



NEWS

ISSUE 24 / March 2013



Security has a social dimension

LOOKING BACK, MOVING FORWARD!

The end of 2012 and the beginning of 2013 were two special moments for EUROMIL. Special moments because we can look back on much more than only the past year. Allow me to use the following quote to make this clear:

“The 13th September 1972 is a date to be remembered by all soldiers in Europe. On this date representatives from a range of several military trade unions and associations gathered together to lay the foundation stone of EUROMIL. The first meeting of the presiding committee in the new organisation was held on the following day, 14th September 1972.”

Dear readers, this is a quote from the book *25 years EUROMIL*.

EUROMIL celebrated its 40th anniversary; 40 years of understanding and friendship between servicemen and –women; 40 years of exchange of experiences between individual member associations; 40 years to promote general, ideal, social and career interests of soldiers and to represent member associations vis-à-vis supranational organisations. These are goals that were already set by eight associations from the Netherlands, Denmark, Germany and Belgium in December 1970 during a preparatory meeting in Bonn.

But one thing is sure: we can be proud of EUROMIL and we must be grateful to our founding fathers who already perceived at that time the need for and had the courage to create this international organisation. When several years ago we discussed the need and future of EUROMIL linked to one of these evaluation moments that every association has to go through once in a while, I made my point by saying that “if EUROMIL didn’t already exist, we would have to invent it today”.

Thanks God, EUROMIL exists and we have to make an effort to keep it alive. Our work is not done! In too many European countries

soldiers still don’t have the right to organise themselves to defend their social rights and consequently have no possibility to raise their voice. It is of utmost importance that international institutions such as the European Parliament and or Council of Europe make clear statements in this regard. EUROMIL continues asking the members of these institutions for their attention to the social and fundamental rights and protection of those who in their day-to-day work don’t have the right and possibility to defend themselves – i.e. the European soldiers. In our view, those European soldiers are highly skilled workers who increasingly work under very difficult circumstances.

If EUROMIL doesn’t try to convince again and again the members of the European Parliament, the Council of Europe and many other institutions or key players to continue to support and defend the fundamental rights of military personnel, nobody will do it. We have to continue our efforts to win them to our cause. After all, defence forces benefit from the existence of strong military associations. The fact that soldiers in several European countries have full trade union rights and are, at the same time, highly professional workers -exactly like their European comrades in other countries - demonstrates our point that military unionism does not induce the end of military discipline or efficiency. Military trade unions should be partners of the defence administration and

should act in a responsible way.

EUROMIL started the year 2013 with a lot of challenges. Not only those related to the representation of the European soldiers and their families, but also some internal ones. In the past years we continuously repeated that the economic and financial crisis together with the reforms of national armed forces had a negative influence on the functioning of our member associations. Over the



Emmanuel Jacob,
EUROMIL President,
Photo:EUROMIL

years their national day-to-day struggle to survive and guarantee their future reached the international level.

However, our member associations are convinced of the need to continue -and if possible even reinforce- their international collaboration. Therefore EUROMIL started a process of adapting its functioning to the new reality. Speaking in terms that we all know: EUROMIL is going towards SMART defence and possibly we are looking for Pooling & Sharing. We are convinced that it is

impossible to do more with less, but we will try to do as good as before and whenever possible, better!



Emmanuel Jacob,
EUROMIL President

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL			
Looking back, moving forward!	1	Limits of Personal Freedom: Civil Rights of Soldiers under Attack? <i>By EUROMIL</i>	7
MEMBERS' ACTIVITIES			
Military life in Greece after the "Economic Armageddon" <i>By P. Asprodinis, AN.E.A.E.D.</i>	3	Roundtable discussion on the CoE Recommendation CM/Rec (2010)4 on human rights of members of the armed forces <i>By EUROMIL</i>	8
12-12-12, 12:00: Epiphany of the FMMA <i>By Miguel A. Lopez, AUME</i>	3	FRA's Director meets Civil Society Organisations based in Belgium <i>By EUROMIL</i>	9
Belgian Politics and Defence Matters: No Way Out? <i>Published in the monthly magazine of ACMP-CGPM, Belgium, February 2013</i>	5	ODIHR - Meeting on Human Rights Monitoring in the Armed Forces <i>By EUROMIL</i>	10
Report of the German Parliamentary Commissioner for the Armed Forces <i>By Silke Flemming, DBwV</i>	6	EUROMIL Calendar 2013	10

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MEMBERS' ACTIVITIES

MILITARY LIFE IN GREECE AFTER THE "ECONOMIC ARMAGEDDON"



Photo: AN.E.A.E.D.

