



## P R E S S   R E L E A S E

### **Solidarity with conscientious objectors, anti-war activists and civilians in all sides of the war & concrete support from Europe**

Brussels, 15 March 2022

The European Bureau for Conscientious Objection (EBCO) expresses its **respect for and solidarity with all the courageous conscientious objectors, anti-war activists and civilians from all parties to the war** and calls on **Europe to provide them with concrete support**:

- **Europe** should stop fuelling the war directly or indirectly, and focus on diplomacy, conflict prevention and non violent conflict resolution. As a movement of conscientious objectors we deplore the peacetime preparations which make war possible: the development, production and trade in weapons – including nuclear weapons – and the training of soldiers. At this time all European countries should open their borders and grant refugee status, to all Ukrainian, Russian, Belarusian and other refugees, including but not only anti-war activists and conscientious objectors, both civilians and soldiers who object to or desert from the military forces. Full access to health, housing, education and employment should be provided to all refugees. For example, European universities should accept Russian and Ukrainian students who seek to flee the war, so that they can continue their studies in Europe.
- **Russia and Ukraine** should grant access to safe humanitarian corridors to all the civilians who flee the conflict areas, and strictly adhere to international humanitarian law and international human rights law, including the right to conscientious objection to military service.
- **Russia** should stop all military operations and remove all Russian troops from Ukraine. Civilians are dying and war crimes are being committed by Russian troops. Russia should also end the crackdown on independent journalism, anti-war protests and dissenters in Russia.
- **Ukraine** should remove the restriction from leaving Ukraine of all male citizens aged 18 to 60, which has been imposed for the period of martial law. This discriminatory and illegal restriction is a blatant violation of the right of freedom of movement.

***"EBCO strongly condemns the Russian invasion of Ukraine as well as NATO's expansion to the east. EBCO calls on the soldiers not to participate in hostilities and on all recruits to refuse military service"***, EBCO President Alexia Tsouni stated today.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION AND INTERVIEWS** please contact:

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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.