

**Question for written answer E-002871/2025
to the Commission**

Rule 144

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Subject: Need for clear exemptions for military personnel under the Working Time Directive

Directive 2003/88/EC¹ (Working Time Directive) sets minimum standards for rest and working hours across the EU. While Article 17 allows derogations for specific sectors, including the armed forces, the scope and application of these exemptions remain legally unclear. This ambiguity has led to inconsistent national practices and legal uncertainty for Member States.

Some countries (e.g. Sweden, Germany and Ireland) have introduced structured systems to balance soldiers' right to rest with operational demands. The Commission has expressed support for Ireland's recent reforms, while other models – such as Sweden's use of collective agreements – have faced criticism. This variation highlights the need for a clearer and more harmonised legal basis for flexibility under the directive.

In the light of evolving security threats and the Commission's emphasis on ensuring interoperability and readiness of national armed forces within a common EU framework, we ask:

is the Commission willing to consider or propose amendments to the Working Time Directive to establish a more explicit, harmonised exemption framework for military personnel – particularly concerning activities such as deployment, emergency response and training?

Submitted: 14.7.2025

¹ Directive 2003/88/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 November 2003 concerning certain aspects of the organisation of working time, OJ L 299, 18.11.2003, p. 9, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2003/88/oj>.