



NEWSLETTER

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Security has a social dimension

EDITORIAL



Coping with change

A Chinese proverb states that one should not wish to live in interesting times. Yet we live currently in interesting times. Soldiers are the first to experience personally when times change and security decreases. Global instability and new security threats cause that European soldiers are called ever more to serve outside of Europe. This growing participation in complex and dangerous crisis-management missions sets growing challenges to the soldiers and their families. Military staff associations defend the professional and social interests of soldiers and help them to adjust to these new challenges.

This edition of the EUROMIL newsletter approaches this service environment from different perspectives. The testimony of Staff Sergeant Mads, Danish army and member of the military trade union CS, portrays the work reality of European soldiers including death of comrades and difficulties to readjust after traumatic experiences to life back home – before being called to

the next mission abroad.

The chairman of the European Parliament's Subcommittee on Security and Defence Karl von Wogau analyses this reality from the EU perspective, characterised by a growing security interdependence of member states and a slowly but steadily increasing cooperation of national armed forces.

The EUROMIL-debate on common standards for soldiers continues in this newsletter, after earlier Dutch and Hungarian contributions, with a German view. Silke Flemming from the BundeswehrVerband reminds us that with the increasing integration on European level concerning structure, operations and equipment, the question of common conditions for European soldiers serving in joint missions will become more obvious. It is easy to agree that such common conditions have to be orientated on the best practices and not on a substandard level. Strong defence relies on well-equipped soldiers who together with their families are backed up by solid support schemes.

Financial limitations of defence budgets can not be used as an excuse to circumvent the duty of

care to soldiers when sending them into harm's way.

The regular "Chairman's Column" features in this newsletter Ton de Zeeuw's account how the Marechausseevereniging enhances its efficiency as the safeguard of the social and professional interests of Dutch gendarmes.

The Spring Presidium meeting of EUROMIL 17-18 April in Berlin will see us discussing Rules of Engagement as well as Fundamental Freedoms of Soldiers. Our workshops will again be accompanied by high-level experts from the military, politics, trade unions and academia.

I wish you good reading moments with the latest newsletter of EUROMIL and look forward to seeing you in Berlin.

Yours sincerely,

Mikko Harjulehto
Secretary General

EDITORIAL

Coping with change

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INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS

“It gets you down when you loose colleagues”

Staff Sergeant Mads lost three good comrades during his tour of duty in Afghanistan in Team Four. He has been back home in Denmark for almost a year, but his experiences have stayed with him.

By Kim Selsø

The sweat pours off him, and he has goose pimples on his arms. His whole body is shaking.

Staff Sergeant Mads is sitting on the sofa with his wife, watching a Hitchcock thriller. It is several months since he returned from Afghanistan with the rest of Team Four, and daily routine has long since become established.

He has not suffered any psychological harm from his tour of duty in Afghanistan, and everything is in order. Until a piercing sound on the television makes him thinking about other things.

“I’ve never had such a shock. I thought I’d put my experiences in Afghanistan behind me, but suddenly reality hits you. It’s at the back of your mind and comes rushing forward when you least expect it,” says Mads, adding:

“But it only really becomes dangerous the day you don’t react physically. Because that means something has gone wrong in your head.”

Mads was in Afghanistan with the Royal Life Guard and spent the greater part of the six months in Sandford. As squad leader, the staff sergeant with mechanic training was responsible for the company’s vehicles, radios and other equipment.

Three killed and several wounded

During its mission, the company lost three men and had several wounded casualties. Engagements with the Taliban were the rule rather than the exception.

“When I was in Kosovo, the wildest thing we experienced was riots. When you’re under mortar fire, it’s a completely different reality. For a long period we



Staff Sergeant Mads lost three comrades during his tour of duty in Afghanistan. The psychological after-effects did not come until he had been home for some time. Photograph: Mikael Hjuler.

were used to something happening every time we were out on patrol,” says Mads.

Tough battles with the Taliban were an everyday occurrence from day one for the soldiers in Unit Four. In September two soldiers were wounded, but it would soon become apparent that this was just the start.

On 26 September the Royal Life Guard lost two soldiers when British units fired on the Danish positions by mistake.

“All hell broke loose within an hour one kilometre from our post. That night I can remember standing chatting to an officer who was on duty. I don’t think I have ever seen Anders (company commander Anders Storrud, Ed.) so annoyed as on that occasion. When he found out what had happened, he threw the microphone around. It’s little episodes like that really make an impression on you,” says Mads.

Just over a fortnight later Anders Storrud himself paid the highest price for his commitment.

Anders Storrud was killed one Monday in October last year. He was seriously wounded when parts of the unit came under mortar and rocket-propelled grenade fire during an operation, and died in the field hospital in Camp Bastion the following morning.

A question of professionalism

The death of its commander sent shock waves through the company, but also a feeling of bonding and defiance.

”It’s really difficult, because it creates many emotions. But it’s also a question of professionalism. When Anders

It’s difficult to sit there and not have feelings of guilt. But we did what we could, and when you’re at war, there is a significant risk.”

The soldiers on the front line live close together, and that creates a special bond. It makes it especially hard to lose someone.

