



**European Organisation
of Military Associations**
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Brussels, 3 April 2013

**STATEMENT
BY EMMANUEL JACOB, PRESIDENT OF EUROMIL,
IN SUPPORT OF JORGE BRAVO, PRESIDENT OF AUME**

The European Organisation of Military Associations (EUROMIL) is an umbrella organization composed of 40 military associations and trade unions from 27 countries. It is the main Europe-wide forum for cooperation among professional military associations on issues of common concern. EUROMIL strives to secure and advance the human rights, fundamental freedoms and socio-professional interests of military personnel of all ranks in Europe and promotes the concept of "Citizen in Uniform". As such, a soldier is entitled to the same rights and obligations as any other citizen. EUROMIL particularly calls for recognition of the right of servicemen and -women to form and join trade unions and independent associations and for their inclusion in a regular social dialogue by the authorities. Soldiers are highly skilled employees, who have the legitimate right to promote their social and professional interests - as do other workers.

EUROMIL was informed about the imprisonment, yesterday morning, of Jorge Bravo, President of its Spanish association *Asociación Unificada de Militares Españoles* (AUME), for a period of one month and one day in a military prison near Madrid. The immediate arrest of Mr. Bravo is a consequence of the disciplinary proceedings launched by the military authorities against him, after a statement he made on 16 July 2012 in the media, considering that defence budget cuts should concentrate on superfluous spending rather than salaries.

EUROMIL expresses its full support, solidarity and sympathy with AUME and Jorge Bravo in this difficult situation.

It is the third time AUME's President is condemned for statements delivered to the media. J. Bravo was already imprisoned for one month and one day in January 2007, for commenting a helicopter accident in Afghanistan, and for one month and ten days in October 2007, for participating and delivering a speech, in civilian clothes, in a demonstration of the Civil Guard.

Despite some positive developments in the recognition of servicemen and -women rights in Spain, such as the adoption, in 2011, of the Law on Rights and Duties for the Members of the Armed Forces, establishing the right of association for military personnel, restrictions of their fundamental rights remain high.

EUROMIL regrets that Spain continues to impose undue restrictions on the right of association for military personnel and strongly condemns the current repressive measures taken against Jorge Bravo.

Military associations are recognized in several countries across Europe as valuable partners for defence administrations. Experience has shown that the right of association has not compromised combat efficiency or military discipline. On the contrary, involving democratic military associations in a permanent social dialogue has de facto improved the moral and loyalty of troops. In times of



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increased operational pace, military associations and unions can be a powerful ally to raise awareness and to articulate the professional interests and concerns of military personnel. Associations can also enhance the status of the military profession in society. EUROMIL therefore calls on the Spanish authorities to immediately drop all disciplinary or judicial measures against members of military associations in Spain.

On behalf of the military personnel in Europe, EUROMIL hopes that the Government of Spain will do everything in its power to support the present request and ensure that all Spanish military personnel will be treated as "Citizens in Uniform" in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Emmanuel Jacob,
President of EUROMIL