



**EUROMIL aisbl**  
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## **DRAFT MINUTES**

### **124<sup>th</sup> Presidium Meeting, 22 October 2021**

#### **Athens, Greece**

#### **Friday, 22 October 2021**

#### **Session 1**

**09h00 – 10h15 (EEST)**

#### **1. Official Opening of the 124<sup>th</sup> Presidium Meeting**

The President of EUROMIL, Emmanuel Jacob, opened the Presidium Meeting at 09h00 by thanking delegates for their presence and acknowledging the difficulties of the past year with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular he thanked EUROMIL's Greek colleagues for their support in organising the 124<sup>th</sup> Presidium. The President also drew attention to the challenges arising out of the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan as well as the climate emergencies across Europe.

He also asked for a minute of silence in remembrance of all those, military and civilian, who lost their lives in the execution of their duties as well as all those who died as a result of the pandemic and floods and fires.

President of PFEARFU, Dimitrios Rotas, thanked guests for their participation and EUROMIL for their continued work and support over the years. He drew attention to the coinciding of the 200<sup>th</sup> year of the Greek Revolution with the 124<sup>th</sup> Presidium. He expressed strong support for EUROMIL's application to ETUC. The PFEARFU President exchanged gifts with EUROMIL President.

Dr Konstantinos P. Balomenos, Director General for Defence Policy at the Greek Ministry of National Defence thanked EUROMIL President for the opportunity to speak of the security situation in the Mediterranean Sea. He highlighted Greece's desire to promote peace and stability in the Mediterranean and the concerns over the situation in Libya. He also addressed the inevitable increase in climate related disasters over the coming years and the impact this will have on security. He also highlighted trends in migration including the decrease in migrant arrivals to Greece. He expressed dismay over the lack of solidarity amongst Member States for the external border countries as well as the need to address the root causes of migration. He also highlighted the increasing issue of hybrid threats to EU Member States and the role EUROMIL can play for civil/military cooperation. In addition he addressed the issue of sexual assault and violence in the armed forces and its institutional prevalence.



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Ioannis Smyrlis, Secretary General for International Economic Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, spoke of the importance of communication between military associations and cooperation as a way towards success.

Ioannis Paidas, President of the Executive Committee of ADEDY and representative of Greece in the Executive Committee of ETUC expressed his strong and complete support for EUROMIL's application to the ETUC and that he will fully back EUROMIL in their application.

## **2. Approval agenda**

The agenda has been approved.

## **3. Approval of the Minutes of the 123<sup>rd</sup> Presidium Meeting**

The Minutes of the 123<sup>rd</sup> Presidium Meeting have been approved.

## **Session 2 10h00 – 12h00 (EEST)**

### **4. Panel: "Military & Migration, EU & Migration"**

George Zgardanas opened the panel with and announced the last minute cancellation of speakers Manolis Kefalogiannis, MEP (Greece, EPP) and Grigorios Apostolou, Head of Frontex Liaison Office for Greece and Cyprus. Other panellists included Dr. Triantafyllos Karantrantos, Marcell Hajdók from the Hungarian Defence Forces Trade Union (HOSZ) and Emmanuel Jacob, EUROMIL President.

Dr Karantrantos began the session by outlining the reasons for migration flows and touched upon the point of migrants being instrumentalised by countries for political strategy. Climate change and conflict were highlighted as two of the most prominent reasons for migration into Europe, as well as the long history of third country diaspora settling in European countries. Dr Karantrantos spoke of the need for a coherent strategy across Member States and with third countries. He also identified the need to be aware of inter-African migration and the impact that will have on European migration trends over the next five years.

Marcel Hajdók from HOSZ then presented on the specific context of the migration situation in Hungary and the significant involvement of the Hungarian Armed Forces in external border control. He highlighted that military personnel were involved with border construction and patrolling and highlighted that the decision to use the armed forces for such activities was political. He further highlighted that many soldiers in the Hungarian Armed Forces become overwhelmed and tired at their engagement in such activities and that proper training and equipment is necessary.

