



NEWS

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Security has a social dimension

NEW CHALLENGES, NEW RESPONSES

The philosopher Søren Kierkegaard once observed that “life must be understood backward. But... it must be lived forward.” This applies to more than one’s own life: EUROMIL’s 102nd Presidium Meeting in October 2010 featured workshops dealing with topics which can only be understood in a continuous historical perspective: Budget cuts in defence spending, International Humanitarian Law and the question of an EU Military Fundamental Rights Officer (see p. 13-16 in this issue of EUROMIL News). Living forward, the EUROMIL family celebrated the admission of two new members with observer status (Associação de Praças and National Alliance of Albanian Military Associations) and one new full membership (Military Order of Romania), thus increasing its total membership to a new historical peak (39).

At the same time the challenges are daunting. Germany, for example, will suspend conscription in 2011, a turning point whose repercussions will be felt in the coming years. In some countries soldiers still feel treated as second-class citizens. The crisis persists. No wonder that soldiers respond more and more by demonstrating in the streets. They did so, for instance, at the huge ETUC demonstration in Brussels on 29 September (p. 12), the AUME demonstration in Madrid on 16 October (p. 11-12) and most recently the impressive demonstration (PASTRENGO/PSD) in Rome on 2 December (see report in the next issue of EUROMIL News). To get new insights into what kind of challenges military associations face nowadays, read the articles on the Dutch and Danish cases in this issue and you will grasp how proactive responses can look like.

At the European level we finally notice with impatience the laborious birth of the European External Action Service (EEAS) whose senior managers were appointed on 1 December 2010 and which should be operational early next year. As Alexander Stubb, Finland’s foreign minister put it “the EEAS is a fantastic Christmas present for the EU and we need it badly”. Another Christmas present represents the slightly over-hyped “New Strategic NATO-concept” (adopted at the summit in Lisbon on 19-20 November). The packaging looks fine but as Winston Churchill once remarked “however beautiful the strategy seems to be, you should occasionally look at

the result.” Whether it really marks a turning point, history will tell but one aspect merits attention: The willingness of NATO to revive the NATO-Russia relationship as a “true strategic partnership” (including the respect of democratic principles) might provide a future-oriented foundation for a bridge towards a new pan-European structure of security and stability. With regard to Russia, however, we should “be critical, not hypocritical” (The Economist) as the interview with Oleg Schvedkov, the President of ITUS, in the current issue of EUROMIL News (p. 4-7) confirms when intentions and “strategic” declarations are checked against – a somewhat brutal - reality and compared to everyday life and struggle of soldiers in Russia.

An already existing solid foundation for bridge building could be used and filled with real life at the 12th Conference of the Military Interest Protection Group within the Visegrad Four Group when presenting and discussing the different military pension systems in place in Europe (p. 9-11) – a key topic which will be further explored in a comparative approach at a workshop during our Presidium in Stockholm in April 2011.

Building bridges is also the leitmotiv of two other articles the reader will find in the current issue. Firstly, the visit of a small delegation of the Azerbaijan Public Association on Security and Defence (APASD) in Brussels organised by the EUROMIL Office (p. 17). Secondly, the fascinating and marvellous story of “marching for peace

and international understanding” (p.17-18) unfolded by LtCdr Marc Boiting (German Naval Reserve), culminating in the phrase “MISSION ACCOMPLISHED – another bridge-building job done”. What is past is more than prologue. It is essential for anyone wanting to understand how today’s world was created.



“20km de Paris”: EUROMIL took up the challenge

Gerhard Ahlbrecht
Secretary General

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INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS

BACK FROM URUZGAN TO A NEW DUTCH CABINET

... AND NOW?

BY: KOOS STAUTHAMER, AFMP/FNV, THE NETHERLANDS, AND JERRY HART

Koos Stauthamer is a Board member of AFMP/FNV in the Netherlands and a Major in the Dutch Army. Jerry Hart is an independent security, risk & intelligence consultant based in the UK and a former lecturer in security management at the University of Leicester's Scarman Centre (now Department of Criminology) where Major Stauthamer was one of his students. They continued to collaborate after Stauthamer's graduation, working on various projects with a focus on the security and welfare of military and other security personnel.

In an article in issue 14 of the EUROMIL News, the chairman of the AFMP/FNV ended with a strong statement paying tribute to the way the Dutch soldiers did their job in Afghanistan. The Dutch Chief of Defence, General van Uhm, was equally clear about the diverse and complex nature of their role. He said that although Dutch military personnel were involved in heavy fighting during the early stages, "the real battle was the fight for the hearts and minds of the population". Although their military presence is no more, the Dutch will continue to support the Government of Afghanistan through aid programs in education, health care and agriculture. This forms a component of the 3D concept that the Netherlands uses: Defence, Diplomacy and Development.

Dutch military involvement in Afghanistan ended in Uruzgan on 1 August 2010. It will take a while for all the troops and equipment to return to Dutch soil, and it is too early to state that all Dutch troops have left the theatre. Moreover, almost 4000 containers of equipment and supplies have to be shipped back to the Netherlands within 24 weeks. This massive operation involves almost 700 soldiers and was initially estimated to cost 115 million euro. However, more recent predictions forecast that this will rise to 229 million euro. The true figure depends to some extent on the amount of equipment they will leave behind for those allies, who will take over their role in the mission area.

Many Dutch soldiers are uncertain about the future of the Dutch Ministry of Defence (MoD), and – perhaps more significantly – the future of their military careers. This may have something to do with the fact that many Dutch political parties in their recent election campaigns threatened with defence cuts ranging from 110 million euro up to 1.2 billion euro. Next to that, a specially convened government commission presented six options to reduce the Dutch forces. Where is all this going to end? The Dutch soldier does not know at this moment, but we will try to shed further light on the topic later in this article.

In September, the Dutch Land Component Commander, Lieutenant General Rob Bertholee, stated in a national newspaper, that his brigades need more than two years to regain full operational capability. This is partly because the military modus operandi in Afghanistan – where soldiers typically leave the compound in platoons

of no more than forty soldiers – is on a different scale to the routine 'battalion-size' exercises commonly carried out in the Netherlands. Moreover, the ardours of the Afghanistan mission have left much of the equipment and vehicles in need of repair or replacement.

AFMP/FNV greatly appreciates the views of the Dutch Land Component Commander, although we wish he had spoken up sooner. AFMP/FNV has brought the financial state of our defence organisation to the attention of commanders and politicians many times. For its part, the defence establishment has stated earlier this

year that "there is insufficient budget to meet all the needs of the operational commands. This means that not all the requested clothing and personal equipment is ready and available to be delivered to the soldiers." In addition, a chronic shortage of ammunition has left us with only enough bullets to carry out basic weapons training. We have called on the Dutch politicians to take measures to end this situation as soon as possible.

The Dutch military unions took some unique steps to directly address the problems that military

and civilian MoD personnel currently face, including setting up a special website www.defensieinactie.nl - "Defence in Action". In addition, the action committee produced a questionnaire in which they asked union members six questions. These were: 1) What do you think about the fact that pay has not been adjusted in line with inflation? 2) Do you receive your salary and any reimbursements in good time? 3) Are you able to attend / follow all required training courses? 4) Is your clothing and personal equipment in a fit state for use? 5) Are you still able to do your work safely? 6) Do you still think your future career will be within the Dutch defence organisation?

There is now a new Dutch cabinet, which means that since 14 October 2010, we have a new Minister of Defence. In a diverse and interesting career, Hans Hillen has worked as a teacher, journalist, information officer and Member of the House of Representatives. In the period 2003 -2007, he was Head of the Health Care Insurance Board and subsequently became a member of the Senate. Both as an MP and as a senator, Hillen has had defence in his portfolio. A further new development is the fact that he will not enjoy the assistance of a state secretary, which means that Hillen will also have the material and personnel portfolios under his care.



Dutch soldiers briefing in Afghanistan, Photo: AFMP/FNV

The Minister of Defence is faced with new reductions in the defence budget. AFMP/FNV concludes that the foreseen 625 million euro reductions will have a serious impact on the operational capabilities of the Dutch military forces and we envisage that more than 4000 jobs will be lost in the coming years. Further, the coalition agreement motioned budget-cuts will also have their effect on the operational capabilities, such as discontinuation of a light infantry battalion, a 50 per cent reduction in the Patriot rocket air defence capability, 50 per cent reduction in naval patrol vessels and a reduction in the number of fighter aircrafts - which could result in the loss of another military airbase, following the recent closure of the bases at Twente and Soesterberg.

It is the opinion of the chairman and the board of the AFMP/FNV that no other conclusion can be drawn than mentioned earlier:

reductions in the workforce will have a serious impact on the capabilities and readiness of the Dutch forces. This will have a knock-on effect on the availability of Dutch military personnel for civil assistance in the Netherlands with the consequence that, in the event of a disaster or serious threat to our security, the safety of the Dutch population cannot be guaranteed.

It is also our opinion that, despite these severe cuts, the new Dutch cabinet hopes to maintain the same levels of performance of our forces in the fight against drugs, terrorism, illegal immigration and piracy. AFMP/FNV strongly feels that these aspirations are wholly untenable unless the proposed cuts are abandoned in favour of an extra budget allocation of 625 million euro. ■

THE CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

OUR SACRED DUTY: TO DEFEND THE DEFENDERS OF THE MOTHERLAND

INTERVIEW BY VLADIMIR MUCHIN

The All Russian Trade Union of Servicemen (ITUS) was established on January 17, 1992 at the Constituent Conference in the near Moscow town Saltykovka. 60 delegates from 54 Subjects of the Russian Federation participated. Today ITUS includes 71 regional organisations. At the conference the ITUS Charter as well as aims and tasks of the union were adopted, leading bodies were elected. ITUS is one of the few public trade union organisations that permanently grow. All servicemen, who need assistance in defence of their social and professional rights, may address the ITUS Central Committee in Moscow and ITUS Regional Committees.