”You get very close to your colleagues when you live right beside one another. There were seven of us in the same compound, so close we could touch each other’s sleeping bags. I knew my boys better than I know my best friends from my childhood.

Major Anders Storrud’s funeral was held at the Garrison Church in Copenhagen on 24 October. If you have a close relationship with the deceased you can ask to attend the funeral in Denmark. But not many people do so.

”If you go home for a funeral one link in the chain is lost, so most people choose to stay,” says Mads.

Relieved when it was over

One of the last things Anders Storrud said before he was killed was that it was important to him to get everyone back home alive, Mads recalls.

”When we were standing at the airport waiting for the flight back to Denmark I was left with the feeling that we weren’t all going back alive. It was hard but at the same time I have never been so pleased and relieved as when we were waiting for the flight that would take us home,” says Mads.

The pondering and the after-effects of violent events do not come until after arriving back in Denmark. Mads therefore thinks it is a good initiative for the Royal Life Guard to allow soldiers to stay together in service for a few months after arriving home.

”When you’ve been at war, you don’t adjust in three weeks. You have a completely different state of readiness for action in your body when you’re in those kinds of conditions. You’re used to accelerating from zero to 100 kilometres an hour in an instant. That in itself tells you that it takes more than three weeks to adjust to everyday life in Denmark when you return home.

Despite his experiences in Afghanistan he has already decided that he will be off again when the company from the Royal Life Guard goes to Afghanistan in 2010.

Blue Book

Name:	Mads.
Rank:	Staff Sergeant.
Town:	Ringsted.
Function:	Squad leader and mechanic.
Seniority:	Ten years in the armed forces. First in the Hussars and for the past seven years in the Life Guard.
Family:	Married, father of a 3-month-old girl.
Missions:	Kosovo Team 6, Afghanistan Team 4.
Future:	Afghanistan 2010

was killed we launched another attack two days later. They shouldn’t get a chance to grind us down,” says Mads.

”It gets you down when you lose colleagues especially if you know someone well, as I knew Anders. I knew him from Kosovo and had a close relationship with him,” says Mads.

”The hardest thing is knowing that his wife and two children are there at home and that their lives are being torn apart. It was the same when we lost Mikkel Keil Sørensen and Thorbjørn Ole Reese, who were both in their twenties. They could have been your own brother.

INTERVIEW WITH

Dr. Karl von Wogau, Chairman of the Subcommittee for Security and Defence in the European Parliament



The European Parliament adopted on Thursday 19 February 2009 with a great majority the resolution on the “European Security Strategy (ESS) and the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP)”, in which more synchronization between European armed forces is emphasized.

The EUROMIL Newsletter talks to Karl von Wogau, chairman of the European Parliament’s Subcommittee for Security and Defence (EPP Group-DE) and rapporteur of the abovementioned resolution.

1. **W**hat are the main policies featured in your report that have tangible effects on the military profession?

Soldiers run unnecessary risks if the equipment is not adequate. This is mainly a responsibility of the Parliaments of the Member States. However, some of the deficits which have become obvious can only be solved by cooperation at the European level.

The Member States of the European Union together spend more than EUR 200 billion per year on defence, which is about half the defence expenditure of the United States. But our ability to act is often limited by the absence of key capabilities. It was for example quite difficult to find four helicopters for the operation in Tchad.

The European Parliament repeatedly expressed its concern about the lack of efficiency and coordination in the utilisation of European defence budgets. This inefficiency is partly due to the fact that we do not have a common European defence and security market. Borders between the Member States which have been abolished in 1992 still exist in the field of defence.

The European Parliament strongly supports the creation of a European defence and security market. We have therefore adopted in co-decision with Council two directives on public procurement and intra-Community transfers and we suggest further initiatives to achieve this objective, in particular in the areas of security of supply and security of information.

The present absence of a common European defence and security market has led to much unnecessary duplication of procurement programmes and to much unnecessary costs. Common operations like Kosovo and Tchad become more costly by the fact that due to the different equipment parallel chains of supply have to be organised.

It is often said that duplications between the European Union and NATO have to be avoided. This is certainly true. However I must point to the fact that the duplications between the Member States are the main problem on our way to improve our capabilities and that we must improve our ability to spend better together. The increasingly expensive development of new military or security technology has already stimulated strong moves towards integration. Despite this, there is still much room for greater efficiency.

We have to make greater efforts to eliminate unnecessary duplication between Member States, namely through specialisation, pooling and sharing of existing capabilities, and joint development of new ones. Therefore, the Member States should take full advantage of the potential of the European Defence Agency. Less unnecessary duplications among Member States of the European Union and a more efficient European defence spending can only but strengthen NATO and help to provide better equipment for our soldiers. And we need better equipment, mainly in the areas of combat equipment, logistic supply and armour of vehicles in order to ensure a maximum of protection for the deployed soldier.