An intervention was then made by Georgios Tsipras Member of Parliament Head of Defence of main opposition in Greece.

As the last speaker, EUROMIL President highlighted the increasing prevalence of participation of armed forces in non-tradition military activities. He pointed out



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that the issue is not the military giving support to society and internal security but rather that there should be strict conditions attached to this and it cannot become a structural function of the military.

The floor was opened for remarks and some points made included the desire for clear conditions attached to any support from the armed forces to internal security issues and that all necessary training and equipment is provided. The example of Ireland was highlighted and the use of military personnel as prison guard escorts. It was pointed out that in this case and in others, military personnel are expected to take up the role of any workers that go on strike. It was also pointed out that migration should not be considered a national issue, but rather an EU wide issue as national borders are also European borders. The Belgian context in 2016 was also highlighted as an example of the remit of the armed forces being overstretched to national security issues as the military.

Questions were then raised about the development of international cooperation at EU level and whether national forces would be seen at other Member States' borders. EUROMIL President remarked that EUROMIL's main priority on any EU wide developments was that the human dimension must remain at the centre of military work and amongst all member organisations. Solidarity with migrants was also strongly expressed by audience and panel members alike and the panel was brought to a close.

### **Session 3**

**13h30 – 17h00 (EEST)**

**5. Activity Report:** The President presented the activity report for EUROMIL from April to October 2021. EUROMIL moved its office from Place Robert Schuman 6, 1040 Brussels to Boulevard du Roi Albert II, 5, B1, 1210 Brussels. Furthermore, Maebh Butler started working at EUROMIL as Project Officer from January 2021 and Dimitra Koutouzi started working as interim as of 1 May 2021 for a period of six months as Policy Officer and will have a full time contract as of 1 Nov 2021.

A revised draft of the position paper on the Working Time Directive has been prepared and will have to take into account outcome of the case *B.K. v Republic of Slovenia* (Case C-742/19) which was decided on 15 July 2021 and was less positive than expected. On 29 July 2021, EUROMIL organized an online discussion with its members concerning the outcome of the case. A thematic event on the same issue is planned to take place between February and March 2022 in Paris during the French Presidency. The agenda will include topics as health, safety and the WTD. In the next weeks we want to have a program and specific dates for the event. The President also kindly asked the Members to inform EUROMIL office as soon as possible on their interest in participating in the event in Paris and thus EUROMIL will try to support those interested.

EUROMIL will also continue working and monitoring the implementation of the outcome of the case on European Committee on Social Rights, and defence in Ireland. Concerning Italy EUROMIL will continue to support its colleagues because the situation is not improving, and thus the parliamentary discussion on the trade



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union rights continues. One positive development in Italy is that 18 of the Italian associations are now cooperating together. Furthermore, concerning EUROMIL vs Portugal case on the Committee of social rights it was highlighted that Portugal rejects responsibility and if the committee approves Portugal's arguments our case will not be accepted. However, few possibilities exist that this would be the case. The final outcome will be in around a year.

**50 Years Euromil:** 13 September 2022 will be exactly 50 years from the creation of EUROMIL and we are planning a celebration at the same place as 50 years before, Bergisch Gladbach (Germany). EUROMIL Office will provide further details on the celebration soon. Also the Members that are interested in participating will receive support from EUROMIL.

**NEZAVISNOST:** the association has still not paid its EUROMIL membership fee. EUROMIL did everything possible to keep them on board but now it is not possible anymore. However, despite the clear rules in the charter, the President informed that the Board will try to get in contact with Serbia soon.

