



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

EBCO visit in Ukraine: Call on Russia to end its war - Solidarity with all Russian, Belarusian and Ukrainian conscientious objectors and deserters

Brussels, 24 August 2022

The [European Bureau for Conscientious Objection \(EBCO\)](http://www.ebco-beoc.org) visited Ukraine from 15 to 20 of August 2022 and repeats its **call on Russia to immediately end its war in Ukraine**. **"We witnessed the devastating impact of the Russian war against Ukraine, including the loss of civilian lives, the continuing suffering of the population, the mass destruction of homes and civilian infrastructure, as well as the damage to the environment"**, EBCO President Alexia Tsouni stated today.



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.

In Kiev **EBCO met with the [Ukrainian Pacifist Movement \(UPM\)](#) and expressed EBCO's support and solidarity. A peace flag with the word "peace" written in all the languages of EBCO member organisations was given as a gift by EBCO President to UPM President Ruslan Kotsaba and Executive Secretary Yurii Sheliashenko. **"We deeply appreciate the work of the UPM promoting human rights, non-violence and peace"**, Alexia Tsouni said.**



EBCO and UPM members visited the **"Oasis of Peace"** in Kiev, inaugurated in 2020 to commemorate 150 years of **Mahatma Gandhi**, and honoured him with a symbolic action in front of his statue and the inscription **"Be the Change that you wish to see in the world"**.



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A **peace poetry event for Ukraine entitled "Make Poetry, Not War"**, with conscientious objectors and activists from Europe reading peace poems for Ukraine and in solidarity with UPM, was co-organised by [EBCO](https://ebco-beoc.org/) and [War Resisters' International \(WRI\)](https://warresisters.org/) on 18 August 2022 (you can watch the video recording of the event here: <https://youtu.be/Fdoh8Sb-w84> and you can read the poem collection here: <https://ebco-beoc.org/node/540>).



EBCO reiterates its call for peace and human rights protection. More specifically:

- **The EU and the European states** (as well as USA, NATO etc) should stop fuelling the war directly or indirectly, and focus on diplomacy, conflict prevention and non-violent conflict resolution. Moreover, the European governments should grant immediate protection and asylum to all Russian and Belarusian as well as Ukrainian conscientious objectors and deserters (you can read the joint appeal here: <https://ebco-beoc.org/node/534>).
- **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.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND INTERVIEWS please contact:

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"Make Europe Not War"

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