But equipment is not everything. In our resolution we

demand a closer synchronization of armed forces in Europe. We propose that this process and the armed forces should be given the name "SAFE" – Synchronised Armed Forces Europe. SAFE would provide sufficient room for manoeuvre for neutral Member States as well as those bound by military alliances, for those which already work closely together and for those which are still reluctant to do so. We propose an opt-in model for the organisation of SAFE based on more intensive voluntary synchronisation. A European statute for soldiers within the framework of SAFE should govern training standards, operational doctrine and freedom of operational action, issues relating to duties and rights, as well as the level of equipment quality, medical care and social security arrangements in the event of death, injury or incapacity.

2. The EU is increasingly active in the field of military peace-keeping. It launched recently its first maritime military operation EU NAVFOR Somalia – Operation Atalanta. Where do you see the main challenge of EU military operations?

The European Union should continue to build its capabilities on the basis of the civilian and military headline goals and should endeavour to make a force of 60 000 soldiers permanently available. The European Parliament reaffirmed its proposal that the Eurocorps should be the core of this force, if necessary reinforced by additional maritime and air capacities. The Parliament therefore welcomed the agreement concluded between Germany and France on maintaining the Franco-German Brigade at joint locations.

The European Parliament also welcomed the Council's commitment to the idea that Europe should actually be capable in the years ahead, within the framework of the level of ambition established, inter alia of deploying 60 000 men in 60 days for a major operation, within the range of operations envisaged within the headline goal for 2010 and, within the civilian headline goal for 2010, of planning and conducting simultaneously two major stabilisation and reconstruction operations, with a suitable civilian component, supported by a maximum of 10 000 men for at least two years or two rapid response operations of limited duration using inter alia the EU's Battlegroups.

The realisation of these ambitious plans will make it necessary to strengthen the capacity at the European level to undertake strategic planning and to conduct ESDP operations and missions. The European Parliament therefore urges to set up an autonomous and permanent EU Operational Headquarter and to strengthen an integrated civilian and military strategic planning structure for ESDP operations and missions.

But the further development of the European Security and Defence Policy is not only a question of technical capabilities and of headline goals. It is also important to foster the development of a common European security and defence culture. The European Union is characterised by a large diversity of historically rooted defence and security traditions. The defence policies of the 27 member states are still displaying substantial differences, in areas such as strategic planning, transformation doctrine, equipment or leadership style.

3. The High Representative for the Common Foreign Security Policy Javier Solana has in December presented his review of the European Security Strategy (ESS). What are the main conclusions of your Subcommittee on the ESS?

In addition to the challenges identified in the ESS as adopted in 2003, the security interests of the Union include the protection of its citizens and its interests inside the EU as well as abroad, the security of its neighbourhood and the protection of its external borders and critical infrastructure, as well as the improvement of its cyber security, the security of energy supply and sea lanes, the protection of its space assets and protection against the consequences of climate change.

The review has clarified some of these points



Photographs: von Wogau

where we are confronted with new developments. We should now concentrate on the implementation of this strategy. In its resolution adopted on 19 February 2009, the European Parliament calls for the elaboration of a European White Book on Security and Defence as a tool to be used to initiate a wide-ranging public debate and to ensure that the European Security Strategy is implemented in an efficient way. In my opinion this White Book should concentrate on two main areas: capabilities and the social situation of civilian and military personnel in European missions and operations.

The White Book should also define European interests. Only if we have a clear idea of its common interests can the EU make its common policy more coherent and effective.

The White Book should also define more clearly the European Union's ambitions concerning its role in the world. The majority opinion in the European Parliament is that the European Union should not try to become a superpower like the United States but that it should instead guarantee its security and security in its neighbourhood.

This White Book should be elaborated in an open and transparent way. The elaboration of the French White Book could therefore serve as an example.

in the context of ESDP: The civilian missions are financed from the European budget and therefore under the control of the European Parliament. In addition to that there are five billion Euros in the European budget foreseen for security related projects such as the satellite navigation system Galileo (which should be available for ESDP missions and operations), the Kopernikus-GMES-System and Security Research.

Last year we had for the first time European legislation on defence matters with two directives on defence procurement adopted in co-decision by the European Parliament and the Council.

All this shows that the influence of the European Parliament in the field of security and defence is increasing. Therefore, the Parliament needs a Committee on Security and Defence which can concentrate on developing the Parliament's expertise in this specific area. I therefore think that the Subcommittee on Security and Defence should be upgraded to become a full committee.

Mr von Wogau, we thank you for this interview.

4. The European Parliament elections will take place coming June. Will the mandate for the European Subcommittee for Security and Defence remain the same? CJ

Since the creation of the European Security and Defence Policy, 22 missions have been carried out within the framework of the ESDP, including 16 civilian missions and six military operations. This fact not only shows the importance of the civilian components of the ESDP, it also shows why the European Parliament plays an important role

Dr. Karl v. Wogau, born 18th July 1941 in Freiburg (Germany) studied law and economics in Freiburg, Munich, and Bonn. Doctorate on the constitutional history of Vorderösterreich. Diploma Insead.

He is Member of the European Parliament since 1979. In 1984 author in the European Parliament's Economic Affairs Committee of the report launching the Internal Market Programme.