According to ITUS Charter, membership is open to every Russian citizen, who serves in the armed forces by contract or was discharged from the military service, including citizens employed by or retired from the Interior state service of the Russian Federation, the state security service, federal customs service, federal tax police, courts and prosecution offices as well as their family members who have reached 14 years of age.

Oleg Schvedkov was born on June 24, 1957 into the family of a submarine officer. In 1974 he entered the Kiev Naval college. After graduating, he served on different posts in the 4th submarine squadron of the northern fleet. 1987 he was assigned as deputy commander of a nuclear submarine. From 1993 until 1996 he served as deputy commander of the nuclear submarine division of the northern fleet.

In 1993, Oleg Schvedkov established the first organisation of ITUS in the northern fleet. In 1994 he became the chairman of the Murmansk provincial committee of ITUS. In August 1996 he was elected chairman of the executive committee of the Moscow urban organisation of ITUS. Since 2001 he is elected chairman of ITUS. He is married and has two daughters.



The number of violations of rights of servicemen for the last two years increased considerably. The chairman of the All Russian Trade Union of Servicemen (ITUS) Oleg Schvedkov considers that the state and the society have considerable debts to the people entrusted with the defence and security of the country.

Q. Mr. Schvedkov, lately the reform of the army and law enforcement structures and thus the aggravation of the problems of the social situation of military servicemen and Ministry of Interior officials are at the centre of attention of the society. Do you think that these problems have been blown up by mass media and politicians, or are they real?

A. Unfortunately, the massive steps in restructuring the army and navy as well as the reform of the Ministry of Interior prevent the authorities to focus on deficits in material and social provisions for active and retired military personnel and officials of law enforcement bodies.

Let me concentrate on the problems of the army. Almost immediately after the reform begun, the officers' corps was reduced by more than half, and the posts of ensigns/officers cadets in the army and the sub-lieutenants in the navy were abolished. As a result we witness dozens and (if you include families) hundreds of thousand of military personnel with uncertain future prospects. According to our information, more than

70.000 officers were taken out of the permanent staff and are now without specific tasks at the general disposal of the command, among them a considerable number of most recent graduates from the military education and training institutes. It is uncertain, if they will find proper posts – or find any place in the army at all.

The Ministry of Defence admits, that a quarter of the graduates of military higher educational institutions, now serve as sergeants. This is an injustice, because when these young men signed the contracts at the educational institutions, they were assured by the state, that after the graduation they will be instituted as officers according to their military profile. Therefore, I believe

that they are entitled to defend their rights and demand from the state appropriate conditions of military service. A small number of soldiers try to fight for their rights. Yet, the absolute majority leave the service without complaint or expect to get the promised positions from their commanders as a “charity”.

We are most concerned with the problems of material provision of soldiers and their housing problems. According to our information, about 60.000 officers did not yet receive authorisation for accommodation. Yet, experience from the previous year shows that formally they could be provided with authorisation for unfinished houses.

Another major concern of ITUS is the situation of retired military personnel. Prime Minister Vladimir Putin declared recently that the average pension in the country will be increased in 2011 from 8100 (195 euro) to 8600 Roubles (205 euro). Yet, according to official information, the average pension of an retired officer (captain/major) is a little more than 7000 Roubles (170 euro). And there is no improvement in sight. True, on 1 September 2010, the pension of each serviceman was increased by 760 – 900 Roubles (18 - 22 euro). But this is most certainly insufficient to compensate for the growing inflation.

According to our statistics, every second retired soldier is getting a pension less than the average of civil pensioners. The salary of a young officer is nowadays lower than the average wage in the country. Under such circumstances we doubt that the professional and social status of soldiers can be preserved.

Q. But this is apparently a temporary event. The Ministry of Defence promised several times to raise considerably the remuneration of professional servicemen and -women including retired military personnel. A special law on this subject is under preparation.

A. Yes, this project can be found on the website of the Ministry of Defence. But what are the results? According to the draft of the Federal law of 26 April 2010, “On the monetary allotment and other payments of servicemen of the armed forces of the Russian Federation” the payment of a platoon commander, according to his post (25000 Roubles - 600 euro) and according to his rank (10000 Roubles - 240 euro), should be 35000 Roubles (840 euro). But in reality this sum for a lieutenant is considerably less. In his Budget Address for 2011-2013 the President of the Russian Federation Dmitry Medvedev, did not announce these figures. He spoke only on the necessity to

increase the payment of military people (including the pensions for the retired) by 6.5 per cent. Again, this increase will not cover the inflation.

Q. But President Medvedev, in his address, prioritised the task to solve the housing problem of military personnel. He promised that all the servicemen who are currently without apartments would be provided with housing by 2012.

A. I already gave numbers on the problem. It is difficult to believe the promises of the state. But it is not only missing housing for soldiers, it is also the quality of the provided housing. Our legal service department at ITUS experienced a considerable increase in request for support of officers in regard to violations of their housing rights. The essence of these requests is that service personnel under discharge are offered housing below the standard prescribed by law. Such things happen in the town of Snegovaja Pad close to



Vladivostok. Additional to sub-standard accommodation, the housing for retired officers has been built on the polluted territory of the former navy arsenal.

In the worst case, the officer has the right to reject proposed housing. But then it is uncertain if he will get another offer. Currently there are housings constructed in a town called Primorie, reserved for military personnel serving in Kamchatka, Sakhalin, Kuril Islands, etc. Apartments there are in general ready for occupation. Yet, the fact that schools, kindergartens and shops will not be built there before end of 2011 constitutes a major problem for the future inhabitants of Primorie. Many officers will come with their families and children. According to our information there will be about 800 children not being able to receive basic education. Our trade union in Primorie is currently trying to contribute a quick solution to this problem.

Q. As I remember, your trade union

raised also other problems connected with housing. It seems you were the first concerned about the intention of the government to transfer the responsibility of managing former military towns from the municipalities to the military structures?

A. The decision of the government to provide the military authorities with additional powers in respect to former garrisons, testifies to the fact that the leadership of the country, as before, simply transfers many social problems to the command of the army - despite the understanding that this problem should rather be considered by the state. It is not a secret that the Ministry of Defence would like to realise many military housing projects on commercial bases. And unfortunately we have already negative examples of such activities.

Some media reported already, that part of the lands near the Moscow garrison in Nemchinovka was sold to private business. Now the command demands from those military personnel and their families, who currently live there, to move away. Our trade union strives to support and help these people. Unfortunately, neither the intention to appeal to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, nor the coverage of this injustice by the mass media could change the conduct of the air force command, owning the town in Nemchinovka. The military authorities continue to pressure the inhabitants - attempting to displace them. One cannot exclude that similar situation could arise in other regions of Russia.

Q. The problem of former military towns really exists. In the whole Russia there are no less than 8000 such towns. The local authorities simply do not have sufficient means to maintain them in a decent way. So, the government decided to give them under the authority of Ministry of Defence. What happens then?

A. Yes, the problem is rather complicated. Especially in smaller garrisons, neglected by higher authorities, where commanders can act as local “Tsar”, soldiers are denied their right of proper housing – authority there is clearly abused. In order to be able to privatise official apartments, soldiers are forced to remain in barracks or temporary quarters at the garrison rather than move to their allocated housing.

Q. Could you give some concrete examples?

A. Unfortunately, these cases are not rare. Two examples: By the orders of a Navy Commander of February 1, 2010 (№ 17) and from February 11, 2010 (№30) 10 senior officers are registered in the service premises. Their request for normal apartments was rejected. We try to help them

now. Another example; our legal service was addressed for help by a senior warrant officer Viktor Davydov. He and his son live in a service premises in the military town Primorsk in the region of Karaganda, Kazakhstan since he was transferred from Russia in the 1990s. After he served twenty years at this distant and isolated post, he was discharged without provision of housing in Russia. In spite of two protests at the garrison's military prosecution officer and corresponding decision of the military court in favour of Davydov, the man, who gave 35 years to the military, was not provided housing in Russia.

Q. But this is the system. It should be changed somehow. Military trade unions will not be able to solve problems of those garrisons.

A. I agree. It seems to us that in the course of military reforms the schemes of specially established federal programmes should be applied. These have to solve not only the housing problem of the former servicemen, but to develop comprehensively new prospects for the former military towns, i.e. to open new enterprises, to establish new working places.

Q. And what is the situation, from your point of view, with the protection of social aspects of servicemen of the Interior Forces¹ and employees of the Ministry of the Interior. Does your trade union defend their interests?

A. Certainly we are open and try to assist all connected to defence and security of our country. Though, the militia has its own organisations defending their rights. One of them is the "Inter region trade union of employees of the law enforcing bodies" (IRTEILDB). Together, we are the members of the "International Association of the trade unions of servicemen and employees of the law enforcing bodies". We help each other by exchanging experience but also work actively together to solve concrete common problems. This mutual assistance is of special value and productivity in the outer garrisons and districts.

Q. How acute are, from your point of view, the problems of Interior Forces?

A. At present time, the leaders of the country declare not without pride that in the current year there will be housing to all homeless servicemen and -women provided. But the situation in the Ministry of the Interior is very bad. According to our information, there are at present 83000 Militiamen and -women without apartments. Under current provisions the housing problem cannot

be solved in less than 40 years – and only for those personnel registered for housing before 1 March 2005. This is one problem the Interior Forces share with the army.

Q. Yes, the problems are really big. But how to solve them?

A. At the national/federal level ITUS, together with the IRTEILDB and other law enforcing organisations, carry out an extensive volume of activities with the aim to change the attitude of the state towards the problems of servicemen in practical terms. ITUS stands for reinstating the social provisions of military and militia personnel from before 2005. We demand an increase of wages and pensions, a just solution to the housing problem, and to re-establish the prestige of the military and militia service. Therefore, ITUS regularly issues inquiries and organises meetings with commanders as well as local officials. On many occasions we addressed the Chief Military Prosecution Office. In consequence, ITUS has signed a mutual co-operation agreement in 2010. Some cases are referred to court as last option to stop "the arbitrariness of commanders".

