



NEWS

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Security has a social dimension

A PARTIAL LOSS OF SOVEREIGNTY?

The main topic of discussions in the past years was the financial and economic crisis and its influence on the functioning of the armed forces in Europe. At the same time, we can note several circumstances. Firstly, the impact on defence forces is no longer discussed only on European level. Mid February 2012 the US Department of Defence released its 2013 Fiscal and Budget Proposal. The proposed defence budget of \$613.9 billion includes \$525.4 billion to fund base defence programmes and \$88.5 billion to support Overseas Contingency Operations. The \$525.4 billion for the base budget includes cuts and other initiatives that will reduce planned spending by \$259 billion over the next five years and \$487 billion over ten years. Defence Secretary, Leon Panetta, stated that “this budget plan represents a historic shift to the future, recognizing that we are at a strategic point after a decade of war.” “We are also redoubling our efforts to make better use of the taxpayer’s defence dollar and meet our fiscal responsibilities,” Panetta added.

The budget cuts and several initiatives have been introduced by an intensive strategic review conducted by senior military and civilian leaders under the leadership and guidance of President Obama. The defence strategic guidance, “Sustaining US Global Leadership: Priorities for 21 st Century Defence,” was published in January 2012. In his introduction to the strategic review document, President Obama said that the fiscal choices are difficult ones. The Department must continue to reduce the “cost of doing business”. One of the principles that will guide the US force and programme development is described as follows: “This entails reducing the rate of growth of manpower costs, finding further efficiencies in overhead and headquarters, business practices, and other support activities before taking further risk in meeting the demands of the strategy.”

Coming back to the European reality, what we witness now is that our armed forces are affected with very negative outcomes of the financial and economic crisis. Several governments took already severe steps concerning the future of their defence forces, however the daily pessimistic consequences and the practical

shortfall are very quickly visible or at least will be very soon. More than ever before governments have to go into the deepest reserves looking for the very last eurocent to submit a political and acceptable budget. The road to financial stability will be a long one and it is a well-known certitude, that every eurocent you lost in defence budgets, will never be recovered again. Therefore, Ministers of Defence have to take long lasting measures. The “Pooling and Sharing Initiative” that has been launched at the informal Defence Ministerial in Ghent during the Belgian EU Presidency, was described by the EDA as the “wake-up call”. At the same time there is a widespread understanding that this initiative, pooling and sharing of military capabilities, is an effective response and it is seen as a must, rather than an option. It is also commonly believed, that at this point a European defence force is an illusion. Maj Gen (Ret) Kees Homan of the Dutch Clingendael Institute and former Director of the Netherlands Defence College,



President,
Emmanuel Jacob
Photo: EUROMIL

stated in an opinion article in the Leeuwarden Courant of 23 February 2012 that pooling and sharing is the new mantra but that “sovereignty” is the most important obstacle. Pooling and sharing implicitly demands the acceptance of interdependence and the abandoning of at least a part of national sovereignty. However, difficult choices have to be made! Defence forces will have to be prepared for their participation in multinational fighting operations with their own strong specialty and niche capacity. At the same time, they need to be trained and equipped for participation and stabilization operations and support of humanitarian missions. Armed forces able to perform on their own is history!

However, let’s briefly come back to the sovereignty problem that has been rightly mentioned by the Dutch Clingendael Institute in their opinion article. On 29 February the Dutch and Belgian Ministers of Defence, Hans Hillen and Pieter De Crem, launched an enhanced cooperation between both armed forces. For a long time both navies operate together and have a joined maritime commandment in Den Helder in the Netherlands, but in the future other components will work closer together in the field of

material, maintenance, personnel as well as formation of personnel. One example is the purchase of NH90 helicopters and the training of their crews and technicians. On this occasion the Belgian Minister of Defence, Pieter De Crem, stated in *Le Soir* of 1 March 2012, “we are no longer in a test phase: it works and we have to think what we want to do together.” “In time it will go through a partial delegation of the national sovereignty” he added, joined by his Dutch colleague, Hans Hillen, who said “the issue of national sovereignty has to be managed”.

It must be clear that from EUROMIL’s point of view pooling and sharing must also have a social dimension. Bringing armed forces closer together, means bringing soldiers closer together! This must and will be the future mission of an umbrella organisation like EUROMIL: representing and defending soldiers’ rights all over Europe! And even if our turn is next and our armed forces and consequently their staff associations find themselves in a precarious situation, every possible action will be taken in order to let the representative organisation of European soldiers and their families survive!



Emmanuel Jacob

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THE CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

INTERVIEW WITH SERENA SORRENTINO, CONFEDERAL SECRETARY OF THE CGIL. MILITARY CITIZENS, THE CGIL ON THE SIDE OF THOSE PROMOTING THE FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

BY VINCENZO FRALLICCIARDI, PRESIDENT OF AMID, ITALY

Serena Sorrentino, Confederal Secretary of the Italian General Labour Confederation (CGIL), stated in an interview with the New Journal of Military Personnel's Director, Antonella Manotti, Vice-President of the Committee Article 52, on 29 November 2011 that the aim of the Confederation is to compare its work with other examples of democratization and representation of military personnel in Europe. The Confederation knows that this battle is not easy in its country, but as history demonstrated in case of the police union, it is not impossible.

The union representative added as well that besides some principles such as electoral process, democratic, transparent and enforceable bargaining at all levels, freedom of association and representation are the cornerstones of life and are applied to all union workers. Despite the cultural and political resistance, as in all great battles for ideals, CGIL will be brought on the side of those who promote the rights and freedom's recognition in the associative function of the workers.

Furthermore, Ms Sorrentino addressed

the legality of the campaign launched by the CGIL, underlying a particular challenge in the times not only of economic and social but also ethical and moral crisis present in Italy. She criticised the security policy conducted by the former Berlusconi government, proposing patrols, security guards for stadiums, the military personnel to oppose criminal wars. She called it a debasement of the professionalism and the function of the military forces that often have no recognition of fundamental rights and no guarantee of adequate resources for professional development.



