

The European Bureau for conscientious objection joined on 9th January a public action in the Centre of Brussels to demand the release of political prisoners for peace . For Mother Earth - a Belgium based NGO from Gent - has dressed the famous Belgian landmark "Manneken Pis" in a traditional prisoner costume, to draw attention to pacifists and conscientious objectors in many countries of the world. The focus of this action was the situation in Finland, as the action takes place just a few days before the first round of the Finnish presidential elections. In Finland more than 50 pacifists are imprisoned every year because of their rejection of an alternative service of a severe punitive length.

The action addressed also the case of the Turkish conscientious objector Mehmet Tarhan, serving actually a prison term of four years because of his refusal to serve in the army, and the Greek conscientious objector Lazaros Petromelidis actually for nearly a year under arrest warrant in Piraeus near Athens and the only EU citizen having been called to the army more than a dozen times during the last 10 years by the Greek army.

The Brussels action received European wide media attention with TV presence from Belgium, Czech Republic and United Kingdom. The prisoner's costume was offered for this action by the City of Brussels, Jussi Hermaja from Finland explained.

Best regards, Gerd Greune, President, European Bureau for Conscientious Objection, 81a Avenue Jan Stobbaerts, B-1030 Brussels, Belgium; Tel: +32 2 215 7908 / Fax: +32 2 245 6297 / [www.ebco-beoc.org](http://www.ebco-beoc.org)