**ETUC:** last Tuesday ETUC sent an email to their executive committee to put remarks of our application until end of October. On 4 November the ETUC will hold a steering committee meeting and EUROMIL hopes that they will prepare a recommendation of the December ETUC executive committee meeting. Some people are trying again to blame extremism on EUROMIL, but we are more than willing to discuss the arguments. The main problems came from the CESI; affiliation of some EUROMIL member associations. However, there is a strong will and support from the management of ETUC to approve our application. In the weeks to come we will have a follow up. The President emphasised, that it will be "this time or never".

**Universal Periodic Review (UPR)** is a review linked to UN articles, treaties etc. EUROMIL has already used UPR in the past years for a number of countries and will continue to do so in the next four year cycle.

**European Parliament:** Due to both the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the summer break, cooperation with the European Parliament was not as frequent as before. However, EUROMIL collaborated with the Greens on EU-NATO cooperation report; we introduced amendments focused on social rights of military personnel, but these amendments did not pass. Now, EUROMIL also works with the Greens in introducing amendments on the SEDE 'Common Security and Defence Policy' annual report.

**Council of Europe, Whistleblowing International Network:** the whistleblowing directive is going closer to implementation (link available in our website where you can see the state of play in every country). The directive is not applied to 'security'.

**ICOAF meeting in support of German Commissioner and Dutch ombudsman:** the meeting took place fully online due to COVID-19 restrictions. There is a demand to support a call to governments to support military ombuds



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institutions to work closer together. We should support this even though we are not an ombuds institution. The call has been approved by the Presidium.

**EPSU- EUROCOP Project (European Commission):** the project focuses on the directive on working conditions, EUROMIL and EPSU are the two main partners. End of May 2021 we hold the launch of event, and afterwards we started with the regional meetings. The next regional meeting will be held in November 2021, EUROMIL will provide more details to their Members soon. Moreover, we also have an agreement with the university of Ghent for a report at the end of the project. EUROMIL President also stressed that the social dialogue is getting to a lower level during the past months by the Commission.

**ECJ:** EPSU went to court for the non-execution of a collective agreement in one of the sectorial social dialogue committees, but lost the case. Nobody is happy with the outcome of the case. However, the Commission is promoting the social dialogue and will try to find an agreement with the social partners.

**EUROMIL campaigns:** Extremism in the Armed Forces; we are looking forward to organise again in the future such a campaign. Besides, EUROMIL launched a campaign during summer for climate emergency. EUROMIL also signed a call launched by the Conflict and Environment Observatory (CEOBS) on the topic to include military CO2 emissions at COP26. To that extent the President stated that "Climate will be in our agenda, we cannot forget about it". Climate change has a huge impact on security and defence industry, and the future.

EUROMIL could also have meetings with its members between Presidium-meetings to discuss current issues and developments. This would also facilitate the agenda of upcoming Presidium Meetings.

**Overall guidelines:** The draft overall guidelines have been presented and discussed. EUROMIL will continue to work on Human Rights, Labour rights, rights of associations etc.

**Future of EUROMIL:** it is very clear that EUROMIL has to make choices; many discussions took place during Board Meetings since April 2021 on whether EUROMIL should become a think tank on security and defence, an academic institution, an NGO on human rights or a security organization. The decision was that EUROMIL should become more involved in trade union environment and hence decided to apply at ETUC. We always need to be ready for changes; we do not know how the French presidency will move towards defence integration or what will be the outcome of the Strategic Compass or the German elections. To that extent, it was highlighted by ACMP – CGPM/ Belgium, that EUROMIL should always be ready to grasp opportunities and this should be written down on the overall guidelines.

After adding this statement, the overall guidelines for 2021-2025 have been approved and will serve as the basis to draw up the activity plan. This plan will be submitted for approval at the next meeting of the Presidium.



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**6. Finances, Budget 2022:** at spring meeting we will submit the results of the year before and the plan for the year after (if the new statute is approved at the Extraordinary Congress). The budgetary result 2020 had a positive result due to COVID-19 pandemic crisis. For the year 2022, the membership fees are going a little bit down. Hence, EUROMIL will hire an intern during spring 2022. Moreover, EUROMIL has less cost now that moved to another office, for example, the rent is less than half. However, EUROMIL will have to move its office again by the end of next year due to the constructions that will take place at the current office. ITUC has already informed EUROMIL that they will move to another office together.