Serena Sorrentino, Confederal Secretary of the CGIL.

Photo: AMID



THE FORESIGHT THAT AMID HAD ALREADY TEN YEARS AGO

BY VINCENZO FRALLICCIARDI, PRESIDENT OF AMID, ITALY

AMID started the ongoing, fruitful cooperation between the associations of Italian soldiers and the CGIL already more than ten years ago.

Together with a strategic accession to EUROMIL, this cooperation was the only possibility to execute the military personnel's right of representation. By now, there is no resistance or preconceptions, as this prevision, for some visionary, is today shared by all the associative individuals working in the defence and security. The financial and economic crisis influencing Europe and Italy should not discourage from defending the right of soldiers to protect their social and occupational interests. The military personnel cannot accept to pay



for the crisis by being made denied protection, excused by the lack of available resources and austerity measures. Not only in Italy, but in fact in every European country, there is a strong temptation to cut the expanses in the defence sector. Therefore mutual cooperation is needed.

EXAMPLE OF COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE ASSOCIATIONS THAT ADHERE TO EUROMIL

BY VINCENZO FRALICCIARDI, PRESIDENT OF AMID, ITALY

AMID has recently participated in the work of the 5th Mediterranean Forum within the 104th EUROMIL Presidium Meeting in Brussels, where among other things, the issues relating to the application of working time in the armed forces of various countries in Europe, were discussed.

In particular, Cyprus was mentioned as an example of country with inconvenient and unfair service conditions for military personnel. In order to highlight the Italian situation, AMID explained the current legislation concerning the armed forces in terms of the implementation of the weekly service, as well as granting extra money or compensatory hours for overtime. The implementation of the working time derives from the application of Law No. 231 approved by the Italian Parliament in 1990, which also covers the regulations applied for military personnel's employment contracts.

In principle, a maximum of 36 hours of service has been set for soldiers. These hours can then be split up on 5 or 6 working days, which means that soldiers will work either 8 hours per day from Monday to Thursday and 4 hours on Friday, or 6 hours from Monday to Saturday.

However, in case of need or an order, the service hours of military personnel may be extended.

As far as the extraordinary overtime is concerned, it is known in advance and applied accordingly to the current needs of the service.

The establishment of the working week was a great victory, achieved thanks to the democratic struggles and long-term commitment of the Italian armed forces, which enabled achieving fair working and economic conditions. Moreover, rules regulating the system undeniable contribute by making disappear many other unnecessary services that were previously provided with excessive superficiality, perhaps, with some abuse of power by superiors too.

Formulating the time of service was an important achievement, however it should not be considered definitive as still under constant attack from General Staffs and Commands in an attempt to attenuate or absorb innovative legislation. It is true that now this condition is part of the consolidated assets of the military work and is too important not to be defended by any means by all military personnel.



Vincenzo Frallicciardi, President of AMID.

Photo: AMID

This is a clear example of how the exchange of mutual experiences by joining associations and trade unions can make a useful comparison to EUROMIL solutions in the various European countries and an in-depth debate on the implementation of reforms aimed at improving the socio-professional status of military personnel.

The advantage of the condition of Italian military personnel, resulting from the working week, was unfortunately opposed by the lack of the non-recognition of the right of association.

In this regard, the future development of the Italian military personnel still needs a lot of involvement and progress but this positive change is not impossible as long as synergies arising from the inevitable achievement of an integrated European defense model are applied.



MEMBERS' ACTIVITIES

100 YEARS OF MILITARY UNIONISM IN THE NETHERLANDS (PART TWO)

BY KOOS STAUTHAMER, AFMP/FNV AND JERRY HART, GLOBAL SECURITY RISK ANALYST AND A FORMER LECTURER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER'S SCARMAN CENTRE

This is the second article describing the beginning of military unionism in the Netherlands. It is interesting to reflect on how far unionism has advanced looking at some images of the AFMP headquarters from the early 20th century, showing a 'union meeting' in some sort of back room at a local restaurant. We now have fully equipped professional meeting rooms at our disposal and have achieved a high degree of respect! In the first article we discussed the role of the AFMP and its legal predecessors. This article explains how the AFMP was founded and how it started to recognize the need to seek cooperation with other unions. It would be fair to say that a significant proportion of the impetus was inspired by the old Dutch proverb: "more service for less money."

AFMP founded

The AFMP was founded in 1987 originally under the name 'Ons Belang', as an association for Non-Commissioned-Officers (NCOs) of the Army. The AFMP is now an amalgamated federation derived from three different associations and, following an important and progressive decision by Ons Belang during a hard period in 1983, membership is now open to all professional soldiers regardless of their rank. Before this, the conscript soldiers had their own associations (VVDM, Union for Conscript Soldiers) but their entry to the AFMP was most welcomed. The AFMP within the federation slowly realized that a fusion of more associations was inevitable: partly because of the impending reductions in the armed forces and thus smaller memberships and subsequently less income. In the autumn of 1990 the word 'fusion' was pronounced for the first time and by December 1991 it was a fact. The AFMP took over the role from Ons Belang both nationally and internationally.

