



**EUROMIL aisbl**

(European Organisation of  
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## **EUROMIL Contribution to the UPR** **32<sup>nd</sup> Session, Cyprus**

*The European Organisation of Military Associations (EUROMIL), which was established in 1972, is an umbrella organisation composed of 34 military associations and trade unions from 23 countries. It is the main Europe-wide forum for cooperation among professional military associations on issues of common concern. EUROMIL strives to secure and advance the human rights, fundamental freedoms and socio-professional interests of military personnel of all ranks and promotes the concept of "Citizen in Uniform". As such, a soldier is entitled to the same rights and obligations as any other citizen.*

**While reviewing the fulfillment of Cyprus of its human rights obligations and commitments, EUROMIL would like to draw the attention of the UPR Working Group on the following issues affecting personnel of the Cypriot armed forces:**

- **Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Art. 24**
- **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Art. 7 (d)**

In Cyprus, some employees of the public services do not enjoy their fundamental rights and freedoms. Indeed, members of the Cypriot armed forces are impeded from fully exercising their economic and social rights.

Contrary to the international human rights legislation cited above to which Cyprus is a party<sup>1</sup>, Cypriot military personnel are workers whom no working time regulations apply<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Additionally, it should be noted that Cyprus is not only acting against international human rights legislation in the UN framework, but also the pertinent regulations on the level of the European Union. In April 2017, the European Commission published an interpretative communication which aims at giving guidance and clarity for the implementation of the [EU Working Time Directive](#). Here, the European Commission establishes that the working time directive is applicable to the armed forces. The exclusion of workers – including military personnel – must be interpreted restrictively and take into account the nature of the tasks performed rather than the sector of employment. The European Commission furthermore published an [implementation report](#) which assesses the current state of play in the different member states. The report highlights the fact that in some Member States, including Cyprus, categories of workers are excluded from the scope of the WTD implementation – in the public sector these are most commonly the armed forces – and clearly states that such arrangements are not consistent with the requirements of the WTD.

<sup>2</sup> The organisation of working time law of 2002 ([Law 63\(I\)/2002](#)). While this law foresees the exclusion of members of the armed forces from the working time law (Art. 4 (3) a), the concrete



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While the government of Cyprus tries to justify this situation with reference to issues of national security, EUROMIL strongly believes that regular working hours and rest periods are of paramount importance for the safety and health of workers, including military personnel. A solution should thus be found which accommodates the national security needs as well as the human rights of Cypriot military personnel.

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regulations on the level of the armed forces themselves for military personnel are not publicly available, as they are listed as classified material.