



QUAKER COUNCIL FOR EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

The Right to Conscientious Objection in Europe: A Review of the Current Situation

Country Report: PORTUGAL

Conscription

In 1999 the Portuguese government announced the abolition of conscription and started a transformation process into fully professional armed forces. The last conscripts were called up for military service in 2004. Since November 2004, the armed forces consist of professional soldiers only.¹

Conscientious objection

The right to conscientious objection was legally recognized in 1976.

There are no legal provisions for the right to conscientious objection for professional soldiers.² When conscription applied, legal provisions on conscientious objection were laid down in Law 7/1992. This law only applied to conscripts. CO applications could only be made before starting military service. Article 13 practically excludes professional soldiers from claiming the right to conscientious objection. According to this Article, the right to conscientious objection does not apply to those whose work includes bearing arms, have a licence to do so or whose work is connected with the manufacture of arms and armaments.³

¹ Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers: Child Soldiers Global Report 2004.

² War Resisters' International: Refusing to bear arms - A world survey on conscription and conscientious objection to military service, 1998.

³ War Resisters' International (1998).