The celebration of 50 years EUROMIL will require more expenses, thus EUROMIL doubled its dedicated budget for events and meetings. Thus, with the current budget we have calculated 20.000 loss. The rest stay on the same level.

The budget 2022 has been approved.

## **7. National Reports**

Belgium/ACMP-CGPM: Additional comments: last week the government approved a raise for the wages of military service people by 1.5 % and by 7.5% for officers. All the retired service people will also benefit from this increase. Member associations should also discuss with ACMP-CGPM about the lessons learned and the strategies that have been used.

Portugal/ANS and AP: Additional comments: in 2014 the last deployment in Afghanistan took place; the government should now support the people, as translators, who all these years have been helping. Portugal did not have the means to help its soldiers who were in Afghanistan. What was the main reason for going there and then leaving and being the same as before, represents a topic something we should discuss.

Portugal/AOFA: Discussion about the increase of salaries.

Italy/ASSODIPRO: Report: emphasized on the organization of the Armed Forces. Not present in Athens.

Spain/AUME: Report: salary discussion is still on the table, and last week a strike took place concerning the raise of salary. Not present in Athens.

Denmark/CS/HKKF: Report: information on retention of senior employees.

Germany/DBwV: Report: emphasis is put on the German elections and the upcoming of General Assembly DBwV in December. No additional comments.

Hungary/HOSZ: Report: emphasis is put on salaries. No additional comments.

Cyprus/NCOACA: Report: the WTD, and promotion is always on the agenda. Additional remarks: last week there was a discussion in the parliament's defence committee on the WTD. Now, they have 15 days to submit comments.





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Cyprus/ CAO A: No additional comments.

Poland/KONWENT/ZZWP: Report emphasized on migration; looking for changes in the competences of the organization. Additional comments: KONWENT/ZZWP is trying to make amendments on the law, which would be beneficial to representatives of soldiers.

Ireland/PDFORRA: The association is working on the WTD and on the issue of sexual harassment in the armed forces.

Ireland/RDFRA: Additional comments: RDFRA is working on the topic of the WTD and on the protection of reserve people.

Sweden/ SAMO: Additional comments: there is need for an increase in the defence budget, a quite change for the Armed Forces.

Slovakia/ZVSR: Report: Slovak ombuds introduced a case on right of association for military. Not present in Athens.

Montenegro/ SOVCG: Report: emphasis on the elections of the new Congress. No additional comments.

North Macedonia/ NSO: Report: the association has organized an event on extremism with the Ministry. MOD has been really supportive. Additional remarks: discussion on military personnel salaries and the role of civilian personnel.

## **8. Upcoming meetings**

### **8.1 Online events**

The President stated that EUROMIL will continue with online events and will plan internal online discussions for members, with the hope of including topics on reserve forces and veterans.

### **8.2 Upcoming Presidium Meetings**

125<sup>th</sup> Presidium Meeting, Trenčín (Slovakia, 29 April 2022)

126<sup>th</sup> Presidium Meeting, Berlin (Germany, 21 October 2022)

127<sup>th</sup> Presidium Meeting, Rome (Italy, Spring 2023)

128<sup>th</sup> Presidium Meeting, Brussels (Belgium, Autumn 2023)

129<sup>th</sup> Presidium Meeting, Lisbon (Portugal, 25-26 April 2024)

130<sup>th</sup> Presidium Meeting (Autumn 2024 tbc)

*Draft Minutes, 124<sup>th</sup> Presidium Meeting, 22 October 2021, Athens (Greece)*



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131<sup>st</sup> Presidium Meeting and Congress, Brussels (Belgium, Spring 2025)

No objections and planning can continue in this regard.

The President thanked both delegates and staff for their participation and support.

