
**European
Bureau for
Conscientious
Objection**



35 Van Elewyck street, 1050 Brussels, Belgium
www.ebco-beoc.org / ebco@ebco-beoc.org

**War
Resisters'
International**



5 Caledonian Road, London, N1 9DX, Britain
www.wri-irg.org / info@wri-irg.org

URGENT APPEAL

To: Lithuanian Immigration authorities

E-mail: info@migracija.gov.lt

Subject: **Ivan STRASHKEVICH case, gim 1993-09-01, urgent release**

4 July 2023

Dear Sir/Madam,

On behalf of the European Bureau for Conscientious Objection (EBCO) and War Resisters' International (WRI), we are writing to you to express our grave concern about the case of Ivan STRASHKEVICH, an ethnic Lithuanian (gim 1993-09-01).

It has come to our attention that an extension to the work visa of the above citizen of Belarus was refused on 5th June 2023, on the grounds that he had previously served as a border guard in the Belarussian army. At the same time he was served by the Lithuanian authorities with a 60 month ban on entry to the European Union. When he subsequently applied for asylum, he was detained during the interview and forcibly transferred to the refugee camp at Pabrade, where he was placed in solitary confinement with access to a phone for only thirty minutes a day – even that not guaranteed. This despite the fact that he has a valid residence permit for Poland which has not been revoked.

EBCO and WRI have no doubt as to the bona fides of Strashkevich, who left the border service in 2019 and subsequently actively supported the protests following the disputed 2020 election and contributed to a documentary film critical of the border service's handling of the 2021 migrant inflow. But in any case his asylum appeal ought to be allowed to run its course following due process without subjecting him to multiple human rights violations.

We call upon the immigration authorities to restore Straskevitch's links with the outside world, reconsider the necessity of his conditions of detention and allow him to pursue his application for asylum, which would enjoy our support, without hindrance.

Moreover, even in the event that the application is turned down, we call upon the authorities to revoke the ban on his entry to the European Union, which has no rational justification.

More generally, EBCO and WRI urgently appeal to the Lithuanian authorities that Belarus should not be considered a safe country for return, especially for those who have already been identified as opponents of the regime; that they revise their view of the significance of former military service in Belarus, recognising those who wish to avoid mobilisation as the conscientious objectors they now

are; that they refrain in all cases from deporting such persons to Belarus, that they give favourable consideration to applications for asylum; and that failing this they agree to issue the objectors with the necessary residence and work permits enabling them to remain in Lithuania and the EU.

Thank you in advance for your kind attention and careful consideration.

Sincerely yours,



Alexia Tsouni
EBCO President



Semih Sapmaz
WRI Programme Coordinator

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 is entitled to lodge collective complaints concerning the European Social Charter of the Council of Europe since 2021. 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 full member of the European Youth Forum since 1995.

War Resisters' International (WRI) was founded in London in 1921 as a global network of grassroots organisations, groups and individuals working together for a world without war. WRI remains committed to its founding declaration that 'War is a crime against humanity. I am therefore determined not to support any kind of war, and to strive for the removal of all causes of war'. Today WRI is a global pacifist and antimilitarist network with over 90 affiliated groups in 40 countries. WRI facilitates mutual support, by linking people together through publications, events and actions, initiating nonviolent campaigns that actively involve local groups and individuals, supporting those who oppose war and who challenge its causes, and promoting and educating people about pacifism and nonviolence. WRI runs three programmes of work that are important to the network: The Right to Refuse to Kill Programme, the Nonviolence Programme, and Countering the Militarisation of Youth.