By P. ASPRODINIS, AN.E.A.E.D.

The "Hellenic Independent Association of Armed Forces Retired Officers", AN.E.A.E.D., in collaboration with "the Association of the active Military personnel: Military Association of Attica Region", E.S.P.E.A., co-hosted a conference on 2 December 2012 in Athens on *Military life after the "economic Armageddon" and its effects on the armed forces, Ways to Respond.*

Almost three years passed since Greece has fallen in a period of deep and escalating crisis, spearheaded by the heavy economic crisis. A crisis that mainly affects low and middle social classes, in an environment of international liquidity and geopolitical turmoil.

The key elements of the impact of this crisis on the social fabric of our country can be identified as namely the overthrow of labour relations, as well as of the insurance and pension systems; the rapid deterioration of health and social welfare; the unemployment explosion and the continuing decrease in real income for the Greek citizens at levels exceeding 50%.

An integral part of the Greek population and a significant structural and cohesive element of our social fabric are the armed forces' personnel.

At the beginning of this crisis, we have witnessed an unprecedented and coordinated, one might say, attack on military personnel, fully integrated into a policy of "divide and rule" which flattens and breaks the coherence of our social tissue. The main objective of this policy was to cut back defence spendings and marginalize military personnel. This persistent and scalable attack consists of punishing the supposedly privileged and high earners: military personnel; devaluating and

making offensive statements (of the high-standing government officials) against the counterproductive and autistic military personnel; trying to divide the military family; defaming the armed forces with the demonstration of an alleged imminent coup, and then replacing the entire military leadership on 1 November 2011, while

the government was heading for a vote of confidence; slashing incomes of active military personnel which currently brings them to a level of economic misery and actual poverty, directly affecting their spirits as they lack the minimum income to manage their everyday family life.

Based on the above-mentioned thoughts, we are afraid that the degradation of the armed forces, the demoralisation of the staff and the levelling of the demobilized personnel, did not happen randomly, by mistake or incompetence. We are scared by the idea that the National Defence may be transferred to national security. Could it be, considering what is happening around us, that this is part of a well-organized plan to weaken our negotiating capacity and our national defence, hence a partial or total loss of our National Sovereignty?

■



12-12-12, 12:00: EPIPHANY OF THE FMMA

By MIGUEL A. LOPEZ, AUME

**FMMA is a regional collaboration of EUROMIL associations under the umbrella of EUROMIL.*

Indeed, it may be accurate to use the term "epiphany" in this case, as we are talking about the resurfacing in public of an organisation that was born three years ago but by then was only known to EUROMIL.

Background

The Mediterranean Forum of Military Associations (FMMA) –from now on referred to as the Forum– was conceived as a regional

organisation within EUROMIL, by representatives of military associations from the Mediterranean area at the Presidium Meeting held in Madrid-Alcobendas in April 2008. Its original aims were to identify and observe the situation of members of the armed forces in Southern European countries.

Two years later we took the decisive step summoning the representatives of the military associations to formalize the



creation of the Forum in a first gathering on 13 March 2010, when the founding act was signed. The signatories were Vincenzo Bonaccorso (Pastrengo, Italy), Mariano Casado (AUME, Spain), Antonio Lima Coelho (ANS, Portugal), Kýpros Kiprianou (CAOA, Cyprus), Fabrizio Menegoli (ASSODIPRO, Italy), and Luis Réis (AP, Portugal), in the presence of and with the signature of Emmanuel Jacob (EUROMIL).

The Forum met on the occasion of the successive Presidium Meetings of EUROMIL and decided to grant AUME its Secretariat, with its headquarters in Madrid.

