

## Schirmmacher releases Lecture held at the Federal Ministry of Defence

In November 2018, Thomas Schirmmacher opened a workshop entitled “Ethical Education in the Bundeswehr on the development of Central Service Regulations for Ethical Education in the Bundeswehr” (German Armed Forces) in the Stauffenberg Room of the Federal Ministry of Defense in Berlin with a lecture entitled “Peace Ethics – Leadership Ethics – Ethical Education: a Luxury or the Lifeblood of Modern Armed Forces?” His lecture has now been sent to all participants and is hereby made publicly available.

Below we quote Josephine Klingner from an internal Bundeswehr report:

“Acting ethically: A question of training?”

Does the Bundeswehr need ethical education? What can and should it achieve? Where are the possible boundaries and areas of conflict? These and other questions were delved into at the workshop 'Ethical Education in the Bundeswehr' held on November 13 at the Federal Ministry of Defence. The goal: New regulations to close the regulatory gap for holistic personality development.



According to Colonel Dr. Sven Lange, Head of Division III 3 of the Ministry's Lead Division Armed Forces, 'It should enter into force in 2019 – the Central Service Regulation for Ethical Education in the Bundeswehr.' Together with regulations on political and historical education, it will then cover soldiers. The three individual regulations are ultimately to be brought together in central service regulations entitled 'Personality Development in the Bundeswehr.' Lange said this would come at the earliest in 2020.

In working groups, representatives of the Ministry, the Bundeswehr, churches, universities and research, as well as internal and external experts discussed the fundamentals and principles of ethical education as well as the tasks and goals of integrative ethical education in the Bundeswehr.

In the end, the Regulation will systematically offer a purpose and objectives of ethical education in initial and advanced training. 'At the same time, it illustrates the importance of ethical education for the realization of the concept of inner guidance and its role model of the citizen in uniform,' Lange explained.

The majority of participants agreed that a clear definition of ethical action was needed in order to remain capable of acting in difficult ethical and moral decision-making situations. Additionally, whatever is written into this regulation, it should not be a straitjacket nor a purely theoretical construct: 'In the end, people deployed in the field have to live with whatever we write into this Regulation,' explained Prof. Dr. Thomas Schirmmacher, reformed theologian, ethicist, sociologist of religion, and human rights expert. Ethics is not an ideal – a Central Service Regulation on this topic has to be suitable for deployment – i.e., virtually

tailored to deployment in order to strengthen a commander's leadership ability and to increase soldiers' confidence to act.

This would also require the development of awareness and sufficient sensitivity for decisions of conscience: The basic dimensions of human action must also be taken into account in such a provision.

There will at least be one more workshop and an additional one with a panel of experts before the new regulation 'Ethical Education in the Bundeswehr' is put on paper. 'The latter is planned for spring 2019 and will deal specifically with concrete topics and questions that still have to be answered with regard to the provision,' according to Dr. Roland Wöhrle-Chon, Academic Director at Division III 3 of the Ministry's Lead Division Armed Forces."

#### Downloads and Links:

- The lecture „Friedensethik – Führungsethik – Ethische Bildung: Luxus oder Lebenselixier für moderne Streitkräfte?“ in German as [PDF-Download](#).
- [More photos online ...](#)