



Picture: Armed Forces Disabled Veterans Association in Lisbon ADFA, 2017



Stop the war: Trade Unions for peace!  
#SolidarityWithUkraine

**PREPARED BY**

*EUROMIL*

# MAIN OBJECTIVE AND GOALS

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The aim of this project is to assess the situation regarding veterans in the Southern EUROMIL member countries and what supports and legislation are in place to help this group enter back into civilian society, if any, in order to gain a fuller understanding of the challenges facing veterans and to hopefully identify elements of best practices that can be shared amongst EUROMIL members. The countries that will be focused on are Greece, Spain, Italy, Cyprus, Malta and Portugal. The project will explore the following issues:

- The definition of 'veteran' in each country;
- Identify whether formal/informal supports exist for veterans entering into civilian society;
- Identify what legislation is in place governing these supports (if any);
- Identify the main challenges for veterans entering back into civilian society;
- Identify context specific challenges within these countries (for instance, relating to cultural norms); and
- To identify examples of good practice within these countries.



# OVERVIEW

## Definition of 'Veteran'

There is no unanimous definition of 'veteran.' The concept varies across a number of European countries with some not defining them at all. The length and type of service often plays a role in the definition, including whether personnel have experience in missions and operations abroad, combat or non-combat. Often, benefit packages and access to care are linked to veteran status. Generally, the more exclusive the definition of 'veteran', the more generous the benefits are that this group enjoys. For the purposes of this project, the term veteran will be used in its broadest sense and describes all those who served in their national armed forces for any period of time. This broad definition is used so that we can ensure we get as wide a picture as possible of the national situation.



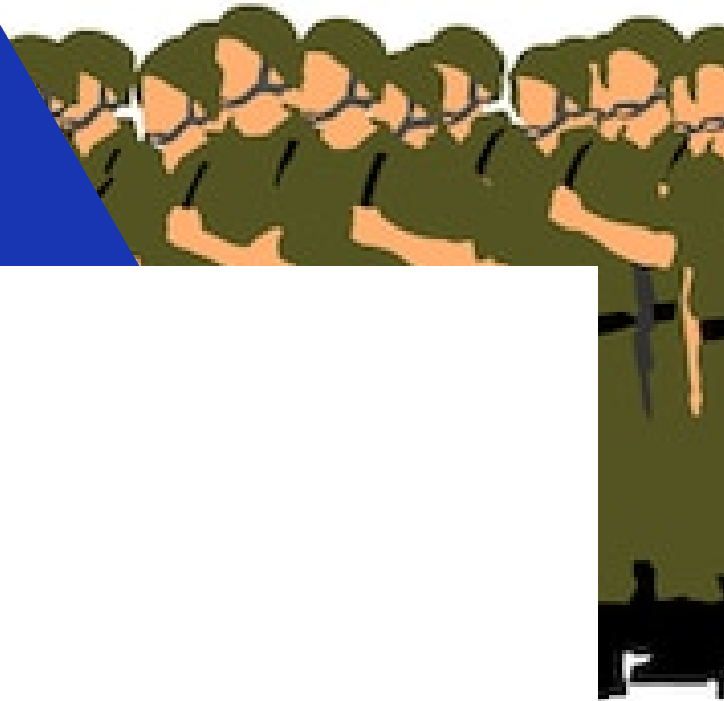
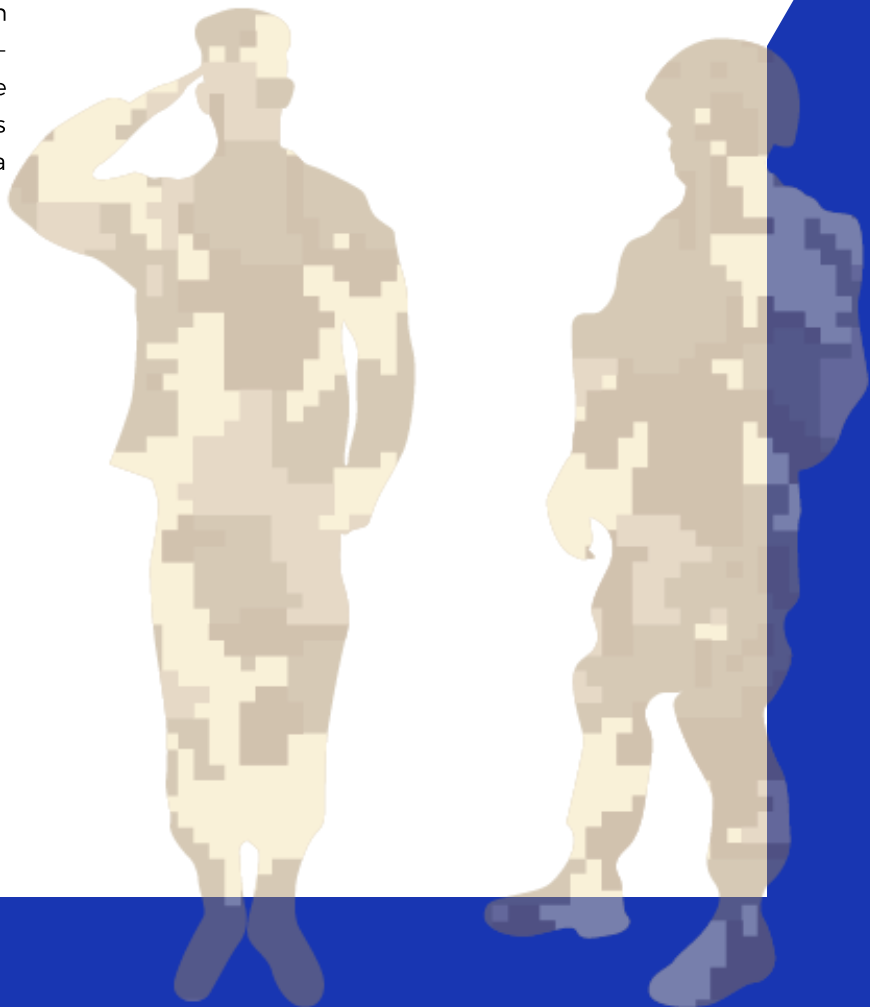
## EUROMIL Position Paper 2020

