

DGB resolution against the NATO "DEFENDER 2020" exercise in Europe

We say "No" to the NATO exercise and "Yes" to peace, détente and disarmament

Branded "DEFENDER 2020", NATO is planning one of the largest land forces exercises seen in Europe since the end of the Cold War. Scheduled for April and May, the exercise aims to demonstrate a) NATO's strategic readiness, testing its ability to rapidly deploy armoured US brigades to the Russian border in an emergency; and b) NATO's military supremacy.

The trade unions take the view that, instead of such confrontation, the focus should be on détente and a relationship of cooperation with Russia. The 1990 Charter of Paris proclaimed the end of the era of confrontation and division in Europe. Doubtlessly, the outbreak of war in Ukraine demonstrated how far we have since moved away from this far-reaching aspiration. At the same time, however, the Charter was signed by all European states, Russia, the US and Canada jointly proclaiming: "We declare that, henceforth, our relations will be founded on respect and co-operation". This joint commitment still stands and must once again become the prime focus of international relations – on the part of both NATO and Russia.

As trade unions, we stand up for the interests of all workers. Having learned our lesson from the horrors of two World Wars, we are committed to a "Never again!" position. This is why the DGB is so actively engaged – whether at German, European or international level – in maintaining peace and preventing armed conflicts and wars.

Climate change, digitalisation and globalisation are causing profound changes in the world of work and in society in general. In Germany, Europe and the whole world, considerable financial support is needed for investment and social security measures enabling workers to face up to these challenges. At the same time however, NATO states are working towards boosting military spending, bringing it up to 2% of GDP. As these resources would thereby no longer be available for the urgently needed investments in the future, the DGB is very much opposed to NATO's 2-percent target. We need détente, not an arms race!

The 1990 Two-plus-Four Agreement, the basis for German reunification, clearly states that "only peace will emanate from German soil". A fundamental pillar of the German constitution (the *Grundgesetz*), this must also be a fundamental principle of German and European politics.

We call for:

- An end to the policy of confrontation! Germany must stand up for this, also vis-à-vis its NATO allies!
- Conflict prevention, a policy of détente and political solutions to conflicts instead of military confrontation!
- Détente, not an arms race! Investments in the future instead of an arms race!

Background: The NATO's "DEFENDER 2020" exercise:

37,000 soldiers from 18 NATO states are scheduled to take part in the exercise from April to May. The transport of 20,000 US troops and tons of military equipment across the Atlantic and the whole of Europe to the Russian border will set the seal on a new dimension of military activities. With Hamburg, Bremerhaven and Nordenham at the receiving end of the trans-Atlantic shipments and with the coordination provided by NATO's new Joint Support and Enabling Command (JSEC) in Ulm, Germany will have a key role to play. Apart from the German army (the *Bundeswehr*), considerable police support, whether provided by the federal police or the police forces of Germany's federal states, will be needed to guard the deployment by road and rail, as well as having to control possible demonstrations against the exercise.