



Associação  
Nacional de  
Sargentos  
ANS - Portugal



**APR/2008  
97<sup>th</sup> Presidium Meeting, Madrid - Spain**

**National Report of ANS - (Portugal)**

**1 → Pay in international missions:**

*As preparation for workshop I “Pay Schemes in International Missions” at the Presidium in Madrid 25/04/2008:*

**1.1. to 1.4.** See **Annex I** and **Annex II** for detailed information.

*As general information for all Presidium members, we sent an hard copy of the EUROMIL booklet “Challenges of European Soldiers in the Field – The Human Factor in Modern Military Missions” to the President of the Republic, to the Prime-Minister, to the Minister of Defence, to the Chairman of the Parliament Defence Committee, to the General Chief of Defence, to the Chiefs of Staff (Navy, Army and Air Force) and we are delivering a copy to every political party represented at the National Parliament whenever we are received by them.*

*The President Military Office and the Prime Minister office acknowledged the booklet. The Air Force Chief of Staff ordered the booklet to be put in the Internal Official Air Force web page, as a very important document.*

**2.1. Operations:**

Portuguese Armed Forces contingents are participating in Peace Keeping and Humanitarian missions since 1991.

At the present moment Portugal has troops in Afghanistan, Kosovo, Lebanon, still a small contingent in Bosnia-Herzegovina, East Timor and Tchad/Darfur.

There are small groups of military advisors in some African countries in Technical Cooperation missions and agreements.

At the end of 2007, (December 2007) Portugal had an Air Force contingent in Lithuania in a Air Defence Mission of the Baltic countries.

## **2.2. Active duty concerns / Career issues:**

The restructuration of the Portuguese Armed Forces which already knew three different working groups during several years, is far from ending. However, the results of these working groups are still to be known, leading to a great deal of uncertainty among troops concerning their future.

Active duty servicemen are lacking of progressing in their careers, remaining long years in the same ranks. This issue is particularly noticed in the sergeants and caporals careers.

The rules for the young contractee servicemen were just changed without their acknowledgement and in contrary to the promises made when they were called to service and join the forces, creating a feeling of mistrust towards the government. These situations already lead to difficulties in the recruitment system, being noticeable the lack of volunteers to serve in the forces.

In addition, a project of law-decree was sent to our association (from the MoD office) to change the Regulation of Military Discipline in a very dangerous manner, pretending to include under disciplinary penalties even the servicemen already retired. The main goal of this project is to silence all the voices that are arising in protest.

## **2.3. Social concerns:**

Portuguese servicemen and their dependents are facing drastic changes in retirement systems, as well as in their social and health care assistance services and systems.

Meanwhile, due to financial restrictions, the raise of the wages is always lower than the official inflation rate. Thus, the social conditions, the purchasing power of servicemen and their dependents have been decreased since the last thirty years.

Retired personnel are facing severe difficulties due to changes in the health and social assistance system, because the lack of implementation of the pension rules and laws, causing that the portuguese state is owing them hundreds of thousands of euros, and because most of the implemented changes are now being applied to the retired personnel, when it was supposed that they would be out of the drastic changes, since they were retired under different rules and laws.

Meanwhile, a disciplinary procedure was presented, by the Air Force Chief of Staff, to an Air Force Retired Colonel because he wrote in his personal web page an article with criticism about the functioning of the Air Force Hospital. This case and the project to change the Discipline Regulations brought to the press the voices of several high

rank retired military in protest. Some of them are well known TV and Radio commentators and university professors.

### **3 ➔ Our associations' main current concerns:**

#### **3.1.**

In spite of the existing national laws approved at the national parliament almost seven years ago, recognizing the right of associations for military, and the different recommendations from several european bodies, in Portugal military professional associations are not being involved in a truthful social dialogue with the governments and the military leadership, in matters concerning the social and professional aspects of their careers.

On the other hand, the lack of accomplishment of several laws and regulations concerning the military, by the current and previous governments, created a situation where the portuguese state raised a crescent debt over one thousand million euros to the military family.

The board members of the associations, who are just calling the attention so the law can be respected and reinforced, are facing disciplinary procedures, endangering their careers and their future. Their military records and their military and professional behaviour are outstanding. They are being punished by political reasons.

#### **3.2.**

The disciplinary procedures referred in the previous point, aim to install the fear and demotivation among the supporting members of the associations, trying to silence the uncomfortable voices that claim for law and rights.

In addition, the fact of not reinforcing the existing laws, not recognizing the rights of association board members, not implementing the european directives and recommendations is bringing more difficulties to the regular work of the board members. Thus, it is more difficult to meet with the members, to recruit new members.

Finally, not having a very well defined board member statute brings more difficulties in order to combine the daily work in the military installations and the necessary work as board members at the association office or in the field, among the members.

#### **4→ Other issue of importance:**

As you all know, Euromil is giving full support to the struggle that portuguese military associations are facing.

We believe that it is possible to put some more pressure on governments who are not respecting the rights of citizens in uniform. Future actions should be taken under the umbrella of Euromil and in a very well coordinated manner.

To close this report, we would like to remind the Euromil members that nothing should be taken as granted. Nothing lasts forever.

The ones who fought in the past to achieve their rights (and did it) must defend them all the time. The risk of loosing rights it is always present.

Today most of the Euromil members may be more involved in discussing matters in a higher level. However, one can ever forget that to achieve this point it was important to fight for basic rights such as the right to exist as an association with their rights full recognized.

It will be very difficult to achieve a stronger Euromil while the members are fighting in so “different worlds” and so “different realities”. Stronger members should support the ones with more difficulties, by means of “Partnerships”, according with Euromil Charter, as it was achieved by our association, ANS and our friends from Ireland, PDFORRA.

Lisboa, April 2008

ANS Board