



European Bureau for Conscientious Objection

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P R E S S R E L E A S E

17 April 2012: Global Day of Action on Military Spending

Brussels, 17 April 2012

The European Bureau for Conscientious Objection (EBCO) participated today in the second [Global Day of Action on Military Spending \(GDAMS\)](#) to protest against military spending with two joint actions, in Brussels, Belgium and in Athens, Greece. EBCO condemns the excessive level of military spending and calls for a reallocation of resources to fulfil basic human needs.

Over 130 different actions took place in 40 countries worldwide, with participation in over 50 cities in the United States alone. The events, which coincide with Tax Day in the United States, emphasize the staggering amount of taxpayer money that goes toward military spending. Amidst global economic and climate crises, groups called for a shift in spending from war and militarism to expenditures on human need.

This day coincides with the annual release by the [Stockholm International Peace Research Institute \(SIPRI\)](#) of new figures on world military expenditures.

World military expenditure in 2011 totalled \$1.74 trillion, almost unchanged since 2010 in real terms. The small rise of just 0.3 per cent in 2011 marks the end of a run of continuous increases in military spending between 1998 and 2010, including an annual average increase of 4.5 per cent between 2001 and 2009. Six of the world's top military spenders—Brazil, France, Germany, India, the United Kingdom and the United States—made cuts in their military budgets in 2011, in most cases as part of attempts to reduce budget deficits. The SIPRI figures (which do not include data on Iran, North Korea or the United Arab Emirates) show that six countries, China, Russia, Algeria, Iraq, Azerbaijan and Turkey increased their military expenditure by over \$1,000 million US at 2010 prices between 2010 and 2011.

The GDAMS coalition is a network of dozens of well-known peace organizations, and was originally called into being by the Institute for Policy Studies and the International Peace Bureau in acknowledgement that thousands of civil society organizations and billions of individuals across the world share the desire for a reduction in global military spending.

Photo 1: Joint action in Brussels, Belgium (Manneken Pis): Action pour la Paix, BEOC -Bureau Européen de l'Objection de Conscience, CNAPD – Coordination Nationale d'Action pour la Paix et la Démocratie, Comité Surveillance OTAN, MCP – Mouvement Chrétien pour la Paix, MIR-IRG – Mouvement International de la Réconciliation / Internationale des Résistant-e-s à la Guerre, Pax Christi Wallonie Bruxelles.

Photo 2: Joint action in Athens, Greece (Syntagma): [European Bureau for Conscientious Objection \(EBCO\)](#), [Greek Association of Conscientious Objectors](#), [World Without Wars and Violence](#), [World Women March](#), [Antinationalistic-Antimilitaristic Initiative](#), [Antigone](#) Information and Documentation Centre on Racism, Ecology, Peace and Non Violence, [Ecologists Greens](#) Party, [Youth of Synaspismos](#) Left Party and [Iliosporoi](#) Network.

EBCO was founded in Brussels in 1979 as an umbrella structure for national associations of conscientious objectors in the European countries to promote the right to conscientious objection to preparations for, and participation in, war and any other type of military activity as a fundamental human right. It enjoys participatory status with the Council of Europe since 1998 and is a member of its Conference of International Non-Governmental Organisations since 2005. It provides expertise and legal opinions on behalf of the Directorate General of Human Rights and Legal Affairs of the Council of Europe. It is involved in drawing up the annual report of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs of the European Parliament on the application by the Member States of its resolutions on conscientious objection and civilian service, as determined in the "Bandrés Molet & Bindi Resolution" of 1994. It is a full member of the European Youth Forum since 1995.