



**The Greens | European Free Alliance**  
in the European Parliament



European  
Bureau for  
Conscientious  
Objection

**PUBLIC HEARING  
PRESENTATION OF REPORT ON CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION TO MILITARY SERVICE  
IN EUROPE**

**WEDNESDAY 26 SEPTEMBER 2012, 12.00 - 14.00  
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, ROOM ASP A5E1**

*hosted by MEP Nikos CHRYSOGELOS (Greens/EFA)*

**PRESS RELEASE**

A public hearing on Conscientious Objection to military service in Europe will be hosted by MEP Nikos CHRYSOGELOS in the European Parliament in Brussels on Wednesday the 26th of September 2012. During this public hearing the European Bureau for Conscientious Objection will present its Annual Report to the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs of the European Parliament (LIBE) on the right to conscientious objection in the European Union<sup>1</sup>. Reflections by MEPs and civil society organisations will follow (Amnesty International, War Resisters' International, International Fellowship Of Reconciliation, European Students' Forum), as well as a Q & A session, and the closing session with the conclusions and next steps.

According to Article 10 "Freedom of thought, conscience and religion" of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union "The right to conscientious objection is recognised, in accordance with the national laws governing the exercise of this right". In a landmark judgment in 2011, the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights decided that conscientious objection to military service, as a manifestation of deeply held religious or other beliefs, is protected under the European Convention on Human Rights, whether or not there are appropriate provisions in national law. Subsequently, it has also underlined that the repeated prosecution of, and systematic deprivation of civil rights from, those who have not performed military service constitutes inhuman and degrading treatment, and that persons who do not agree to be recruited should continue to be treated as civilians and should not be put before military courts on military disciplinary charges.

Nevertheless, conscientious objectors in Greece continue to appear before military courts. Meanwhile, in the UK, the case of former Leading Medical Assistant Michael Lyons displays the limitations of procedures to consider applications for release by serving members of the military who have developed conscientious objections, if these procedures are not sufficiently independent of the military chain of command. In most of the European Union and candidate and potential candidate countries the problematic practice of conscription into obligatory military service is no longer taking place. In most cases, however, it has formally been suspended rather than abolished. In some Member States registration for military service continues. And there has been no progress on related issues of grave concern. Several Member States have not yet raised their minimum recruitment age to 18, and continue to give the military privileged access to schools for recruitment purposes; the end of conscription in Germany has seen an increased level of military recruitment in schools. And military expenditure continues to be largely shielded from the effects of the economic crisis, which consequently fall even more heavily on social welfare programmes.

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<sup>1</sup> According to Paragraph 16 of the Resolution on conscientious objection in the member states of the Community of 19 January 1994 (the Bandrés Molet and Bindi Resolution), the Committee on Civil Liberties of the European Parliament is instructed "*to draw up an annual report on the application by the Member States of its resolutions on conscientious objection and civilian service, and to involve the European Bureau for Conscientious Objection*".



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## **PUBLIC HEARING ON CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION IN EU PRESENTATION OF EBCO's ANNUAL REPORT**

*hosted by MEP Nikos CHRYSOGELOS (Greens/EFA)*

**WEDNESDAY 26 SEPTEMBER 2012, 12.00 - 14.00  
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, ROOM ASP A5E1**

### **PROGRAMME**

**Moderator of first session:** MEP Nikos CHRYSOGELOS, Greens/EFA

<b>12.00 - 12.10</b>	Introductory speech by MEP Nikos CHRYSOGELOS, Greens/EFA
<b>12.10 - 12.20</b>	Introductory speech by Friedhelm SCHNEIDER, EBCO Chair
<b>12.20 - 12.45</b>	Presentation of EBCO's Annual Report on Conscientious Objection in EU by Derek BRETT, EBCO Researcher
<b>12.45 - 12.50</b>	Reflection by MEP Katarína NEVEDALOVA, S&D group
<b>12.50 - 12.55</b>	Reflection by MEP Ramon TREMOSA i BALCELLS, ALDE group
<b>12.55 - 13.00</b>	Reflection by MEP Kyriacos TRIANTAPHYLIDIS, GUE/NGL group (tbc)

**Moderator of second session:** Alexia TSOUNI, EBCO Coordinator

<b>13.00 - 13.10</b>	Comments by Kondylia GOGOU, Amnesty International Researcher on Greece and Cyprus
<b>13.10 - 13.20</b>	Comments by Andreas SPECK, War Resisters' International Right to Refuse to Kill Programme Worker
<b>13.20 - 13.30</b>	Comments by Francesco CANDELARI, International Fellowship Of Reconciliation Coordinator
<b>13.30 - 13.40</b>	Comments by Luis Alvarado MARTINEZ, AEGEE-Europe / European Students' Forum President
<b>13.40 - 13.50</b>	Questions & Answers
<b>13.50 - 14.00</b>	Conclusions and next steps by Friedhelm SCHNEIDER, EBCO Chair & MEP Nikos CHRYSOGELOS, Greens/EFA

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