### **Closing of Presidium Meeting**

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## ANNEX - Registered Participants

Organisation:	Last Name:	First Name:
ACMP-CGPM	Housen	Roger
AFM	Could not participate due to quarantine measures in Malta	
AFMP	van den Berg	Ton
AFMP and MARVER	Schilperoort (excused)	R.W.
ANEAD	Panagiotou	Georgios
ANEAD	Vidakis	Ioannis
ANEAD	Roidis	George
ANEAD	Dimitropoulos	Vassilis
ANS	Lima Coelho	António
AOFA	Rui	Marques
AP	Represented by ANS	
ASSODIPRO	Could not participate (mandate to E Jacob)	
AUME	Could not participate due to COVID-19	
BUAFWA	Could not participate due to COVID-19	
CAOA	Kipros	Kyprianou
CAOA	Kotzikas	Christos
CAOA	Malliotis	Ioannis
CAOA	Messiouris	Andreas
CAOA	Kyriakos	Olympios
CAOA	Papageorgiou	Zacharias
CAROA	Could not participate	
CS	Bengtzen	Finn
CS	Hansen	Jesper
CS	Kehr	Bjarne
CS	Munk	Jane
DBwV	Greiffendorf	Jörg

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DBwV	Hahn (Excused)	Uwe
DBwV	Kiesner	Albrecht
DBwV	Struckmeier	Jörg
DBwV	Bög	Karl-Heinz
DBwV	Lorse	Philipp
DBwV	Steinmetz	Andreas
EUROMIL Board	de Zeeuw (Excused)	Ton
EUROMIL Office	Jacob	Emmanuel
EUROMIL Office	Butler	Maebh
EUROMIL Office	Koutouzi	Dimitra
HKKF	Block	Tom
HKKF	Sørensen	Poul
HOSZ	BÁCSKAI	István
HOSZ	CZÖVEK	János
HOSZ	HAJDÓK	Marcell
KONWENT	JEWGIEJUK	Krzysztof
KONWENT	NOGAJ	Janusz
KONWENT	ROGALSKI	Artur
KONWENT	ZMARZ	Jacek
LMP	Not able to attend due to organisational reasons	
LSA	VINGOLDS	Imands
MARVER	Schuitema	Sven
MOR	Could not participate.	
N-COACA	CHRISTODOULOU	ANDREAS
N-COACA	IOAKEIM	GEORGE
N-COACA	MARKOULLIDOU	KATERINA
N-COACA	NIKOLAOU	EFI
N-COACA	SERDARIS	NEOKLIS
Nezavisnost	No answer!	
NSO	Ballanca	Blerim
NSO	Isajov	Vanco



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NSO	Popovski	Nikica
OMVTO	Observer. Informed us that they are not able to participate.	
PDFORRA	McCarthy	Thomas
PDFORRA	Guinan	Gerard
PDFORRA	Holland	Ken
PDFORRA	Quigley	Damien
PFEARFU	Zgardanas	George
PFEARFU	Dimitrios	Rotas
PFEARFU	Theodorou	Georgios
PFEARFU	Panagiotidis	Nikolaos
PFEARFU	Asfis	Nikolaos
PFEARFU	Koutsidis	Theodoros
PFEARFU	Chatzidimitriou	Konstantinos
PFEARFU	Sourelis	Christos
PFEARFU	Dimos	Spyridon
PFEARFU	Nioras	Konstantinos
PFEARFU	Kollyris	Ilias
PFEARFU	Vasileios	Lambrou
RACO	Nolan	Owen
RACO	Priestley	Derek
RDFRA	Gargan	Eugene
RDFRA	McCarthy	Jo
RDFRA	Scanlon (Excused)	James
SAMO	Kenttälä	Mikael
SAMO	Öhlén	Johan
SAMO	Fresker	Lars
SOVCG	Valentin	Stankovic
ZV SR	Could not participate	
ZZWP	Could not participate due to elections	