Q. Do you have statistics and numbers on activities of your trade union?

A. Certainly we have, and to certain degree it reflects the army's reality. Analysing the activities of our regional legal assistance departments, we see that the number of violations of the rights of servicemen has considerably increased for the last two years. In 2010 our legal assistance departments were addressed by approximately 13000 people. Half of these cases are connected to violations of housing rights of active and retired servicemen and their families. 40 per cent are regarding violations of military regulations, i.e. illegal activities of the commanders of military units. And about 10% are complaints about material and monetary allotment etc.

Q. Servicemen and -women on active duty are prohibited to participate in the meetings, demonstrations and protest actions organised by military trade unions. To what extent are activities of your organisation legal in Russia?

A. We are neither politicians nor extremists. Soldiers are not allowed to strike. Our task is not to draw service personnel to actions of protest, but to assist them in solving their social and professional problems. The legal base for our activities is article 30 of the Russian Federation Constitution stating that "everybody has the right of association, including the right to establish professional unions for the defence of their interests. The freedom of the activities of public associations is guaranteed". As important and great

help for us is the Federal law "On the trade unions, their rights and guarantees". Article 4 of this law has confirmed and secured the right of existence of our military trade union. After introducing changes to article 9 of the Federal law "On the status of servicemen" by the end of the 1990s, the right of servicemen to join trade unions was established. Based on this law we have prepared the bill "On the trade unions of servicemen" in 1997. The bill made it to the second reading, but eventually and regrettably was not adopted due to the sole opposition by the Ministry of Defence. While our legal status is thus somewhat incomplete, we are sufficiently covered to pursue our activities.

Q. But then how do you arrange your activities? Are you recognised by the authorities?

A. Certainly. And if I may add, our organisation is indeed widely respected. Our daily business with the relevant ministries and offices was realised on the basis of mutual agreements on co-operation. With the Ministry of Defence for example, we had six agreements and regional organisations of ITUS signed with commanders of 40 large military units and formations, including federal and regional military registration and enlistment offices. We assist them in sponsoring activities and relations with veterans. And they in their turn assist us in realisation of our demands for the defence of the fundamental rights of service personnel.

Traditionally, trade union leaders are members of the Russian three-sided commission on the regulation of labour disputes. They usually have worked in the government "commission on the social problems of servicemen and citizens discharged from the military service and members of their families" as well as the organisational committee "Victory". Personally, I worked in an expert groups under the Defense committee of the State Duma, "commission on servicemen" of the Russian Federation Public Chamber. Moreover, I am a member of the "co-ordination committee on servicemen and citizens discharged from the military service and members of their families" under the Chairman of the Council of Federation of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation and member of the Public council of the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence. This also gives the trade union some leverage in negotiating agreements for the benefit of soldiers.

Q. Having such a status, you as the leader of the "All Russian Trade Union of Servicemen" apparently raise and address problems. Likely, connected with the military reform?

¹ Interior Forces are law enforcement forces under jurisdiction of the Ministry of the Interior.

A. Certainly. ITUS is for example very much concerned with the situation of education and training of future officers. Many times we discussed this with leaders of the military education. At this point, I will not accentuate the problem of the de facto suspension of the enlistment of young people to the military officers training for the coming three years. This is to a certain extend the forced measure of the Ministry of Defence. But we worry about innovations, connected with the so-called "humanisation" of the military service for future officers. Practically, today's cadets enjoy military education, but are not living within the barracks. We believe that this constitutes a loss in very important military lessons, such as building military unity, esprit de corps, discipline, physical exercise, etc.

In the time of our military training and officer's education we had in the army and in the navy the so-called "two-year officers". They were called "civilian jackets", because they were fearful of barracks, did not know how to maintain order and discipline and did not know how to work with the staff. It is not desirable to see the same destiny to the future graduates of military institutes.

Additional, the army community considers the decisions connected with certain innovations regarding students of "Suvorov" and "Nakhimov" military schools²

² The Suvorov Military Schools are a type of boarding school for boys of 14-17. Education in such these schools focuses on military related subjects. The schools are named after Alexander Suvorov, the 18th century prominent military leader. Their naval counterparts among Russian military schools for teenagers are the Nakhimov Naval Schools, named after Pavel Nakhimov, the 19th century admiral.

as wrong. The military educational programmes are reduced as well as physical and combat training. In practice these military schools are reformed into boarding schools for noble girls. Additionally, the privileged entrance to higher military education for the graduates of Suvorov and Nakhimov military schools was cancelled. Yet, in my view and according to the experience of the past these schools were a good forge for further officers' cadets.

Q. But what are other good things in ITUS "money-box"?

A. Over years, ITUS has established a system of mutual co-operation with authorities on regional basis. We have signed more than 30 agreements of co-operation with heads of Russian federal subjects³. More than 40 leaders of the trade union organisations were elected deputies of regional legislative assemblies. Now many leaders are members of various commissions, established by the administrations of the federal subjects, Krai⁴ and regions.

We also co-operate in a very active way with executive bodies on the problems of employment, for example in Moscow. The "Moscow centre of social-professional adaptation and retraining of citizens, discharged from military service" was established upon our suggestion. This body, with assistance by ITUS, is permanently occupied with supporting servicemen seeking employment. In the last six years more than 72.000 service personnel asked for the centre's assistance, 48.000 thousand of them seeking employment. All of them

³ the Russian Federation consists of 83 subjects or members with own representation

⁴ federal subjects of special status

were provided professional advices, 15.000 could receive professional retraining and 3.500 were directly placed into employment. The Moscow centre participates in all employment-fairs organised in the city. It has four permanent offices consulting on employment and retraining of service personnel leaving the armed forces and of the military reserve personnel. The Kostroma regional organisation of ITUS trains specialists for non-government security bodies. More than 600 former servicemen and -women went through this process.

We have some other regional programmes for the employment of former servicemen. In co-operation with a bank we have established the "Military-Economic Society" (MES) in order to support and develop small and medium business launched by former military personnel. On annual base, MES organises within the program "Business in uniform", round tables, out of town activities, meetings with local authorities and other interested organisations and structures. Today MES organisations are active in Moscow, Saint-Petersburg, Ryazan and Kaliningrad. We plan during the coming two years to transform MES into a nation-wide organisation. The main motive for ITUS is the preservation of jobs and establishment of new working places for former military personnel and members of their families.

Mr. Schvedkov, I thank you for the interview.

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INTERNAL AFFAIRS

THE DANISH TRADITION FOR COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

BY RUNE KJØLBY LARSEN, FINN BENGTSEN, CS, DENMARK AND EUROMIL BOARD MEMBER

The starting point for the modern Danish industrial relations system is the so-called "September Agreement" from 1899. After a major, long-lasting industrial conflict the employers and workers agreed on a more formalised co-operation based on mutual recognition. In essence, the basic rules that were adopted in 1899 still apply in the Danish co-operation and bargaining system.

This article will describe: 1) The primary forms of employment in the Danish state sector today, 2) the organizational structure, and introduce the "social partners" in the Danish co-operation and bar-

gaining system regarding the state sector, 3) the different settings - central and local - in which co-operation and bargaining can take place in the Danish system, and 4) the Danish arbitration system in case of conflict between the social partners.

employment forms in the Danish state sector: statutory civil servants and contractual staff

Table 1: Number of employees (full-time positions) in the Danish state sector

Year	Statutory civil servants or employees with similar service regulations	Contractual staff	Total
2. quarter 2010	49.592,60	133.052,80	182.645,40
2. quarter 2008	52.868,10	114.502,50	167.370,60
2. quarter 2006	55.360,30	100.119,90	155.480,20
2. quarter 2004	55.594,90	99.805,90	155.400,80
2. quarter 2002	57.757,30	123.651,30	181.408,60
2. quarter 2000	73.471,70	110.899,30	184.371,00

Source: The Negotiating/Bargaining-database (a database developed by the Danish Ministry of Finance)

The Danish state sector traditionally distinguishes between two groups of employees: a) Statutory civil servants and b) Contractual staff.

The most important difference between the two groups is that civil servants have a statutory pension scheme, are not allowed to take industrial action, and are entitled to 3 years' salary in case of redundancy. Civil servants' basic employment conditions and pension schemes are regulated by statutes. But their working conditions and wages are subject to negotiations between the employers and trade unions, as is the case for contractual staff. Civil servants have the right to organise, and all civil servants – including civil servants in the police and armed forces – are fully covered by the agreement on co-operation and co-operation committees.

The proportion of civil servants in the state sector has been reduced quite dramatically over the last few years. The tendency is indicating that civil servant groups will in the future be limited to the “men and women in uniform” – policemen, military personnel and prison staff – and civil servants at the highest levels. This development has led – and will continue to lead – to greater conformity between the state and the private labour market.

the co-operation and bargaining system in the state sector

The Danish state sector – and the public sector in general – is characterized by a comprehensive co-operation and collective bargaining system. There is no tradition for major industrial conflicts in connection with the renewal of collective agreements or in the periods in between. Employers and trade unions usually come to an understanding.

The Danish system of collective bargaining is underpinned by basic agreements, which stipulate mutual recognition and enjoin the “social partners” to resolve cases of conflicting interests by concluding collective agreements. This means that: 1) The trade unions recognise the employers' right to manage and allocate work, while respecting currently valid collective agreements and the spirit of co-operation. 2) The employers respect the right of employees to organise and to establish collective representation.

Separate rules have been drawn up for the procedures for concluding collective agreements and for the scope and mode of use of collective industrial action. The rules impose a peace obligation, which prevents the social



Rune Kjølbj Larsen

partners – in ordinary circumstances – from resorting to hostile action during the period of validity of the collective agreements.

The collective agreements apply to all employees in the Danish state, union members and non-union members.

At the work place level, co-operation committees and shop stewards play an increasingly important role. This is connected with the tendency to conclude framework agreements at the central level, leaving the conclusion of more specific complementary agreements to local actors, with the introduction of a new salary system and with the development of personnel policies (in the field of competence development, non-discrimination, senior workers etc.)