From 1994-1999 Chairman of the European Parliament's Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs and Industrial Policy. Spokesman for the European Parliament at the Extraordinary Plenary Meeting of the European Parliament on 2 May 1998 to decide on the introduction of the Euro.

Since 2004 chairman of the newly set up Subcommittee in the European Parliament on Security and Defence. Substitute Member in the Committee on Foreign Affairs; Substitute Member in the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs; Member in the Delegation for relations with NATO.

Cofounder and Chairman of the Kangaroo Group, an association with the aim to integrate Europe around common projects (internal market, common currency, armed forces of the EU) and Secretary General of the European Security Foundation.

Highest common standards for European soldiers

Against the backdrop of the discussion on the introduction of common standards for European soldiers, Silke Flemming elaborates on the question of European standards in joint missions from a German viewpoint. Earlier editions of the newsletter discussed this issue from a Hungarian and Dutch perspective.

Silke Flemming is a lawyer of the department of labour law and participatory rights at the German Federal Armed Forces Federation (DBwV).

In the last years the challenges of security policy in Europe have changed enormously. The threats we are facing today are common to all European states and can not be encountered effectively by nation states, which makes a close international cooperation in the field of security policy inevitable. Since 1999, when the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) was initiated, the Member States of the European Union have intensified their military cooperation quite quickly. Many security and defence politicians in the Member States favour the creation of “European armed forces” but it is the general opinion that the establishment of European armed forces can only be the aim in the long run. The conditions as well as the traditions and the self-understanding of the armed forces in the European countries are so diverse that the creation of integrated European armed forces, where nationality is of no concern any more, would require a great willingness to compromise and a lot of changes by all Member States. That needs time. Whatever European armed forces might look like in the future though, it will in any case be characterized by more integration than there is today in our cooperation of national armed forces. With the creation of integrated European armed forces at the latest we would therefore need common standards or a common military law system.

However, already today multinational missions are part of the reality of the armed forces personnel in Europe and international cooperation in the military

sector will surely be intensified. Although working in an international context, in international missions or multinational units, the service regulations which are valid for the individual soldier and determine his/ her rights and working conditions are national law, set by

We have to take care that the setting of common standards in Europe does not lead to a lowering of standards in some countries. EUROMIL therefore should examine in which areas common regulations are really necessary for armed forces personnel and identify the regulations/ conditions serving our members and the purpose best. EUROMIL can only demand and accept common standards on that “maximum” level.

the respective country. As there are big differences from country to country, this can lead to frictional loss and conflicts in the joint missions. The question of common standards for soldiers thus is not a question which only arises when creating European armed forces in the future: the more integration we have on European level concerning structure, operations and equipment, the more obvious is the question of common conditions for European soldiers serving in joint missions.

That seemed to be the idea of the Members of European Parliament as well, when they adopted the resolution regarding the European Security Strategy and the ESDP



German soldier in Afghanistan

lately, which suggests a more intensive cooperation of the armed forces step by step in the form of a voluntary opt- in model, called SAFE- synchronised armed forces. In that framework the European Parliament proposes a common statute for soldiers.

As long as we do not have an authority with the legislative power for military/ soldiers law on European level, common standards can only be set by the Member States by harmonizing national law provisions. Eight years ago already, the German Ministry of Defence commissioned a study about different military law systems for the purpose to identify areas in which the harmonization of regulations is recommendable for a better and easier cooperation in a multinational context. As defence authorities obviously are contemplating about creating common standards already, quite quickly we could find ourselves in the situation that we have to react on proposals to that matter. As the interests of governments might differ from the interests of the soldiers, we must discuss the question of common standards in EUROMIL as well and define the interests of the armed forces personnel.

In any case we have to keep in mind though, that the harmonization of national regulations bears a risk: It might be very tempting for governments to create common standards on a lower level than the level existing in some of the European states. As members of EUROMIL we have the advantage to be able to compare the different situations of military personnel in the European states: we not only know that many problems of the armed forces and the staff are the same, but we also know that there are quite big differences between

the countries with regard to basic rights, service regulations/ labour law, social and medical care of the military personnel.

Under these circumstances creating common standards can either mean the improvement of the situation or a step backwards for the situation of military personnel. One thing is clear: we have to prevent the latter. The establishment of common standards on the lowest common denominator is not acceptable. We have to take care that the setting of common standards in Europe does not lead to a lowering of standards in some countries. EUROMIL therefore should examine in which areas common regulations are really necessary for armed forces personnel and identify the regulations/ conditions serving our members and the purpose best. EUROMIL can only demand and accept common standards on that “maximum” level.

Apart from the discussion about creating common standards we should continue to demand the implementation of the already existing standards on European level- above all the European Convention of Human Rights and the provisions of the European Union- for the soldiers in all European states, because as we all know in some states not even all of those minimum rights are implemented for soldiers yet.

For these tasks the military associations need EUROMIL because it is the only platform of all European soldiers, where we can exchange our information and views, where we have the possibility to coordinate our actions and to speak with one voice.