Throughout these three years the Forum has grown with the accession of new member associations such as AMID (Italy), ETAL (Greece) and N-COACA (Cyprus) and other ones are underway, like AN.E.A.E.D. (Greece), AOFA (Portugal) and SOVCG (Montenegro). It is expected that at the 8th FMMA meeting to be held next April in Nicosia, we will have reached eleven members.

The action

Coming back to the title of this article, the representatives of the Forum decided to take action in establishing a Manifesto, whose text was previously agreed upon by all. The addressees and the chosen date were as important as the content of the text.

The content makes reference to the critical situation of professional soldiers in Mediterranean countries as a result of restrictions and cuts caused by the bad management of the current financial crisis with direct impact on wages, social benefits, promotions and rights of our colleagues.

The addressees could not be other than the persons in charge of the application of the restrictive measures to our representatives, i.e. the Heads of State or the Governments of our respective countries.

The choice of the date took into account the journalist activity in Spain, where the Forum was being held, in order for it not to be overshadowed by a general strike scheduled on these days. We finally decided on 12 December 2012, at 12:00.

Our colleagues of the Portuguese associations ANS and AP (five representatives attended the event!) and of the Italian ASSODIPRO (Fabrizio, thanks for the effort!) together with representatives from AUME presented the Manifesto to the Spanish Prime Minister (see photo). This was followed by a meeting in the AUME offices (which is also the FMMA site) and a press conference. Simultaneously, our Greek and Cypriot friends took the same action on that same day.



Photos: AUME

For the first time we have witnessed the name of FMMA in the media and we could publicize its existence. It is a very important step that will with no doubt make room for more actions, communications and events to let our leaders know that there is a part of the society – namely “Citizens in Uniform”, that is asking for the recognition of equal rights as to the rest of the citizens that we serve and defend. ■



MANIFESTO

We, the military professional associations from the countries members of the Mediterranean Forum of EUROMIL, are suffering great hardship at professional, social and income levels. Recent decisions taken by our governments due to the economical situation in Europe have a great impact on our social, family and personal life, affecting in a negative way our professional values. All these measures lead not only to a considerable reduction in wages and loss of purchasing power but, more regrettably, to an important regression in consolidated fundamental rights.*

We as soldiers, have to defend our countries if need be giving our blood. Reduction in our defense budgets have a great impact in our training facilities and procedures, inadequate equipment, operations, safety and moral of personnel, the main pillars of any Armed Forces, resulting in partially losses of national sovereignty.

It is not fair to ask the military to pay for the consequences of the decisions that have taken us into the crisis. It is not fair for the military, which already have had some fundamental rights limited, to impose more harmful limitations for themselves and their families.

In this critical situation, representatives and members of our associations are still being prosecuted in some of our countries because of their associative activities, and are facing disciplinary proceedings that could end in deprivation of liberty.

We, the military personnel of all ranks and services, as citizens in uniform, understand, sympathize and fully support our fellow countrymen and women, also suffering from severe cuts and reductions in their labour, social and living conditions.

Therefore, we want to show once again that we, as citizens, are also by their side, and we want to show that, from the associationism, we are going to boost as much as possible the legal actions needed to warn of our situation and propose measures that deem appropriate to avoid the continuation of the increasing suffering of this important part of society who, nevertheless, does not cease for a minute to fulfill their duties.

The members of the Mediterranean Forum of Military Associations will not allow the escalation of cuts at European level to undermine the dignity of our families and our citizen and person conditions. ■

BELGIAN POLITICS & DEFENCE MATTERS: NO WAY OUT?

PUBLISHED IN THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF ACMP-CGPM, BELGIUM, FEBRUARY 2013

Politicians continue throwing themselves on the armed forces like vultures...

Again and again, politicians from all sides introduce ideas on defence. Often ideas oppose themselves, which proves that politicians don't have an unambiguous and shared vision of our Belgian defence. How can this last any longer?

Nevertheless, there are a few constants in the policy. For decades the Belgian armed forces saw its budget shrinking each time the national budget was discussed.

