

Joint Statement on the Portuguese EU Council Presidency Paving the way for European recovery and resilience

Brussels / Lisbon, 29 January, 2021

Portugal takes over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU) at a decisive moment: frontline workers continue to fight for the lives of European citizens, entire economic ecosystems are on the verge of financial collapse, and free movement remains severely inhibited. At the same time, Member States are rolling out vaccination campaigns and the EU has agreed on an extensive Recovery and Resilience Facility, which will not only make for a new foundation of European solidarity but, hopefully, pave the way for a future-oriented and sustainable recovery - all of which requires efficient coordination in the EU Council. In addition, the Portuguese Presidency will have to build consensus on many important dossiers that hopefully make the European economies and societies resilient for the years ahead. The European private security industry, represented by the *Confederation of European Security Services (CoESS)* at EU-level and the *Associação de Empresas de Segurança (AES)* in Portugal, is committed to support the EU and Portuguese Council Presidency in this historic effort.

Recovery from the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic

CoESS and AES strongly hope that the Portuguese EU Council Presidency will coordinate the implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Facility in a way that ensures a sustainable recovery of the European economy:

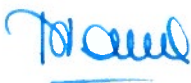
- It is crucial that viable companies, which are suffering from the consequences of the pandemic, are able to quickly benefit from financial aid and retain workers, without distortion of competition. CoESS and AES thereby welcome that the Portuguese Presidency is committed to **paying particular attention to the economic sectors that are most affected by the crisis**, including tourism, transport and the cultural industry.
- We underline the relevance of the European instrument for temporary **Support to mitigate Unemployment Risks in an Emergency (SURE)**, particularly in sectors like the private security services which suffer from a chronic labour shortage.
- We note that Member States have to **step up efforts for the coordination of travel restrictions in the Schengen area and a common approach towards testing and quarantine policies** for cross-border travel. Otherwise, it will be difficult to re-establish trust in free movement and travel in Europe. We regret that Member State action in response to Council Recommendation (2020/1475) and the European Commission's Communication on additional COVID-19 response measures (COM(2020) 687) has been limited, and hope for a better coordination of vaccination strategies.

Building consensus on digital and societal transformations

The Portuguese Presidency will shape decision-making on a number of important legal proposals presented by the European Commission. CoESS and AES count on the Presidency to build consensus and promote constructive dialogue among stakeholder groups, Social Partners and Member States:

- CoESS and AES represent a labour-intensive sector, which is actively engaged in Collective Bargaining. We are convinced that a **strong Social Dialogue** has proven to best serve social cohesion across Europe. Dialogue with Social Partners at EU and sectoral level will be key for a sustainable recovery from the crisis.
- In this regard, we fear that the **European Commission Proposal for a Directive on adequate minimum wages** would, as it stands, negatively impact the autonomy and attractiveness of Collective Bargaining in Europe. We hope that European co-legislators will acknowledge these serious concerns and defend Social Partner autonomy.
- We welcome the Portuguese Presidency's human-centric approach for the follow-up to the **White Paper on Artificial Intelligence**, which should ensure an ethical and risk-based, but also user-friendly application of technologies by qualified, if necessary licensed, users.
- The European Commission's proposals for a **NIS Directive 2** and on the **resilience of Critical Entities** are a centrepiece of our economies' enhanced resilience against current and emerging threats. We believe that physical protection and cybersecurity of critical entities must go hand-in-hand. More can be done to transform both proposals into effective, harmonised tools for enhanced security of critical entities.
- We support the implementation of the **new EU Security Union Strategy**, the **EU Counterterrorism Agenda**, and the **new EU Cybersecurity Strategy** through a pro-active participation in multiple EU Expert Groups and remain committed to offer the knowledge and experience of our experts from across Europe to the Portuguese Presidency.
- CoESS and AES see that a **digital transformation of education systems** must be taken forward - ensuring the development of digital skills and re-/ upskilling of the workforce.

CoESS and AES count on the Portuguese EU Council Presidency to ensure that the recovery from the COVID-19 crisis will make European society, workers, businesses and Social Partners fit for a new future. Both associations stand ready to offer their expertise in order to foster a resilient Union, which is prepared for the numerous opportunities and challenges ahead.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Catherine Piana'.

Catherine Piana
Director General
CoESS

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rogério Alves'.

Rogério Alves
President
AES



About CoESS

CoESS acts as the voice of the private security industry, covering 22 countries in Europe and representing 2 million guards, over 45,000 companies and generating a turnover of over €40M. The private security services provide a wide range of services, both for private and public clients, ranging from Critical Infrastructure facilities to public spaces and government and EU institutions buildings. CoESS is active in European Sectoral Social Dialogue with UNI Europa and numerous EU Expert Groups, including the EU Operators Forum for the Protection of Public Spaces.

About AES

AES is a Portuguese private security employer's association, founded in 1990, with the objective of promoting, among its members and throughout the entire industry, professional ethics principles and respect for the legislation applicable to the activity. Our aim is to develop an environment of healthy and fair competition and to raise awareness to corporate social responsibility and to stop the spreading of undeclared work.

Position Paper on the European Commission Proposal for a Directive on the resilience of critical entities to be published in March 2021

[January 2020 - CoESS Statement - the EU Counterterrorism Agenda](#)

[January 2020 - CoESS Position Paper - The European Commission's Proposal for a Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages in Europe](#)

[November 2020 - CoESS Statement - A coordinated EU approach to the restriction of free movement in response to the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

[October 2020 - CoESS White Paper - The New Normal 2.0: Private Security and COVID-19 in Europe](#)

[June 2020 - CoESS Position Paper - The White Paper on Artificial Intelligence - A European Approach](#)

[May 2020 - CoESS and UNI Europa - Joint Declaration on "Ensuring business continuity and protection of workers in the COVID-19 pandemic"](#)

[May 2020 - CoESS Position Paper - European Commission Communication "Tourism and Transport in 2020 and beyond"](#)

[January 2020 - CoESS Position Paper - Evaluation of Council Directive 2008/114 on European Critical Infrastructures](#)

