



Presentation of EBCO's Annual Report 2016 on Conscientious Objection in Europe

Brussels, 13 November 2016

The European Bureau for Conscientious Objection (EBCO, <http://www.ebco-beoc.org>) presents its Annual Report 2016 on Conscientious Objection in Europe on Saturday 19/11/2016 in Athens, Greece (at 18:00 at the WELCOMMON Community Center for Refugees' Temporary Hosting and Social Inclusion, 4 Kapodistriou Street, 10682, Athens).

EBCO decided to organize in Greece this Annual Report presentation because in less than a year three different international human rights instruments (the UN Human Rights Council, the UN Human Rights Committee, and the European Court of Human Rights) have pointed out serious violations of human rights of Greek conscientious objectors. This highlights Greece's urgent need for legislative reform on conscientious objection, in order to comply with international human rights law and standards.

Programme:

1. Welcome by Nikos Chrysogelos, Coordinator of the WELCOMMON Community Center for Refugees' Temporary Hosting and Social Inclusion.
2. Introduction and focus on war refugees by Friedhelm Schneider, EBCO President.
3. Presentation of EBCO's Annual Report 2016 on Conscientious Objection in Europe by Derek Brett including:
 - 3.1 developments in the relevant European and international human rights instruments of the European Union, the Council of Europe and the United Nations;
 - 3.2 developments in the European countries in terms of conscription, recognition of conscientious objection for conscripts and professional soldiers, obligatory military service and alternative service, military expenditure, recruitment ages, conscientious objectors as asylum seekers; and
 - 3.3 new publications.
4. Comments by representatives of some countries where the human rights of conscientious objectors are still violated:
 - 4.1 Turkey by Davut Erkan;
 - 4.2 Cyprus by Murat Kanatli & Gina Chappa;
 - 4.3 Finland by Jussi Hermaja; and
 - 4.4 Greece by Michalis Maragakis.
5. Comments by Mihalis Tsapogas, Representative of the Greek Ombudsman.
6. Comments by George Karatzas, Representative of the Greek Section of Amnesty International.
7. Comments by Timotheos Sigalas, advocate of the Greek conscientious objector who recently won his case at the European Court of Human Rights.
8. Q&A and open discussion.

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.