

HELLENIC REPUBLIC
GREEK NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Neofytou Vamva 6 (3rd floor), GR 106 74 Athens, Greece, Tel: +30 210 7233221-2;
fax: +30 210 7233217; e-mail: info@nchr.gr, website: www.nchr.gr

<p>Recommendations regarding Conscientious Objectors and the Scheme of Alternative Civil-Social Service</p>
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The NCHR decided to submit the following recommendations to the Government:

(a) the duration of alternative social service should not exceed that of regular military service by 50%;

(b) the duration of unarmed military service should not exceed that of regular military service by 30%;

(c) the instigation of continuous and repeated prosecutions for refusing to perform military service should be abolished;

(d) as far as the competence of the Supervisory Body for Conscientious Objectors is concerned, it should fall under the Ministry of National Defence, on the condition that, when conscientious objectors are removed from the Enlistment Register it would fall under the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Health;

(e) that rejections by the Committee for the Examination of Conscience be reasoned in detail;

(f) that the composition of the aforementioned Committee be strengthened with two more State representatives, one from the Ministry of Interior and one from the Ministry of Health;

(g) that a special list of NGOs in which conscientious objectors may serve be drafted by a joint ministerial committee;

(h) that the geographical criterion for the completion of the alternative unarmed or social service is in conformity with the same rules that apply to regular armed military service;

(i) that the CoE Resolution providing for long-term and elderly conscientious objectors to meet their military obligations be implemented.

Finally, the NCHR addressed a letter to the Minister of National Defence (03.12.04), concerning the cases in which a professional soldier expresses his conscientious objection in relation to a particular military operation (the recent war in Iraq). The views expressed were: (a) that the term “conscientious objector” be interpreted in a broader way and (b) that the chronological point of its expression should be extended. The Ministry’s reply (17.12.04) referred to recent positive developments on the topic introduced by Law 3257/2004 and, more specifically, the reduction of the duration of the service for both categories (unarmed/social service) and stressed the fact that, at present, conditions are not deemed favorable for a reconsideration of the term, although these could well change in the near future.

10 June 2004