Joining the FNV

Since the beginning of the 1990's the world of the armed forces changed significantly and all military organizations had to reorient themselves. There was no other industry in the Netherlands at that time that endured such a comprehensive downsizing and reorganization as those responsible for national defence. Thousands of positions were lost and all professionals had to adjust their career prospects. In the meantime consultations on the working conditions in the wider public sector were on a different footing, as since April 1993 (union-) officials negotiated their own working conditions. There were eight sectors: municipalities, water boards, education, judicial, county, power, police and defence sector and all had their own negotiations with the employer, the Minister. To structure these processes as much as possible, federations and trade associations got involved. The AFMP was already affiliated with the General Central of Government Personnel (Dutch: ACOP) It became obvious that the AFMP itself would become a member of the FNV, the Netherlands Trade Union Confederation. The Federation of Dutch Trade Unions (FNV) is a Dutch association of trade unions representing the

interests of workers and beneficiaries. The FNV represents young and old workers, professionals, people on benefits and pensioners. Nearly 1.4 million people are members of a union under the FNV umbrella organization. The FNV has collective professional negotiators, skilled lawyers and tax consultants. The AFMP joined the FNV ranks in December 1994.



The Board of "Ons Belang" in the year 1928.

Photo: AFMP/FNV



The VVDM, the Association of Conscript Soldiers became obsolete with the end of military conscription.

Cooperation with the Military Police Association (MARVER)

The solution to the future prospects of the cooperation with the Military Police Association (*Marechausseevereniging*) started in September 1999, when the *Marechausseevereniging* itself decided to join the AFMP. Before it joined the AFMP, it was closely working together with the *ACOM* (*Algemeen Christelijke Organisatie van Militairen*) one of the seven other military unions in the Netherlands. They sought cooperation while maintaining their own identity and the *ACOM* could not realize this type of cooperation. The *ACOM* eventually demanded that the *Marechausseevereniging* merge with the *ACOM*. The AFMP did offer this possibility. In the meantime the *Marechausseevereniging* came to the conclusion that the maintenance of "association work" with its own organization offered no prospects for the future. This would eventually lead to the disappearance of the *Marechausseevereniging*. Both the board of the AFMP and *Marechausseevereniging*, concluded that combining the work of both organizations, the future prospects for both unions would be positive. This led in 2001 to a situation where both unions merging their workforce established an organizational model to alleviate and later solve the financial difficulties the AFMP had foreseen. This was a brilliant move. The boards approved a multi-year financial plan which had after five years such an effect on the financial status of the AFMP that budgets were finally in balance and there was no debt anymore.

REPORT ON RETALIATION MEASURES AGAINST A SYNDICATE TRUSTEE EMPLOYED IN THE SLOVENIAN ARMY

BY ČRT JEREB SKRT, SVS, SLOVENIA

The Slovenian army took retaliation measures against a syndicate trustee of the Syndicate of Soldiers of Slovenia (SVS). A trustee and syndicate lawyer, Črt Jereb Skrt LL.B., was dismissed from service in the Slovenian army on 23 January 2012, after two years of his and SVS's struggle to start a dialog with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and after Slovenia's first protest of military personnel in November 2011. Immediately after the protest, threats were made by the MoD spokesman who stated that the protest was not legitimate. MoD spokesman concluded that those who were active in the protest violated, in the opinion of the ministry, the law by insubordination and that punishment was not excluded.

SVS's predictions regarding MoD intimidation tactics were correct and based on the low number of personnel who had courage to join the protest. Earlier in the past, the protest reprisals were carried out against the president of SVS. Gvido Novak was found guilty of violating the military law before the disciplinary court of the Slovenian army, after making a demand to the Minister of Defence to replace the General Chief of Staff, Alojz Štajner, who is suspected of breaching several laws (labour and criminal legislation). The disciplinary court of the Slovenian army sentenced Gvido Novak to a conditional dismiss from service for one year of probation.

Črt Jereb Skrt (trustee and syndicate lawyer) was the second person in the syndicate to feel reprisals for his work. Črt was taken from his work by force on 23 January 2012, at 10:30 am. Two military police officers were ordered to take all measures to prevent him from remaining in the barracks. He was escorted to the entrance as a non-military person, which is perceived persona non grata. In the internet and in other public media in Slovenia he was labelled as an insubordinate person, whose employment agreement had expired and wasn't prolonged, due to lack of discipline and bad working habits. Črt Jereb Skrt was officially informed that the employer (MoD) began the procedure for the termination of the employment contract on 16 December 2011. He was ordered to render his assigned weapon, ID card, uniform and equipment by the commanding officer on 10 January 2012. Črt Jereb Skrt refused to obey the order on the basis of the Slovenian labour and military legislation. The confederation KNSS and SVS sent an official complaint to the Minister of Defence, Ljubica Jelusič, who refused to act and who ratified the actions of the Slovenian army.

These events represent only a part of irregularities that charge the former Minister of Defence and the General Chief of Staff. With the policy to silence anyone who opposes to wrongful acts of the employer (MoD), Slovenia did not discontinue with the totalitarian methods of the ex-communist or Yugoslavian army methods. In response to the undemocratic policy making of the former Minister of Defence, Gvido Novak, as President of SVS, laid a criminal information against Ljubica Jelusič. Slovenia has made a big step back in lustration and democratic values, where basic human rights and freedoms can be defended only by the court of justice.

Let's hope that the courts in Slovenia work with the minimum clear mind, ethics and uncorrupted common sense, to penalize



SVS in front of the Ministry of Defence during the public rallies, presenting its demands.

Photo: SVS

such publicly open and shameless wrongful acts, that public servants commit with the consent of the government.

Homeland always comes first for all military personnel (at least it should). Abiding the law is the base regarding the honour of serving in the army (any army). Anything that goes beyond the law may cross the thin line of military revolt or misuse of given power. History is full of examples of abuse of power. Historical awareness of Slovenians should extend only for 20 years in the past to realize that history is repeating, but I am sceptical about the collective memory of Slovenians working that way.



POLISH EU PRESIDENCY ACHIEVEMENTS IN CSDP

BY EUROMIL

Although the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty changed in some aspects the institutional framework of the EU, as well as limited the formal role of the national presidency in Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), the example of the Polish EU Council presidency showed that there was still a vast room for manoeuvre to provide the EU institutions with strategic directions on CSDP and to be active in this field.

