

“Transition to the New Era” with the youth in military uniforms!

The bill of the Ministry of National Defence entitled “*Transition of the Armed Forces to the New Era*” aims to adapt the Greek Armed Forces **more effectively** to the needs of NATO and the EU. It runs counter to the rights of the youth and the people as a whole and must be **withdrawn**, or —if the government dares to submit it to Parliament— be **voted down**.

This is proven by the mass **mobilisations** of active-duty and retired non-commissioned officers and officers, as well as by the thousands of negative comments submitted within just a few days during the so-called public consultation.

A “New Era” of wars and great dangers!

The very title “Transition of the Armed Forces to the New Era” is revealing of the bill’s real objectives.
What is this “New Era”?

► It is the era of **sharpened antagonisms and wars** between the USA, NATO and the EU on the one hand, and China and Russia on the other, over domination of markets, natural resources, transport routes and energy corridors.

► It is the era of our country’s **deeper involvement in imperialist wars** in the region, of support for the murderous state of Israel and the genocide of the Palestinian people, and of support for the Zelensky regime so that the slaughter in Ukraine may continue.

► It is the era of the **turn to the war economy**, in which the EU is channeling 900 billion euros to war industries and merchants of death, while preparing in every way to send peoples and youth to the slaughterhouse.

► It is the era in which **bargaining has opened between the Greek and Turkish bourgeois classes**, with NATO acting as arbiter, over the co-exploitation of the Aegean and the final partition of Cyprus —a process that poses enormous dangers for the Greek people and the other peoples of the region.

That is why the Minister of Defence calls on us to acquire a **“war culture”** and to become accustomed to images of coffins carrying the children of the Greek people. Meanwhile, the children of wealthy and well-connected families will continue to evade military service or secure cushy and privileged postings, as clientelism and nepotism remain entrenched.

The same policy throughout the EU:

war hysteria and armaments

In the same direction, **similar bills are being passed in Germany, France and other EU countries**, where liberal and social-democratic governments are actively seeking ways to impose **compulsory military service**, encountering **mass resistance from the youth**.

For the same reason, the bill introduces an “**Active Voluntary Reserve**”, aiming to expand the pool of immediately available personnel to meet the growing needs of war.

Nor can the proposal for the “**voluntary enlistment of women**” be viewed as unrelated. The arguments about “equal access and equal opportunities” are spurious. In reality, it means equal opportunities for access to the slaughterhouse of war, since as war preparation intensifies, “voluntary” enlistment will inevitably become compulsory.

PASOK, SYRIZA, Velopoulos and the other bourgeois parties agree with the substance of the bill, as they all align with NATO commitments, exorbitantly expensive NATO armaments and military missions beyond the country's borders—that is, with everything that constitutes the “Transition of the Armed Forces to the New Era.”

Certificates to laugh at – deferments to cry over!

The government's attempt to present the bill as an “opportunity” is nothing short of ridiculous, as it turns reality on its head regarding the enormous difficulties faced by young people during military service today. In practice, everything included in the so-called “Opportunity Service” boils down to a few certificates of skill acquisition of dubious value, handed out to conscripts after completing their service.

Instead of inventing catchy titles to conceal reality, the government should **take substantive measures to support young conscripts** in coping with the huge cost of military service, genuinely increase pay, ensure decent living con-

ditions in military camps, and take real measures to safeguard the lives and health of conscripts and Armed Forces personnel. After all, in just the past few days, a **19-year-old professional soldier lost his life** during training, while **four new recruits were struck by lightning** due to inadequate protection.

Instead, through this unacceptable bill, **new obstacles are added to the granting of deferments**, making it even harder for young people to complete their studies and pursue their professional lives without interruption. The aim is their faster handover for “utilisation” within NATO planning.

For **university students**, with the adjustment to the unacceptable law on the deregistration of students, deferments will be granted up to the age of 25 for four-year degree programmes, 26 for five-year programmes and 27 for six-year programmes, whereas until now deferments were granted to all students up to the age of 28 without differentiation. At the same time, **if a student chooses to perform military service before completing their studies, a compulsory suspension of studies will be imposed;** they will not be allowed to sit examinations during leave, nor will they be entitled to the student housing allowance.

For **students of vocational training institutes**, deferments will be granted only up to the age of 22, instead of 24 as applied until now, seriously hindering the completion of their practical training.

For **doctoral candidates**, deferment will be granted up to the age of 30, whereas until now —under certain conditions— it was granted up to the age of 33. This will force many to prolong the duration of their doctoral research, at a time when deadlines are already extremely tight.

Very serious problems are also created for **Medical School graduates**, with the abolition of the article that granted deferment up to the age of 33 for the completion of medical specialisation. Under the bill, they will now be obliged to complete military service by the age of 27, meaning forced interruption of their specialisation, their scientific development and a delay in their professional career, including the loss of their position in the National Health System.

The bill even affects **researchers at CERN**, who until recently could receive deferment for the entire duration of their research, whereas now they are forced to interrupt it and return in order to enlist.

Serious problems are also created for **Greeks living abroad**. Governments whose policies forced thousands of young workers and scientists to migrate are now punishing them twice through the new deferment provisions and the change in the criteria defining who is considered a “permanent resident abroad.”

No tolerance for war preparation!

The thousands of **active-duty and re-tired members of the Armed Forces**, the **students of military academies** mobilising against a bill that places a gravestone on their rights, the **conscripts** expressing their opposition through protests and letters, and the **student unions** across the country multiplying decisions condemning the bill, have already given

Organisation and struggle to overthrow this system!

a resounding answer to the government's so-called "consultation":

**THE BILL IS REJECTED
AS UNACCEPTABLE!**

KNE calls on young men and women to stand against this disgraceful bill, to react en masse so that it is not even submitted to Parliament, and to ensure that all its reactionary provisions remain dead letter.



Today more than ever, it is necessary to intensify the struggle for:

- The disengagement of our country from NATO planning, which turns it into a perpetrator against other peoples and a target of retaliation.
- Funds to be allocated to wages, Health and Education, and not to NATO needs and war slaughterhouses.
- That no conscripted child of the Greek people be sent on missions abroad.

Together with the farmers at the road blockades, the workers, the youth and the people as a whole, let us swell the militant river that will sweep away the criminal policy of poverty and wars.