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## **Extremism has no place in the armed forces!** **Statement of EUROMIL<sup>i</sup> on 2 July 2020**

In the last decades, Europe has been confronted to a rise in religious and political extremism nurtured by various elements, including globalisation, an economic and financial crisis, security and migration issues or the normalisation of populist and xenophobic discourses. At present, the sanitary crisis that the world is facing has also led to a rise in discriminatory, racist, and xenophobic acts.

Armed forces are unfortunately not spared from this scourge. In recent years, members of the armed forces in different European countries were suspected or convicted for extremist activities. Some EU Member States, like Germany, have taken the bull by the horns and addressed the problem by adopting concrete measures to prevent and respond to extremist behaviour in the military.

EUROMIL therefore welcomes the series of [measures](#) announced by the German Minister of Defence, Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, to all military and civilian members of the *Bundeswehr* on 1 July 2020, as a follow-up to internal enquiries on right-wing extremism in the Special Forces of the German armed forces (KSK), and hopes for a swift and complete adoption of the measures. It believes, however, that the procedures should not only target the KSK but the *Bundeswehr* as a whole.

On this occasion EUROMIL underlines that it strongly rejects any form of extremist ideology which has absolutely no place in the armed forces. EUROMIL defends democratic principles and human rights. It promotes the concept of "Citizen in Uniform", which means that a soldier is entitled to the same rights and obligations as any other citizen.

In democratic states, the military should be at the service of the state and its people and democratically accountable towards society. This means that members of the armed forces should defend and embody the values of the country they serve, which includes respect for human rights. Ensuring respect for human rights of and by armed forces personnel is a prerequisite towards a cohesive society for building public trust in institutions as well as resilient armed forces.

*"Extremism has no place within the barracks and is in contrast to the values guaranteed by the military. Soldiers are ambassadors and defenders of fundamental rights and freedoms, both at home and abroad, in the performance of their duties. As "Citizens in Uniform", they propagate these values in all circumstances" stated EUROMIL's President, Emmanuel Jacob.*



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Combatting all forms of extremism to protect European citizens and European democracies is a collective responsibility. EUROMIL thus urges the European Union and its Member States to adopt the necessary policies and concrete actions to ensure that extremist behaviours in the military are not only prevented or detected but also severely condemned.

For any further information, please contact the EUROMIL Office by email at [euromil@euromil.org](mailto:euromil@euromil.org) or phone at +32.2.626.06.80

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<sup>i</sup> The European Organisation of Military Associations and Trade Unions (EUROMIL) is an umbrella organisation composed of 32 military associations and trade unions from 21 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.