The scope of collective bargaining issues is comprehensive. Agreements cover issues such as wages, working time, holidays, works councils, competence development, child care days, voluntary retirement and schemes for senior workers, pension schemes, non-discrimination, and a so-called “social chapter” (an agreement on the basis for creating special jobs for employees with health or social problems to prevent exclusion from the labour market).

the social partners in the Danish state sector

The organisational structure in the state sector reflects the organisational structure at the national level. In Denmark there are three trade union confederations, all of which are affiliated to the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC). The three national confederations are: 1) AC, which organises professional and managerial staff graduated from universities. 2) FTF, which organises salaried employees and civil servants. FTF is a non-political organisation. 3) LO, which organises salaried employees and civil servants as well as skilled and unskilled workers. Historically, LO has had close links with the Danish Social Democratic Party. However today there is no financial link to the Social Democratic Party.

The State Employer's Authority, an agency under the Ministry of Finance, carries out the function of central government employer.

There are three central organisations in the Danish state sector. Together they form the CFU (Danish Central Federation of State Employees), which is the main counterpart to The State Employer's Authority at the bargaining table. The three organisations are: 1) OAO (Organisations of Public Employees – Denmark) - OAO organises trade unions which for the most part are affiliated to LO and are part of the LO structure. 2) SKAF (the Collective Negotiation Secretariat of Central and Local Government Employees) - trade unions affiliated to SKAF are organised in two different central organisations – LC and CO10. 3) AC (the Confederation of Professional Associations) - AC takes part in CFU negotiations on behalf of its statutory civil servant members, and negotiates directly with the State Employer's Authority on behalf of its contractual staff members. Usually, the CFU agreements are extended to the rest of the AC members.

CS was established in 1967, at first as a



Finn Bengtsen

collective negotiation secretariat organising 9 different unions, later as a formalised trade union. CS is affiliated to CO10 and represent military personnel (approximately 6800 members and 700 retired military personnel) employed in the Army, Navy and Air Force. The Police Union (approximately 11.800 members) and CS are the two biggest trade unions affiliated to CO10. CS is a political neutral organisation. The focus on a “politically neutral-perspective” play a central part in the making of CS. As mentioned in the beginning of this paragraph, at first CS was a central secretariat organising different unions, including HKKF (Trade Union for Enlisted Privates and Corporals in the Danish Army). HKKF was the biggest of the 9 unions and was separated from CS at the end of 1984, when HKKF strived for affiliation to LO. LO’s close political links to the Danish Social Democratic Party was not compatible with the politically

CS and HKKF - military trade unions

neutral-perspective, which was – and still is – formulated in the statutes of CS.

CS co-operate and bargain with social partners which is greatly influenced by the predominant politically orientation in Denmark. In the long run CS therefore believes that this perspective contributes – better than a formulated political perspective – to secure the economic, social, educational and legal interests of its members.

Main agreements regarding general conditions for the employees in the state and the main agreement for statutory civil servants are concluded by the State Employer’s Authority and CFU, whereas the main agreement for contractual staff is concluded by the State Employer’s Authority and each of the 3 central organisations (OAO, SKAF and AC), who together form CFU.

In addition, specific union agreements (which cover the members of a specific trade union and mainly regard wages and working time) are concluded by the State Employer’s Authority or the individual state institution/company and the individual trade union. Finally, local agreements at the work place level are concluded by the local branches of state institutions and the shop stewards.

the Danish arbitration system

There are two arbitration systems for employees in the Danish state, a disciplinary court for civil servants and an industrial relations court for contractual staff. The disciplinary court and the industrial relations court are both based on law, but on different laws. The Civil Servants’ Disciplinary Court (Tjenestemandstretten) is based on the Statute relating to civil servants (Tjenestemandstloven) and the Industrial Court (Arbejdsretten) is based on labour law.

In Denmark, we make a distinction between “conflicts of rights” (conflicts regarding the interpretation of concluded collective agreements) and “conflicts of interest” (conflicts that are linked to the process of collective bargaining or renewal of collective agreements).

In case the social partners cannot reach agreement (conflicts of interest), the matter can be taken to the independent Public Conciliator (arbitrator), a mediation mechanism established by law in order to avoid strikes and lockouts. As mentioned in the beginning of this article, civil servants do not have the right to take industrial action and this mediation mechanism only covers contractual staff. When it comes to civil servants, the employer has the right to make one-sided decisions.

As for conflicts regarding the interpretation of concluded collective agreements (conflicts of rights), the employer or the trade unions may take the matter to the disciplinary court (civil servants) or the industrial relations court (contractual staff). ■

THE 12TH VISEGRAD 4 CONFERNECE: FOCUS ON PENSION SYSTEMS

**BY ROBERT SZITA, HOSZ, HUNGARY,
PHOTOS: FERENC KISÉRI-NAGY**

The 12th Conference of the Military Interest Protection Organisations of the Visegrad Four (V4) Group was held at Erdőbénye, Hungary, on 18 - 21 October 2010. The conference was attended by EUROMIL President Emmanuel Jacob, and Ms. Katalin Jenei, Secretary of Defence Interest Conciliating Forum.

The primary topic was the different service pension systems. Representatives of Honvédszakszervezet (HOSZ), the Polish Officers’ Konwent, the Association of Slovak Soldiers (ZV-SR) and the Union of Professional Soldiers of the Czech Defence Forces (SVP-ACR) discussed the situation of their national defence forces, including the development of living and working conditions of soldiers in the past year. They were especially concerned with the promotion and payment systems, as well as with the issue of service pensions. The leaders of the unions signed a common declaration at the end of the conference. A special program of HOSZ TV also dealt with the

happening in detail. EUROMIL Vice President Bernhardt Gertz visited the central headquarters of Honvédszakszervezet en route to the Erdőbénye meeting of the Visegrad Four. János Czövek, former Secretary General, now President of HOSZ, met the former Chairman of the German Federal Armed Forces Association (DBwV), and briefed him on the most important issues relating to HOSZ, such as the preparations of the extraordinary congress to be held on 26th October.

As moderator of the conference, Dr. Ottó Heiling, Hungarian member of the Board of EUROMIL, opened the conference with a speech outlining the main topic proposed by Konwent: An overview of the service pension systems in V4 Group countries. He introduced as guests the President and Vice President of EUROMIL, who later on provided an outlook of the Western European models. Furthermore, Dr. Ottó Heiling welcomed Ms. Katalin Jenei and Colonel Tamás Zsiga, Head of Department, Personnel Directorate of



EUROMIL Vice President Bernhard Gertz and János Czövek, HOSZ Secretary General at that time, now HOSZ President

the Ministry of Defence (MoD), who represented the Parliamentary State Secretary and the military leadership, respectively. State Secretary István Simicskó was unable to attend the meeting due to his other engagements abroad. According to Dr. Ottó Heiling, the MoD together with the trade unions is seeking new roads for co-operation. It is hoped that the lessons learned during this conference will also be utilised to integrate the most up-to-date knowledge into future agreements.

Dr. Ottó Heiling, moreover, stated that the service pension system in Hungary was, and is continuously, attacked and that further restrictions had been announced. He expressed his hope that the conference would provide the delegates with ample ammunition, when negotiating with their employers. After speaking about the Hungarian particularities, including the possibility of retiring after 25 years service, and the recent trade union demonstrations in Europe, Dr. Ottó Heiling also provided an overview on the approach towards the protection of soldiers' interests. He said that the military and political leaders of the V4 countries had established a culture of continuous negotiation, and that it was therefore also plausible that the present topic, the service pension systems, would be put on the agenda of current dialogues.

"Service pension system in the Hungarian Defence Forces" – that was the title of the presentation held by Lieutenant Colonel Dr. Zoltán Somlai. The Head of the Payment, Labour and Pension Determining Department of the Economy and Finance Agency of the MoD first spoke about the provision systems, such as disability pensions, accident allowance provisions, and orphans' allowances. Moreover, he provided a brief overview on the history of the Hungarian social security system, the pension funds and here, in particular, about the obligation of payment of contributions. He then spoke about the pension system with mixed financing and the legislative changes in 1996. Furthermore, he explained the legislative environment of pension determination and service time calculation, of which the most important requirement is an active service duration of 25 years. Whether 25 years are too much or too short is relative, but it is not such a glaringly short period, which could not establish pension entitlement, said the speaker. Dr. Zoltán Somlai gave examples, illustrating when or when not a 100 per cent pension payment is due. He also provided information on the various multiplication factors of the years in service, and the denials of service pension due to criminal proceedings. According to his statement, the number of such cases in the Hungarian Defence Forces is insignificant. Dr. Zoltán Somlai added that the calculation of service time is comparatively well covered by law; the amount of pension is calculated from the salary in the last year in service.

Summarising the presentation, Dr. Ottó Heiling stated that the current service pension system "is an achievement of the trade un-

ion" and that "it must be preserved".

"Our system may not be the best system, but we have to live with it", said Wim van den Burg, Chairman of the Dutch AFMP/FNV introducing the pension system of the Dutch soldiers. Early retirement age is 60, the average age 65. The transition from a retirement age of 55 to 60 generated a serious debate lasting 15 years. The early pension - 73 per cent of the last salary - is paid from the budget of the Ministry. Salary development of retired soldiers is connected with the developments of the defence branch, including supplementary allowances. Secondary income via an additional occupation is permitted - even for senior ranks. And, according to Wim van den Burg, this is definitely required for persons retiring from lower ranks. Military pension was developed in 1922 for military public service purposes. "A Dutch soldier with 40 years in service can have a pension of 34065 euro annually" said Wim van den Burg.

Mr. Anatol Tichoniuk, the Chairman of Konwent spoke about Polish particularities, which cannot be compared with the Dutch. "The Polish service pension is independent from the general pension system", the Chairman said, and explained that pensions are covered by the central budget. Pensions are calculated on the basis of time in service and of the last position held. A supplementary income is allowed without any decrease of the pension. A retired Polish soldier can be accommodated in one of the homes of retired service personnel. The maximum level - 75 per cent of the last salary - is reached after 29 years in service. After 15 service years soldiers may retire, however, every extra year in service is increasing the pension with 2.6 per cent. The military pension is about 700 euro per month. Many people demand the introduction of a different system. The reformers promote 20-25 basic service years, and according to some ideas the pension would only be 45 per cent of the salary in the last 12 months. The plan is to reach 85 per cent after 32 years in service. The velocity of the social dialogue is extremely important, as this will influence the schedules. "Preserving vested rights are not questioned in our country", stressed Anatol Tichoniuk.

