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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by the EUROMIL EV, a non- governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.


[15 May 2017]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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EUROMIL Statement on Freedom of Association for Military Personnel

The European Organisation of Military Associations (EUROMIL) is an umbrella organisation composed of 34 military associations and trade unions from 22 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,

- insists that the right to associate, together with other civil and political rights, is intrinsic to democratic societies and expressly recognized in all major international and regional human rights instruments;
- recalls articles 20 and 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 8 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) and article 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966);
- refers to the Conventions of the International Labour Organisation, including 87 (1948), 98 (1949), 151 (1978) and Recommendation 159 (1978);
- welcomes the renewal of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association for a period of three years, congratulates the new mandate holder and thanks the former one for the work done so far;
- regrets that some countries continue to prohibit armed forces personnel from exercising the right to set up and join trade-unions and professional associations;
- deplors that too many associations and their affiliates often face threats, intimidation and harassment;
- emphasizes that experience has shown that the right of association has not compromised combat efficiency or military discipline;
- notes that involving democratic military associations in a permanent social dialogue has de facto improved the moral and loyalty of troops;
- 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 with the authorities.

EUROMIL therefore particularly calls upon states:

- to allow members of the armed forces to join a professional association or a trade union representing their interests;
- to consult military associations or unions on issues concerning the conditions of service of members of the armed forces and engage with them in a regulated social dialogue;
- to lift any restriction on freedom of association that is not prescribed by law, necessary, proportionate and non-discriminatory;
- to forbid disciplinary actions against members of the armed forces in connection with their participation in activities of lawfully established military associations.

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