Call for a common statute for soldiers

The European Parliament plenary adopted on Thursday 19 February with a great majority the resolution on the “European Security Strategy (ESS) and the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP)

The report drafted by Karl v. Wogau (EPP-ED, DE) points out that cooperation between national armed forces should increasingly be synchronised and called “SAFE”- Synchronised Armed Forces Europe. It stresses the need for a common defence policy requiring a more integrated and interoperable European Armed Force. It also suggests that the European Union gives priority to crisis prevention in the ESDP. Additionally, it considers to review the European Security Strategy every five years and to develop a strong “strategic autonomy” in ESDP.

SAFE is presented as a voluntary opt-in model for Member States introduced originally by the President of the European Parliament, Prof. Dr. Hans-Gert Pöttering.

Within the framework of SAFE the report calls for a common and European statute for soldiers on

“governing training standards, operational doctrine and freedom of operational action, issues relating to duties and rights as well as the level of equipment quality, medical care and social security arrangements in the event of death, injury and incapacity”.

EUROMIL particularly welcomes this position. It would over time strengthen the social protection of soldiers serving in difficult peace-keeping missions.

It is positive that the European Parliament emphasises the social protection of European soldiers in a report. Stronger operational welfare with high levels of social security, efficient medical care and weight on equipment quality benefits the serving soldier increasing his health and safety during international operations. Thus it contributes to a higher service morale fundamental to the success of ESDP operations.

CJ



INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS

Rules of engagement and national caveats

All major European military missions are these days, and even more so in the future, multinational missions where soldiers from different national defence forces serve side by side to achieve a common goal. Despite a common mission and a common goal European and allied armed forces operate in practice under different rules of engagement in the same mission reflected in national caveats.

The continuing use of national caveats has direct negative effects on operations and soldiers. Therefore EUROMIL delegates will discuss this topic in depth during the 99th Presidium in April with experts from the military and politics.

Rules of Engagement (RoE) are set rules and guidelines for a specific operation. RoEs delineate the circumstances and limitations under which armed forces will initiate and/or continue combat engagement - the use of force and coercive measures, including the use of deadly force, with encountered forces.

Barriers to planning and C2-capabilities

National caveats are essentially political-military constraints unilaterally imposed on most individual national contingents. In 2005 the NATO Parliamentary Assembly defined national caveats in a resolution (Resolution 336 on reduction of national caveats) as restrictions placed on the use of national military contingents operating as part of a multinational operation. National caveats can be both declared and known to commanders, or undeclared and therefore unknown to commanders until they actually assign a mission to a particular unit and discover that a caveat prevents that unit from performing that mission.

Those different rules pose real difficulties for the personnel to effectively conduct their tasks - from the simple soldier to the commanding officer serving in common missions.

The NATO Parliamentary Assembly affirmed in reports that such restrictions limited the ability of NATO forces in Kosovo to respond to civil unrest there in March 2004 and continue to be an issue on the use of national military contingents in Afghanistan. This means, existing national caveats have a

debilitating effect on ISAF.

Military commanders of NATO forces, foremost in Afghanistan, consistently cite national caveats as a significant impediment to the planning and execution of their mission. Caveats affect every level of operations and most concerning, the operational role and function of national contingents. They interfere with the command-and-control capabilities (C2-capabilities) of multinational commanders and have direct impact on - even prohibit engaging in - combat operations. For example, some troops stationed at Kabul International Airport are restricted by national caveats from leaving the airport. Another national contingent that has command of a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) is prevented from staying outside their base overnight. In effect this restricts them to an 80-kilometer radius from



Photograph: German MoD

Patroulling in Afghanistan
their base, allowing them to be present in only a small

part of the province in which they are based. Reportedly, it proved problematic for some national contingents to reinforce troops engaged with encountered forces, given national restrictions prohibiting combat operations.

“The size of a large city phone directory”

“The size of a large city phone directory”, so describe NATO commanders the classified book containing all national caveats. The Congressional Research Service of the US Congress stated in a report that in 2006 NATO forces had 105 restrictions placed upon them, 50 of them were “operational significant”.

It can be argued that because many NATO nations significantly restrict their force’s operations that a disproportionate burden is being placed on NATO countries that have no restrictions on their forces use in Afghanistan. Such a disparity could also conceivably result in a rift between NATO forces that participate in combat operations and those forces that are restricted from participating. As the NATO Parliamentary Assembly rightfully acknowledged, sovereign nations have the right to define the terms by which they participate in a mission. But such conditions should at least be made known to all other participants in the mission before a deployment to avoid complicating the planning process. It would be ideal if nations could agree, as they did in Kosovo 2004, to remove virtually all national caveats and restrictions and place all forces under common rules.



Photograph: UK MoD

EUROMIL supports the establishment of common rules for common missions and recommends to diminish national caveats and to increase common rules of engagement.

Political mandates have to be better adapted to the reality of the theatre and mission.

Don’t make soldiers’ job more difficult

In their resolution, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly urges member governments and parliaments of NATO

to eliminate the use of undeclared caveats and at least allow the restrictions on a national contingent to be taken into consideration during the force planning process. They recommend minimizing the use of declared caveats and regularly to reconsider or eliminate specific caveats, if changes in the operating environment or in the available resources of the national contingent allow for this.

