



European Bureau for Conscientious Objection

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

Register now for the "Countering the Militarisation of Youth" international study conference

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The European Bureau for Conscientious Objection (EBCO) encourages young people to participate in the international study conference '**Countering the Militarisation of Youth**' which will take place in **Darmstadt, Germany, 8-10 June 2012**, organised by War Resisters' International (WRI), in co-operation with Deutsche Friedensgesellschaft – Vereinigte Kriegsdienstgegner/innen (DFG-VK) and Bertha-von-Suttner Foundation (more info <http://wri-irg.org/programmes/militarisationofyouth>).

"In Europe, and to some degree on a global level, there are presently two trends which both contribute to an increased militarisation of youth. The first is the end (or, more exactly, the suspension) of conscription in most European countries. The second is an increasing "normalisation of war" stemming from the 'war on terror and the use of military force as a means of politics. Both trends reinforce each other in strengthening the militarisation of youth from an early age- something we are committed to working against."

The project, which includes an international meeting in Germany, and a post-conference publication, hopes to bring together activists from all over the world.

The aim is to foster an ongoing regional and multi-regional network of cooperating anti-militarist organisations. The overarching objective of the conference is strengthening the work against the militarisation of youth in Europe (and beyond) by providing opportunities for people to exchange skills and experience of working in this field and to create/strengthen networks and relationships across the region.

With just four weeks until meeting in Germany for the conference things are starting to take shape. Participation is expected from - in no particular order - Britain, Chile, Germany, Sweden, Netherlands, Israel, Finland, Spain, South Africa, Venezuela, Colombia, USA, Canada, and a range of other countries.

In preparation for the conference, WRI is conducting a survey on the militarisation of youth. The survey is not a test, and is not looking necessarily for statistical evidence or facts based answers. What it would like to gather are impressions, anecdotes and experiences of these topics. Please participate in the survey at <http://wri-irg.org/programmes/militarisationofyouth/survey>.

The programme of the conference will begin with a focus on analysing the different ways youth are militarised, looking at issues such as military and public spaces, Militarisation, military and education, Queer/gender and militarism, and the recruitment of immigrants and low income youth. The second part of the conference will focus on the exchange of experiences of resistance, including, but not limited to Queer resistance, resistance in educational settings, the role of veterans, direct action against the militarisation of youth, and children's rights. A draft programme is available at <http://wri-irg.org/programmes/militarisationofyouth/conference-programme>.

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.