As far as Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) is concerned, the role of the presidency has been limited, because like in most Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) areas, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (hereafter High Representative) and the European External Action Service (EEAS) have taken over the responsibilities of the rotating presidency.

The job of the High Representative, currently Baroness Catherine Ashton, is vast as it combines responsibilities of several persons from the pre-Lisbon framework and at the same time she has to delegate part of her work to other people. Moreover, the EEAS was only established at the beginning of 2011 and is not fully operational yet with a significant number of vacancies in important positions high in structure. As a result, there is room for an active rotating presidency to share part of the responsibility with the High Representative and her service.

Poland decided to use that opportunity, agreeing with Catherine Ashton on a number of initiatives to be put forward by the Polish presidency, under the EEAS' formal leadership.

"Secure Europe" in general was one of the three basic priorities in the official Polish presidency programme. Therefore, CSDP being one of the important elements of the Polish foreign and security policy received the Polish presidency's attention.

The participation of all EU actors with a predominant role of the High Representative working hand in hand with the Member States, striving for a more systematic and harmonized implementation of CSDP initiatives, were underlined as key prerequisites to meet the EU ambition to become more capable, more coherent and more active.

The Polish presidency focused above all on the key areas that were identified as crucial for CSDP development, such as:

- Improvement of EU capabilities. A more effective and efficient Member States cooperation through comprehensive implementation of the pooling and sharing and Battle Groups' reform, increasing its usability and flexibility.
- EU command structure reform. A necessary progress in EU strategic level planning and conduct capacity, as well as a deeper harmonization of civilian-military cooperation.
- Bringing the EU Eastern partners closer to CSDP activities, including broadening cooperation in the area of training and Security Sector Reform and encouraging partners to participate in CSDP missions and operations.
- EU-NATO relations, as far as Polish presidency perspective

is concerned, needed to be constantly improved, however the current climate does not favour making substantial progress. Thus, in this field, the main activities concerned supporting the High Representative in her actions, including in the areas of dialogue, in-theatre cooperation, harmonization and synchronisation of capability development processes.

Polish proposals to revitalize CSDP were first formulated in the Weimar Letter (signed by France, Germany and Poland) and then developed in the Weimar + Initiative (composed of France, Germany, Poland, Italy and Spain). Both, "Weimar Initiative" and "Weimar + Initiative" have been supported by the EU Member States and the EU Institutions.

Furthermore, during the Polish presidency, the Athena mechanism and the EUFOR Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina operation were revised.

An important outcome was the adoption of the Council conclusions on CSDP on 1 December 2011, which constitute a sound basis for concrete CSDP developments in the upcoming months. The Council reviewed developments in the EU's

CSDP and adopted conclusions, mainly concerning:

- Operations

The Council discussed the state of play concerning the EU's military CSDP operations and considered the way forward. These operations include the EUFOR Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the EUNAVFOR Atalanta counter-piracy operation off the coast of Somalia, and the EU training mission for Somali forces, EUTM Somalia. They also took stock of the latest developments with regard to Libya.

- Partnerships

The High Representative updated Ministers on her efforts to strengthen EU-NATO cooperation in crisis management in line with the mandate of the European Council of September 2010, on the EU-UN cooperation, and on her contacts with strategic partners with regard to CSDP.

The Council tasked its preparatory bodies to continue discussing a revised mechanism for financing the common costs of EU military operations (Athena mechanism).

- European Defence Agency

The Council set the 2012 budget for the European Defence Agency at EUR 30.5 million. From July to December 2011, the Polish presidency organized or participated in a dozen of CSDP related events or meetings.

In cooperation with the High Representative and the EEAS, Poland made an attempt to bring an added value and momentum of the on-going debate on CSDP. At the same time Poland made a good impression, after, some commentators say, the rather 'wobbly' presidencies from other "new" Member States.



EU WORKING TIME DIRECTIVE (WTD) - STATE OF PLAY

By EUROMIL

In September 2009, President Barroso announced at the European Parliament that the Commission would launch a new review of the WTD.

A previous effort to amend the Directive (2004-2009) had ended when Parliament and Council were ultimately unable to reach agreement on a draft amending proposal, despite long negotiations and a conciliation procedure.

The Commission wants to review the existing rules because there have been fundamental changes in the world of work over the past twenty years, which affect the organization of working time. They include the impact of technological change, globalization, a much more diverse workforce, work intensification, increasing variation in individual working time patterns and greater competitive pressures. Employers wish to see more flexibility while workers' organizations seek more effective protection of health and safety. Some questions remain unclear, and there are substantial difficulties for some Member States in implementing some aspects of the rules.

The Commission's review aims at finding sustainable solutions to these challenges, which would be capable of enjoying broad-based support.

President Barroso told the European Parliament in September 2009 that the new review would be based on a two-stage consultation of the social partners at European level and a detailed impact assessment paying attention to both social and economic aspects.

During 2010, the Commission launched two successive stages of consultation of the social partners (each based on a consultation paper published as a Communication), launched and published a

substantial impact assessment study by independent experts (the 'Deloitte study'), published a comprehensive legal Report of the Commission services on the current implementation of the Directive in all Member States.

The Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU) sets out particular rules for social policy legislation, including Working Time, which specifically requires the Commission to consult with representative social partner organizations at EU level before making any legislative proposal in this area. The procedure is provided for in Article 154(2) TFEU.

There was a large response from the European social partners to the first stage consultation. Broadly speaking, there was overall consensus that EU working time rules needed review but strongly differing viewpoints on what sort of changes were needed, with business calling for more flexibility, and unions for more effective levels of protection. The main outcome of the second stage consultation was the interest expressed by all the main cross-sectoral social

partners in the option available to them under Art 155 TFEU of choosing to negotiate themselves on the Working Time review.

The social partners have jointly decided to launch talks under Art 155 TFEU.

