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Recommendation of EUROMIL to OSCE Participating States on Freedom of Association for Military Personnel

Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2016

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The European Organisation of Military Associations (EUROMIL) is an umbrella organisation composed of 35 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.

EUROMIL,

- recalls that the right to associate, together with other civil and political rights, is intrinsic to democratic societies and expressly recognized in OSCE commitments, as well as all major international and regional human rights instruments;
- supports the concept of "Citizen in Uniform" – that a soldier is entitled to the same rights and obligations as any other citizen;
- reminds the recommendations made by the OSCE/ODIHR and DCAF in chapter 9 on "Military Unions and Associations" in the "Handbook on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Armed Forces Personnel" (2008);
- refers to article K of the Recommendation on "Human rights of members of the armed forces" of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (2010);
- regrets that some countries continue to prohibit armed forces personnel from exercising the right to set up and join trade-unions and professional associations;



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- 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.