In our 2020 Position Paper on Veterans, we highlighted how the institutional framework differs from country to country, usually with the following structures in place:

- Veteran Ministries or a department in the Ministry of Defence;
- Armed Forces structures dealing with veterans;
- Veteran associations; Professional associations and trade unions; and
- Civil society organisations, including peer support initiatives. EUROMIL wishes to explore the structures in place providing support for veterans as they transition back into civilian society, specifically in its Southern member countries. Transitioning periods are a particularly challenging time for all members of society however little is known about veterans' experiences after service and their attempts to integrate into their 'new' society.

# OVERVIEW

In addition, veterans experience very specific issues relating to their transition from the workplace to society in comparison to civilian workers. To recall the 2020 Position Paper again, the armed forces - and in a broader sense the governments - have a duty of care as an employer for their employees, be it in the military or civil service. Military service can, due to the nature of the military profession including missions and operations abroad, leave military personnel physically or mentally wounded. Psychological and mental health problems can especially occur after deployment - sometimes even years after the military service ended. Caring for its personnel after retirement is thus a key task of the armed forces.

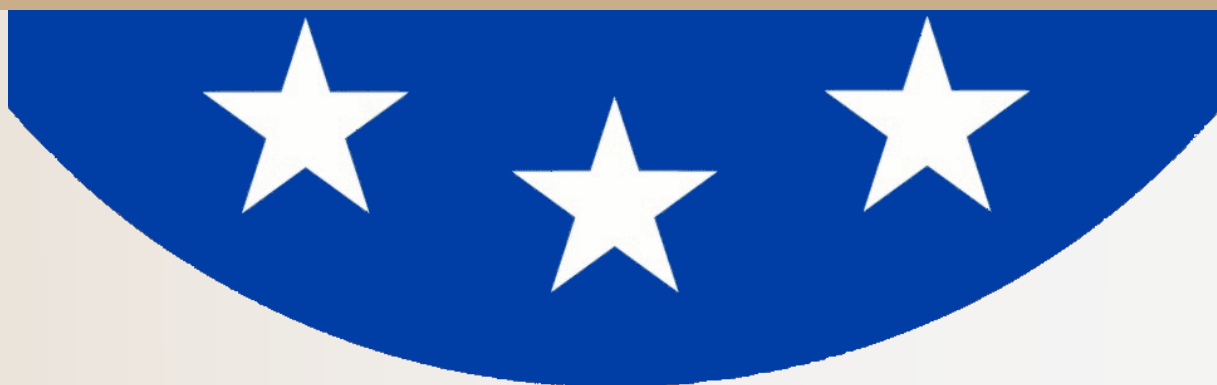




**Military unions and representative associations can play an important role in achieving just and favourable working conditions and providing support for veterans. They are essential for developing a strategy to improve working conditions and care within the military. Military unions and representative associations act on behalf of soldiers to identify and raise awareness of existing problems and can assist with the adoption and implementation of legislation.**



**COMPENDIUM OF STANDARDS, GOOD PRACTICES AND RECOMMENDATIONS**  
Emmanuel Jacob (Chapter 15: Working Conditions and Support for Veterans)



### Who is a veteran?

For historical and cultural reasons, the definition of a “veteran” varies among OSCE participating States (see Box 15.5). This has implications for service personnel in terms of the benefits they are entitled to receive after leaving the armed forces. The definition of a veteran is usually determined by: (a) whether personnel served on active duty or as reserve forces; and (b) whether personnel have conflict experience. Generally speaking, states that adopt a more exclusive definition provide more generous benefits to their veterans.<sup>687</sup>

#### Box 15.5: Definitions of a veteran in selected OSCE participating States<sup>688</sup>

**Czech Republic:** The status of veterans is defined by law. A “war veteran” is a Czech citizen who has served as a member of the Armed Forces or civilian employee of the Ministry of Defence in a foreign mission for more than 90 days in a place of conflict, or for more than 360 days in non-conflict locations.

