



## ***Security has a social dimension!***

### ***Statement of EUROMIL<sup>i</sup> in view of the 2014 European Elections***

The 2014 European elections will be the first elections held under the Lisbon Treaty, which gives the European Parliament new law-making powers and several new fields under the co-decision procedure of the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union. The new elected European Parliament will have more power and therefore also more responsibility.

The decisions of the European Parliament will, more than ever, directly affect the daily life of European citizens. Parliament shall, in all its activities, fully respect the fundamental rights of EU citizens, in line with the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty.

As a representative organisation of military personnel promoting the concept of "Citizens in Uniform", EUROMIL wants to draw the attention of European political parties on some Security and Defence issues and, in particular, on the situation of the hundred thousands of men and women serving in the Armed Forces and their families. EUROMIL supports a comprehensive and indivisible approach to security, which includes, among others, a human dimension.

Today, European military personnel deployed abroad have to function in missions that cover the full spectrum of crisis management operations – from humanitarian and rescue tasks, disarmament and combat operations, peace-keeping/-making, post-conflict stabilisation, to training, logistical support and support of third countries in combating terrorism in their territories.

In this context, it is important to recognise that the soldier is no longer a "fighter" in the traditional sense, but rather a mediator and conveyor of certain, often humanitarian, values and notions – a "social diplomatic war-fighter". Besides training in traditional fighting skills, modern soldiers receive training and education to function in their specialisation, as mediators and even social and development aid workers with the highest level of moral integrity and sensibility. European soldiers are risking their health and live in the service of the nation and the international community for the preservation and restoration of fundamental and democratic rights in foreign countries. They put their lives at risk for the preservation of some European values and rights, rights that some of the European soldiers do not enjoy themselves.



Soldiers should, and will, go where ordered! But the appropriate training and equipment must be in place to ensure that potential casualties are minimised. While service conditions, obviously, entail certain threats, the soldier's life should not be put unavoidably at risk, or without a clear and legitimate military purpose. This implies the need for sound strategies, proper equipment, well-equipped medical facilities as well as social protection.

EUROMIL seeks to raise awareness of the requests of soldiers, advocating, among other things, for:

- legal security for soldiers by reality checked mandates, caveats and rules of engagement;
- legal protection in the execution of their function also during missions abroad (such as the application of the Directive 2013/48/EU of 22 October 2013 on military personnel in missions abroad);
- extensive training as joint forces including comprehensive education on languages, national and international laws as well as cultural awareness;
- better protection thanks to reliable and high quality equipment;
- best possible and free medical and psychological care and this as well before, during and after the mission abroad.

EUROMIL calls for deeper cooperation and harmonisation among EU Armed Forces, not only to what concerns Pooling and Sharing of capabilities, but also for the development of common standards for the living and working conditions of Armed Forces Personnel. In this regard, it recalls the SAFE Project (Synchronised Armed Forces Europe), launched in 2008 by a former President of the European Parliament, Dr. Hans Gert Pöttering. The project aimed for a dynamic development of the cooperation of national Armed Forces towards a closer synchronisation and increased Europe-wide division of labour, based on the principle that "those who serve together should train together." Moreover, too many breaches of basic human rights of servicemen and -women are still reported in European countries. EUROMIL therefore calls on all EU Member States to abide by international legislation and respect the fundamental rights and freedoms, including the freedom of association, of their members of Armed Forces.

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<sup>i</sup> The European Organisation of Military Associations (EUROMIL) is an umbrella organisation composed of 39 military associations and trade unions from 26 countries. It is the main Europe-wide forum for cooperation among professional military associations on issues of common concern. EUROMIL strives to secure and advance the human rights, fundamental freedoms and socio-professional interests of military personnel of all ranks in Europe and promotes the concept of "Citizen in Uniform". As such, a soldier is entitled to the same rights and obligations as any other citizen. EUROMIL particularly calls for recognition of the right of servicemen and -women to form and join trade unions and independent associations and for their inclusion in a regular social dialogue by the authorities. [www.euromil.org](http://www.euromil.org)