Under the relevant Treaty provisions, they enjoy autonomy as regards the content and structure of their discussions, and have nine months to reach agreement. If they reach an agreement, they are entitled under Art 155 to ask for its implementation as a Directive.

SHORT SUMMARY ON EUROMIL POSITION ON WTD

EUROMIL REJECTS ANY REVIEW OF THE WTD, INVITES THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION TO CONTROL ITS FULL IMPLEMENTATION TO THE PUBLIC SERVICES INCLUDING THE ARMED FORCES AND CALLS THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT TO OBJECT TO ANY PROPOSALS FOR REVIEW.

EUROMIL:

- **SUPPORTS THE ETUC POSITION ON WTD ADOPTED BY ITS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ON 3 JUNE 2010.**

- **CLAIMS, THAT THE DIRECTIVE IS ALSO APPLICABLE FOR SOLDIERS AND ITS FULL IMPLEMENTATION BY MEMBER STATES HAS TO BE ENSURED.**

- **STIPULATES THAT CLEAR, COMPREHENSIVE, COHERENT AND BIDDING WORKING TIME REGULATIONS SPECIFIC AND ADAPTED TO ARMED FORCES PERSONNEL ARE NECESSARY.**

- **IS OF THE OPINION THAT PROTECTION AGAINST LONG AND IRREGULAR WORKING HOURS IS A CRUCIAL MATTER OF HEALTH AND SAFETY PREVENTION ALSO REGARDING SOLDIERS.**

- **PROPOSES THAT ON-CALL OR FOR EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS TIME SHOULD BE COUNTED AS WORKING TIME.**

- **FINDS THE RECONCILIATION BETWEEN PROFESSIONAL, PRIVATE AND FAMILY LIFE OF SOLDIERS, CRUCIAL.**

This has been done in many previous cases. The Commission would then present the social partners' agreement to the Council in the form of a Directive. Under the Treaty, the Council may either adopt it or reject it, by qualified majority, but may not amend it. The Parliament is informed, but is not a co-legislator.

Out of respect for the autonomy of the social partners, the Commission will not put forward a legislative proposal on the issues covered by their talks.

In the event that the social partners do not reach an agreement, the Commission would then come forward as promised with a legislative proposal, based on its consultation and impact assessment work.

On 14 November 2011, European social partners sent a letter to Commissioner László Andor informing him that further to the



 ETUC / CES European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) Confédération Européenne des Syndicats (CES)	  UEAPME The voice of crafts and SMEs in Europe	 CEEP <i>servicing the public</i> European Centre of Employers and Enterprises providing Public services	
<p>Commissioner László ANDOR European Commission Rue de la Loi 200 B-1049 Brussels Email : laszlo.andor@ec.europa.eu</p> <p>Brussels, 14 November 2011</p> <p>Dear Commissioner,</p> <p>Re: opening of negotiations on working time</p> <p>Further to the Commission consultation on reviewing the working time directive, we are pleased to inform you that our four organisations will open negotiations. The aim of these negotiations will be to conclude an agreement, to be implemented by Council decision in accordance with article 155 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.</p> <p>A first negotiation meeting is scheduled for 8 December 2011. Should we be able to conclude these negotiations within the nine-month period foreseen by the Treaty, we would inform the Commission of the results achieved at the beginning of September 2012.</p> <p>Yours sincerely,</p>			
 BUSINESSEUROPE Philippe de Buck Director General	 ETUC Bernadette Ségol General Secretary	 UEAPME Andrea Benassi Secretary General	 CEEP Ralf Resch General Secretary

Joint letter to Commissioner László Andor

Commission consultation on reviewing the Working Time Directive they will open negotiations.

The aim of the negotiations will be to conclude an agreement, to be implemented by Council decision in accordance with Article 155 of the TFEU.

The first negotiation meeting took place on 8 December 2011. Should the European social partners be able to conclude these negotiations within the nine month period foreseen by the Treaty, they would inform the Commission of the results achieved at the beginning of September 2012.

SALTO DI QUIRRA AND THE QUIRRA SYNDROME

BY EUROMIL

Between 7 and 15 October 2011, Carla Goffi, President of the Mouvement Chrétien pour la Paix and Ria Verjauw of the Belgian Coalition Stop Uranium Weapons, visited Sardinia and afterwards prepared an extensive report regarding the Quirra zone.

On 21 January 2012, a seminar was organized at the premises of the Belgian, Francophone War Resisters' International section, in order to remind about this visit and discuss the issue.

Quirra is a village located in the Italian Sardinia Island, close to a big military polygon PISQ (Polygone Interforze Salto di Quirra) where ballistic missiles and weapons are tested. Recently, the zone has been driven to the attention of the media due to the so-called "Quirra syndrome", an apparently off-normal incidence of illnesses in that zone. The media indicated in the military use of Depleted Uranium a possible cause of the above situation. Salto di Quirra is the largest polygon in Europe in terms of quantity and diversity of the activity. The other polygons in Sardinia are Capo Teulada, Decimomannu and Capo Frasca.

According to the report, since the 1980's, there have been reports of a sharp increase in the incidence of tumors in people living in the contaminated areas as well as in military personnel. These tumors occur particularly in the haemo-lymphatic system and the thyroid.

In 2001 a local medical doctor raised his voice about the increase in the incidence of cancers and genetic malformations in infants amongst the local population. In the village of Escalapano, with 2.600 habitants, 8 children were born with genetic malformations in 1988. In the village of Quirra with 150 habitants, 12 people died from leukemia in 2002. Recent tests carried out by the University of Modena have found traces of heavy metal nanoparticles in lungs and consequently in the blood system of all those exposed to the dust created by explosions accompanying several military tests that are carried out.