Meanwhile, our government bends regularly over the financial situation to check its budget. By doing so, defence can't avoid any additional measure, even if our current Minister of defence tries to reduce damages: our Department is constantly under strain!

Core business

In the past few weeks we also heard another thing. For once it came from the Ministry of Home Affairs. As part of the debate, Minister Milquet (responsible for the police) announced a possible transfer of the police tasks to the military police. This time to ensure the security of the Royal domains. Yet, another trial balloon was launched in that direction: to guard an embassy or to ensure the escort of our Prime Minister Di Rupo!

But when will we actually have a debate about defense? Is it our core business to guard non-military installations (in normal circumstances)? Is it the kind of army that we finally want to maintain?

When will there be an ultimate debate over defence's core business?

Anyhow, our armed forces have other problems to deal with! While army itself isn't able to organize a "professional" guard for all military barracks anymore, there are still a lot of servicemen and -women overwhelmed with too much overtime.

As in many places the "professional" guard in exclusive functions has been transformed into a guard with "occasional"

performances, the issue of overtime will further increase.

Besides, there are still a few questions that bother us:

1. Our chiefs are thinking of delivering about 180 servicemen to NATO headquarters SHAPE in Mons, to take over a few tasks by 2014.

2. Others are suggesting taking over the surveillance of the Royal Domains, a capacity of about 150 people.

Add these two together and we get the equivalent of a battalion. A battalion that somewhere in this country, sooner or later, will be closed.

Lack of staff

If we continue in this direction, the operational capacity of our armed forces will further shrink. The smaller our operational capacity, the smaller the spectrum of operations in which the Belgian Defence can participate.

Besides, the increasing natural leave of servicemen cannot be sufficiently compensated by the recruitment of young recruits. Although an expansion of recruitment was promised for 2013, the existing problems concerning 'job-hopping' can't be solved.

If the situation continues in this direction, the defence operational capacity will keep on shrinking.

Today there are within our Belgian defence 3000 unfilled functions due to a lack of staff. In other words: the defence can't even fill up the existing structures and nothing indicates that it will be able to do it in the near future.

The headcount is day by day more problematic, and, without any form of embarrassment, some ministers call for more and more extra effort from the defense.

Budget cuts

In the parliamentary committee on defence, members of Parliament (the majority as well as the opposition) recognize the fact that the department of defence is "the best student of the class", speaking about savings. Those



members of the Parliament –each with his own political point of view- endeavor to reach a modern and efficient defence as part of a dynamic foreign security and defence policy. When differences between the majority and the opposition remain, then limit these differences are mainly expressed in words rather than acts.

Of the 100 million to be saved from the national budget in 2013, there will hardly be a noticeable impact on the operability of the defence, according to most fractions in the Parliamentary committee. Everyone realizes that another cut of 100 million in 2013, means at least as much less for 2014 and later.

The renewal of the material of the armed forces should remain a priority for the defence. A large portion of the material was indeed recently replaced. Nevertheless, Minister De Crem, MoD, acknowledged that the supplied equipment is insufficient to provide the fighting units of the Land Component with sufficient combat vehicles to prepare themselves for operations abroad in a decent way. A situation which may not be without risk for the safety of our soldiers.

Too many soldiers quit their professional engagement earlier because they can't prepare well enough to realistic situations. Constants savings lead to decrease in the functioning costs of the defence.

Investments

Another factor is the distribution of the defense budget over the various items of expenditure: personnel, functioning and investment. For many years, it has been assumed that the budget should be divided accordingly: 50% for personnel costs, 25% for functioning costs and 25% for

investments costs. The ratio is today 63% for personnel costs, 28% for functioning costs and only 9% is reserved for new investments. A logical situation when the budget is constantly being reduced.

Due to the ongoing savings, investments are too low to maintain the necessary operational capacity level. The budget foresees an investment plan of 219.3 million Euros while more than the double is needed.

Defence budget

Despite the critical note that can be heard sometimes among members of parliament who observe defence, we note nevertheless that within the Parliamentary Committee on defence the majority approved the defence budget for 2013, while the opposition simply abstained. The top politicians from the government Di Rupo I shall therefore continue the policy they started decades ago and from which they bear the greatest responsibility.

