



E B C O P R E S S R E L E A S E

EBCO General Assembly and parallel actions in Athens, Greece

Athens, 9 May 2023

The [European Bureau for Conscientious Objection \(EBCO\)](http://www.ebco-beoc.org) held its General Assembly in Athens, Greece, on 22 April 2023, organised as a hybrid meeting both in person and online, with representatives of its member organisations from **Belgium, Cyprus, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Russia, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom.**



"We came together to discuss the current challenges, especially given the ongoing Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, and organise our actions towards protection of all conscientious objectors, deserters and non-violent anti-war protestors from Russia, Ukraine and Belarus", EBCO's President Alexia Tsouni stated today.

A [joint public action](#) in the framework of the [#ObjectWarCampaign](#) was co-organised by [EBCO](#), the [Association of Greek Conscientious Objectors](#) and the ObjectWar gathering on 22/04/2023 at Syntagma square, Athens, defending the right to protection and asylum for deserters and conscientious objectors from Russia, Ukraine and Belarus.



The **video of the action** is available here:

<https://vimeo.com/femartact/objectwarcampaign-action-athens>

On 21/04/2023, an EBCO delegation, with representatives from Russia, Belarus, Finland, Germany and Greece, had constructive meetings with the **SYRIZA** and **MERA25** political parties.

Meeting with the SYRIZA political party:

Press release: <https://left.gr/news/synantisi-toy-syriza-ps-me-organoseis-gia-ta-dikaiomata-ton-antirrision-syneidisis>

Photos:



Meeting with the MERA25 political party:

Photos:



Moreover, EBCO members gave interviews to journalists. **Media coverage** included interesting articles in **EFSYN** and **NEWS247**.

EFSYN article, 22/04/2023:

"Conscientious objectors are the hope to defeat violence" by Dimitris Aggelidis

Online version: www.efsyn.gr/ellada/dikaiomata/386828-oi-antirrisies-syneidisis-einai-i-elpida-gia-na-nikisoyme-ti-bia

Including interviews with:

Olga Karatch, "[Our House](#)" – Belarus;

Andreas Michos, "[Association of Conscientious Objectors](#)" – Greece;

Saša Belik and Maria Zakharova, "[Movement of Conscientious Objectors](#)" – Russia; and

Yurii Sheliashenko, "[Ukrainian Pacifist Movement](#)" – Ukraine.

Printed version:

ΖΗΤΟΥΝ ΔΙΕΘΝΗ ΠΡΟΣΤΑΣΙΑ ΚΑΙ ΣΕ ΟΣΟΥΣ ΕΓΚΑΤΑΛΕΙΠΟΥΝ ΤΟΝ ΣΤΡΑΤΟ ΣΕ ΡΩΣΙΑ, ΟΥΚΡΑΝΙΑ ΚΑΙ ΛΕΥΚΟΡΩΣΙΑ

ΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ ΣΤΗΝ ΟΥΚΡΑΝΙΑ ΜΑΝΟΣ ΦΡΑΓΚΙΟΥΔΑΚΗΣ 29 ΑΠΡΙΛΙΟΥ 2023

A **joint public action**, a **historical tour** in Athens city centre, was co-organised by [EBCO](#), the [Association of Greek Conscientious Objectors](#) and [Amnesty International - Greek Section](#) on 21/04/2023, **anniversary of the launch of the Greek military dictatorship** (21 April 1967), highlighting the human rights violations and the struggle for freedom and justice. The tour included the following stops: 1) Museum of Anti-Dictatorship Democratic Resistance of the Association of Imprisoned & Exiled Resisters 1967-1974; 2) Grigoris Lambrakis; 3) War Museum; 4) (former) Medical Centre for the Rehabilitation of Torture Victims; 5) Greek Section of Amnesty International; 6) Law School of the University of Athens; and 7) National Technical University of Athens.



The **video of the action** is available here: <https://vimeo.com/femartact/greek-dictatorship-resistance-tour>

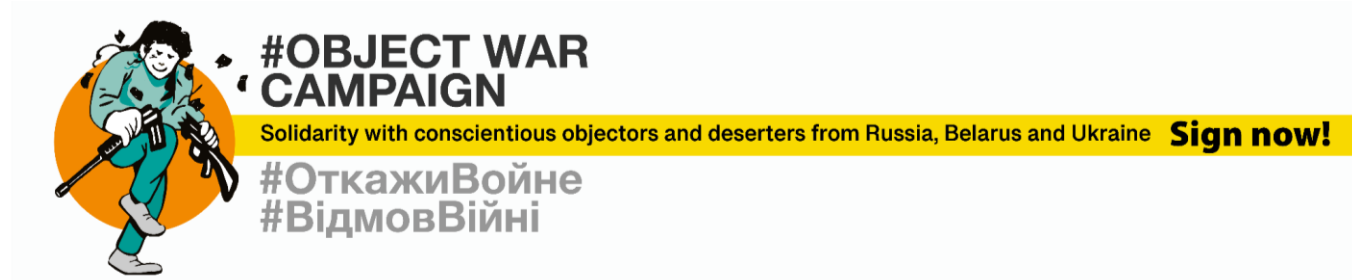
The **document of the action** is attached.

EBCO strongly condemns the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and calls on all soldiers not to participate in hostilities and on all recruits to refuse military service. EBCO denounces all the cases of forced and even violent recruitment to the armies of both sides, as well as all the cases of persecution of those who object the war. **The right to conscientious objection to military service is inherent in the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion**, guaranteed under Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which is **non-derogable even in a time of public emergency**, as stated in Article 4(2) of ICCPR.

EBCO calls Russia to immediately and unconditionally release all those soldiers and mobilised civilians who object to engage in the war and are illegally detained in a number of centres in Russian-controlled areas of Ukraine. Russian authorities are reportedly using threats, psychological abuse and torture to force those detained to return to the front (<https://ebco-beoc.org/node/559>).

EBCO calls Ukraine to immediately reverse the suspension of the human right to conscientious objection, release and honourably discharge conscientious objector Vitaly Alekseenko, and acquit conscientious objectors Mykhailo Yavorsky and Hennadii Tomniuk. EBCO urges for international observers and international media coverage of the trial of prisoner of conscience Alekseenko in Kiev on May 25th. Ukraine should safeguard the right to conscientious objection to military service, including in wartime, fully complying with the European and international standards, amongst others the standards set by the European Court of Human Rights (<https://ebco-beoc.org/node/561>).

#ObjectWarCampaign: [Russia, Belarus, Ukraine: Protection and asylum for deserters and conscientious objectors to military service](#)



FOR MORE INFORMATION AND INTERVIEWS please contact:
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The [European Bureau for Conscientious Objection \(EBCO\)](#) 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. EBCO enjoys participatory status with the Council of Europe since 1998 and is a member of its Conference of International Non-Governmental Organisations since 2005. EBCO is entitled to lodge collective complaints concerning the European Social Charter of the Council of Europe since 2021. EBCO provides expertise and legal opinions on behalf of the Directorate General of Human Rights and Legal Affairs of the Council of Europe. EBCO 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. EBCO is a full member of the European Youth Forum since 1995.