**Denmark:** The Veteran Policy defines a veteran as someone who has been deployed – as an individual or in a unit – in international operations for more than 28 consecutive days following a decision of the Danish Parliament, the Danish Government or a minister.

**Estonia:** A veteran is defined in policy as an Estonian citizen who: 1) has defended the state within the Estonian Defence Forces (EDF); 2) has participated in an international military operation or collective self-defence operation within the EDF; or 3) has obtained

<sup>686</sup> For more information, see: “Der Berufsförderungsdienst der Bundeswehr [The Vocational Promotion Service of the Bundeswehr]”, Bundeswehr website, <http://bfd.bundeswehr.de>.

<sup>687</sup> Christopher Dandeker, Simon Wessely, Amy Iversen, and John Ross, “What’s in a Name? Defining and Caring for ‘Veterans’: The United Kingdom in International Perspective”, *Armed Forces & Society*, Vol. 32, No. 2, January 2006, pp. 161-177.

<sup>688</sup> Responses to the ODIHR-DCAF 2018 questionnaire.

#### Human Rights of Armed Forces Personnel

a permanent disability while on duty in the EDF (at home or abroad).

**Finland:** Veterans are those who fought in World War II. They receive pensions and rehabilitation support. Those who have performed crisis management tasks also have veteran status. They receive the same benefits as service personnel if they are injured or killed on duty. Currently, there are around 15,000 former service personnel and around 45,000 veterans who have participated in crisis management operations.

**Latvia:** A veteran certificate is provided to those who have participated at least once in an international operation of the national Armed Forces.

**Norway:** A veteran is someone who has participated in international operations.

**Romania:** A veteran is defined as someone who took part in World War I or II, or who was deployed as a soldier in a UN mission. The Ministry of National Defence can grant veteran status on the basis of the relevant documentation.

**Sweden:** There is no legal definition of a veteran. In the armed forces, a veteran is defined as someone who has been employed by the armed forces and has served as military or civilian personnel in a national operation or an international mission abroad (such as the UN, European Union or the OSCE).

**The United Kingdom:** A veteran is someone who has served for at least one day in the Armed Forces. There are an estimated 2.56 million veterans in the United Kingdom.



Definition

# WHAT IS A VETERAN?



[Read more](#)

Q Compendium on Human Rights



## Compendium on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Armed Forces Personnel chapter 15, on Veterans



The KEY question of this chapter is: who is a VETERAN?

In 2013, the German Minister of Defence, Thomas de Maizière, proposed defining veterans as personnel who have been honourably discharged from active service in the Bundeswehr and who were deployed abroad. The definition was never made legally binding, however, and the question remains as to who is considered a veteran and to which rights and obligations they are entitled.

CHAPTER 15 ON VETERANS, BY OSCE (COMPENDIUM ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS OF ARMED FORCES PERSONNEL)



Tip: Click on the links symbol to go to a different page inside the presentation to learn more about the topic.



**IN OTHER STATES, ONLY FORMER ARMED FORCES PERSONNEL WHO HAVE SERVED IN CONFLICTS OR CONFLICT CONDITIONS (SUCH AS PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS) QUALIFY AS VETERANS.**



## 01

### **NO FORMAL DEFINITION OF VETERANS**

Some states, including Austria, Germany and Lithuania, lack a formal definition of a veteran altogether.

## 02

### **STATES WITH FRAGMENTED LEGISLATION**

In some states, legislation on the definition of a veteran does not adequately address the situation of former armed forces personnel today. For example, in Bulgaria, a veteran is defined by law as “a person who, as a military official, has taken a direct part in combat operations during a war led by the Bulgarian State in defence of the national interests and the territorial integrity of Bulgaria.”<sup>691</sup> This definition includes those who fought in the two world wars, but not personnel deployed in more recent missions or operations such as Operation Althea (formerly the European Union Force Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR)). In such states, legislative changes – such as those introduced in Poland – are needed to clarify the status of former service personnel.



**“VETERANS: RE-ENTERING  
CIVILIAN LIFE AFTER  
SERVICE.”**

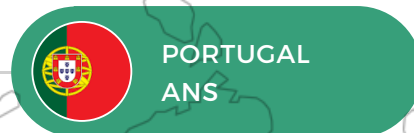
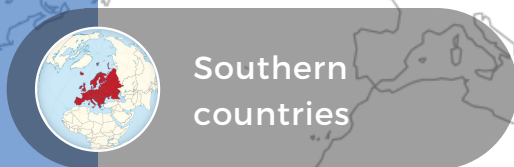


