

Security has a Social Dimension

Declaration

of the European Organisation of Military Associations

on the occasion of its Congress on 19th October 2000

in Nyborg / Denmark

I

1. The military mission of servicemen in Europe is changing. The classic mission of defending countries and alliances is being replaced by international assignments for peace-keeping and peace-making purposes. Such assignments take place in Europe and in other parts of the world; they take place over a lengthy period of time and change the pace of work and the pace of life of both servicemen and their families significantly.
2. Out of concern for the protection, security and welfare of servicemen on duty and also for the preservation of democratic rights in the armed forces, also outside their home countries, the member associations of EUROMIL call upon national and European decision-makers on all political and social levels. They appeal to their responsibility and welfare. Security has a social dimension.

II

3. For years now thousands of servicemen from Europe and overseas have served side-by-side in peace-keeping and peace-making assignments both in Europe and elsewhere. Violent clashes and even civil wars, which do not spare women and children, form the current and future scenarios for armed forces on assignments.

On the one hand war or war-like assignments, in which servicemen have to serve repeatedly on behalf of their governments, are becoming an ever-increasing burden. On the other hand, the general public increasingly

perceives these assignments as part of the daily routine of servicemen and turns its attention to other events. This is also true of some political decision-makers. It is essential to counteract this development.

4. The autonomous assignment of national contingents under their own military leadership is becoming a rarer event, as national resources for available armed forces, equipment and financial power are no longer adequate. Even if it is left up to the nations to define the manner in which they participate in international assignments, in future troop contingents with different leadership philosophies, training, equipment, experience, payment, general social conditions and civil rights will participate side-by-side too to carry out joint assignments under the leadership and responsibility of supranational institutions such as the United Nations, NATO or in future the EU.
5. Against this background EUROMIL is observing closely the current changes taking place within the Western European Union, which is becoming the military arm of the EU. The structural and organisational preparations to this end are developing at considerable intensity and will have achieved a certain degree of maturity by summer 2001. The WEU will then cease to exist. 60,000 ground troops and in addition air and sea armed forces, which must be tripled in numbers for an enduring assignment, should then be available to the European Union from 2003 onward. Most member associations of EUROMIL will thus sooner or later have a majority of the servicemen they represent in this multinational corps of the European Union.
6. The European Union will thus in the near future not only assume the tasks of developing leadership structures, formulating principles of assignments and developing equipment standards for international troop contingents. The Union will also have to accept responsibility for harmonisation of national procedures regarding social rights, such as the right of association, the guidelines on safety and well-being at the workplace, the regulations governing working hours and the granting of fundamental rights in accordance with the European human rights and social charters.

For the first time this specific background presents a major opportunity to EUROMIL to make a lasting impact on consistent application of the European Union's labour and socio-political regulations for servicemen too and to implement such regulations.

III

7. Servicemen are citizens in uniform, who are obliged by their governments more and more frequently to place their own lives and health at risk in the interest of peace and the freedom of citizens of other countries and continents. Therefore, nothing is more evident than the fact that national and supranational political commissioning parties should grant servicemen in principle the same civil rights as civilians enjoy. Any restriction of such civil rights must be regulated by the constitution of the country concerned. A military mission may nevertheless make it necessary to suspend these rights temporarily, if the conditions of deployment for the subordinate servicemen make this absolutely essential.

8. Almost 500,000 servicemen, who are presently organised in 26 member associations from 19 European countries within EUROMIL, therefore appeal to governments and governmental bodies to implement and observe the following Community principles for peace-keeping and peace-making missions in which their servicemen are involved:

- The international legal foundation for military deployment must be formulated clearly, the mandate must be evident beyond doubt and must be accepted by each country assigning forces. In principle the highest-level mandate of the United Nations must be aimed for.
- International conventions relating to the protection of servicemen such as the "Convention on the Safety of the United Nations and Associated Personnel" must be ratified and enforced. Consistent application of such conventions must be ensured.
- The objective of a military operation must be formulated precisely and assignment location, timescale and forces required must be carefully determined. The resources required for assigning and relieving forces must be approved and made available in good time by the relevant parliaments.
- Equipment and weapons, especially also personal protection of servicemen must comply with the state-of-the-art. It must be ensured that no false economies are made in this area.
- Training of servicemen must be conducted in adequate time and in a closed unit. The experiences of allied armed forces must be utilised. The high demands of every serviceman as an operational combatant and judicious mediator have to be taken into account. Careful personnel selection and comprehensive training of all ranks - from lance corporal to general - increase the ability of de-escalation in a critical situation considerably.
- The primary objective of military leaders on site is to protect the life and health of servicemen under their command and – as far as possible – to apply the legal regulations or procedures in force in their own country, even if this is not customary in an allied neighbouring troop section.

- In principle the social rights, which servicemen enjoy in their own country, shall continue to apply during international assignments. The co-operation of servicemen's representatives in the deployment zone must be facilitated, as they can rely on their staff associations and can contribute to rapid success in the areas of material and social care.
 - Some servicemen, who return from assignments abroad, suffer from health-related stress symptoms, which are in most cases psychological and which have to be cured by the relevant facility of the armed forces and the civilian health care system. Experience in this area must be included in the training of new troop contingents on an ongoing basis.
 - Servicemen's and servicewomen's families play a key role in contributing to the readiness for action of their husbands and wives; it is therefore advisable to include families intensively in care, welfare and information procedures and to ensure that their social security remains guaranteed to the best possible extent.
9. EUROMIL observes that the above stated demands are met to a large extent in some of the countries assigning forces; in others however they have only been implemented in part. In individual cases, however, it must also be observed that certain signs of deterioration occur and the quality of individual actions declines as the result of repeated and long-term assignments.
 10. EUROMIL therefore urges the creation and observance of the highest possible standards, as they are for instance set forward by NATO. In the same sense the co-operation with international bodies and institutions must be based on high standards, utilising the experience of countries, which have an exemplary reputation in assigning forces, and that of their armed forces.
 11. EUROMIL is staging its congress in Denmark, a country which enjoys an excellent reputation in the geo-strategic Scandinavian and Baltic region. In the same way the Danish member associations enjoy respect and recognition inside EUROMIL, especially because of their continuous and numerous support to other associations. Moreover the Danish member associations achieved to secure the high social standard of their country and the civil trade union regulations to a high extend also for the armed forces. Especially in this respect the Danish member associations set a high standard for EUROMIL as non-governmental organisation.

Under the common umbrella all member associations realise that armed forces which are deployed to guarantee peace and freedom abroad need to experience social security internally, since security has a social dimension.