



**EUROMIL aisbl**

(European Organisation of  
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## **EUROMIL Position on the European Pillar of Social Rights**

*The European Commission launched a consultation on a European Pillar of Social Rights in March 2016. The aim is to gather feedback of different stakeholders on the topic of social rights. The consultation was closed by the end of December 2016 and the Commission plans to finalise a proposal for a European Pillar of Social Rights in early 2017. The overarching aim of the Pillar is to re-establish upward social convergence among the members of the Eurozone in times where disparities are increasing. The Pillar will not establish new rights, but rather describe principles in the fields of: equal opportunities and access to the labour market, fair working conditions and adequate and sustainable social protection.*

### The most pressing employment & social priorities from EUROMIL's point of view

EUROMIL promotes the professional and social interests as well as the fundamental rights and freedoms of European soldiers. As one of the most pressing priorities it sees the legislative barriers, still existing in some EU Member States, preventing military personnel from forming and joining professional associations and trade unions. Here, we believe a further harmonisation of national legislation, together with a close monitoring from the European level is needed. In addition, European legislation needs to be implemented more efficiently and timely at a national level. For EUROMIL, this is, in addition to the freedom of association issue raised above, especially true for matters of safety and health at work as well as working time. Here, a closer and more effective monitoring of the member states by the European Commission would be helpful.

### Current transformative trends

Three current trends are the most transformative for the profession of military personnel and are linked to both risks and opportunities. **Demographic trends** will lead to a reduced number of potential candidates joining the military service. At the same time, **new skills requirements** and **technological changes** have an impact on the military profession as well, raising the need for highly motivated and skilled personnel. As a consequence, the military has to compete on the labour market with civilian employers to attract the most qualified personnel. As the number of short-term careers in the military is increasing, the successful reintegration of ex-military personnel is a challenge, especially in times of economic problems and tight labour markets. In addition, the need for the creation of sustainable pension systems for military personnel is becoming a more pressing issue.

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## Outline of the Pillar

The outline of the Pillar<sup>1</sup> as suggested by the Commissions seems to be appropriate in its design to tackle the challenges ahead. However, EUROMIL wishes to emphasize some points in particular:

- **Scope of the Pillar:** The Pillar should be applicable not only in the Eurozone but in the whole European Union.
- **Secure professional transition:** For military personnel, professional transitions become an increasingly important issue given the fact that more and more countries do not employ their military personnel on a lifetime basis anymore, but offer short-term contracts. As already outlined above, the reintegration of ex-military personnel in the civilian labour market is not easy and requires specific concepts and policies.
- **Equal opportunities:** "Raising awareness and addressing discrimination" are already steps in the right direction. However, the issue of discrimination should not only be tackled from a negative point of view. On the contrary, it is worth raising awareness about the positive chances arising from diverse and tolerant armed forces.
- **Health and safety at work:** "Micro- and small enterprises" are in the focus here, however, addressing the issue from a more general point of view would be helpful in order to include especially those people facing specific risks to their safety and health because of the nature of their work, amongst them is military personnel.
- **Social dialogue and involvement of workers:** At EU level, the necessary legislative regulations are already in place. What is missing is the effective

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<sup>1</sup> 1. Skills, education and life-long learning  
2. Flexible and secure labour contracts  
3. Secure professional transitions  
4. Active support for employment  
5. Gender equality and work-life balance  
6. Equal opportunities  
7. Conditions of employment  
8. Wages  
9. Health and safety at work  
10. Social dialogue and involvement of workers  
11. Integrated social benefits and services  
12. Health care and sickness benefits  
13. Pensions  
14. Unemployment benefits  
15. Minimum income  
16. Disability benefits  
17. Long-term care  
18. Childcare  
19. Housing  
20. Access to essential services



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monitoring of the implementation at national level. In a high number of European countries military personnel is still excluded from the fundamental right to freedom of association. Moreover, trade union rights including the right of collective bargaining for military personnel are only implemented in a small number of European countries.