



**European Organisation
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**Rights of Portuguese soldiers below European standards
EUROPEAN SOLDIERS DISSATISFIED WITH THE PORTUGUESE
GOVERNMENT**

The Portuguese government does not engage in a social dialogue with its soldiers. European soldiers protest that the rights of their Portuguese comrades will be even further eroded by a fresh legislative proposal of the current Portuguese government.

In most EU-countries governments involve their military associations in a social dialogue. Democratic military associations representing the interests of servicemen are on a permanent basis involved in negotiation processes regulating the social and professional matters of military employees and their relatives. This is not the case in Portugal.

“Not only that a law unanimously approved by the Portuguese Parliament in 2001, which granted Portuguese soldiers the right of association, has in practice never been implemented, but a new draft “statute for military professional associations’ leaders” will reduce the right of social representation to zero” states Emmanuel Jacob, President of EUROMIL, the European Organization of Military Associations. The new statute forbids association activity inside military quarters and denies all association work for soldiers in command positions, which includes *de facto* all officers and staff workers.

European soldiers currently gathering in Cracow, on the occasion of their spring conference, protest against this further deterioration, which stands in strong contrast to general European standards. “I am ashamed that this comes from my government, which is about to preside the European Union” adds Mr. Antonio Lima Coelho, President of ANS, the Portuguese National Sergeants’ Association.

Portuguese soldiers have for a long period demanded the right to be fully consulted on social and professional matters affecting them directly. Numerous Portuguese soldiers have been subjected to disciplinary measures for expressing their opinion.

EUROMIL is the umbrella organization of 33 military associations in 22 European countries representing more than 500.000 servicemen and their families.

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