The purpose of the visit in October 2011 was:

- To recognize the human and environmental tragedy,



caused by the weapons and high-tech materials tests, made by Italian armies, NATO and NATO members, as well as private companies;

- To collect more information and create a dossier on Quirra Syndrome;
- To meet journalists, local judicial authorities, independent experts and scientists, relevant committees, victims, representatives of the public and the President of the Sardinian Trade Union Confederation;

An area which seeks justice.

On 15 October 2011, in Cagliari, the third manifestation meeting

was organized by the families of deceased soldiers and the Sardinian "Jetons les Bases" committee.

They demand an immediate suspension of military activities in the three Sardinian polygons, urgent evacuation of military personnel active in PISQ, which is now called "the polygon of death", an immediate transfer of soldiers exposed to contamination coming from the polygons, environmental rehabilitation and security of the land and water areas that have been contaminated, financial compensation to patients and families of the victims for the loss of health or life of their beloved, a general compensation to



the inhabitants of Sardinia for the damage of its territory.

According to what Ms. Goffi and Ms. Verjauw have put in their report, the conclusions after the visit are the following:

- There is no industrial activity on the Island of Sardinia; pollution comes from weapons testing, as well as a result of the destruction of unutilized stocks of weapons.
- The problem with radar and electromagnetic fields is also present.
- The Syndrome of Quirra exists. It is most probably caused by different pollutants.
- The Quirra Syndrome affects the entire society; It influences the democracy, the health, the local economy, the environment, the future of the local population (as well as subsequent generations).
- The local population, military personnel, wildlife and the environment suffer from war pathologies.
- There is no available information about possible effects on



tourists driving through or staying in contaminated areas.

- The local population is divided into two groups. The one is in favour of closing the polygons; the other is against it.
- The military personnel are integrated into Sardinian

society (several mayors had military careers but had married local women before going into the military).

- Militarization of the island and movements of different military troops is very visible on the island, especially in the areas that surround the polygons.

- The local population is poorly informed about the kinds of weapons tested. This information is secret, probably due to industrial espionage and security reasons.

- Up to now only organizations of victims and a few politicians, (representatives of the authorities) have raised this issue and spoken out.

- Environmental organizations are not yet active regarding this problem.

- When meeting the local people, Ms. Goffi and Ms. Verjauw found them really surprised with this visit. They could not believe that someone came from so far away and was concerned about the situation in Quirra while the Italian government and Sardinia representatives do not seem to worry.



Photos: Ria Verjauw,
Belgian Coalition Stop Uranium Weapons

MILITARY POLLUTION IN NO-WAR ZONES ALDE WORKSHOP

On 7 March 2012, Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe organized in the European Parliament a seminar on Military pollution in no-war zones.

The conference was chaired by two ALDE MEPs, Mr. Jelko Kacin and Mr. Giommaria Uggias.

Several speakers such as local authorities, journalists, universities' experts, trade union representatives, Members of national Parliaments, as well as citizens of polluted regions (mostly from Sardinia), discussed the military pollution in different contexts and the future of polluted territories.

The problem of the military and weapon industry trash is serious. It has a very negative influence on the health of citizens and the environment of some European countries which are not subjected to war hostilities as Slovenia, in the Balkans after the war, and as Italy in Sardinia, where there are 3 military bases used by European and foreign armies, private companies/industries, and NATO armies to test weapons.

The purpose of this conference was mainly to witness the human and environmental tragedy caused by weapons and military trash in polluted areas; to collect and put together information about various illnesses that hit inhabitants causing cases of cancer and congenital malformations in the population and animals.

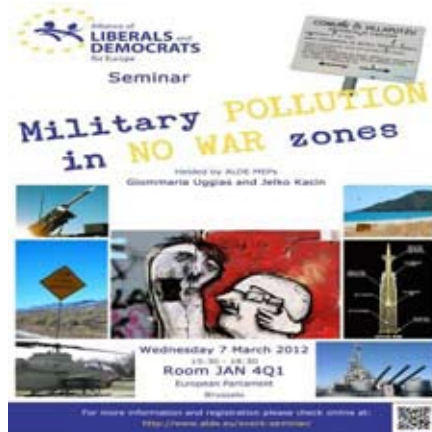
Regarding the present situation in the contaminated areas, the need to raise awareness, to change policy, to shed light on the truth and enforce responsibility was underlined. According to the residents of the polluted sites in Sardinia, there is a conspiracy of silence in media which does not help stopping their military slavery and suffering as civilian victims out of war zones and beyond war time. They demand justice, sovereignty for their region and concrete governmental actions which will bring about positive change in order to protect their health. On the other hand, there were several arguments presented in favour of military activity in these zones. A trade union's representative claimed it has a very positive impact

on social and economic life in this territory providing employment and development. Furthermore, in accordance with what local authority of Ogliastra Province say, military bases in Sardinia are important source of income likewise allow promoting research and competitiveness there.

As far as the future of polluted territories is concerned, it was agreed that action on European level is needed. Both MEPs stated that such regions need ecological and social rehabilitation and people living there deserve compensation. MEP Uggias informed he addressed a question for written answer to the European Commission regarding cancer incidence in the areas surrounding the inter-force military test site in Quirra. Mr Uggias asked whether the Commission can say if it will take any measures to ascertain whether the procedures for collecting and studying epidemiological data were carried out properly and if so, what those measures will be, whether the Commission will look into the possible existence of conflicts of

interest between authorities which are responsible for establishing the truth and whether it will also check if the citizens' fundamental right to health and environmental salubrity has been infringed. In his answer to MEP Uggias, European Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy, Mr John Dalli replied among others that: "Should the conditions in Quirra outside the military site move to breach European laws protecting human health, the Commission would ask the Italian Authorities for remedial action."

Furthermore, there was a proposal given by Sardinia residents, in which they demand that Quirra case is included in the existing Joint Motion for a Resolution on (depleted) uranium weapons and their effect on human health and the environment – towards a global ban on the use of such weapons.