The Slovakian pensions system was presented by Colonel (Ret.) Jan Paulech, Secretary General of SV-SR, on behalf of the Chairman Michal Bohunický. According to him, Slovakia works with a mix of allowance grants, indemnifications for dismissal, casualty grants, pensions, widow and orphan's allowances. The calculation of pensions is based on service years; after 15 years in service 30 per cent of the basic salary is due. Between 16 and 20 years in service an extra 2 per cent is added after each year, which is increased to an annual 3 per cent between the 21 and 25 service years. After 26 years there is an additional annual 1 per cent extra. However, the pension cannot exceed 60 per cent of the base. Pensions are calculated from the amount of the monthly salaries, although, position and rank are also considered, as well as the quality and evaluation of performance.



President Emmanuel Jacob explains the Belgian pension system

The Czech pension system was presented by Mr. Roman Doba, Chairman of SVP ACR. He stated that certain legislative changes had occurred, which would certainly influence the Czech pension system. From 2010, this would mean the period between 2011 and 2016 in the development plans, active service can last till the age of 65 for servicemen and 62 for women. According to the law on commissioned soldiers, there is a possibility for retraining, financed by the government. The only precondition is a minimum of 5 years in service. These courses are utilised by 60 per cent of those leaving the armed forces. The system of indemnification for dismissal depends on the time spent in service and the reason of dismissal.

EU experiences and future trends of the pensions and social provisions of soldiers were presented by EUROMIL President Emmanuel Jacob. In Belgium employees of the private and public sector, as well as self-employed persons have separate pension systems; specific regulations govern pensions of judges, members of parliament, policemen and soldiers. Pension funds are covered by active employees (that means, their salary deduction for pensions benefits current pensioners, it is not saved for their future pension)



János Czövek (HOSZ), Anatol Tichoniuk (Konwent), Michal Bohunicky (ZV SR) und Roman Doba (SVP ACR)

and are managed by the Ministry of Pensions. The pension system is an independent chapter in the Belgian budget. Pensions can be earned from a service duration of 5 years. however, even if a soldier leaves the service at the age of 40, he will receive pension payment not earlier than from the age of 65. With the exception of generals, everybody can retire at the age of 56. On the basis of a considerable reform in 2001, salaries in the last 5 years are considered when calculating pensions of public servants, although, the length of service is also investigated. The EUROMIL President raised the question of the role of the European Union in the pension system and gave right away the answer: “the member countries will decide, that’s all”. Nevertheless, there are framework rules presented by the EU, and these require broad co-ordinations. In Belgium, men and women enjoy identical pension rights, though the retirement age is different. Belgian unions are trying to synchronise this too. President Jacob stated that national reforms must be prepared, a modern and transparent pension system has to be established. Nearly every EU Member State intends to introduce some reforms, and a so called Green Book on the European pension system was published by the EU Commission. The Green Book is, however, not binding, but simply initiated discussions and consultations – open also to the public via an online consultation. Additionally, President Jacob gave to think that the average life time is increasing by 2.5 years in every decade. Therefore, pension systems must support pensioners for longer periods.

Supporting the statement of President Jacob, EUROMIL Vice President Bernhard Gertz, who presented the German military pension system, reiterated that the costs of pensions are largely increased due to the age pyramid. Consequently the federal government decided to decrease the pensions of soldiers. This has already happened, as pensions are decreased to 71.75 per cent of the basic salary from the previously 75 per cent. Furthermore, the retirement age has been raised; for NCOs, it is 51, 55 up to the rank of captains, majors 57, colonels 61, while it is 63 for generals. Beyond 65 there is no limitation on additionally income to the pension. For example: a sergeant-major with a EUR 3200 salary is entitled to a pension of EUR 2300; a colonel with a EUR 6762 salary is entitled to a pension of EUR 4868.

Concluding the presentation part of the conference Dr. Ottó Heiling said: “as the protectors of the social and professional interests of soldiers and as service personel, we try to stick to certain things. However, in certain issues it may be unavoidable to concede to external pressure. And even if governments promise that there will not be restrictions, we are all aware that at the same time, reforms of service pensions are debated in the relevant Ministries.”

After the presentations, the members of the Visegrad Four Group approved a common declaration which was signed by the current V4 Chairman János Czövek, General Secretary of HOSZ.

As concluding ceremony, János Czövek handed over his Chairmanship of the Visegrad Four Group to Michal Bohunicky, Chairman of the Slovak SV-SR. The next meeting of the V4 military interest representing organisations will be in the Slovak Republic in 2011.

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SPANISH MILITARY DEMONSTRATES

BY MIGUEL LOPEZ, AUME, SPAIN

Demonstrating against declining career possibilities as well as working and social conditions, members of the Spanish military association, Asociación Unificada de Militares Españoles - United Association of Spanish Servicemen and women (AUME), gathered for the second time near the Ministry of Defence in Madrid on Saturday 16 October 2010.

Already in December 2009, AUME demonstrated in the vicinity of the Ministry of Defence (see EUROMIL News Issue 12, April 2010) to protest against the implementation of a new law and the proposed model for military careers of all corps and ranks. Following the demonstration, representatives of the military associations, among them AUME, received official requests by the Ministry of Defence authorities to present their credentials and to state their positions. The associations were also promised regular meetings and involvement in negotiations regarding planned military regulations. Yet, since then, there have been no more meetings. Attempts by AUME to re-establish contact remained unanswered by officials within the Ministry of Defence.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Defence presented to the Parliament a proposal for a law on rights and duties of members of the armed forces – once more without involving the military associations as social partners. This proposal, if approved, could restrict even more fundamental rights of military personnel, such as the freedom of speech, right of association, gathering and demonstration as well as the right to privacy.



Therefore, AUME called on their members to demonstrate once more close to the premises of the Ministry of Defense. Hundreds of soldiers attended the demonstration, publicly displaying their discontent about the current professional situation – a direct consequence of the implementation of the law on military personnel

and the content of the above-mentioned proposed law. This event had an impressive media response which forced the Under-Secretary of Defense to react by announcing a press conference at the same time of the demonstration. She praised the improvements applied to the soldiers on social and working conditions and the efficacy of the new career model. Incidentally, two weeks later, this Under-Secretary, head of the Ministry of Defense personnel, has been removed from her post.

Another important consequence of the demonstration is the rapprochement of military associations. On initiative of AUME, all existing military associations in Spain have united their efforts and prepared a manifesto to be presented to the defense authorities. This manifesto represents the determination of all military associations to improve the working, professional and social conditions of Spanish soldiers and to show their unity of action.

EUROMIL SHOWS FLAG AT THE EUROPEAN DAY OF ACTION

By EUROMIL

The economic crisis and austerity measures do not stop before the armed forces and military personnel. Therefore, EUROMIL joined delegations from around 50 trade union organisations from 30 countries, demonstrating in the streets of Brussels on 29 September 2010. The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) organised the European Day of Action and above all its key event -the Euro-demonstration in Brussels. The ETUC aimed to give a voice to workers and to make it clear to European leaders with responsibility for employment and growth that workers are not willing to pay for the planned austerity measures.

EUROMIL, together with delegations from Belgium (ACMP/CGPM), Germany (DBwV), Hungary (HOSZ) and the Netherlands

(AFMP/FNV, MARVER/FNV), participated to show solidarity with the workers and employees of Europe and to emphasise that also military personnel deserves social dialogue.

As other employees, soldiers want to collectively protect and effect their social and professional conditions – and rightly so. Only, when soldiers are able to exercise and enjoy their fundamental rights and freedom, will the armed forces be fully integrated in society.

In spite of this, several NATO and EU Member States still restrict the representation rights of their military personnel without providing any sensible explanation for doing so.

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ECONOMIC CRISIS, INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW, AND A EU MILITARY FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OFFICER

By EUROMIL



President Jacob

“In an age of austerity, it is not realistic to simply demand the best of everything, and lots of it, without considering the financial implications. It is, however, the task of representatives of soldiers to ensure that the standard is set as high as possible, and that soldiers will never be called upon to perform operations for which, they are neither equipped nor trained”, said Emmanuel Jacob, EUROMIL President. He referred to the economic crisis as a challenge but also an opportunity. It would entail painful implications, but only by taking responsibility, also for hard decisions, would military associations be considered credible interlocutors for the defence administration. It was, however, important to similarly ensure that the standard is set as high as possible, and that servicemen and -women will never be called upon to perform operations for which, they are neither trained nor equipped. It was noted that the crisis for all its shortcomings might also inspire a change of mindset in favour of greater co-operation among EU Member States, thereby proving an opportunity.

a stronger CSDP is key for the EU

With these statements President Jacob opened the 102nd EUROMIL Presidium in October 2010. For the second time EUROMIL met at the International Trade Union House in Brussels. Around 100 delegates discussed with a variety of guest speakers and experts the effects of the “Impact of Budget Cuts on the Armed Forces”, “International Humanitarian Law (IHL) in conflicts other than war”, and if an “EU Military Ombudsman/EU Fundamental Rights Officer for the Military” would be a way to promote fundamental rights in the armed forces.

In a recorded message, the President of

the Council of the European Union, Herman Van Rompuy, stated “promoting global security is crucial for the European Union” and “for the future, a stronger Foreign and Security Policy is key”, underlining the commitment to global security and reaffirming that it was essential that the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) be further developed based on the changes introduced with the coming into force of the Lisbon Treaty. Honouring the soldiers and civilians in EU and other missions, van Rompuy said: “Many take risks in the field, they are representing us in crisis zones, I would like to express them all my respect”.