But how long can the vultures of the politics keep going, before the last bit of meat gets completely eaten and only scraps are left over for our armed forces? ■



There were significantly less AIV purchased than what had been initially planned by De Crem.

Photo: Orban Daniel

REPORT OF THE GERMAN PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSIONER FOR THE ARMED FORCES



BY SILKE FLEMMING, DBWV

Recently, the German Parliamentary Commissioner for the Armed Forces published his annual report. Once again he listed many shortcomings in the armed forces which are also criticised by the DBWV.

The Parliamentary Commissioner for the Armed Forces is elected by the Members of Parliament (Bundestag) for a five-year term of office. The Commissioner works to safeguard basic rights in the armed forces and to assist Parliament in exercising parliamentary oversight of the armed forces, a task enshrined in the German Constitution. He is the ombudsman for the military personnel and can take action if he gets knowledge of circumstances which suggest a violation of the basic rights of a member of the armed forces or of the principle of *Innere Führung* ("leadership and civic education"). The Commissioner investigates incidents which give rise to the suspicion that, for example, human dignity, freedom of opinion or the legal protection of service personnel have been unlawfully restricted.

The Commissioner's attention can be drawn to special incidents leading to investigations during visits to military units and through press reports, information from Members of Parliament or petitions from service personnel. As the military ombudsman he can be contacted directly and without going through official channels by the individual members of the armed forces, from private to general. All matters

reflecting wrong or unfair treatment can be brought to the attention of the Commissioner. Petitions can therefore cover the entire spectrum of everyday military routine, including official, social and personal problems.

Each year the Commissioner evaluates thousands of complaints of military personnel and the experiences of his troop visits and lists his findings in the annual report. Most petitions of soldiers in 2012 referred to the item "leadership" (17.5 %), followed by the areas "career planning/personnel management" (12 %) and "payment" (11.3 %). Many problems are also related to the issue of "balance between work and family life" (9 %). This year's report does not contain any big surprise but mostly gives updates of the shortcomings which were already known in the past years. Concerning the topic "leadership", the Commissioner describes many incidents of inadequate reaction of superiors to violations of service duties. The report depicts cases of very mild reactions as well as extremely severe measures of superiors which reflects massive deficiencies in leadership and the exercise of disciplinary power.

One thematic focus of the report lies on the international missions which the

Commissioner criticises for their deficient preparative training. Another problem stated in the report is the fact that more than half of the service personnel in international missions have to stay abroad longer than six months. Furthermore, the regeneration period between two missions is often less than 20 months, which is due to be the rule. The report also deals with equipment and armament deficiencies provided for deployed soldiers.

In this year's report the Commissioner describes again the great dissatisfaction of military personnel with the reform of the armed forces, which started in 2010. According to the report, the main reasons for the frustration are cuts in the number of staff and the closing of many military bases going along with the reform. A lot of soldiers were or will be transferred to other places. As the reform is going on and in some parts still is in the planning phase, there is a lot of uncertainty for the staff. Many soldiers still do not know where they will work in the near future, which is a very straining situation for them and their families. These findings of the Commissioner coincide with the results of the survey the DBWV launched last year. ■

EUROMIL ACTIVITIES

LIMITS OF PERSONAL FREEDOM: CIVIL RIGHTS OF SOLDIERS UNDER ATTACK?

By EUROMIL

On 19 February 2013 EUROMIL organised, in cooperation with the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNS) and the European Security Roundtable (ESRT), a lunchtime debate on “Limits of personal freedom: civil rights of soldiers under attack?”. The meeting was opened by Hans H. Stein, Director - International Political Dialogue at FNS, and moderated by Christoph Raab, Chairman of ESRT. Speeches were delivered by Hellmut Königshaus, German Parliamentary Commissioner for the Armed Forces, Emmanuel Jacob, President of EUROMIL, and Major General Georg Nachtsheim, Deputy Commander - Rapid Reaction Corps France.