**SURVEY**

BY EUROMIL



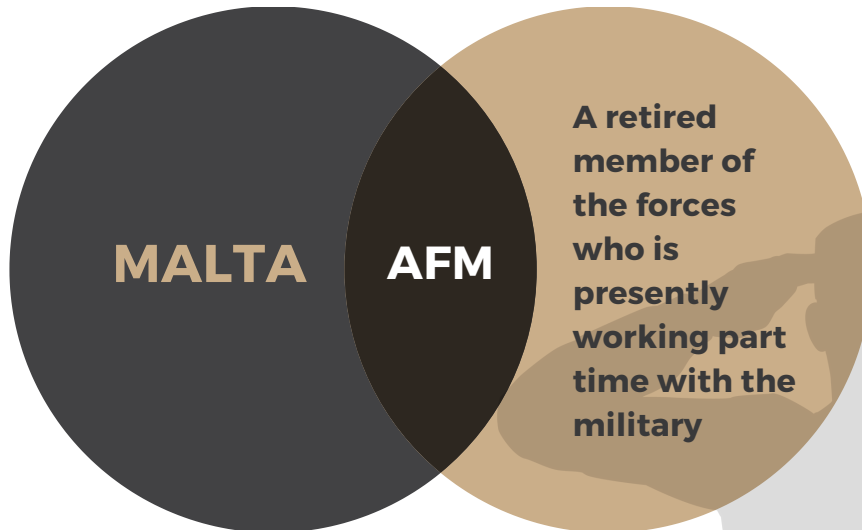
# COUNTRIES THAT HAVE PARTICIPATED IN THE SURVEY



