



**EUROMIL aisbl**

*(European Organisation of  
Military Associations)*

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**To the Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, Mr. Bohuslav Sobotka**

Brussels, 23 August 2016

Prime Minister,

The European Organisation of Military Associations (EUROMIL) is an umbrella organisation composed of 35 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 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.

EUROMIL read with great interest your declaration on *bloomberg.com* of 22 August 2016 on a common European defence: "*I'm convinced that we can't do without a Common European army in the long term.*"

We fully agree with your statement in support of a common European defence just like we welcomed similar declarations of the European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, the High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini and recently the Italian Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence, Paolo Gentilone and Roberta Pinotti. Since its foundation in 1972, EUROMIL is of the opinion that the different European armed forces should train and work more and better together. A closer cooperation of our armed forces growing towards a European defence union and even a European army is the key for a true and powerful Common Security and Defence Policy.

However, the implementation of a European defence union also has a social dimension. Every day hundreds of thousands men and women serve in the armed forces. They are motivated armed forces personnel and deserve to be treated with respect. They must be able to execute their duties under the best conditions and this is true not only for the field of training and equipment but also for the social field. As already stated, EUROMIL promotes the concept of "Citizen in Uniform" and is therefore of the opinion that military personnel should be treated as every other worker. EUROMIL is convinced that executing a very specific task guaranteeing national peace and security is no obstacle to the enjoyment of the most basic fundamental rights and freedoms.

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Dear Prime Minister, despite international legislation and regulations several European countries do not grant the right of association to their soldiers. EUROMIL is aware of the fact that this is also an issue in the Czech Republic. EUROMIL believes that the implementation of this right of association through a well-organised social dialogue is very important. The results of such a well-regulated relationship are not only beneficial for military personnel but also for the armed forces as such. It is EUROMIL's experience that an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect is needed for a social dialogue in which equal partners come together.

Looking at your encouraging statement on a common European defence, I would like to call on you as Prime Minister of the Czech Republic to improve the (national and international) representation of Czech military personnel and implement a real social dialogue. In these times wherein armed forces pool & share their resources, it is also important that staff organisations work together and share their experiences on the international scene. Of course, EUROMIL is available to discuss this topic with you or with your close collaborators in this field. We are always willing to share our experience and information on this and other issues whenever needed and wanted.

Prime Minister, we thank you in advance for your kind consideration of this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Emmanuel Jacob,  
President