In respect to the work done by soldiers on international missions, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly stated that, “[a]s members of parliament, we should not create barriers that make it more difficult for them to do their job”.

EUROMIL supports the establishment of common rules for common missions and recommends to diminish national caveats and to increase common rules of engagement. Political mandates have to be better adapted to the reality of the theatre and mission.

The continuing use of national caveats, among other shortcomings, has dramatic consequences, not only for the theatre of operations but also for the soldiers on the ground.

TML

Coordinating strategic trade union interests in the Dutch security sector

By Ton de Zeeuw, Chairman of MARVER/FNV (The Netherlands)

The MARVER/FNV represents the interests of nearly all serving and retired military personnel of the Dutch Gendarmerie (Koninklijke Marechaussee). The Dutch Gendarmerie is a centrally lead police organisation with a military status. It is controlled by the Ministry of Defence but conducts its majority of tasks under the authority of the Ministry of Justice. The major tasks of the Dutch Gendarmerie are policing the Armed Forces in the Netherlands and abroad, policing and high risk security at the major Dutch civilian airports, border control and immigration services, security services for the Royal House and National Bank and assisting the civilian police.

The strategic goal for the MARVER/FNV for the coming years is to develop a close cooperation or even establish a new federation together with the Dutch association for military personnel AFMP/FNV and the Dutch association for (civilian) police personnel NPB.

the civilian police) and external security (former domain of the Armed Forces) are blurred. In some (western) countries a new Ministry of Homeland security has been founded in order to reduce coordination problems between the different public security and intelligence organisations. Although initiatives for this purpose came up in the Netherlands, at the end the political will was too small to found such a Ministry.

An alternative in reducing the coordination problems was found in establishing a few new agencies which house both military personnel (including our Gendarmerie members) and police personnel. Both groups have kept their specific legal position. In practice, these groups compare their legal position (e.g. wages, additions, regulations, ranks and career possibilities). The differences in working conditions between these groups are causing predictable agitation. In order to minimize these differences, we as trade unions need to coordinate ourselves. Coordinate with our colleagues

of the association for police personnel, because of the fact that the consultations we have with the common employer of our members (The Dutch state) are on different tables (MoD and MoI).

But this is just a practical reason why we formulated our strategic goal of establishing a new federation consisting of associations of military (gendarmerie) and police personnel. Above all we strongly believe that we have something in common, namely: representing the interests of employees of the armed public security sector. Next to this common interest we believe that we can learn from each others experiences and knowledge. This will result in a stronger and better association for our members.

The only condition we've put on ourselves is that the different associations conserve their own identity and autonomy. This is to prevent that members do not identify



Photograph: MARVER/FNV

Ton de Zeeuw, Chairman of MARVER/FNV

After the terrorist attacks in 2001 and further, the clear distinctions between internal security (former domain of

with their own association any more and start ‘voting by feet’. By integrating our different staff bureaus into one and develop a form of governance in which the autonomy for each association is granted and at the same time enables us to formulate common policy. If we succeed I’m convinced that our influence as interest

group will increase, that our service to our members will increase and that the (economic) vulnerability of each participating association will decrease.

That is what will challenge us in the near future.

Ton de Zeeuw started his military career in 1986 as a Dutch gendarme. After carrying out most of the different operational tasks including an international mission in Sinai Egypt (MFO) he became an active member of the works council of the gendarmerie and the association MARVER/FNV.

Decision making processes and the influence on them by different parties became his main interest and he started to study the subject. Meanwhile he became experienced as project officer conducting organisational changes within the gendarmerie.

After his election last year as chairman of MARVER/FNV he resigned his commission as a captain of the Dutch gendarmerie. Since then, he is on the payroll of his association and with that fully independent from the MoD.

Ton de Zeeuw has a bachelor on Public Management and hopes to finish his master program Public Administration at the University of Leiden soon. Besides realising the mentioned strategic goal for the MARVER/FNV and fulfil the responsibilities as board member of EUROMIL it will be another challenge for him to find the time to write his final master thesis.

EUROMIL CALENDAR

26/27	March	Board meeting	Bonn
16	April	Board meeting	Berlin
17/18	April	Presidium meeting	Berlin
13-18	May	Council of Europe Working Group Fundamental and Human Rights in the Armed Forces	Strasbourg
7-9	October	Council of Europe Working Group Fundamental and Human Rights in the Armed Forces	Strasbourg

EVENTS: 99th EUROMIL Presidium in Berlin 17-18 April 2009

Focus on duties and rights of soldiers

The concept of duty is an essential and inseparable element of the military profession. Soldiers from different nations serve in common, multinational missions under different rules of engagement. This creates often a confusing patchwork of duties and rights which is not helpful - neither for the success of the mission nor for the soldiers serving on the ground. The **rules of engagement in international operations** will thus be scrutinized in the first workshop of the Presidium meeting.

A second workshop will on the other side focus on rights of military personnel. Several countries restrict without any comprehensible reasoning the right of association of its military personnel. Soldiers are highly-skilled employees who have the legitimate right to promote their social and professional interests. A workshop on **the human rights of military personnel** will analyze these limitations on soldiers' fundamental rights in the light of existing human rights conventions.

