

# EUROMIL: Biannual Presidium

EUROMIL held its biannual Presidium meeting in Tuusula, near Helsinki, Finland on the 11th and 12th October 2003. This was the first EUROMIL presidium attended by RACO since it joined the organisation.

**T**he presidium is a standing committee of EUROMIL consisting of representatives of all member unions and associations as well as members of the board of EUROMIL. The General Secretary, Lt. Col. Brian O'Keeffe and the Research Officer, Comdt. Michael Geraghty, represented RACO at the presidium.

Päällystöliitto, the representative association for Finnish military officers, hosted the event. Although Finland is not a

member of NATO, the importance of international co-operation is increasing significantly for Finland. With about 1000 servicemen currently on peacekeeping missions abroad, Finland is one of the major contributing countries, measured in servicemen per inhabitant. One of the functions of a presidium is the briefing of representatives on work in progress by lead associations. Lead associations are those who continuously analyse and prepare position papers on key issues relating to

EUROMIL. Lead associations are currently developing the following issues.

## **Multinationality**

"Joint Mission – Joint Rights? Social conditions on missions abroad". This study examines the universal standards that should apply to all military personnel, irrespective of mission, nationality or representation, and includes; the welfare of families, standards of accommodation officially provided, allowances, the welfare



Spanish troops returning from duty in Iraq. Social conditions on missions abroad was one of the issues discussed at the Finnish conference.



The German and NATO flags: The German representative association reported on EU military issues in the proposed new EU constitution.

of soldiers, equipment provided as well as post-mission measures.

**Legal Issues**

The full-time legal section of the German association, the DBwV, presented a report to the presidium regarding the developments

in the ESDP and CFSP, and military issues emanating from the draft EU constitution.

**“Veterans”**

The term ‘veterans’ does not now refer to the war veterans of the two World Wars, but rather servicemen returning from peace-

keeping, peace-making or humanitarian missions. It is a fact that for these “new veterans” and their families there are no modern rules governing service and care adapted to their duties. Many issues relating to international missions as well as the care of servicemen who have returned from missions have yet to be resolved by the governments. EUROMIL is taking a proactive role in this area and continues to lobby in this regard.

Other projects in progress and scheduled to be submitted at the forthcoming presidium in March are; “the Health & Safety of Military Personnel”, and a comprehensive analysis of “Military Pension Systems”.

**EU Enlargement**

The presidium was briefed on and discussed EU enlargement, as 01 May 2004 will herald in the most radical change in the EU’s history to date. Ten new countries are set to join the EU. The EU population will thus increase by one third, i.e. 100 million citizens; however the national product of the EU will only increase by 4% and the proportion of agriculture in the overall national product will increase by 50%. Overcoming the major economic differences between the old and the accession countries is the greatest challenge to enlargement. However, the presidium also heard that it is not purely economic but rather political aspects that that will be decisive for enlargement.

With regard to the EU convention, some countries had divergent subject focuses in the course of the negotiations on the Convention. For Finland defence was the main focus. Germany and France also desired to go further and have presented proposals for this. Quite clearly, security structures have changed extensively in recent years and now require closer co-operation between the EU states in the area of defence.

EUROMIL is increasingly active in the area of political lobbying, particularly at EU level and the organisation uses facts and information supplied by the member associations.

**RACO ADC 2003**

RACO was pleased to welcome Mr. Andreas Prüfert as a special guest at the Associations Annual Delegate Conference in Tralee, last November. Mr. Prüfert was invited to brief the Conference on the structures and developments in EUROMIL. He provided a very useful and worthwhile insight into the work of EUROMIL as well as the organisations business plans for the next three years.

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