

JOINT STATEMENT
OF THE MINISTERS OF DEFENCE AND HEADS OF DELEGATION
PARTICIPATING IN THE
CENTRAL EUROPEAN DEFENCE COOPERATION (CEDC) + WESTERN
BALKANS MINISTERIAL MEETING

Brdo pri Kranju, 22 September 2026

We, the Ministers of Defence and Heads of Delegation of the Central European Defence Cooperation (CEDC) Member States, the CEDC observer country and the Western Balkans partners, meeting in Brdo pri Kranju on 22 September 2026, are:

REAFFIRMING our commitment to security, stability, and practical defence cooperation in Central Europe and the Western Balkans, recognising that the security of our regions is closely interconnected and firmly rooted in respect for international law, the principles of the UN Charter, European values and principles, democracy, fundamental rights and the rule of law;

ACKNOWLEDGING that the evolving security environment requires greater defence preparedness, credible capabilities, interoperability and closer regional cooperation in support of a more secure, stronger and more resilient Europe;

EMPHASISING the EU's objective to strengthen European defence readiness by 2030 and NATO's efforts to reinforce deterrence and defence and enhance readiness and resilience, while taking into account national security and defence policies and international commitments of participating countries, as well as, where applicable, commitments undertaken in the EU accession process;

UNDERLINING that CEDC is a flexible, member-driven framework for political and strategic coordination and the CEDC plus Western Balkans format is a platform for dialogue, confidence building and practical cooperation;

RECOGNISING the shared strategic interest in a peaceful, stable, secure and prosperous Western Balkans, reaffirming our commitment to regional stabilisation efforts, particularly in the framework of KFOR and EUFOR Althea, and supporting the continued advancement of partners on their respective European paths based on credible reforms, the principle of own merits and a demonstrated commitment to European values and principles, international law, democracy, fundamental rights and the rule of law;

STRESSING that alignment with the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), including alignment with and effective implementation of the EU's restrictive measures and efforts to prevent their circumvention, where applicable, remains an important expression of a partner's strategic choice, and encouraging further progress towards full alignment;

HIGHLIGHTING military mobility as an important enabler of security and defence, facilitated by improved cross-border cooperation, streamlined procedures, the exchange of best practices, logistics planning, dual-use infrastructure development, seamless logistics corridors and transport connectivity between Central Europe and the Western Balkans;

UNDERSCORING the importance of strengthening defence capabilities with a view to enhancing interoperability and operational readiness, including through enhanced cooperation, information exchange, training and exercises, and by drawing on lessons identified from the evolving security environment and contemporary conflicts, in particular Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine;

RECOGNISING the importance of tackling cyber and other hybrid threats, including foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI), and of further strengthening cooperation to build societal and institutional resilience;

SUPPORTING efforts to strengthen a competitive, innovative and responsive defence technological and industrial base, including through closer industrial cooperation, improved security of supply, standardisation, more resilient supply chains and greater interoperability between the EU Member States and Western Balkans partners;

ACKNOWLEDGING the importance of sustained international assistance for Ukraine, in accordance with the specific character of national security and defence policies and in line with the security and defence interests of all participating countries, and recognising that Ukraine's security is closely linked to European security, while drawing, where appropriate, on lessons identified from Ukraine's experience in defending against Russia's war of aggression to enhance our own regional preparedness and resilience;

Endorsed at Brdo pri Kranju on 22 September 2026.