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION ON THE IMPACT OF THE FINANCIAL CRISIS ON THE DEFENCE SECTOR IN THE EU MEMBER STATES

By EUROMIL

The current financial and economic crisis is severely affecting the defence sector in Europe. As pointed out in EUROMIL's 104th Presidium Meeting in October 2011, most of EU Member States cut their defence budgets, consequently affecting training and operations, investments and personnel. However, Europe cannot forget about its security. On 14 December 2011, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on "the impact of the financial crisis on the defence sector in the EU Member States". The text, tabled by MEP Krzysztof Lisek (Poland, EPP), emphasises the need for further coordination among EU Member States in the defence area in order to strengthen military capabilities, enhance the EU's strategic autonomy and build a solid and competitive EU defence industry. The resolution considers that the crisis can be used as an opportunity and highlights the major role that the European Defence Agency could play in this regard.

While Member States spend about €200 billion a year on defence, the resolution deplores the way in which most of these funds are spent, based on uncoordinated defence planning decisions leading to capability gaps, overcapacities, duplications and fragmented industry and markets. Further cooperation between Member States is the only possible manner to achieve the objectives of the CSDP in a more cost-efficient way. This should be done through better coordination of defence planning, pooling and sharing of certain capabilities and support structures, enhanced cooperation in research and technological development, facilitating industrial collaboration and consolidation, and optimisation of procurement and removing market barriers.

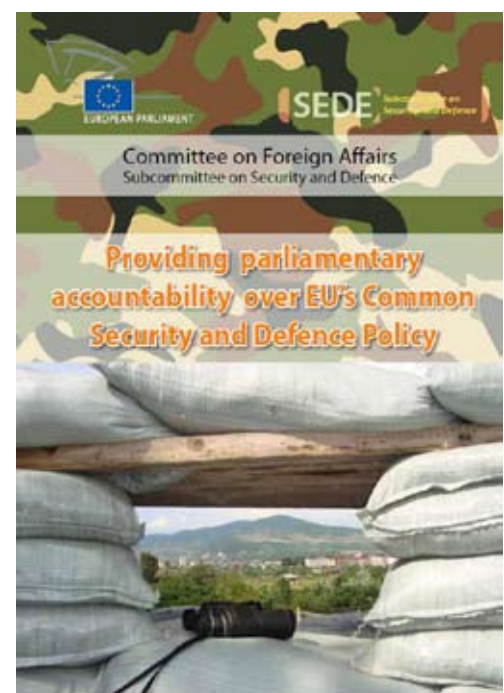
Among specific measures, the resolution calls again for a white paper on security and defence and mutual consultations between Member States in order to harmonise military requirements. Pooling and sharing is considered a necessity and several models could be varyingly explored such as the possibility to jointly acquire equipment. Moreover bilateral and regional initiatives are recognised and the need for a civil-military EU Operational Headquarters is recalled. On the EU defence industry, the resolution highlights the importance of research and innovation as the basis for competitiveness and resilience. It recalls the growing number of dual-use technologies and the importance of complementarities and synergies between civilian and security research programmes. Additionally, the resolution recalls the need to progress in the consolidation of the European defence technological and industrial base, foster standardisation and interoperability and improve the transparency and openness of the defence markets. Finally, the resolution calls for an increased budget of the European Defence Agency and the consideration of a possible extension of the ATHENA mechanism.

Access to the resolution here:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P7-TA-2011-0574&language=EN>



MEP, Krzysztof Lisek,
Vice-Chair of SEDE Committee in the EP



EUROMIL ACTIVITIES ON OMBUDSMAN INSTITUTIONS

By EUROMIL

EUROMIL participates in the 3rd ICOAF.

Last year, EUROMIL was invited by Saša Janković, Protector of Citizens of the Republic of Serbia, to actively participate in the 3rd International Conference of Ombuds-Institutions for Armed Forces (ICOAF) on 13-15 April 2011 in Belgrade, Serbia.

ICOAF aims at establishing best practice and lessons learned related to the mandate, powers and functioning of ombuds-institutions for the armed forces. It also reaches out to states that do not have an ombuds-institution for the military but have expressed an interest to learn from experiences from other states. The first two conferences took place in May 2009 in the German Bundestag in Berlin and in April 2010 in the Austrian National Assembly in Vienna.

Entitled “Protecting the Human Rights of Armed Forces Personnel: Old and New Challenges”, the 3rd ICOAF was organised by the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) and the Protector of Citizens of the Republic of Serbia, with the support of the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Serbia. In addition to “special addresses”, discussions were structured in three panels, namely “External and Internal Complaints Handling Procedure”, “Military Unions and Associations” and “The Role of Ombudsman Institutions in the Protection of Rights of Armed Forces Personnel in Multinational Mission”.

For the first panel, EUROMIL produced a food-for-thought paper on “External and Internal Complaint Handling Processes”.

Participating in the second panel, EUROMIL’s Vice-President, Bernhard Gertz, held an opening presentation on “Military trade unions - scope of activities”. In his speech, he concentrated on the nature of arrangements for military unions or associations, the boundaries of their activities and their relationships with ombuds-institutions. Mr. Gertz recalled that military unions and associations can only exist if States grant their active serving military the freedom of peaceful assembly and of association and gave an overview of the situation in Europe. Military associations and ombuds-institutions sharing the same duty of protecting the fundamental rights and freedoms of servicemen, Mr. Gertz underscored the importance and added-value of their partnership.

Representing EUROMIL’s member associations, Edward Lugthart from AFMP/FNV, Gerry Rooney, Secretary General of PDFORRA, and Poul Sørensen, HKKF, also attended the 3rd ICOAF.

The 4th ICOAF will take place in Ottawa, Canada, on 23-25 September 2012.

