



PRESS RELEASE

21 September 2022

"OBJECT WAR CAMPAIGN" LAUNCH : Petition to support Conscientious Objectors and Deserters from Russia, Belarus and Ukraine

On the occasion of the International Day of Peace, 21st September, [Connection e.V.](#), the [International Fellowship of Reconciliation](#), the [European Bureau for Conscientious Objection](#) and [War Resisters' International](#) are calling for a signature campaign for deserters and conscientious objectors from Russia, Belarus and Ukraine. The **#ObjectWarCampaign** calls on all citizens from everywhere to join the global effort to ensure protection and asylum to conscientious objectors and deserters from Russia, Belarus and Ukraine involved in the current war in the region. **They are our hope to refuse war and let peace prevail!**

On April 6, 2022, the President of the European Council, Charles Michel, [had called on Russian soldiers](#) to desert and promised them protection under refugee law. So far, this promise has not been fulfilled.

Within the scope of **#ObjectWarCampaign**, a [petition](#) has been prepared for everyone to sign in. The petition is addressed to the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen, the President of the European Council Charles Michel and the President of the European Parliament Roberta Metsola. The petition emphasizes the need to uphold the right to asylum to conscientious objectors and deserters from Russia, Belarus and Ukraine by hosting states. The petition launched on the WeMove.eu website can now be signed in [German](#), [English](#), [French](#), [Italian](#) and [Greek](#).

There are [an estimated 100,000 Russian military draftees and deserters](#) refusing the war of aggression. [An estimated 22,000 Belarusian military draftees have left their country](#) because they don't want to participate in the war in Ukraine. Everyone who has refused service risks several years of prosecution because of their stand against the war. They are hoping for protection in various countries.

Ukraine suspended the right to conscientious objection and closed the border for men between 18 and 60. [Over 100,000 men have evaded war involvement in Ukraine](#) and fled abroad. Currently, Ukrainian citizens have temporary residence in the European Union. The **#ObjectWarCampaign** petition demands that the right to conscientious objection to military service is fully guaranteed in Ukraine.

The petition signatures are a crucial sign of support for conscientious objectors and deserters. This campaign highlights the importance of opening borders to those who oppose the war at

great personal risk in their countries, and calls on everyone around the world to support those who refuse to fight and kill.

Every recruit can be a conscientious objector, every soldier a deserter. Let's support those who refuse to kill and end war together!

#ObjectWarCampaign

#StandWithObjectors

The launch of the petition has been anticipated by an appeal sent in June 2022, to the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe -supported by 60 organizations from 20 countries - detailing why protection and support for deserters and conscientious objectors on all sides of the Ukrainian war is necessary and moreover that it is a human right. There have already been discussions about this in the European Parliament.

More information:

The appeal to the European institutions can be found [here](#).

Background information can be found [here](#).

Contact and interview requests:

Zaira Zafarana, International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR), zaira.zafarana@ifor.org, www.ifor.org (English, Italian)

Rudi Friedrich, Connection e.V., +496982375534, office@Connection-eV.org, www.Connection-eV.org (German, English)

Semih Sapmaz, War Resisters' International (WRI), semih@wri-irg.org, www.wri-irg.org (English, Turkish)

Sam Biesemans, European Bureau for Conscientious Objection (EBCO), +32477268893, ebco.brussels@skynet.be, www.ebco-beoc.org (French, Dutch, Italian, English)