



European
Bureau for
Conscientious
Objection

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

THE RIGHT TO CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION TO MILITARY SERVICE IN EUROPE

Friday 4 October 2013, 16:30 – 19:30

Office of the European Parliament in Greece, 8 Amalias avenue, Syntagma square

PRESENTATION OF EBCO'S ANNUAL REPORT ON CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION TO MILITARY SERVICE IN EUROPE hosted by MEP Nikos Chrysogelos (GREENS/EFA)

Brussels, 30 September 2013

A **public event on conscientious objection to military service in Europe** will be hosted by **Green MEP Nikos CHRYSOGELOS** on Friday the **4th of October 2013**, at **16:30-19:30** in the office of the European Parliament in Greece (8 Amalias avenue, Syntagma square). During this public event the **European Bureau for Conscientious Objection** will present its **Annual Report** on the right to conscientious objection in Europe.

"Unlike previous years that we presented EBCO's Annual Report on Conscientious Objection to Military Service in the European Parliament in Brussels, where our international secretariat is based, we decided this year to present EBCO's Annual Report in Athens, due to our rising concerns about the unacceptable treatment of conscientious objectors in Greece which continues to be in violation of international human rights standards and the political guidelines of the European Union. It is particularly distressing that this should be happening just as Greece is about to assume the presidency of the European Union, which has hitherto played such a positive role in the international campaign for the full recognition of the right of conscientious objection to military service.", **Friedhelm Schneider, EBCO's President** stated today.

"EBCO's annual report this year documents an unprecedented series of prosecutions of conscientious objectors in Greece. Another focus is on the treatment of conscientious objectors who seek asylum; we are particularly concerned about the situation of Syrian asylum-seekers in Greece. And we are disturbed that military expenditure continues to be largely shielded from the austerity package which is being imposed on the Greek economy, so that social welfare programmes have to bear an undue part of the burden.", **Derek Brett, EBCO's Researcher** added.

"Instead of prosecuting conscientious objectors to military service, the greek government should promote conscientious objection as a human right and as a valuable contribution to non-violence and peace. Civilian service should promote solidarity, social cohesion and protection of the environment. Asylum seekers should be granted international protection. In order social spending to be prioritised over military spending in a period of crisis, EU should guarantee the borders of Greece using its political power.", **Nikos Chrysogelos, MEP of the Greens/EFA** underlined today.

The United Nations Human Rights Committee has found that the right of conscientious objection to military service is inherent in the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, enshrined in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.¹ The European Court of Human Rights, too, has ruled that conscientious objection to military service is protected under Article 9 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.²

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¹ See: *Atasoy and Sarkut v Turkey*, Views adopted 29th March 2012, (CCPR/C/104/D/1853 – 1854/2008)

² *Bayatyan v Armenia* (Application no. 23459/03, Grand Chamber Judgment of 07/07/2011)



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in the European Parliament



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PUBLIC EVENT ON CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION IN EUROPE PRESENTATION OF EBCO's ANNUAL REPORT

hosted by MEP Nikos CHRYSOGELOS (Greens/EFA)

FRIDAY 4 OCTOBER 2012, 16.30 - 19.30

OFFICE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT IN GREECE, 8 Amalias avenue, Syntagma square

PROGRAMME

Moderator of first session: Nikos CHRYSOGELOS, MEP Greens/EFA

16.30 - 17.00	Registration
17.00 - 17.10	Introductory speech by Nikos CHRYSOGELOS , MEP, Greens/EFA
17.10 - 17.20	Introductory speech by Friedhelm SCHNEIDER , President, EBCO
17.20 - 17.45	Presentation of EBCO's Annual Report on Conscientious Objection in Europe by Derek BRETT , Researcher, EBCO
17.45 - 17.50	Comments by Angelos NIKOLOPOULOS , General Secretary, Greek Association of Conscientious Objectors
17.50 - 18.10	Reflections by political groups

Moderator of second session: Ioanna SOTIRCHOU, Journalist of the Journalists' Journal

18.10 - 18.20	Comments by Petros MASTAKAS , Associate Protection Officer, Office in Greece of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
18.20 - 18.30	Comments by Michael TSAPOGAS , Senior Investigator on Human Rights, Greek Ombudsman
18.30 - 18.40	Comments by George KARATZAS , Coordinator, Network for the Right to Conscientious Objection, Greek Section of Amnesty International
18.40 - 18.50	Comments by Timotheos SIGALAS , lawyer, defender of conscientious objectors in Greece
18.50 - 19.00	Comments by Harry LADIS , lawyer, defender of conscientious objectors in Greece
19.00 - 19.10	Comments by Hannah BROCK , Right to Refuse to Kill Programme Worker, War Resisters' International
19.10 - 19.15	Comments by representative of the World without Wars and Violence
19.15 - 19.30	Discussion

Note: Simultaneous interpretation from english to greek and from greek to english will be provided during the entire event.