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Brussels, 4 July 2020

To Whom It May Concern,

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 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 has been informed of the recent developments in Montenegro concerning the deprivation of liberty on Thursday 2 July 2020 of Zdravko Kasalica, President of the Trade Union of Defense and Army of Montenegro (SOVCG) and his wife Makedonka Kasalica, lawyer of profession. We have also been informed that early this morning, 4 July 2020, their detention was extended with 72 hours. Without going into detail or interfering with the investigation, EUROMIL would like to express its doubts about the reasons that form the basis of the deprivation of liberty of Zdravko and Makedonka Kasalica.

As early as October 2017, EUROMIL sued the unauthorized attacks by the Montenegrin authorities on SOVCG when the then President of SOVCG, Nenad Cobeljic, became the victim of various procedures and was eventually forced to retire. It was then and it is now clear for EUROMIL that attacks on individual civilians, on citizens in uniform, are used to hit the existence and working of the military trade union SOVCG.

Regarding the current Kasalica case, we refer to a statement by Zdravko Kasalica regarding his and his wife's deprivation of liberty. Zdravko Kasalica asked the inspectors not to harass his family, emphasizing that "he knew that they were being arrested on the order of the Minister of Defense who is taking revenge on them for supporting the Metropolitanate of Montenegro



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and the Littoral and not for his wife's failure in performing her job, for she has never made such failures in her work.”

EUROMIL condemns the manner in which Mr and Mrs Kasalica were deprived of their liberty and further detained. We are convinced that this abuse of power is mainly related to the private and professional activities of Zdravko Kasalica. For EUROMIL, this embarrassing and unacceptable situation is yet another sign of an anti-union stance on the part of the Montenegrin government, and in particular the defense authorities, which have been opposing this constitutional and international right since 2011 in its effective implementation in the armed forces of Montenegro.

Therefore, EUROMIL shares the demands of the Union of Free Trade Unions of Montenegro (UFTUM) and Trade Union of Defense and Army of Montenegro (SOVCG) and calls on the authorities and leadership of Montenegro:

- to urgently release Zdravko and Makedonka Kasalica to enable them to prove their innocence in a dignified way;
- to respect basic human rights and freedoms such as freedom of thought, freedom of expression, freedom of religion and ethnicity;
- to respect freedom of association and the right to defend military workers in uniform including the right to form and join military trade unions and organise a social dialogue based on mutual respect;
- to investigate on the real background of this case by an independent authority and stop the harassment and witch hunt against the SOVCG leadership collectively or based on their private live and convictions.

I thank you for your kind consideration of this letter and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely,

Emmanuel Jacob,
President