# WHAT IS UNDERSTOOD BY THE TERM 'VETERAN' IN YOUR COUNTRY?

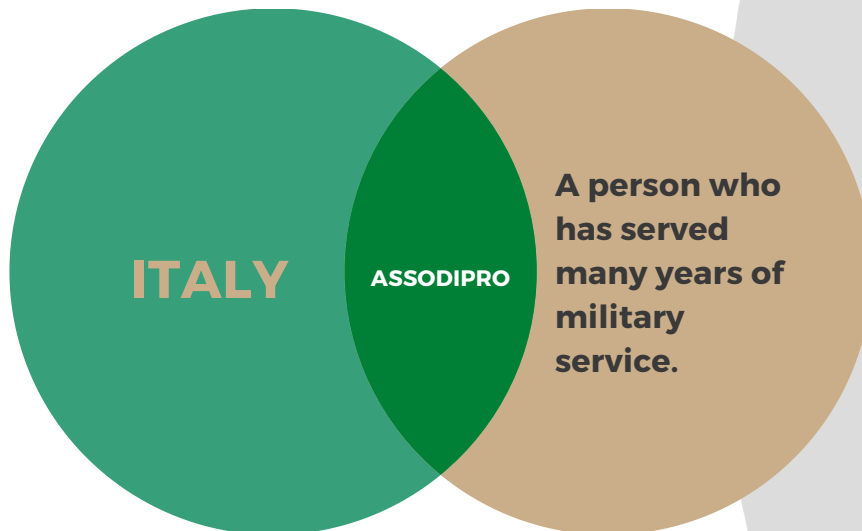


COUNTRY & MEMBER ASSOCIATION



Definition

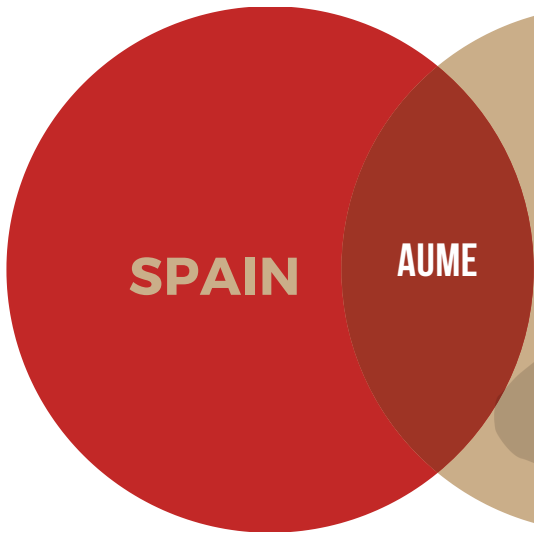
COUNTRY & MEMBER ASSOCIATION



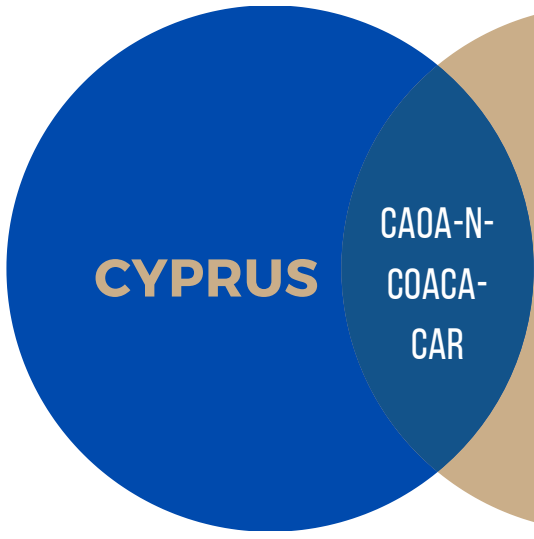
Definition



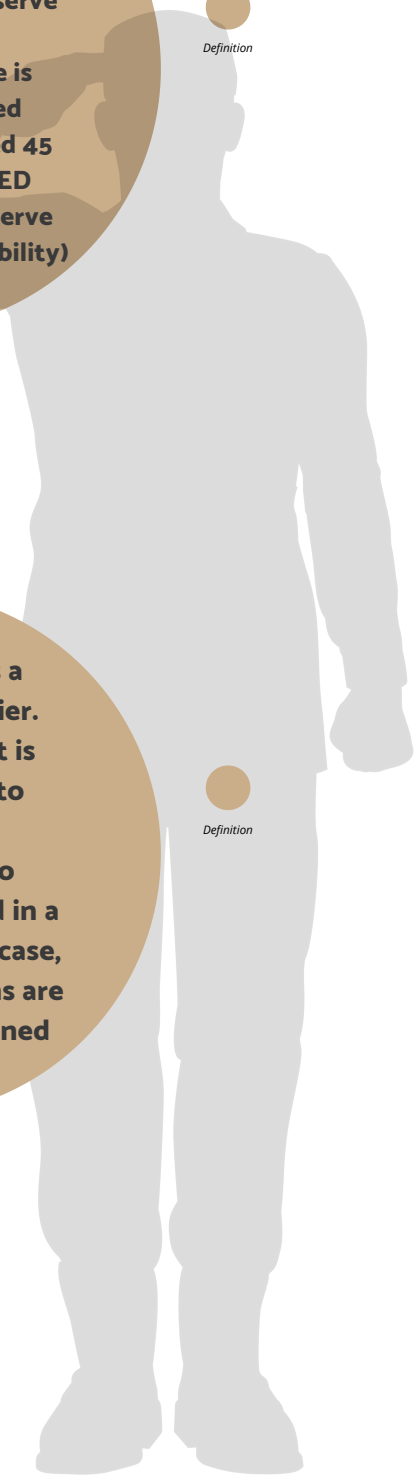
# WHAT IS UNDERSTOOD BY THE TERM 'VETERAN' IN YOUR COUNTRY?



People who have served long years in the Armed Forces and are retired, or in a special reserve situation. A particular case is that of Enlisted personnel aged 45 declared on RED situation (Reserve Special Availability)



A veteran is a retired soldier. The concept is often used to name the fighters who participated in a war: In this case, war veterans are also mentioned



# WHAT IS UNDERSTOOD BY THE TERM 'VETERAN' IN YOUR COUNTRY?



COUNTRY & MEMBER ASSOCIATION

**PORTUGAL**

**ANS**

We have a very specific situation derived from 13 years of colonial wars (1961/1974) and some people tend to define as veterans those who participated on those wars (mainly in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau). However, there is now a discussion because the inclusion on the "veterans" of those who participated in UN, EU, NATO more recent missions.

Definition

COUNTRY & MEMBER ASSOCIATION

**GREECE**

**P.FE.AR.F.U.**

The term veteran is not officially used, however we could say that generally it is used to describe someone who has spent many years in the AF, meaning that his career was purely military.

Definition



# What supports exist for veterans in your country when they first leave the military?



## MALTA

They will get a pension (2/3 from their actual salary). If and when they retire after 25+ years of service, they may opt to work as part timers with the Army. If not, they can either leave or stay full time until the age of 55.

## ITALY

Nothing else than the pension.

## PORTUGAL

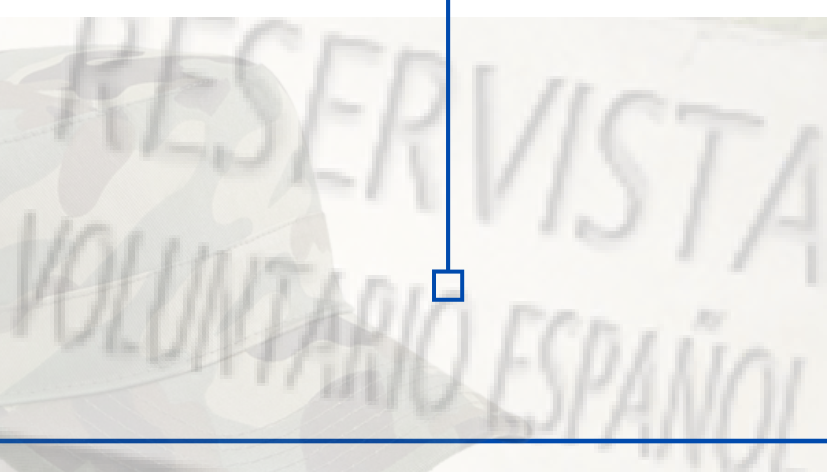
There are so many situations considered "veterans leaving the Armed forces", it is very difficult to give just one explanation. It depends on the condition and the situation on the veteran.