Further information on ICOAF can be found on the following link: <http://icoaf.org/about.html>

EUROMIL discusses an EU Fundamental Rights Officer for the Military

Discussions on ombuds-institutions for the armed forces started in EUROMIL on 12 September 1997 at its 75th Presidium Meeting in Ennis. More than ten years later, two workshops on “The Need for an EU Military Ombudsman”, later renamed “EU Fundamental Rights Officer for the Military”, were successively organised in the framework of EUROMIL’s 101st and 102nd Presidium Meetings, which respectively took place on 19 March 2010 in Berlin and on 30 October in Brussels (for more information, please read *EUROMIL News Issue 12*, April 2010, p.11 and *EUROMIL News Issue 15*, December 2010, p.16).

Following to the abundance of ideas raised by the discussion, a Working Group on the “EU Fundamental Rights Officer for the Military” was established in order to further research the question. The Working Group composed of Bernhard Gertz, EUROMIL Vice-President, Gerry Rooney, Secretary General of PDFORRA, Poul Sørensen, HKKF, Jaqueline van Rossum, AFMP/MARVER/FNV, and the EUROMIL Office represented by Dr. Gerhard Ahlbrecht, EUROMIL Secretary General and EUROMIL Project Officer, Caroline Henrion, met three times on 1 July 2011, 2 September 2011 and 2 March 2012 on EUROMIL premises.



Photo: DCAF



In 9 months, the Working Group conducted research, contacted several people and institutions and explored all possible ways to best fulfil its mandate. Conclusions and recommendations were drawn and will be presented at EUROMIL’s 105th Presidium Meeting in Limerick on 27-28 April 2012.

EUROMIL WELCOMED PARTICIPANTS OF THE SEMINAR “QUO VADIS EUROPE? COMMON SECURITY IN EUROPE OF THE 21ST CENTURY”

By EUROMIL

On 16 February 2012, journalists representing the volunteer year of the Central German Radio's Education Centre, as well as elected representatives of the German Armed Forces Association (DBwV), visited EUROMIL's office in the framework of a seminar on the security-political education, “Quo vadis Europe? Common Security in Europe of the 21st century”, organized by Dr. Michael Rudloff, National Chairman of the State and Society Association in cooperation with the Karl-Theodor-Molinari-Foundation (KTMS).

The studytrip of 25 participants lasted 5 days. From 13 until 17 February 2012, participants visited Bonn, Geilenkirchen and Brussels in order to get familiar with the situation of the European integration and the European Security Policy. Furthermore, they received a



deeper insight into the work of the European institutions and NATO. Another important issue, which was discussed during the seminar, is the role of European media

in sharpening common responsibility for a future Europe.

As EUROMIL guests, the seminar's participants were welcomed by the Vice-President, Bernhard Gertz, and Secretary General, Dr. Gerhard Ahlbrecht, who made a presentation on EUROMIL's activities,

history and main goals. Afterwards, Mr Gertz chaired a discussion on European security policy and its main barriers, threats and challenges.



Photos: EUROMIL



INAUGURATION OF THE MEMORIAL FOR NATO SOLDIERS

By EUROMIL

EUROMIL's President, Emmanuel Jacob, participated in the first European memorial that was organized to honor the memory of soldiers killed or wounded in NATO operations. The event took place in Fréthun of Pas-de-Calais Department in France, on 25 February 2012.

This project was possible thanks to a private initiative of two associations, the European Association of Army Members and Public Security and Defence Bodies (AECOPSD) and the National Circle of Former French Military Personnel Stationed in Germany (CNAMFSA). In times of more and more wars in the world, increasingly undermining peace, NATO missions are even more crucial, even if the Alliance's representatives have become “war targets”.

Currently, only regarding the NATO operation in Afghanistan, for some quotas of 28 Member States and 21 Associated Countries, deaths of over 2 300 soldiers, including 76 French, were confirmed. Also, on a daily basis, lots of soldiers get wounded. The AECOPSD and CNAMFSA, two associations representing European troops, decided to erect a monument (the very first in Europe) to honor the memory of their colleagues killed or wounded in NATO operations.

This memorial had three objectives:

- To honor the memory of soldiers killed or wounded in an operation under the NATO flag;
- To raise awareness about the duty to remember those who suffered;

- To maintain the need of the recollection in the framework of a better international cooperation.

The reason why this memorial took place in northern France was that it is situated at the crossroads of Europe and at the crossroads of the majority of the NATO European founding Members.

Around 300 persons took part in the ceremony. Among them, military attachés from Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Germany, Canada, delegations from the Netherlands and the UK, as well as several French associations and regional politicians. Also families' representatives of French and Dutch soldiers that died were present.



MISCELLANEOUS

On 27 February 2012, EUROMIL launched its Satisfaction Survey:

'EUROMIL News and EUROMIL's website. Help us improve our newsletter and website!'

The deadline for receiving members' inputs is 5 April 2012.

EUROMIL CALENDAR 2012

19-20	APRIL	FIFTH FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS PLATFORM MEETING	VIENNA, AUSTRIA
26	APRIL	BOARD MEETING	LIMERICK, IRELAND
27-28	APRIL	PRESIDIUM MEETING	LIMERICK, IRELAND
25-26	MAY	EMI FEDERAL ASSEMBLY	BRUSSELS, BELGIUM
25-27	MAY	20 YEARS ANNIVERSARY CONGRESS OF ASSODIPRO	RIMINI, ITALY
25-28	MAY	NATO PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY	TALLINN, ESTONIA
29	JUNE	BOARD MEETING	BRUSSELS, BELGIUM
10-11	SEPTEMBER	BOARD MEETING	BRUSSELS, BELGIUM
25	OCTOBER	BOARD MEETING	BRUSSELS, BELGIUM
26-27	OCTOBER	CONGRESS	BRUSSELS, BELGIUM



EUROMIL
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HAPPY EASTER
2012!





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