The discussion focused on constraints on human rights of military personnel in normal working conditions as well as in overseas missions. It was emphasised that although soldiers join the armed forces of their free will and acknowledge some restrictions to their personal rights and freedoms in operation, they should enjoy, under normal working conditions, the same rights as any other citizen.

The right of association was particularly emphasised by Mr. Jacob, who recalled that military personnel from over half of the European countries still do not enjoy the right to organise. In some EU countries, chairmen of military associations are even persecuted for denouncing particular social and economic conditions. He concluded saying that the right of association does not harm the effectiveness of the armed forces.

This was confirmed by Mr. Königshaus who explained that German soldiers have trade union rights, which does in no way compromise obedience and order. He described his role as Parliamentary Commissioner for the armed forces to ensure that the basic rights of soldiers are guaranteed and the army democratically represented, more particularly in international missions.

Supporting the role played by military associations and ombudsmen for the armed forces, Maj Gen Georg Nachtsheim gave more information on the German case.

The debate continued on multinational missions and the complexity of organising the rights of soldiers at supranational level.

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From left to right: Christoph Raab, Maj Gen Georg Nachtsheim, Hellmut Königshaus, Emmanuel Jacob and Hans Stein

Photos: EUROMIL

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ON THE CoE RECOMMENDATION CM/REC (2010)4 ON HUMAN RIGHTS OF MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES

By EUROMIL

On 21 March 2013 EUROMIL's member association from Montenegro, SOVCG, organised a round table on the implementation of the Recommendation CM/Rec (2010)4 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on human rights of members of the armed forces. SOVCG was supported for this event by the "Union of Free Trade Unions of Montenegro" (USSCG) and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

Representatives of the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as a representative of the defence staff, the Security and Defence Committee of Parliament, a neighbour EUROMIL member association from Slovenia and a human rights NGO also participated at the round table. SOVCG invited EUROMIL's President, Emmanuel Jacob, to participate as a speaker at the event and the press conference that followed the discussions.

In his speech, SOVCG's President, Nenad Cobeljic, listed a number of discriminations appearing in the draft law that will amend the Law on Armed Forces. He particularly highlighted the differences between the working conditions and statute of military personnel (contract and full-term soldiers) and civilian employees, who work in the armed forces

and in certain cases conduct a military job. Furthermore, Cobeljic identified the promotion system and travel costs as discriminatory.

SOVCG proposed to introduce sixteen rights in the Law on Armed Forces as the association is of the opinion that the law foresees only obligations and no rights. These rights concern, among others, the right to fair remuneration, compensation of costs related to military service, benefit packages and training to prepare soldiers to return on the labour market; and freedoms ranging from freedom of thought to freedom of expression. The representatives of the MoD and military staff reacted that all these rights are foreseen in the Constitution of Montenegro and therefore do not need to be

restated in the military law. However, based on the reactions of the participants, it seems that a serious debate about these issues is more than needed.

EUROMIL's President presented Recommendation CM/Rec (2010)4 of the Council of Europe emphasizing that this text is not legally binding, but can anyhow influence the case law of the Court and have an impact on national court cases. Jacob reminded that the starting point of the recommendation was the acknowledgement that soldiers do not lose their human rights and fundamental freedoms at the barrack gates. In certain situations it is justified to have certain restrictions on the enjoyment of these rights and freedoms, but it is unacceptable that these rights would not be granted at all.

Going through the different points of the recommendation, special attention was drawn on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association with others. These rights, in combination with a well-defined national social dialogue, constitute the basis of success for a good relationship between the political and military authorities and the representatives of military personnel. However, it seems that this is not yet



the case in Montenegro. Some positive changes were noticed, compared with previous visits and following the change of Minister of Defence. However, there is still a long way to go before we can talk about a social dialogue.

During the meeting, there was nonetheless a possible opening with the declaration of a Member of Parliament from the Security and Defence Committee, who stated that he would propose a hearing on the draft law together with the Minister and the trade union. EUROMIL supports this idea as a positive step towards a future social dialogue which was also one of the round table's conclusions. We can only regret that the official representatives could not adhere to the



conclusions, because they did not have the proper mandate to do so. In support of its friends from Montenegro, EUROMIL will contact the Montenegrin Minister of Defence on these matters and

will try to convince her that a social dialogue is more than wanted and needed in her country.