## SPAIN

On general terms, they are granted with all the provisions regarding military social assistance (facilities, medical support, social funds, etc.)

## CYPRUS

Regarding the financial benefits of the retired soldiers, these receive pension or allowances according to the relevant legislation of the Republic of Cyprus. The government of the Republic of Cyprus also decided on 2018 to provide a supplementary small allowance in order to honour those who fought during the 1974 war (Turkish Invasion in Cyprus). Regarding the psychological support however there is not any dedicated government authority (i.e a specific department in Ministry of Defence) to support veterans to re-enter the civilian life after the termination of their military service.



## WHAT ARE THE MAIN CHALLENGES THAT EXIST FOR VETERANS ENTERING BACK INTO CIVILIAN LIFE?



### MALTA

Not being qualified to civil standards.



### ITALY

Try to reach a quiet time to enjoy your retirement.



### SPAIN

Personnel on RED situation (Reserve Special Availability) get a monthly payment on regular basis guaranteed until retire (around 700euros) and support to study and promotion on civilian labor.



### CYPRUS

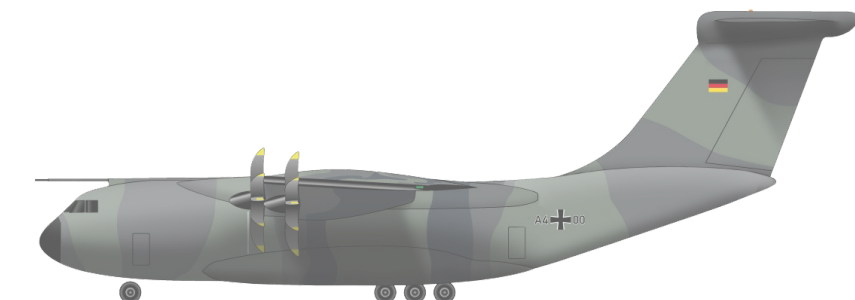
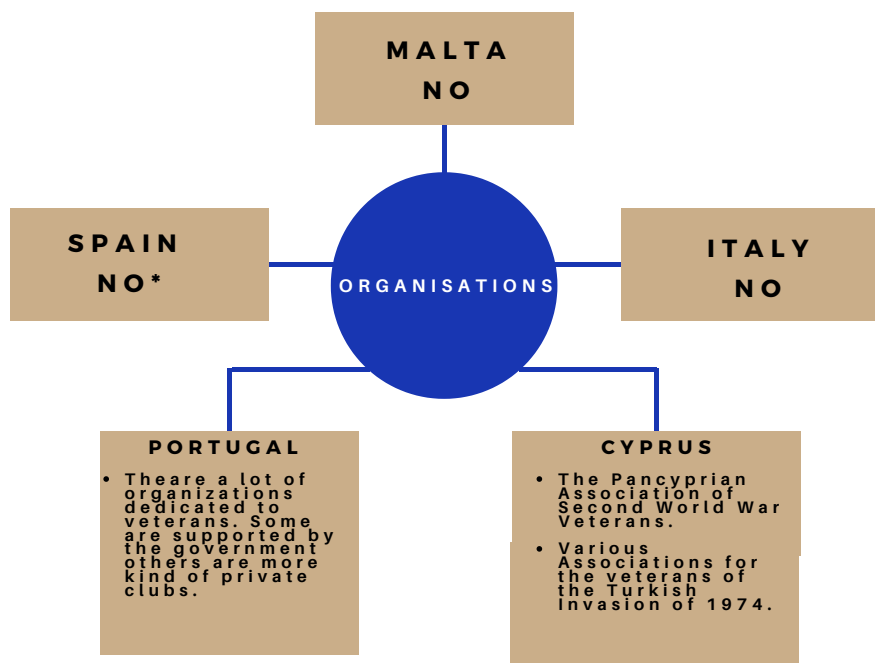
Some of the main challenges that exist for veterans returning to civilian life are mental illness and substance abuse, psychological problems, health problems and problem after captivity.



### PORTUGAL

The older veterans do not have the conditions to "entering back in civilian life". For the "new veterans" the situation is not easy, even though the legislation states that they could be integrated in civilian life. One of the problems is the recognition of skills.

# Is there a specific organisation dedicated to veterans in your country? How well does it work on the ground?



\*Actually, there is not organisation on the moD chart. There is a traditional association nomined Real Hermandad de Veteranos de las Fuerzas Armadas y la Guardia Civil. Membership of this association is on voluntary basis, currently it is not very representative into the military and considered right-wing oriented.



# How does society receive veterans generally when they enter back into society? (e.g. are they respected)

## MALTA

As trusted individuals

## ITALY

Respected as the other citizens

## SPAIN

Since it is a small collective, there is not real impact on Spanish society. Rather, indifference predominates.

## PORTUGAL

It depends the kind of veteran and the kind of civil society department.

