



EUROMIL aisbl
(European Organisation of
Military Associations and Trade Unions)
Rond-Point Robert Schuman 6
B-1040 Brussels
Tel: +32.2.626.06.80
E-mail: euromil@euromil.org
N° Ent.: 0538.809.759
RPM : Brussels

EUROMIL Recommendations on Handling the COVID-19 Pandemic in the European Armed Forces (concise version)¹

The European Organisation of Military Associations and Trade Unions (EUROMIL):

- acknowledges that in times of crisis, armed forces and their members must be engaged in supporting society and the population;
- calls however for appropriate care and support for the personnel who provides support to civilian authorities, this means protection for those who protect;
- highlights that relevant care for the personnel and their family impacts moral and motivation and consequently operational readiness;
- recalls that the military cannot function without its human capital;
- insists that taking all measures to protect and support the defence personnel is vital for our collective security;
- invites states to conduct a review and draw lessons from the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, with the view of making improvements to the armed forces and get prepared for its subsequent waves or future pandemics;
- calls on political and military authorities to respect their duty of care towards military personnel while at the same time ensuring the good functioning of their armed forces in times of crisis and beyond.

EUROMIL therefore particularly calls upon international organisations and states:

- to respect the fundamental rights of armed forces personnel including in times of crisis;
- to grant military personnel the right to freedom of association, establish or strengthen social dialogue, pursue consultations with professional military associations and trade unions, and respect trade union rights;
- to allow military personnel to fully enjoy their right to health, both physical and mental, and increase legislation, policies, actions and investments in this area;
- to ensure that military personnel have the right to access preventive healthcare as well as treatment during a health crisis and beyond;
- to adopt an effective testing system in the armed forces;
- to provide the necessary protective equipment and clear guidelines on how and when to use them;
- to conduct further efforts on preventive healthcare, including vaccination for all personnel at the frontline when vaccines will be available;
- to systematically redeploy personnel at risk because of their age, chronic disease or pregnancy;
- to protect vulnerable groups and grant special leave to those in need;
- to make available sufficient medical support, in personnel and material, to treat sick personnel;
- to put sick staff in quarantine and treat them separately;

¹ This is a concise version of the position paper adopted at the 122nd EUROMIL Presidium Meeting on 22 October 2020. The complete version of the paper is available [here](#).



EUROMIL aisbl

*(European Organisation of
Military Associations and Trade Unions)*

Rond-Point Robert Schuman 6
B-1040 Brussels

Tel: +32.2.626.06.80

E-mail: euromil@euromil.org

N° Ent.: 0538.809.759

RPM : Brussels

- to foresee the possibility of self-isolation for those possibly contaminated;
- to work on a structural solution in countries where armed forces are confronted to shortages of doctors and nurses;
- to increase investments and better access to mental health services in the armed forces;
- to provide psychological support to armed forces personnel who are requested to carry out unusual tasks, during but also after these special assignments;
- to respect the right of military personnel to have access to relevant information;
- to openly publish data on exposure, infection cases or death due to COVID-19 in the military;
- to respect safe and healthy working conditions for military personnel at all time;
- to adopt a clear and binding definition of "frontline workers";
- to recruit fundamental rights and social welfare in human resources department;
- to allow military personnel to enjoy their right to rest in relation to working time as well as to work-life balance;
- to ensure that military personnel are not kept in barracks or sent away far from their families;
- to encourage telework, where possible, or shift work and regulate them by negotiations;
- to ensure safe and healthy accommodation and infrastructures to military personnel by making new investments;
- to ensure social distancing as well as hygiene (sufficient disinfection) in military compounds;
- to adopt specific measures to protect the personnel in environment where social distancing is being made difficult, as for instance navy ships;
- to ensure that guidance on hygiene, social distancing and the use of protective equipment is available at all time, together with the necessary material;
- to provide for compensation schemes and recognize COVID-19 as an occupational disease for military personnel;
- to provide sufficient training, preparation and equipment for military personnel dealing with public health crises;
- to strengthen national coordination at all levels;
- to establish efficient structures for command and control with national coordination mechanisms and experts in various fields;
- to draw up pandemic plans and protocols aiming at mitigating the impact of a crisis on readiness and recruitment;
- to invest in Information Technology and particularly online education, training, and teleworking when social distancing is necessary;
- to ensure that armed forces have appropriate medical equipment, permanent military medical crisis cells, are sufficiently trained and cooperate and train with civilians;
- to strengthen European defence cooperation, including regional cooperation initiatives, to pool human and financial resources to efficiently respond and increase preparedness to pandemics;
- to reinforce EU-NATO and other regional security partnerships to ensure synergy in their responses to crises;
- to preserve defence spending targets to allow armed forces to respond to future crises and deliver on expectations in the defence sector.