EJ



Photos: SOVCG

FRA'S DIRECTOR MEETS CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS BASED IN BELGIUM

By EUROMIL

On 25 March 2013, representatives of organisations participating in the Fundamental Rights Platform (FRP) - the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights' (FRA) network for cooperation and exchange of information with the civil society -, together with EUROMIL, represented by Caroline Henrion, Project Officer, and other civil society organisations based in Belgium, met with FRA's Director, Morten Kjaerum, and FRP's Programme Manager, Massimo Toschi, at the Belgian Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism (CEOOR).

The meeting was an opportunity to informally discuss the work of the FRA and its cooperation with the civil society to protect fundamental rights in the EU.

The FRA was established in 2007. Since then, an internal evaluation was conducted, on which the management board is expected to give comments in May 2013. In the meantime, the Justice and Home Affairs Council of the European Union, on proposal of the European Commission and

after consulting the European Parliament, adopted, on 11 March 2013, the agency's five-year Multi-annual Framework, which determines the nine thematic areas of the agency's work:

- a) access to justice;
- b) victims of crime, including compensation to victims;
- c) information society and, in particular, respect for private life and protection of personal data;
- d) Roma integration;
- e) judicial cooperation, except in criminal matters;
- f) rights of the child;
- g) discrimination based on sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation;
- h) immigration and integration of migrants, visa and border control and asylum;
- i) racism, xenophobia and related



Morten Kjaerum, Director of the FRA, Photo: FRA, 2012

intolerance.

Please visit: fra.europa.eu

CH

ODIHR - MEETING ON HUMAN RIGHTS MONITORING IN THE ARMED FORCES

By EUROMIL

EUROMIL participated in the Expert Meeting on Human Rights Monitoring in the Armed Forces, organised by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the OSCE (ODIHR) on 4-5 March 2013 in Warsaw.

Twenty-four participants from eighteen countries of the OSCE region representing the civil society, academia, ombudsman institutions, military associations and EUROMIL gathered with ODIHR to share experiences and best practices in monitoring and protecting the rights of armed forces personnel.

On the second day, Caroline Henrion, EUROMIL Project Officer, Antonio Lima Coelho, President of the Portuguese association ANS, and Miguel López, International Affairs Officer from the Spanish association AUME, delivered

speeches on the relevance and importance of military associations in human rights monitoring. Their presentations focused on EUROMIL's work, accomplishments and best practices in monitoring rights through such a network and the work and challenges for military associations in countries such as Spain and Portugal. Representing ASSODIPRO, Deborah Bruschi was also present to inform participants on the difficult situation for military personnel in Italy.

It was interesting for the participants to hear more about military associations as the idea of military associations and their usefulness is not yet very much developed further east in the OSCE. The meeting was also the opportunity to raise the voice of soldiers at international level and to increase EUROMIL's visibility.



ODIHR's Human Rights, Gender and Security Programme, works with the OSCE's 57 participating States to mainstream human rights and gender in the security sector. Please visit: osce.org/odihr

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EUROMIL Calendar 2013

11 April 2013	Board Meeting	Nicosia, Cyprus
12-13 April 2013	Presidium Meeting & Extraordinary Congress	Nicosia, Cyprus
25-26 April 2013	6th FRP Meeting	Vienna, Austria
17-19 May 2013	NATO PA	Luxembourg City, Luxembourg
30-31 May 2013	Office Move	Brussels, Belgium
17 June 2013	Board Meeting	Brussels, Belgium
10 September 2013	Board Meeting	Brussels, Belgium
17 October 2013	Board Meeting	Brussels, Belgium
18-19 October 2013	Presidium Meeting	Brussels, Belgium

After having spent many years next to the Ixelles Ponds, EUROMIL will soon leave its premises Avenue Général de Gaulle and move to Rue John Waterloo Wilson, near the European quarter. Obviously we will come back on that in the next EUROMIL News, Issue 25, to be published in June 2013.



European Organisation of Military Associations



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