



Conscience and Peace Tax International

Internacional de Conciencia e Impuestos para la Paz

NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the UN

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Item 6: Universal Periodic Review

ORAL STATEMENT BY CONSCIENCE AND PEACE TAX INTERNATIONAL
Delivered by **Derek Brett**, Thursday 22nd September 2011

ADOPTION OF UPR REPORT ON GREECE

Conscience and Peace Tax International (CPTI) regrets in the draft report on the Universal Periodic Review of Greece there is no mention of the issue of conscientious objection to military service, despite an unprecedented three stakeholder submissions focussing on this issue.¹

In 1997, Greece was the last of the then members of the European Community to introduce legislation catering for conscientious objectors to military service. Several aspects of the provisions in Greece still fall far short of regional and international norms; information on the possibility of applying for recognition as a conscientious objector is not readily available to those faced with military service; the application procedures are unduly rigid and complicated, and therefore difficult to fulfil, there are arbitrary exclusions on who may be recognised; the commission which examines applications is not clearly independent of the military authorities, and there is strong evidence of discrimination between conscientious objectors on the basis of the beliefs on which their objection is based. Moreover, the alternative civilian service available to recognised conscientious objectors is of disproportionate duration and some of the other conditions are punitive.

As the Universal Periodic Review moves into the second cycle, we would encourage States taking part in Working Group sessions to give greater attention to making sure that the discussions cover as full a range as possible of the human rights issues which have been identified in the State Under Review, rather than focussing with undue repetition on one or two of the most urgent.

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¹ The Association of Greek Conscientious Objectors and the European Bureau on Conscientious Objection (EBCO), in addition to CPTI itself.