

RETIREMENT INFORMATION WORKSHOP
Tuesday 24 November 2009

Good afternoon,

My name is Tino Synadinos and I am to speak to you of both ARO, the retired staff association at NATO Headquarters, as well as of the Confederation of NATO retired staff associations whose secretariat is co-located with that of ARO.

2. First of all I want to emphasize the differences between active civilian personnel associations and retired staff associations.
3. The substantive difference between these two categories is that active staff are de-facto members of their NATO body's civilian personnel association, whereas retiring staff are free to decide whether they want to adhere to their "local" retired staff association or not ; theirs is an optional membership.
4. The other difference is that whereas every NATO body has a civilian personnel association, however small the number of such personnel may be, the same cannot – and does not – apply to retired staff associations, because of the dispersal of this personnel after retirement. Instead, one finds a limited number of retired staff associations to which retired staff from more than one NATO body can adhere.
5. These associations currently are :
 - 1) ARO/ARNS, which accepts civilian retirees from any NATO body provided he/she is at least 50 years old and has worked for NATO a least 5 years;
 - 2) ANARCP, which accepts civilian retirees from SHAPE and from all other military headquarters or Military Committee agencies and has 2 branches, one in The Hague, the other in Geilenkirchen;
 - 3) NOBA, which accepts both civilian and seconded-staff retirees from NAMSA; and
 - 4) FARAOF, the Federation of retired staff associations of the NATO agencies located in France.
6. As can be seen, these four associations are quite different from one another. And because of these differences, and because they have to handle a number of matters which are particular to their NATO body of origin, they have each kept their separate identity. On the other hand, having also to face problems which are common to them all, they also form an

integral part of the Confederation of NATO retired staff associations, under which they are fully recognised by NATO in the Civilian Personnel Regulations.

7. In addition to the above purely NATO associations, there is AAPOCAD, the association of pensioners of the six Coordinated International Organizations, i.e. : NATO, OECD, European Space Agency (ESA), Council of Europe, the WEU (or what is left of it) and the European Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasts. Just as for all the other retired staff associations, membership in AAPOCAD is optional.

8. Let me stress here that AAPOCAD is the only retired staff association that has been formally recognised by the member countries of the Co-ordination structure; and is therefore the only retired staff association allowed to participate in the Co-ordination activities and meetings through its official representatives on the Committee of Staff Representatives (CSR).

9. The above explains the reasons for having more than just one NATO retired staff association, as well as the interest for retirees to adhere to more than one of them. It also explains why we, at NATO, strongly recommend dual membership for pensioners, i.e. : in the "local" retired staff association for matters related to the NATO body of origin ; and in AAPOCAD for matters related to Co-ordination.

ARO

10. I now turn to ARO, the Association at NATO Headquarters which - should you decide to join it – is your "local" retired staff association.

11. It was founded in 1987 by Pierre Dechamps, with the support of former Secretary General Joseph Luns. It was from the beginning – and remains so to this day – open to all NATO retired staff, whatever their NATO body of origin, as long as they meet the criteria of age and length of service. Its membership now stands at over 850, half of whom are pensioners, the others having opted for the Provident Fund.

12. ARO is led by an Executive Committee, whose members are elected for a 3-year period, supplemented on occasion by not more than 5 co-opted members. Its initial President was its founder, Pierre Dechamps; he was succeeded in 1997 by Ghislain Hondequin; and, since May 2008, I have the honour of being its third President.

13. The ARO Executive Committee meets three or four times a year, but the bulk of the work is carried out by "on-duty" members - all volunteers – who deal with the day-by-day matters. This being said, the Executive Committee keeps ARO members informed of the various matters dealt with by Newsletter, issued once or twice a year. It also formally renders account of its activities to ARO members on the occasion of the General Assembly, held each year between the months of April and May.

14. After many moves, the ARO offices are now located in the Staff Center; they are normally open from 9 am to 4 pm.

15. What are ARO's activities ?

- First of all, and that is its principal activity, to act as a go-between for its members vis-à-vis the various services of the NATO HQ Administration, as well as with Van Breda.

- Participate actively in all the activities of the Confederation and maintain close contacts with the three other Associations which constitute it.
- ARO has recently obtained, from the Executive Management Division, the establishment of a Point of contact for Social Issues, to which it can apply regarding problems which it does not have the expertise to handle. It is something ARO had long sought for and thanks go to Assistant Secretary General for Executive Management Mr. Dempster who has arranged it.
- ARO is represented by an observer on the NATO HQ Staff Committee; it is also a member of the Staff Centre Management Committee.
- ARO maintains through its members contact with AAPOCAD; and also maintains links with the Belgium Section of AIACE, its counterpart of the European Communities.

THE CONFEDERATION

16. The Confederation, established in 1995, and whose Articles of Association have been approved by the Secretary General, is formally recognised in the Civilian Personnel Regulations. As such it is formally represented on the Joint Consultative Board (JCB), the Defined Contribution Pension Scheme (DCPS) and the Retirees' Medical Claim Fund (RMCF) and, as required, in some of their working groups. The Confederation also works closely with the Liaison Committee of Staff Representatives and as an observer at their meetings.

17. Following a recent modification of the AAPOCAD Articles of Association, the Confederation Chairman is now an ex-officio member of the AAPOCAD Governing Board, with full rights regarding all matters concerning Coordination.

18. The Confederation Executive Committee consists of up to 4 representatives from each of the member Associations: ARO, ANARCP, NOBA and FARAOF. These representatives represent the Confederation in the various NATO committees mentioned above and report to it the outcome of the meetings they have attended. The Confederation chairman is Mr. David A. Facey, who is also Vice-president of ARO.

19. The Confederation Executive Committee normally meets twice a year, but a great deal of work is done between meetings by e-mail, phone and postal mail. Its main concerns are of course related to the annual salary and consequential pension adjustments, to the various pension and provident funds and to the medical coverage arrangements with Van Breda. On this last, a major effort over the last several years has been the work in the JCB working group, looking to the extension of the Van Breda contract to include provisions for Long Term Care/Home Care. A further example of a recent effort is the overall NATO Retired Staff Data Base, comprising some 3470 names, which was submitted in 2008 to Mr. Dempster, the Assistant Secretary General for Executive Management.