Both workshops will be accompanied by outstanding

experts from politics, international military staffs, academia and the trade union sector.

The member associations of EUROMIL advance the social and professional interests of soldiers. This trade union character of EUROMIL's member associations sets them apart from the multitude of military comradeship associations which bring former and serving soldiers together in merely sociable activities. The participating delegates will thus at the Presidium have a **first exchange of views** whether the work of EUROMIL could be enhanced through a closer cooperation or even membership with and in the umbrella of European trade unions, the **European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)**.

The member associations will as usual have the possibility to inform their European comrades about their current situation and challenges under the agenda point "National Reports".

MH

Draft Programme around the 99th Presidium Meeting of EUROMIL 17-18 April 2009 Berlin



Thursday 16 April

Friday 17 April

Saturday 18 April

Sunday 19 April

17.00:

EUROMIL
Board Meeting*

20.00:

Welcoming Reception

09.00 – 10.30:

Official opening, VIPs
speeches

11.00 – 12.00:

Reports by President,
Secretary General,
Treasurer

12.00 – 13.00:

National reports by
member associations

13.00 – 14.00:

Lunch Break

14.00 – 17.00:

Workshop 1
Common Rules of
Engagement in
Common Military
Missions

09.00 – 10.00:

Discussion: EUROMIL
to become an Industry
Federation of the ETUC
– a way ahead?*

10.00-12.30:

Workshop 2
How can Int'l
Human Rights be used
to advance the Right
of Association for
Soldiers?

13.00 – 14.00:

Lunch Break

Social Programme:
Visit of
German Memorial Center
of Resistance ("Bendler
Block", Berlin Mitte)

Departure of
participants

*In camera

99th Presidium Meeting of EUROMIL (European Organisation of Military Associations)
17-18 April 2009 Berlin, Grand City Hotel Berlin Mitte, Osloerstr. 116

WOMEN IN THE ARMED FORCES

PDFORRA subcommittee report on the recruitment and retention of women in the defence forces

By Simon Devereux, Deputy Secretary General of PDFORRA (Ireland)

The defence forces represent a particularly challenging environment in which to try and introduce work-life working arrangements which are necessary because it's standard pattern of work is generally very family unfriendly. It involves duties which require individuals to work both regular and irregular hours, which can be long in duration and involve extended periods away from home. It also requires individuals to undertake work away from home at short notice, although more often than not, this is a consequence of poor planning rather than any operational requirement. Typical examples of this kind of work are overseas service, guard duties and training exercises, to name but a few.

A number of work-life working arrangements already exist in the defence forces including the following, adoptive leave, parental leave, maternity leave, paternity leave, term time leave, careers leave, force majeure leave, special leave, career leave and serious illness or bereavement leave. In general these arrangements were worked out to address the standard working pattern in civilian employment and do little for the unique circumstances that apply in the defence forces. In addition a number of arrangements, which generally apply elsewhere in the labour market, do not apply in the defence forces, these would include part time working, job sharing, flexitime, home working and compressed working hours. Despite the current absence of these

specific arrangements one would have to imagine that it's possible for the defence forces to at least attempt to conduct its operations in a family friendly manner. This very premise formed the basis of our discussions. We sought to investigate how existing work-life working arrangements could be altered to meet the needs of the modern defence forces and indeed what additional arrangements if any could be included. While this report for the most part refers to factors that affect the recruitment and retention of women in the defence forces, the findings on issues relating to overseas service, duties and sea-shore rotation to

name but a few are equally applicable to our serving male members, so in this report unless we emphasise the gender specific nature of the topic, please interpret



Photograph: PDFORRA

PDFORRA subcommittee on recruitment and retention of women in the defence forces

our findings as relating to all serving members.

FINDINGS OF THE WORKING GROUP

We will discuss the findings under the following headings.

- **Overseas**
- **Child care facilities**
- **Medical provisions**
- **Additional concerns**

OVERSEAS

Perhaps the biggest factor affecting all serving soldiers especially those who enlisted post 1994, is our increased commitment to missions overseas. Our recommendations in this regard are as follows.

1. Overseas tours of duty should be reduced to three or four month duration with no exceptions. As a lot of Defence Forces families have two parents serving, these shorter tours would present a greater opportunity for both to fulfil their contractual obligations while at the same time maintaining a stable family unit.
2. No two parents should be detailed for overseas service at the same time or for consecutive trips, which eliminates the possibility for harmony time, pre and post tours of duty.
3. While one parent is overseas the parent at home should where possible be excused from duties that keep him or her away from their dependants at night.
4. No mother should be mandatory selected for overseas within two years of giving birth.

CHILD CARE FACILITIES

This is a huge issue for our members and admittedly for society as a whole. The promised crèches/childcare facilities for the DFTC and Air Corps, as the first two locations for the Defence Forces are no closer to fruition today than they were five or ten years ago.

