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Affiliate:

to the Professional Union of the Public Force (SPFP)
to the General Confederation of Public Service (CGFP)

SPAL – Meeting with " The Greens "

Recently, representatives of the largest army union SPAL met with representatives of the "Dé Greng" party. In a one-hour exchange, the union representatives were able to express their current main concerns.

The volunteer soldier has been the backbone of the Luxembourg armed forces for decades. For a few years, however, legal questions have arisen again and again in relation to the statute and employment law questions. Furthermore, the recruitment of volunteer soldiers has noticeably stalled in recent years, and the new army law has not changed much. The union representatives reported on a petition they recently received. In it, two thirds of the volunteer soldiers expressed their displeasure about their statutory situation and the loss of eight days off during the "reconversion phase". In the discussion it became clear that there is an urgent need for action and that the current system is reaching its limits in many respects and appears hopeless. In times when the demands on the soldiers are becoming more and more complex and the army is becoming more and more technical, it seems that a change is urgently needed!

Recently, the head of the army said in an RTL interview that Luxembourg had to become "resilient" and in this context brought conscription into play. This topic was also discussed and the SPAL representatives explained their view that one should not close oneself to a possible military service would In such a project, no stages may be skipped; which in the eyes of the union representatives means that the issue of the reserve army must be dealt with first! All present agreed that

for any reserve, infrastructure, material and a concept must first be available. You can buy a lot with money, but the necessary manpower and the necessary drumming is unfortunately not currently available. In the upcoming challenges to the Luxembourg army, every man is indispensable!

A final major point of discussion was the so-called RICO law sent to the courts by the previous minister. Here, the army representatives explained that this text is primarily a breach of contract to the "Accord relative sur le temps de travail et de repos dans l'Armée" of July 2019.

The main problem is the massive deterioration for all uniformed personnel. Attempts were made to compensate for the reductions in overtime by means of financial compensation, with the State Council questioning the tax exemption of this compensation in its opinion. Should it happen that the army members are taxed here, this would be a disaster for the union representatives.

There would therefore not only be reductions in overtime, some of them also fall under the remuneration negotiated in 2019. There was consensus that it would probably be time to revise the text once more. However, what currently worries the union representatives the most is the manner in which these compensations will be applied in the future: it seems that the upcoming law will be used to camouflage the acute staff shortage.

This is not in accordance with the law, so all involved agreed!

Afterwards, there was an outlook on the creation of the Bi-national battalion (Belgium-Luxembourg) which will be stationed in Arlon. Politicians and trade union representatives were in agreement here as well: planned personnel cannot be in Diekirch and Arlon at the same time. The union representatives stressed that any double functions, i.e. people who would have a job in both locations, would be detrimental to attractiveness, family life and ultimately work-life balance. Even if the current recruitment numbers for the professional military are on target, it would not be enough to vote for future retirements and the battalion. On the contrary: various training courses take years and so it is rather unlikely that the ranks in Arlon and Diekirch will be filled by the deadline in 2030. In addition, and thus the circle was closed, a statutory problem concerning the volunteer soldiers: Currently there are

no legal basis that allows permanently stationing or sending soldiers abroad.