

**P R E S S I N V I T A T I O N****Presentation of EBCO's Annual Report
on Conscientious Objection to Military Service in Europe
Focus on Cyprus, Turkey and Azerbaijan**

**Friday 18 January 2019 at 11:00
Meeting Room QCEA, square Ambiorix 50, Brussels
(close to Schuman)**

With its annual report, the European Bureau for Conscientious Objection (EBCO) puts in a nutshell relevant aspects of the complex current situation of conscientious objectors to military service in the large Europe (countries of the Council of Europe) during 2018.

During the press presentation, the author of the report Derek Brett (NGO Representative to the Committee of Human Rights at the UN in Geneva) will focus on 3 countries:

1. The good news comes from the northern part of Cyprus where the government is proposing a law to the parliament which could solve the problem of conscientious objectors who are now at risk of imprisonment. This political initiative comes as a result of the peaceful struggle of the new generation, the pressure of the local civil society, and the international solidarity. But the bad news was that on 15 January, the Turkish-Cypriot conscientious objector Halil Karapaşaoğlu was arrested and imprisoned.
2. In Turkey, the authorities continue the harassment of the activists of EBCO's Turkish member association VR-DER (the Turkish Association of Conscientious Objection), as well as the blatant violation of human rights and the international recommendations to recognise the right to conscientious objection to military service.
3. Azerbaijan promised the Council of Europe on accession in 2001 that it would adopt a law on alternative service in compliance with European standards by January 2003. It has never adopted such a law.

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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.