

JOINT DECLARATION

BY

**THE FEDERAL MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND SPORTS
OF THE REPUBLIC OF AUSTRIA**

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA,

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC,

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE OF HUNGARY,

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC,

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA

CONCERNING

THE CENTRAL EUROPEAN DEFENCE COOPERATION

(CEDC)

The Federal Minister of Defence and Sports of the Republic of Austria, the Minister of Defence of the Republic of Croatia, the Minister of Defence of the Czech Republic, the Minister of Defence of Hungary, the Minister of Defence of the Slovak Republic and the Minister of Defence of the Republic of Slovenia, hereinafter referred to as the “Participants”;

Considering their geographic location and the manifold cultural, historical, political and economic relations among them and the profound common interest in the stability and security in Central Europe;

Considering common security challenges for ensuring security and stability in Central Europe and its neighbourhood;

Understanding the CEDC as a security and defence policy platform for the Participants in order to develop and promote common interests;

Recognizing the EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) as an integral part of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) covering defence and military aspects, as well as civilian crisis management;

Willing to strengthen the cooperation within the CEDC;

hereby declare the following:

The **principal goal of the CEDC** will be to contribute to the strengthening of regional security within the framework of the EU and the NATO Partnership for Peace by promoting specific regional interests of the Participants.

The wider objective will be to improve the interoperability of the Participants' Armed Forces and to ensure a cost-efficient building of required capacities through selected projects. All activities and measures within the framework of the CEDC are voluntary and subject to the respective country's legislation. The utilizing of synergies in capacity building and capability development with further cost reductions remains an objective.

The **main areas** of cooperation within the CEDC will be:

- Harmonisation of positions with regard to security and defence policy affairs;
- Operations within UN, OSCE, EU and NATO, training, exercises and capability development.

The cooperation within the CEDC will consist of the following three elements:

1. **Political oversight** provided by the Ministers of Defence who will annually evaluate progress of the CEDC and task the steering element with elaborating of specific ideas or areas of cooperation. The Ministers of Defence will meet at least once a year in the country acting as the Presidency.

2. **Steering element** at the level of Defence Policy Directors. The steering element will serve as the central coordination body, taking note of achieved progress of and making recommendations to the Ministers of Defence, as well as providing guidance to the working level, as necessary. It will meet at least twice a year.

3. **Working level** composed of national subject matter experts who might also serve as Points of Contact for specific areas of cooperation.

The **Chiefs of Defence** will also be engaged in the cooperation within the CEDC in order to ensure military oversight of specific activities relevant to the armed forces when appropriate.

The **Presidency** of the CEDC will rotate annually and last from 1 January to 31 December of the respective year. The main role of the Presidency will be:

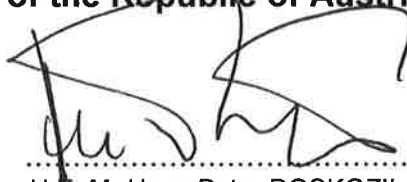
- to provide impetus to the CEDC and distribute all necessary information amongst the Participants;
- to support coordination of a common position on security and defence issues in the EU and in other international institutions relevant to CEDC interests;
- to organise at least one meeting of the Ministers of Defence and at least two meetings of the Defence Policy Directors annually;
- to organise all necessary expert level meetings, if not decided otherwise.

The sequence for the CEDC presidency will be:

2016 Austria
2017 Czech Republic
2018 Hungary
2019 Slovakia
2020 Slovenia
2021 Croatia

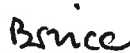
Signed in Frauenkirchen, on 7 November 2016, in one original in English.

**The Federal Minister of Defence and Sports
of the Republic of Austria**



H.E. Mr Hans Peter DOSKOZIL

**For the Minister of Defence
of the Republic of Croatia**



Mr Nikola BRZICA

**For the Minister of Defence
of the Czech Republic**



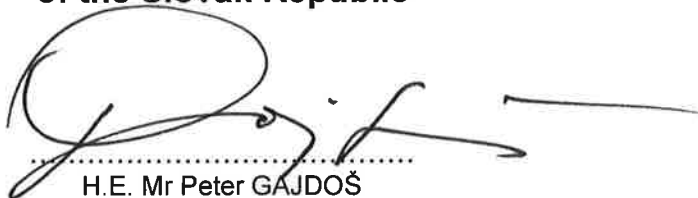
Mr Jakub LANDOVSKÝ

**The Minister of Defence
of Hungary**



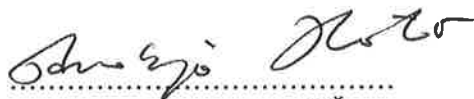
H.E. Mr István SIMICSKÓ

**The Minister of Defence
of the Slovak Republic**



H.E. Mr Peter GAJDOŠ

**The Minister of Defence
of the Republic of Slovenia**



H.E. Mrs Andreja KATIČ