The Chairman of the EU Military Com-

mittee, General Håkan Syrén, described the economic crisis as part of a fundamental reordering of the global balance of power. While stating that “the Lisbon treaty provides new possibilities” he added in order to avoid all misunderstandings that “Member states remain firmly in the driving seat” and “the political will of the Member states is what finally determines what role the EU will play in the field of security and defence.” According to Syrén, it is not enough to have a large toolbox, if the tools were not used efficiently. Suggesting the need to pool and specialise resources, while increasing co-operation within the EU and with strategic partners, General Syrén stated that this would necessitate a change of national mindsets. He reminded the audience that while the absolute level of EU military expenditures in a global comparison is second to the USA, defence budgets are fragmented. Moreover, the

the Lisbon Treaty provides new possibilities - but Member states remain firmly in the driving seat

the main priority, and the need to align increasing demands on resources with cuts in defence budgets was emphasised. “Budgetary pressure will force us to accept more interdependency and cooperation, and particularly a more efficient and smart cooperation” said Colonel Andries. He explained further that co-operation initially will entail the identification of opportunities for pooling and sharing. While permanent structured cooperation (PESCO) contained in the Lisbon Treaty “merits to be further explored for implementation”, the implied risk of a two-tier Europe could also undermine



General Syrén

EU is the only region world wide where defence budgets are either stagnating or shrinking. Money needs to be spent more wisely if the EU wants to fulfil its ambitions, wants to remain relevant and wants to avoid that European force structures fall below a level that puts entire capability categories at risk. “We can increase co-operation in a broad range of areas”, said General Syrén.

The Head of the Presidency Task Force Defence, Colonel Johan Andries, subsequently commented on the role of the Belgian EU Chairmanship. The further development of military capabilities was considered



Colonel Andries

the political will to actually implement the relevant article. PESCO “is frequently discussed”, stated Colonel Andries, “but still not commonly understood by all”. Despite that, according to Colonel Andries, “the Belgian Presidency succeeds in assuring the continuity and in keeping the momentum in the most important CSDP-files” even beyond the Presidency. Yet, he acknowledged that “no spectacular progress and results in the field of CSDP can be expected in this

PESCO is not commonly understood

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BUDGET CUTS AND ARMED FORCES

transitional period”.

All three panellists in the workshop “Impact of Budget Cuts on the Armed Forces” painted a bleak picture, predicting a great reduction in defence expenditure and cuts in manpower as most simple solutions to the economic crisis effects on armed forces.

Dr. Hilmar Linnenkamp stated that EU Member states would need to rationalise their armed forces “even without an economic crisis”. In this context, he argued that while EU Member States “collectively are strong in defence”, spending about

“...saving more, saving better, saving together...”

200 billion Euros annually and employing close to 2 million troops, this is to some extent “fat, not only muscle”. While savings were usually arrived at through a combination of national cuts to “personnel, structures and armaments”, the ambitions should be to coordinate savings internationally to achieve a more rational solution. The EU needs to develop a mindset of “saving more, saving better, saving together” said Dr. Linnenkamp. Commenting on some bilateral co-operation agreements established in Europe recently, he cautioned that, while the strengthening of bilateral measures heralded a step forward, it could ultimately be counterproductive as it might lead to exclusive and limited alliances. It is essential to continuously move forward and not revert to national solutions.

Commenting on the projected demographic changes, Colonel Roger Housen of the Belgian Ministry of Defence raised the issue of continued funding and manning of the armed forces in view of declining and ageing populations in Europe. In the absence of a common European solution, additional and significant budget reductions had to be expected. It was, in this context, noted that NATO member states spend on average 55 per cent of defence expenditure on personnel, while investments and operations accounted for 19 and 26 per cent, respectively. Colonel Housen demonstrated that the approach to save money by reducing personnel numbers and the size of procurement projects is no longer sustainable. “We

have reached the bottom line”, said Colonel Housen, predicting that certain national capabilities might vanish if the “cheese-slice” method is continued. In this regard, Colonel Housen criticised the “can-do-mentality” of military leaders towards superiors and politicians and called for more realistic pictures of what can be done with reduced resources and capabilities. He sees it therefore inevitable that structural changes to the armed forces need to be carried out. Increased European co-operation, however, Colonel Housen considered dependent on the political willingness to share sovereignty and to establish and adhere to common standards.

The Head of the Planning and Policy Unit in the European Defence Agency (EDA), Dick Zandee, subsequently emphasised the need to intensify co-operation in response to dwindling national resources and an increasing number of challenges. He warned of the possibility that “Member states might fall back finding purely national solutions, protecting national industrial interest”. He suggested to harmonise



Dick Zandee, Colonel Roger Housen and Dr. Hilmar Linnenkamp agree on the need to cooperate in security and defence

military requirements and to combine investment in research and technology, while similarly striving to construct co-operative armaments programmes, strengthening market competition and the defence industrial base. The current situation of industrial “fragmentation” produced equipment too costly in too many types and models,

“we have 16 naval shipyards - the US have three”

compromising standardisation and interoperability. “We have 16 naval shipyards in Europe, the US have three”, Zandee gave as example. Zandee considered that to achieve the outlined form of co-operation a “change of mindset” was required: “First think about multinational solutions” based on top-down instructions and the “hearts and minds” of the bottom, instead of “national solutions”.

In defining future national capabilities, EU Member States had to move from “nice to have” to “need to have”.

In the subsequent question-and-answer session, the potential role of military associations was discussed. Generally, it was noted that associations should not struggle against the inevitable but, instead, seek to contribute actively to the restructuring of resources. Dr. Linnenkamp advised to accept personnel cuts and co-operate with the authorities to make transformations the least harming

soldiers are diplomats, mediators, development aid workers and fighters

and socially acceptable by helping affected soldiers. In this context, the disbandment of the last heavy artillery battalion in Denmark was mentioned as an example of the tough decisions lying ahead. It was paradoxical that military authorities were suddenly very keen to involve associations, when these

had previously been held at arms length. It was therefore noted that, while associations should and would assume a role in implementing economic crisis measures, it was unfair to simply relegate them to be the bearer of bad news. The public presentation on military missions was, according to Mr. Linnenkamp, one-sided; soldiers are regarded “mostly in a strategic context” but “rarely the individual, family and the social side”. Referring to the International missions, Zandee

recognised that the modern soldier needs to be equipped with more skills as during the Cold War; as diplomat, mediator, development aid worker and fighter. Thus, the quality of soldiers needs to rise while the quantity will fall due to finance problems. Out of cost calculation, he predicted that “while the pool of deployable forces will increase, the deployed number will go down”, “deployments are so tremendously expensive that EU Member states cannot afford them anymore”. It was, moreover, emphasised that European harmonisation could not be examined independently of NATO due to scarce national resources and overlapping institutional activities. As soldiers are sent on mission, in his opinion the current level of investment into force protection in international operations “is a shame”. In his concluding remarks, the President underlined the schism between available resources and aspirations, and the ensuing tough deci-

sions to be made. In implementing the crisis measures, it was important that the associations incorporate the rank and file so as to ensure understanding and acceptance of the initiatives.

INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

The representative of the Belgian Red Cross, Roeland Neyrinck, emphasised that “on the whole, International Humanitarian Law remains a suitable and relevant framework to protect the victims of armed conflict”. International Humanitarian Law (IHL) was defined as a legal framework that seeks to protect those that do not take part in the conflict and as an instrument to restrict the means and methods of warfare. It is, as such, based on the fundamental principles of “distinction”, “proportionality” and “precaution”, apart from the attempt to outlaw weapons causing excessive suffering – such

IHL remains relevant framework

as the 1997 Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel landmines. Neyrinck explained that non-compliance was a serious issue. While this was sometimes related to blatant disregard or poor implementation, it was often explained by ignorance of existing commitments. Hence, Neyrinck emphasised the need for awareness raising. While states remained central, the challenge posed by non-state actors, including private security companies, had also to be borne in mind. Neyrinck said that “Asymmetric warfare challenges compliance with fundamental principles of IHL in terms of distinction and of prohibition of perfidy”. To him, it seemed

obvious that the weaker party in a conflict would seek to exploit the rules, and that it was therefore essential that impunity by any or all combatants be punished through the International Criminal Court (ICC) or other relevant instances. Referring to a two-year study by the ICRC, he underlined the continued relevance of IHL. However, Neyrinck noted the need for further clarification or development in certain key areas – for example in regard to internally displaced persons or internment. “Better implementation of IHL depends on the will of the states, but also on the knowledge of the rules”, concluded Neyrinck.

In the second presentation, Lieutenant General (ret.) Jean-Pierre Bovy commented on operations other than war (OOTW), which were defined as “military activities during peacetime and conflict that do not necessarily involve armed clashes between two organised forces”. Since such operations often require closer contact with the population, routine movement in urban and rural areas, apart from more restrictive rules of engagement, the level of personal threat was considered liable to exceed that of active combat. Similarly, using the example of counterinsurgency, it was noted that the military is often expected to perform civilian tasks and that, consequently, the role of servicemen and -women had undergone a transformation – soldiers were, as such, to be considered as “social diplomatic war-fighters”. It is, in this context, essential that the military acquires an adequate understanding of political, economical, cultural and technical environment in the mission area – and that servicemen and -women are guided by suitable military ethics based on IHL. Soldiers should, moreover, be skilled in communication and diplomacy and be introduced to the intricacies of development assistance. Therefore, Bovy promoted

the establishment of “knowledge centres” charged with the compilation of relevant regional information and lessons learned. It was noted that such centres are not universally present, and could usefully be established at the international level. It was suggested to create a European Intelligence Agency as a broker for complex and hybrid threats. In conclusion, a change of mindset was considered necessary to achieve a truly comprehensive approach – Bovy underlined the need to move from “need to know” to “obligation to share”.