## CYPRUS

There is the absolute respect and various events are held in honor of the veterans. Exhibitions are held on their action in the war and books have been published dedicated to their contribution to the wars (WWII and 1974). In Nicosia there is a Monument to the Fallen of the Second World War and there are also several monuments of those who fought in the Turkish invasion of 1974 where wreaths are laid.


# “Is the term veteran defined in legislation?”


## Survey results

**MALTA** 



**NO**

**CYPRUS** 



**YES\***

**SPAIN** 



**NO**

**SOUTHERN COUNTRIES**



**GREECE** 



**NO**

**ITALY** 



**NO**

**PORTUGAL** 

The term is "antigos combatentes". The legislation that publishes this condition is the Law number 46/2020 of 20AUG (Lei nº 46/2020 de 20 de Agosto)

\*Yes, there is legislation on the Recognition of the Contribution of Cypriot Volunteers during the Second World War. Also on the basis of this law in 2003 regulations for the Operation of a Committee for the Establishment and Maintenance of a Register of Cypriot Volunteers of the Second World War were enacted.

**Is there specific legislation governing the supports in place for veterans in your country? If yes, is it specific to veterans or to all members of society?**



BY EUROMIL SURVEY

**PORTUGAL** 

There are some social assistance support within the armed forces but it is not enough to all veterans

**SPAIN** 

No general regulation. Every service (Army, Navy, Air Force) has its own regulations on honorary matter and social & institutional support of veterans' collective

**ITALY** 

No

**GREECE** 

No answer

**MALTA** 

No. Apart from the 2/3 pension till the age of 65. Then they will benefit from the civilian pension only

**CYPRUS** 

Unfortunately we did not find any information about this issue.

# Is data about veterans well documented?

**MALTA**



**No**

**ITALY**



**No**

**SPAIN**



Military records of the veterans are preserved into the historic archives. Except for personnel on RED situation (Reserve Special Availability), veterans are no longer under the control of the Armed Forces, and consequently no documented.

**CYPRUS**



Yes, the data on veterans are documented by the Committee for the Establishment and Maintenance of a Register of Cypriot Volunteers of the Second World War and the Pancyprian Association of Prisoners of War of 1974.

**PORTUGAL**



Yes, in the Veterans department at the MOD and in some of the biggest organizations that support veterans.



# More information



## CYPRUS

With more than 20 thousand volunteers, Greek Cypriots, Turkish Cypriots, Armenians, Maronites and Latins, Cyprus is by comparison the first country in the world in voluntary participation proportion to the population. The price of this participation was heavy. In 10 concentration camps in Central Europe, 2.500 thousand Cypriot prisoners had been held until the end of the war. Six hundred had been killed and their graves are in 56 military cemeteries in 16 countries in Europe and the Middle East.

### 1974 CONFLICT.

It is estimated that the number of prisoners of war in 1974 was 2.467 of whom 40% died without making use of the free medical care provided by the relevant legislation. There are currently 731 prisoners of war registered in the register of prisoners.

In 2008 the government passed a law that gave some benefits to prisoners of war. This law, however, was never implemented with the exception of the law which concerned the free medical care of their captives and dependants. This law, in 2013 was repealed in the context of the economic crisis.

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## PORTUGAL

Portugal can be a "case of study" concerning veterans and the complexity of this subject in our society.

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## GREECE

In essence, the Greek armed forces, although participating in international and European missions, do not have an active role in combat missions. They are mainly engaged in peace support operations and other support services.

In Greece there are associations of retired officers who deal exclusively with these issues.

"Veteran" status have also those who fought in the Second World War, the Korean War and Cyprus during the Turkish invasion in 1974. For these categories there is a special care and benefits from the State.

One solution to ensuring there are better supports for veterans is by looking at what is happening in other countries, both within the EU and further afield. As part of this study, EUROMIL identified some international programmes that are worth investigating in the context of implementing similar projects within EUROMIL members' countries.

