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**STEERING COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS  
(CDDH)**

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**WORKSHOP ON HUMAN RIGHTS OF MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES**

**Programme**

28 June 2023  
Strasbourg, Agora (room G02)

## Concept note

The workshop aims to raise awareness and promote dialogue on the human rights of members of the armed forces. It provides a platform for stakeholders to discuss current challenges and opportunities in protecting the rights of military personnel and to identify ways to enhance protection of their human rights in light of international standards.

The human rights of members of the armed forces are protected by the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and there is significant relevant case law of the European Court of Human Rights on this issue. The Council of Europe has also developed a set of specific standards in relation to human rights of military personnel, which includes notably Committee of Ministers' Recommendations [CM/Rec\(2010\)4](#) to member States on human rights of members of the armed forces and [R \(87\) 8](#) regarding conscientious objection to military service, as well as recommendations and resolutions of the Parliamentary Assembly.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the European Social Charter and the Revised European Social Charter, and the decisions and conclusions of the European Committee on Social Rights, are relevant, as are the standards defined by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, whose mandate covers military detention facilities.

The Council of Europe's co-operation activities in Armenia have contributed to shaping the national reforms related to the promotion and protection of human rights in the armed forces, bringing the country's legislation and practice more closely into line with Council of Europe standards and existing national policies by supporting the implementation of certain actions of the 2020-2022 National Strategy of Human Rights Protection of Armenia. Through these activities, the Council of Europe has developed various co-operation methods and approaches in this area and gained special experience and expertise in working with the governmental authorities, military personnel and human rights institutions to address issues of human rights in the armed forces.

The workshop provides a platform to share this experience, expertise and lessons learnt with other member States, with a view to enhancing the national implementation of relevant standards in this field. In particular, experts will be familiarised with the human rights standards applicable for members of the armed forces and the specific issues that continue to arise, and informed of the support that the Council of Europe can provide in addressing these issues.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Recommendations 1742 (2006) on "Human rights of members of the armed forces", 1714 (2005) on the "Abolition of restrictions on the right to vote", 1572 (2002) on the "Right to association for members of the professional staff of the armed forces", 1518 (2001) on the "Exercise of the right of conscientious objection to military service in Council of Europe member states" and 1380 (1998) on "Human rights of conscripts.

<sup>2</sup> Information on the support available from the Council of Europe in this field includes the Project "Fostering Human Rights in the Armed Forces in Armenia". Its objective is to contribute to better protection of human rights within the armed forces, by empowering women's role in the armed forces through the improvement of the regulatory framework and institutional mechanisms, enhancing social guarantees, strengthening capacities of the Ministry of Defense, the Human Rights Defender's Office, military law-enforcement agencies and the judiciary. This Project is implemented by the Council of Europe within the framework of the Council of Europe Action Plan for Armenia 2023-2026.

**14:00 Opening of the workshop by Christophe POIREL, Director, Human Rights**

**14:10 Implementing standards related to the protection and promotion of human rights of members of the armed forces in Council of Europe member States**

*Moderator - Introductory remarks, including information on [CM/Rec\(2010\)4](#) on human rights of members of the armed forces*

**Krista OINONEN (Finland)**

*Protecting and respecting the human rights of armed forces personnel: overview of State practice*

**William MCDERMOTT, Senior Programme Manager, DCAF – Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance**

*The rights of “citizens in uniform”: current challenges and protection gaps*

**Emmanuel JACOB, President, European Organisation of Military Associations and Trade Unions (EUROMIL)**

*The role of NHRIs in relation to human rights of members of the armed forces*

**Yuriy KOVBASA, Director of the Department for Control of Rights in the Defense Sector, the rights of veterans, servicemen, prisoners of war and their family members, Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman)**

*The right to conscientious objection to military service: where do we stand in Europe?*

**Friedhelm SCHNEIDER, Representative, European Bureau for Conscientious Objection (EBCO)**

Q&A

**15:30 Coffee break**

**16:00 Strengthening the protection of human rights of members of the armed forces: the role of the Council of Europe**

*Moderator - Introductory remarks*

**Martina SCHMIDT, Head of Council of Europe office in Yerevan**

*Overview of Council of Europe standards and instruments to support member States in addressing the issue of human rights protection in the armed forces and cooperation activities to promote them*

**Armen GRIGORYAN, National programme officer, Council of Europe office in Yerevan**

*Protecting Human Rights in the Armed Forces*

**Gevorg MARTIROSYAN, Head of Human Rights and Integrity Building Centre, Colonel, Ministry of Defence of Armenia**

*Support for the role of the national human rights institution in protecting human rights in the armed forces*

**Andranik YEGHOYAN, Head of Unit of Protection of Human Rights of Members of the Armed Forces and Their Family Members, Ombudsman office of Armenia**

*Needs regarding the enhancement of human rights in the armed forces in Ukraine*

**Yuriy KOVBASA, Director of the Department for Control of Rights in the Defense Sector, the rights of veterans, servicemen, prisoners of war and their family members, Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman)**

*Human rights education in the military educational institutions (presentation of the HELP model course on Human rights protection in the armed forces)*

**Eva PASTRANA, Head of the Justice and Human Rights Training Division**

Q&A

**17:20 Closing remarks by Kristīne LĪCIS (Latvia), CDDH Chairperson**