Colonel (ret.) Bernhard Gertz, EU-ROMIL Vice President, confirmed that regular armed forces are obliged to respect IHL, even though insurgents systematically violate IHL to gain advantages for their actions. Commenting on contemporary challenges, Vice President Gertz stated that “it

it is essential to comply with the rules

is exceptionally difficult for state-run armed forces under extremely asymmetric circumstances to take action against non-state fighters while at the same time adhere IHL”. Non-state actors, who neither identify themselves as combatants, consciously seek to use IHL as an instrument to discredit or undermine the political will of the opponent. Vice President Gertz noted that, while IHL may occasionally hamper effective countermeasures against insurgents and even if insurgents systematically violate IHL, it is essential to continuously comply with the rules. Servicemen and -women are, as such, required to distinguish between combatants and civilians, apart from being restricted to the use of only proportional force against legitimate targets. While it could be considered to adapt IHL, the Vice President cautioned that this could also lead to the watering down of existing principles.

In the following question-and-answer session, the constraints imposed by rules of engagement were discussed. It was remarked that soldiers were more likely to be guided by considerations reflecting, in declining order, personal security, group safety and the fear of hitting the wrong target than the actual rules of engagement. While in principle, Lieutenant General (ret.) Bovy concurred that soldiers should be entitled to use the necessary force in a life-threatening situation, the issue was to determine the legitimate extend of this – especially in situations, where the enemy openly flouts IHL. Frédéric Cashier of the Belgian Red Cross, emphasised that IHL as well as rules of engagement must be respected, even if incon-



General (ret) Bovy, Colonel Bernhard Gertz, Andrian Ryan (moderator), Frédéric Cashier and Roeland Neyrinck on the significance of IHL in asymmetric warfare

venient. In conclusion, the significance and consequences of instant reaction in a given situation was noted – and, as such, action could not be assessed in a clear cut “black and white” manner.

EU MILITARY FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OFFICER

Once more EUROMIL discussed in a third workshop of the 102nd EUROMIL Presidium, the functioning of an EU Military Ombudsman.

As guest speaker, Colonel Peter Kallert, Chief of the EU Group to Military Representative of Germany to the Military Committee of NATO and the EU, gave insights into the working with the German Parliamentary Commissioner for the Federal Armed Forces from the perspective of a military leader. He explained that the institution of the Commissioner does an excellent job to defend the dignity of soldiers as highest value and that the independent institution effectively brings problems to the attention of the public as well as political decision makers and military leaders that would otherwise go unnoticed. In regard to the EU Military Ombudsman, he declared that an EU Army is far away from developing and that different leadership philosophies are prevailing in national armed forces. For that reason, there is no role for an EU ombuds institution.



Colonel Peter Kallert does not see a European Army in the near future

In his opinion, EUROMIL should rather strive to foster the establishment of independent national military ombuds institutions. During the discussion, several EUROMIL members voiced concern and scepticism in regard to an EU Military Ombudsman. One direction proposed was to further research into the role and competences of the existing EU Ombudsman and other consolidated



Lars Fresker (SAMO, Sweden) fears that an EU body might be used against the establishment of military unions

national ombuds institutions. Furthermore, it was requested to choose a different title and to shift from discussing a juridical body to a political institution fostering fundamental rights in armed forces.



EUROMIL Presidium delegates discussed benefits and possible negative aspects of a military fundamental rights body on EU level

Proponents of an ombuds institution on EU level proposed the working title of an “EU Fundamental Rights Officer for the Military” for further discussion. These delegates gave to contemplate that an “EU Fundamental Rights Officer for the Military”, elected by the European Parliament, would have the necessary legitimacy to advocate the protection of fundamental rights, ensure compliance of EU legislation and coordinate and complement the work of national ombuds institutions. Commenting on existing ombuds structures in some national armed forces, it was stated that independent parliamentary ombuds institutions, as external control, are more favourable than internal control via, for example, military bodies such as an inspector general acting as ombudsman.



Antonio Lima Coelho (ANS, Portugal) supports an EU body when national institutions fail to deliver

The two positions were reconciled with the suggestion that in order to continue the discussion it would be necessary to find out how an “EU Fundamental Rights Officer for the Military” could be positioned and invested with appropriate competences and influence



Wim van den Burg (AFMP/FNV, the Netherlands) perceived the need for deeper research

to do the job required of such a position. President Jacob concluded that while there is agreement that an independent ombuds institution invested with competences over the military is desirable, further research in the topic of an “EU Fundamental Rights Officer for the Military” and continued discussions within EUROMIL are needed to establish a common position on this topic.

During the internal affairs part of the 102nd EUROMIL Presidium, Ms. Deborah Bruschi, representing the Italian General Confederation of Labour (CGIL), read out a statement commenting on the constraints imposed on members of the armed forces in Italy. The right of association is, according to Military Law 382/1978, subject to the authorisation of the Ministry of Defence, while the freedom of expression according to Ms. Bruschi continues to be severely hampered. The sentencing of Vincenzo Bonaccorso [see EUROMIL News Issue 14] was, in this context, used as an example. The statement mentioned that the sentencing was imposed despite the fact that three of the four members of the tribunal voted against introducing disciplinary measures.

Giuseppe Catalini, from the Italian association AMID, reminded the audience that in his view a careful, intelligent approach to lobbying the right of association might be the best way. He informed the Presidium delegates that the Italian parliament approved a new military law, amending the disciplinary and penal code for the worse of soldiers.

Also in the internal part of the Presidium, the Lithuanian Soldiers Rights Defence Centre was introduced by the Director, Laimonas Jakas, and EUROMIL welcomed the “Military Order of Romania” (MOR), the “National Alliance of Albanian Military Men” (AKUSH) and “Associação de Praças – Association of Soldiers (AP) as new member and observer associations.

KG, TL

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

BUILDING BRIDGES...

By EUROMIL

Securing the social and professional rights of servicemen is (alas) a universal challenge that continues to require our common commitment and exertion. It is only by working together, that we will successfully overcome the unreasonable restrictions imposed on our men and women in uniform. It was therefore also with pleasure that the office in Brussels earlier this year in November welcomed a small delegation from Azerbaijan

The visit, which was organised on 17 - 19 November, provided an opportunity to explore possible areas of co-operation with an association outside our traditional area of operation – and for our guests to establish contact with relevant international institutions in Brussels. The office had, in this context, organised a three-day programme with conferences in the European Parliament, the European Council, NATO and the EastWest Institute. This involved discussions with the Chairman of the subcommittee on human rights who, due to a planned visit to the region in the coming year, signalled keen interest in the issues that were raised. The representatives of the NATO Partnership Division, similarly, expressed intimate un-

derstanding of the national context, and possible common projects were outlined and discussed.

The visit was organised as a result of the chance encounter by the President, Mr. Emmanuel Jacob, with the Azerbaijan Public Association on Security and Defence (APASD) during an OSCE event in Baku in 2008. The contact was subsequently cultivated and developed, leading to an invitation to visit our office in July 2010.

The APASD, which was represented by its Chairman Mr. Yashar Jafarli, is an umbrella association consisting of some 20 national organisations. It strives to secure the social and professional interests of service personnel, and is actively engaged in security sector reform and the integration of Azerbaijan into Euro-Atlantic structures. It is also involved in the management of an online military news site (www.milaz.info), available in several languages. The Chairman was accompanied by two assistants, including a representative of the OSCE Office in Baku.

It is hoped that the visit will lead to further co-operation in the future – and thus serve as a bridge for the exchange of information and experience with other relevant associations in the wider region.

KG

MARCHING FOR PEACE AND INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING

By LtCDR MARC BOITING (GERMAN NAVAL RESERVE), PHOTOS BY DRIES VERSCHAEVE

From somewhere sounds a bugle. Sounds again, and again, does not stop. “Cavalry Charge” – CAVALRY CHARGE?? – Slowly I stick my nose out of my sleeping bag into the ice cold air. With a broad



LtCDr Marc Boiting and comrades

o'clock in central Europe. Time to get your ***** up and into gear, blokes. You wanna be on the road by O-seven-hundred!“

The „road“ is 100 kilometers of streets and footpaths around Ieper or Ypres, the picturesque Flemish „Town of Peace“. Holy

grin the guy on the next cot pushes a button on his cell-phone. The bugle falls silent. Not really believing what's going on, baggy faces and puffy eyes appear from the bundles around. The guy with the cell-phone is in good mood and up on his feet already. “Good moooorning, ev'rrybody”, he shouts “It's six

ground for the British. In the middle ages well-known for its cloth. Here the English word “diaper” has it's origin; cloth „de Ieper” - an early trademark.

Besides that Ypres is the namesake for four of the bloodiest and fiercest battles of the first World War (WW1) with hundreds of thousands of casualties on both sides. And this is what the weekend is all about: For the 39th time this year people, soldiers, come together to march for remembrance, international understanding and reconciliation over the graves of the fallen. We, the German Reservists, come here to walk the battlefields with comrades and friends from Belgium, the Netherlands and the UK. To get to know each other better and to see what traces a war leaves, even after nearly one hundred years.

On three consecutive days, the marchers pass by places like “Hellfire Corner“, “Sanctuary Wood“, “Hill 60“, “Caterpillar Crater“, “Hooge Crater“, “Passchendaele“ and many more. You name them, the WW1 buff knows them all. Masses of white headstones are scattered everywhere over the landscape. Occasionally you can find a single unexploded ordnance on the roadside or piled up high in the courtyard of a farm. Still, farmers can have up to 200 tons of “Iron Harvest” every year - ammunition still live and dangerous. Like the last of the 21 “Messine Mines” which is believed to be found undetonated and nearly forgotten underneath a farmhouse -



German Cemetery Langemareck

with 20,000 pounds of explosives. Some static from a thunderstorm might be enough to... better not think about it.

Talking about headstones and cemeteries; on the evening of the first day the central ceremonies are traditionally opened at the



Bagpipers at the Menen Gate honoring the fallen of WW1

German Cemetery in Langemarck. What a difference to the, well, bright atmosphere of the British resting places. Black headstones overshadowed by large branches of old trees, surrounded by a thick brick wall. The atmosphere is somewhat threatening, sad and depressing. Here lies the „forgotten generation“. Few people come here, hardly any German. The 44,000 who found their final resting

Belgian Memorial and under the impressive Menen Gate, another place with a very special atmosphere. During the touching ceremony you can hear a needle drop. It means a lot for the organisers to assemble during this particular event former enemies together to remember and to demonstrate that it is truly understood that a peaceful future is a common responsibility.

