



European Bureau for
Conscientious Objection



Soldiers' Mothers
of St. Petersburg



Center for the Development of
Democracy and Human Rights



Human rights group
"Citizen. Army. Law"

J O I N T P R E S S R E L E A S E

21 September: International Day of Peace

Youth activists meeting, resolution and action in St. Petersburg, Russia

St. Petersburg, 22 September 2012

Each year the International Day of Peace is observed around the world on 21 September. The General Assembly of the United Nations has declared this as a day devoted to commemorating and strengthening the ideals of peace, both within and among all nations and peoples.

On 21 September 2012, on the occasion of the International Day of Peace, the European Bureau for Conscientious Objection, the human rights organisation "Soldiers' Mothers of St. Petersburg", the Center for the Development of Democracy and Human Rights, and the human rights group "Citizen. Army. Law" organised a youth activists meeting (at the conference-hall of the Soldiers' Mothers of St. Petersburg) and a public event for peace and conscientious objection to military service (near Vladimirskaaya Metro Station) in St. Petersburg, Russia.

During the youth activists meeting, young people from Russia and other countries joined to discuss peace, non-violence, conflict resolution, human rights and conscientious objection to compulsory military service. In the end they adopted a resolution which was published later, during the public event. The public event included picketing, sharing of the resolution and discussion with the people, as well as an artistic creation of the peace sign by joining nails with a multi-colour thread. The latter symbolised that when different people (multi-colour) join together (thread) they can overcome the problems (nails) and create peace (sign).

The main aim of these activities was to bring together youth individuals and organisations from Russia and other countries, to encourage participation and initiative, and to establish cooperation in the field of peace, human rights, antimilitarism and antinationalism.

Note: Attached please find the profile of the organisations, the poster, the joint resolution and some photos of the youth activists meeting and public event.

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With the support of the
Youth in Action
programme of the
European Union



**Youth
in Action**

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Profile of the organisations

The **European Bureau for Conscientious Objection** (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. EBCO enjoys participatory status with the Council of Europe since 1998 and is a member of its Conference of International Non-Governmental Organisations since 2005. EBCO provides expertise and legal opinions on behalf of the Directorate General of Human Rights and Legal Affairs of the Council of Europe. EBCO 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. EBCO is a member of the European Youth Forum since 1995.

The **Saint Petersburg regional human rights organisation "Soldiers' Mothers of St. Petersburg"** has been actively engaged since 1991 in uniting public efforts to protect the lives, health and civil rights of draftees, service members, and members of their families, and to offer legal, social, and psychological assistance to the citizens of Russia. The organisation definitely considers conscientious objection to military service one of the fundamental human rights, and is looking forward to the abolition of conscription in Russia.

The **Center for the Development of Democracy and Human Rights** (CDDHR) was established in Moscow in 1998 as an independent non-profit non-governmental organisation in Russia. CDDHR's mission is the development of effective democratic institutions and the creation of sustainable mechanisms for human rights protection in Russia by influencing public policy in these areas, creating conditions for civic participation in decision making from local communities to the international level and empowering individuals and groups to play a more influential role in the communities they belong to. CDDHR strives to make democracy work for people living in Russia and to assist them in finding in democracy a practical meaning relevant for their lives.

The **human rights group "Citizen. Army. Law"** was established in Moscow in May 2010 by the leaders of the nationwide NGO Coalition for a Democratic Alternative Service, which since 2001 has worked to support the development of democratic alternative civil service, and since 2003 has been implementing the all-Russian monitoring of human rights violations during the process of military conscription and military service. The main goal of the Group is to protect the rights and legal interests of conscripts or conscientious objectors, those being in military service or alternative civilian service, as well as members of their families.