MEDICAL SERVICES

The key problem in the Defence Forces at present is a lack of doctors and especially a lack of female doctors; this in many cases prohibits or at the very least restricts the options available to our female members requiring assistance and/or advice on specific female health related issues. To avail of dedicated external provider

like the “Well Woman Clinic”, requires little effort and no research, merely the will to accept it as a solution with real validity, one that were it to be accepted would represent a real commitment to the provision of quality healthcare to our female members.

ADDITIONAL CONCERNS

Under additional concerns we include some issues that came up during the course of our discussions and we feel they merit mention. Here is a list of some simple

BACKGROUND

In November 2006 the Minister of Defence, commissioned the most comprehensive research ever undertaken in this country into the whole issue of recruitment and retention of women in the defence forces. Submissions were requested from all interested parties, seeking their views on how to increase female recruitment which currently stands at 6 per cent of the defence forces, and perhaps more importantly to shed some light on the factors that militate against the retention of women in the service, and what, if anything could be done to address these problems.

things that could be improved upon.

- **Single Parents:** Every attempt should be made to facilitate our single parents with early notification of duties and military exercises to allow for adequate child-care provisions to be made.
- **Fitness testing:** The current practice of requiring women who return to work after maternity leave and within a short period of time expecting them to attempt the sit-up part of the test has got to be reviewed. It is generally accepted that post pregnancy it can take in some cases up to twelve months for the stomach muscles to return to normal, whether it's a natural delivery or caesarean. At the very least an alternative exercise could be accepted as being valid within twelve months of giving birth.

- **Larium:** The issue of larium is a huge concern to all members; best practice would suggest that it should be replaced by malarone as the side effects that present with malarone are far less serious particularly in relation to effects on the nervous system.
- **Sexual health:** We live in a changing society; the defence forces is part of that society and subject to the same risks. The increase of Sexually Transmitted Infections in society is now a huge cause for concern, it is reasonable to assume it is also an issue that should concern the defence forces.

through exit and climate surveys on why people exit prematurely and feeding this into an updated strategy. The second is adapting work-life balance policies to benefit both the individual and organisational ethos to meet ever changing development needs and expectations of our people. The success of our retention efforts will be indicated by turnover rates by category.

In respect to the future of the defence forces we share the same concerns as military management with regard to recruitment and retention. We wish to see the defence forces re-established as an 'employer of choice' and greater emphasis on factors that will enhance retention holds the key in our opinion. For happy fulfilled soldiers are the greatest advertisement to potential recruits one could hope for. The embracing of the recommendations contained herein and a real attempt to facilitate a work-life balance in the defence forces will contribute in no small way towards making the defence forces a real contender in the labour market once again.

This is a shortened version of the original report, to see the full document or to request a copy please visit the PDFORRA website www.pdforra.ie

SUMMARY

The Defence Forces Human Resource Management Strategy 2006-2010, Strategic Objective 2: *To recruit, select, induct and retain the most suitable people to contribute to defence forces military capability*; highlights two key initiatives which will be prioritised over the lifetime of the strategy to ensure the retention of the most suitable people. The first initiative is gaining feedback

NATIONAL NEWS: Pension levy on all public servants in Ireland

Pension levy, what next?

By Gerry Rooney, Secretary General of PDFORRA (Ireland)

The Irish Government unilaterally introduced the Pension Levy on all Public Servants on 3rd February 2009. This followed the early morning breakdown of the Social Partnership talks at Government Buildings which had been dealing with the Department of Finance proposal to introduce a Pension Levy.

PDFORRA has made it clear that the Pension Levy is an unfair tax which is exclusively targeted at the Public Service – indeed all Public Service unions and ICTU (Irish Congress of Trade Unions) have adopted the same position. In addition the structure of the Pension Levy is very inequitable in that it places an excessive burden on those on low or middle levels of pay. That said, PDFORRA accepts that the budgetary situation has deteriorated to such an extent that revenues must be found elsewhere to restore stability to the public finances.

It is puzzling that the Irish Government has not moved to raise revenues from other sources – particularly those who have benefited from the 'Celtic Tiger'. In addition, no efforts have been made to raise taxes from high earners. The only revenue raising efforts introduced so far have been directed at the Public Service.

Traditionally the only time when ICTU had influence over taxation, and the Pension Levy is an unfair form of taxation, was during periods of Social Partnership. Accordingly, if the Pension Levy is going to be addressed it will be necessary for the Social Partnership process to be resurrected.

ICTUs agenda for the Social Partnership process is far wider than the Pension Levy. ICTU is advocating a Social Solidarity Pact as a better and fairer route to

national recovery. This plan includes protecting jobs, tackling unemployment, improving competitiveness, reforming the banking system, honouring the terms of the Towards 2016 pay agreement and addressing taxation including the Pension Levy.

ICTUs agenda is in the best interests of PDFORRAs membership and must therefore be supported by PDFORRA. This support includes the resurrection of the

Social Partnership process so that national recovery is carried out in the interests of low and middle income earners – and that the Pension Levy is addressed.

PDFORRA National Executive participated in a protest in Dublin on Saturday 23rd February 2009 which saw over 100,000 public sector workers demonstrate against the levy.



Photograph: PDFORRA

PDFORRA (Ireland) National Executive

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