Among all marchers and their hosts is a more than friendly atmosphere. Most of the military groups sleep, eat and drink together at the „Hotel 100km“ - two big tents for 80 men each, located at the local barracks. Beside the mutual backslapping and hugging among buddies, sometimes it seems like a family gathering. „I come here for 20 years,“ says the German Company Sergeant Major, „I’ve seen kids growing up here during my time. Some of them meanwhile have kids of their own. Makes me feel like a Grandfather“, he laughs and taps on - another 20km to cover today.

„So what! - Quite normal“, you may say. There are more events like that. The „Ijzer-March“, „Diekirch“, „Ardennes“ or the „4-Daagse“ and many, many others all over Europe. Well „normal“, yes and no. The part the German groups play in terms of „Ambassadors in Uniform“ is easily underestimated in a united and befriended Europe. But, the past casts long shadows, as one German marching group had to experience three years ago when they applied for an invitation to the „Airborne-March“ in Oosterbeek in the Netherlands, the world biggest one-day-marching-event with more than 30,000 participants. At first, the organisers declined with the explanation that they feared discontent especially among the elder inhabitants of the area. It was not left at that. What followed was an exchange of e-mails and a meeting in the town of Goch, close to the German-Dutch border - neutral ground, so to say. On the end of the day the organisers gave the application their approval. And were taken somewhat by surprise about the feedback the first uniformed



„Hotel 100km“ gives shelter to a total of 160 participants

place here „are buried under the debris and the guilt of the war that followed the „War to end all Wars““, personnel of the German War Graves Commission (Volksbund deutscher Kriegsgräberfürsorge), who are attending the cemetery, once stated.

Present today, beside the German reservists, British military and army cadet groups, Belgian officials, the buglers of the Menen-Gate and since 2009 bagpipers from the area. Rather symbolic for the spirit and the aims of the event of the „100km of Ypres“: Belgian musicians in British uniforms playing the haunting „Ich hatt’ einen Kameraden!“ for the German dead.

From there the column moves into town to lay wreaths at the

German group since the introduction of the march some 62 years ago, gave them in their „After Action Report“. Long time participants welcomed the Germans with statements as: „Where have you been all these years?“, „How shall we demonstrate reconciliation when you’re not here?“, „It’s our common history and our common responsibility that something like that never and nowhere happens again.“, and „Hope you’ll come back next year with a battalion!“

Three years later the group grew to at least platoon strength and are, as on other marches, warm welcomed guests. MISSION ACCOMPLISHED - another bridge building job done. ■

PERMANENT STRUCTURED CO-OPERATION: A EUROPEAN IMPERATIVE?

By EUROMIL

“Intensifying military co-operation in Europe” is a “European imperative”. This is the title of the food-for-thought paper issued by Germany and Sweden following up the Informal Meeting of the EU Ministers of Defence in Ghent, 23-24 September 2010. On this meeting, EU defence ministers (or their deputies) agreed to increase cross border co-operation as means to maintain their military capabilities in times of shrinking budgets in order to avoid becoming insignificant “under a Sino-American domination”. Ministers at the Formal Meeting of the Foreign Affairs (Defence) Council on 9 December 2010 backed the German-Swedish initiative. Is this the hour of Permanent Structural Co-operation (PESCO)?

In the last issue this publication informed on the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR/VP) and the European External Action Service. These are institutional instruments to achieve the goal to render EU crisis management capabilities more efficient and coherent.

One other, potentially very important, provision introduced by the Lisbon Treaty in regard to Common Security and Defence Policy (CFSP) is a facilitated mechanism for PESCO. According to the Lisbon Treaty, PESCO is open to any Member state committing to the objectives to (a) proceed more intensively to develop defence capacities through national contributions, to

mote transnational defence co-operation by encouraging self-selected participants, on self-set criteria for participation, to deepen their collaboration on certain projects, to rationalise industry or to look into any measure saving money yet to avoid a decline of military capabilities in Europe.

Dr. Sven Biscop, director of the Security & Global Governance Programme at Egmont (Royal Institute for International Relations), stated that Europe still struggles to



Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Christian Schmidt, German State Secretary for Defence

deploy more than four percent of its almost 2 million troops. Major capability shortfalls have not been addressed and many EU Member states will no longer be able to sustain the level of national capabilities they possess today. As Nick Witney, policy fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations and former chief executive of the European Defence Agency (EDA), said: “even in the best of times, finance ministers in Europe resent providing money for defence”. And in austerity Europe they are free to cut this budget. PESCO seems to be a “lifeline to grab” for defence establishments faced with the budget cuts. Yet, Member states have not shown much enthusiasm for deeper strategic integration.

Besides national focused efforts, there have been some steps towards bilateral defence co-operation. Czechs and Slovaks have started talks about closer co-operation. Belgium, a pioneer in defence co-operation, shares for example a naval command and training facilities with the Netherlands. Britain and France signed in November a defence and security co-operation treaty, including an agreement to operate aircraft-carrier strike groups together and to pool

training and maintenance for the A400M transport aircraft. Additionally, the countries want to jointly develop, among others, nuclear-submarine technologies and satellite communication.

The Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEF) between Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden, is an example of regional efforts to co-operate in security and defence. These countries, including Iceland, discussed in November to go even further with an initiative to form a “Nordic Pact” based on the “Stoltenberg Report”, in response to major geopolitical changes. The report suggests creating among others a military and civilian stabilisation taskforce, disaster response unit, joint cyber defence systems, joint air, maritime and satellite surveillance and co-operation on Arctic governance. Moreover it proposes a similar provision to the NATO “Article V” and a pooling of consular services. This regional scheme thus mirrors provisions of the Lisbon Treaty on EU level.

While the strengthening of bilateral measures could be interpreted as step forward, it could just as well be counterproductive as it might lead to exclusive and limited alliances. It seems, however, that economic pressure and new security challenges have indeed started to change national mindsets and opened the path for serious defence co-operation.



Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen

participate in multinational forces, in the main European equipment programmes, and in the activity of the European Defence Agency (EDA), and (b) to have the capacity to supply by 2010 at the latest, either at national level or as a component the EU battle groups. PESCO is designed to pro-



Herman van Rompuy, President of the European Council, Pieter De Crem, Belgian Minister of Defence in Ghent

The Spanish EU presidency has started a “reflection process” on PESCO in March 2010 that was carried as a priority into the Belgian EU Presidency. Belgium, Hungary and Poland have declared in a Non-Paper dated 17 May 2010 that they recognise the added value of PESCO. They state that synergies between Member states should lead

to operational advantages, more efficient defence spending, elimination of duplications and shortfalls in defence capabilities. Reinforced by the current economic crisis, PESCO can, as an incentive to rationalisation and enhancement of defence efforts, generate political will. Therefore the paper proposes to move forward to a common understanding on PESCO with an open and inclusive approach. Furthermore, in order to keep the momentum and to explore further the possible implementation



Group photo: Informal Meeting of Defence Ministers, Ghent, 23 - 24 September 2010

of PESCO, the Belgian Presidency organised a seminar involving 150 experts in July 2010. The combined efforts culminated in the Informal Meeting of Defence Ministers in Ghent in September 2010.

As follow up to this meeting, Germany and Sweden issued a food-for-thought paper, the “Ghent Initiative”. In this paper both nations recognise the imperative of co-operation, and propose to identify areas for intensified multinational co-operation. To that end, capabilities should be categorised as: 1) capabilities absolutely “essential for individual nation, maintained on strictly national level limiting co-operation”, 2) capabilities allowing closer co-operation “without creating too strong dependencies”, and 3) capabilities “where mutual dependency and reliance upon EU partners is acceptable in an international burden-sharing framework”.

The Foreign Affairs (Defence) Council welcomed the input of the German-Swedish

initiative in their conclusion from 9 December 2010: “The Council encouraged Member States to exchange information, as appropriate, and enhance transparency on current and forthcoming defence budget cuts, and to examine the impact of these budget cuts on capability development.” Moreover, the Council encouraged Member States “to systematically analyse their national military capabilities and support structures, taking into account criteria such as operational effectiveness, economic efficiency and sustainability.” Picking up the German-Swedish initiative, the Council calls on “Member States to consider: measures to increase interoperability for capabilities to be maintained on a national level; exploring which capabilities offer potential for pooling; intensifying cooperation regarding capabilities, support structures and tasks which could be addressed on the basis of role- and task-sharing.”

According to media reports, France,

Germany and Poland seem to be keen on keeping the momentum. Just after the Foreign Affairs (Defence) Council, the foreign ministers of those countries urged the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, in a joint letter to personally take charge of plans to boost military co-operation between EU Member states and between the EU and NATO. The letter specifically proposes to make use of PESCO and that Ashton should “achieve concrete results under the Polish EU presidency in the second half of 2011”.

Moreover, the ministers ask Ms Ashton to look into the creation of a permanent EU civilian-military planning capability and to explore ways to increase effectiveness of EU battlegroups. Additionally, Ashton shall come up with possibilities for “common funding” of battlegroup needs, and stimulate research investment in the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base.

It seems that Member states started to understand the imperative to revise national defence planning, to discontinue national capabilities redundant on EU level, and in general to pool assets and capabilities, including logistics and training facilities. Although it is not yet certain that PESCO will be the chosen mean to achieve the necessary “step-change in defence co-operation from tactical to strategic level”, recent developments sure do look promising.

TL

EUROMIL Calendar 2011

13	January	Board	Brussels, Belgium
10	March	Board	Brussels, Belgium
14	April	Board	Stockholm, Sweden
15-16	April	Presidium	Stockholm, Sweden
22	May	Board	Nicosia, Cyprus
15	September	Board	Brussels, Belgium
27	October	Board	Brussels, Belgium
28-29	October	Presidium	Brussels, Belgium

EUROMIL

*and the Brussels team
wish you a Happy Holiday Season
and a Peaceful New Year*



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