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21 Сентября: Международный День Мира

21 September: International Day of Peace



Организаторы: Европейское Бюро по Сознательному Отказу от военной службы (Брюссель), правозащитная организация "Солдатские матери Санкт-Петербурга" (Санкт-Петербург), Центр Развития Демократии и Прав Человека (Москва), и правозащитная группа "Гражданин. Армия. Право" (Москва)



Organised by the European Bureau for Conscientious Objection (Brussels), the human rights organisation "Soldiers' Mothers of St. Petersburg" (St. Petersburg), the Center for the Development of Democracy and Human Rights (Moscow), and the human rights group "Citizen. Army. Law" (Moscow)

При поддержке программы
«Молодежь в действии»
Европейского союза



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J O I N T R E S O L U T I O N

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St. Petersburg, 21 September 2012

Each year the International Day of Peace is observed around the world on 21 September. The General Assembly of the United Nations has declared this as a day devoted to commemorating and strengthening the ideals of peace, both within and among all nations and peoples.

On the occasion of the International Day of Peace on 21 September 2012, the European Bureau for Conscientious Objection, the human rights organisation "Soldiers' Mothers of St. Petersburg", the Center for the Development of Democracy and Human Rights, and the human rights group "Citizen. Army. Law" declare:

- Peace and non-violence are core values for young people. Young people should promote a culture of peace and conflict prevention. In cases of conflict, young people should be actively engaged in conflict resolution and post conflict reconciliation.
- Young people should call on governments to support a robust Arms Trade Treaty to stop transfers when there is a substantial risk that the arms or ammunition are likely to be used in serious violations of international humanitarian law or international human rights law, or fuel armed violence and undermine socio-economic development. This treaty should be a global, comprehensive treaty that includes all conventional weapons and ammunition, all transfers and all transactions. It should be legally-binding to hold governments accountable to existing standards of international law and the UN Charter. It should be an enforceable treaty that includes detailed guidelines for full implementation, reporting, international cooperation, compliance and accountability.
- Young people should oppose the recruitment of child soldiers in any case, and urge governments to sign and ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict. For persons aged under 18 there should be no compulsory recruitment (even in a state of emergency or mobilization or war), no voluntary recruitment, and no military training.
- Young people should call on governments to abolish conscription, which has become a war against young generation, and meanwhile recognise the right to conscientious objection to military service for conscripts, serving conscripts, reservists and professional soldiers. This right should be recognised both on religious and ideological grounds, without any exclusion, without restrictions on accessing it, providing adequate and timely information, without any punishment or discrimination against conscientious objectors. Political asylum should be given to persons who seek asylum in another country because of their conscientious objection to military service. Young people should refuse to serve the mandatory military service, which is contrary to peaceful values, since it promotes a culture of militarism and nationalism. Young people should be free to choose to either serve the civilian service, or to be exempted from any service. The civilian service should be genuinely civilian (not under the Ministry of Defence), and of non punitive length (equal duration to the military one) and nature.
- Young people should call on governments to minimise military expenditure, maximise social expenditure, and recognise the right to conscientious objection to military taxes.

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C O N S C R I P T I O N I N R U S S I A **= WAR AGAINST YOUNG GENERATION**

1. We see that the CONSCRIPT army system has become a WAR AGAINST YOUNG GENERATION in Russia.

Young people drafted to the Army suffer from violence and the lack of medical aid. They are sent for unpaid, hard and very dangerous work, such as utilization of the shells in the firing fields. Young people carry 100 kilos boxes of shells, living in tents, suffering from cold in winter and heat in summer. Explosions, injuries, and illnesses come as a result of careless commanders. Only in Ashuluk, a firing field near Astrahan, at least 11 young soldiers died during one year. Six injured soldiers and two officers died during one month in Donguz firing field, Orenburg region.

The situation becomes dramatically worse. According to the Main Military Prosecutor's Office, the number of murders in the army increased by 53% during the year. Violence and assault by the officers are increasing. We are concerned about this situation.

2. Each young man can STOP THIS WAR AGAINST YOUNG GENERATION if he doesn't obey to go to the Army, doesn't participate in the corruption, but just send an application demanding Alternative Civilian Service or defending the right to be released from service.

3. We welcome all young people conscientious objectors to military service, performing alternative civilian service or applicants.



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