



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

EBCO General Assembly and parallel action in Paris, France

Publication of the EBCO Annual Report "Conscientious Objection to Military Service in Europe 2023/24" on May 15th, international conscientious objection day

Brussels, 3 May 2024

The [European Bureau for Conscientious Objection \(EBCO\)](http://www.ebco-beoc.org) held its General Assembly in Paris, France, on 27-28 April 2024, organised as a hybrid meeting both in person on the Peace Boat, and online, kindly hosted by the [Association Alternat](http://www.alternat.be). The General Assembly of EBCO was attended by representatives of its member organisations from **Belgium, Cyprus, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Italy, 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**. We also discussed about the violations of the rights of conscientious objectors in **Cyprus**, and celebrated the recent judgment by the European Court of Human Rights in the case of Turkish-Cypriot reservist conscientious objector [Murat Kanatlı v Türkiye](#). We underlined the failure of **Turkey** to implement the relevant judgments of the European Court of Human Rights, as well as the failure of **Greece** to comply with the decision of the UN Human Rights Committee on the appeal of Petromelidis. We prepared for the **publication of the EBCO Annual Report "Conscientious Objection to Military Service in Europe 2023/24" on May 15th, international conscientious objection day**. Last but not least, we expressed our **solidarity with the Israeli conscientious objectors and the non-violent activists from both sides**, and repeated our clear position against all the violence in the conflict, indiscriminate killings and destruction. We urged for an immediate ceasefire and negotiations to achieve a just and lasting peace in Ukraine, in Palestine, and in all the conflict areas worldwide", EBCO's President Alexia Tsouni stated today.*

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 is currently running the following joint international campaigns:

- [#ObjectWarCampaign](#): Protection and asylum for all deserters and conscientious objectors to military service from **Russia, Belarus, Ukraine**.
- the appeal to the European Commission and the European Parliament about necessary measures for the **international protection of Russian conscientious objectors, deserters and those who surrendered or were captured**, also promoted by the [Movement of Conscientious Objectors to military service in Russia](#).

- the campaign to **drop all charges against Yurii Sheliazhenko**, Executive Secretary of the [Ukrainian Pacifist Movement](#), who is under partial house arrest since 15/08/2023.
- #protection4olga campaign: **Protection and asylum for Olga Karatch**, director of the Belarusian organisation "[Our House](#)" in Lithuania, whose application for political asylum was rejected by the Lithuanian authorities on 18/08/2023.

As a parallel action, a **public event** was organised on 26 April 2024, including:

- Screening of the **documentary "Comme un seul homme"** (43 minutes, directed by François Chouquet, produced by the association "Réfractaires Non-Violents à la Guerre d'Algérie", 2005) about conscientious objectors since the Algerian-French war.
- Discussion with **Claude Verrel** who spoke about his experiences as conscientious objector during the war in Algeria, and **Christian Renoux**, Maître de Conférences en Histoire Moderne à l'Université d'Orléans, moderated by **Eric Sapin** from the Association Alternat.
- Exhibition of paintings about peace by artist **Suzanne Glaner**.
- Exhibition of posters, books and newsletters by [Union Pacifiste France](#).

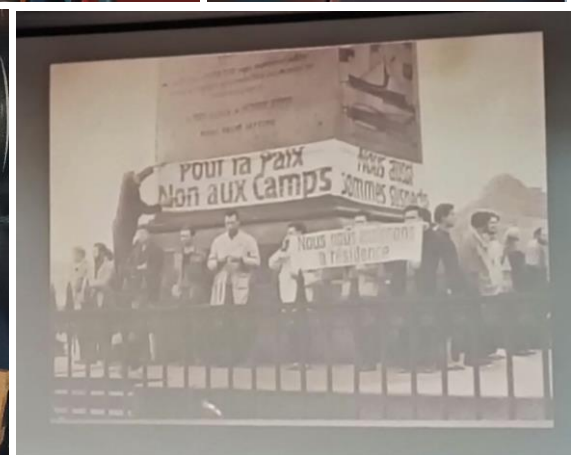
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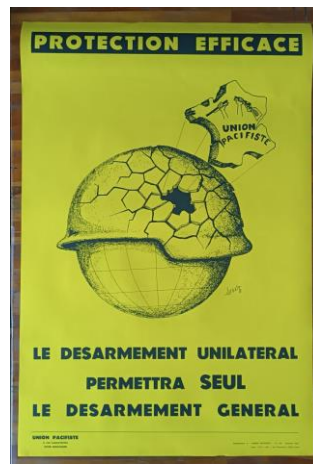
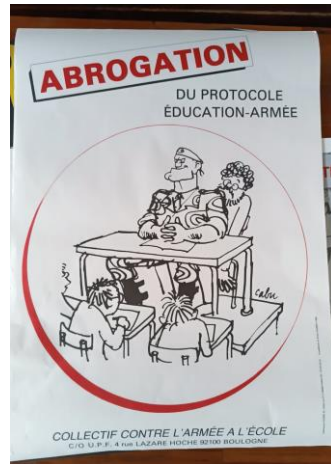
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PHOTOS FROM THE PUBLIC EVENT:







VIDEOS FROM THE PUBLIC EVENT:

<https://youtu.be/NIS1E50WaZs>; https://youtu.be/PpbAJvbUJ_Y

PHOTOS FROM THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY:







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.