## PROGRAMMES CURRENTLY OPERATING IN THE USA & EUROPE





# CONCLUSIONS





# SWOT

## STRENGTHS

- Advanced medicine/research/ technologies.
- Employee training/education,

## WEAKNESSES

- Shortage of funding.
- Delays in treatment

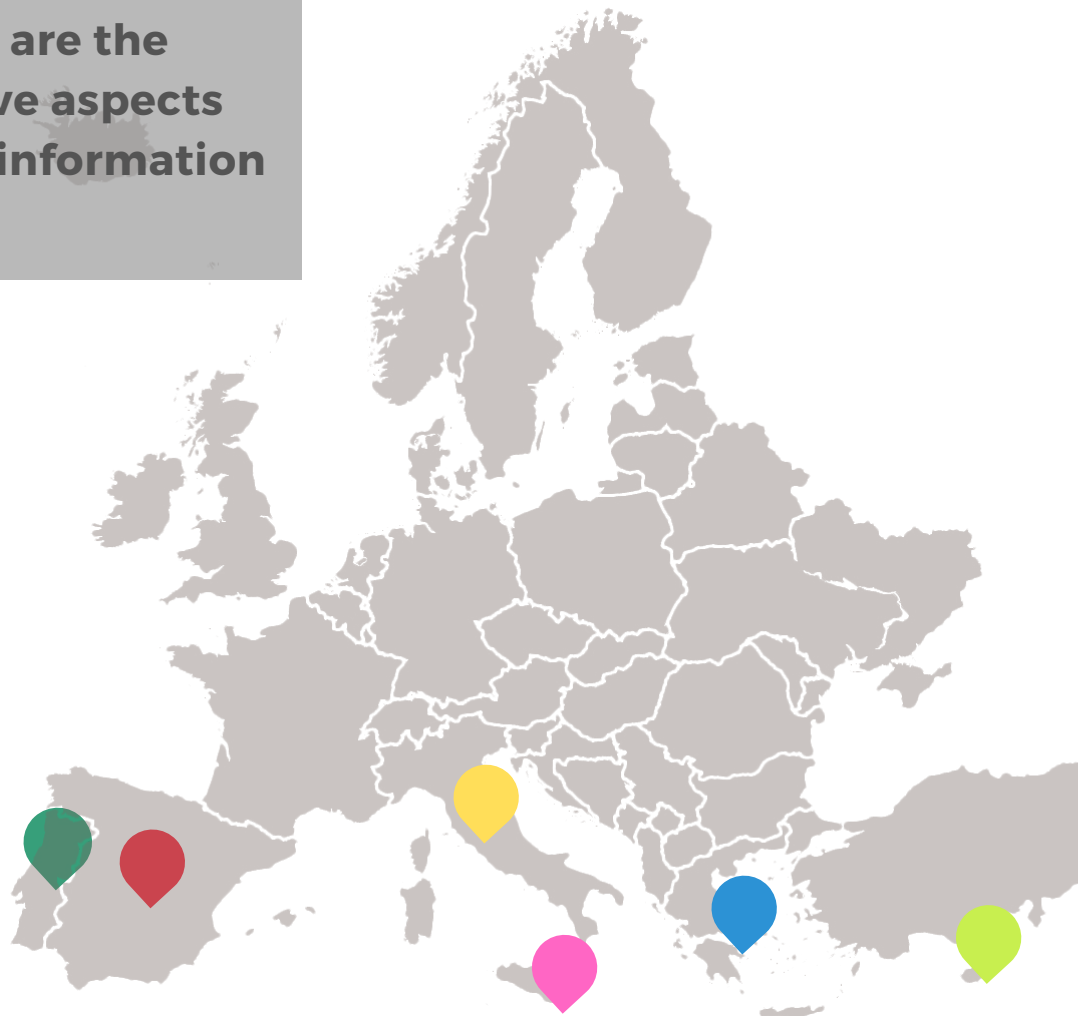
## OPPORTUNITIES

- Media influence to implement policy change.
- Access to government funding.

## THREATS

- Budget shortage for health care.

**Observations: What are the positive and negative aspects identified from the information provided?**





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# Conclusions

## "VETERANS: RE-ENTERING CIVILIAN LIFE AFTER SERVICE

Although only a snapshot of the situation in Southern Europe, this report highlights some key prevailing issues that remain to be addressed.

What is clear is that policies concerning veterans are varied and lacklustre across Europe. The first issue is that the concept of 'veteran' remains undefined. As has been seen amongst the country group in this report, the term is not always legally defined thus leaving a very unclear picture as to who exactly should fall under the title of veteran. Without a clear legal basis across the EU, it is impossible to ensure that there are adequate protections in place for veterans when they leave the military and re-enter back into civilian life. An EU wide approach to this would undoubtedly help in ensuring there are better supports for personnel on leaving their military career. Many individuals leaving the military will struggle with issues such as physical and psychological injuries, positioning themselves as 'civilians', lack of transferable qualifications and so on. Without appropriate support, these issues can only fester and worsen. Although an outlier in the group, Portugal highlighted the prevalence of groups dedicated to veterans. With groups like these, working in tandem with national and public services, veterans are better positioned to express their needs through the right channels, as well as seek out social supports from their peers who may have similar experiences.

Soldiers across Europe are more and more working alongside one another and engaging in the same tasks and duties and with that, the same risks. A first step towards better protection for veterans would be for a harmonise approach across EU member states, with appropriate legislation to back it up.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to all the participants from the **Southern Countries** for having committed to this report and for having provided EUROMIL with the necessary information to be able to continue defending the rights of our citizens in uniform. Your generosity and effort in collecting information is greatly appreciated.

- AFM, Malta.
- ASSODIPRO, Italy.
- AUME, Spain.
- CAOAN-COACA-CAROA, Cyprus.
- ANS, Portugal
- P.FE.AR.F.U, Greece.

*Thank you for all your support and effort  
in fighting for the rights of our citizens in  
uniform.*



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THANKS FOR THE SUPPORT

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