

WORLD VETERANS FEDERATION
7th International Conference on Legislation
Concerning Veterans and Victims of War
24-26 November 2010, Paris (France)

WORKSHOP I

RECOGNITION OF VETERANS STATUS AND LEGISLATION

CONCLUSIONS

The WVF received responses to its questionnaire from 50 member associations of 38 member countries. The responses have been completed both in written and oral form during the Conference. They indicate, that veterans' rights and benefits have gradually been better taken care of and looked after in most countries, particularly compared with the circumstances at the time when the last, 6th International Conference on Legislation was held in Lisbon 1994. The same applies to the dependents of war veterans and also victims of war. However, there are in many countries still essential needs in veterans' affairs which are not sufficiently covered by the legislation and/or appropriate means.

The most essential needs, which according to several replies, presentations and speeches during the meetings are not sufficiently covered in the member countries by the legislation and/or by the appropriate means, were:

- Legislation concerning veterans and victims of war does not cover all the veterans of the country
- Legislation does not cover the dependents of veterans
- Pensions are insufficient for adequate living
- Services or benefits available for veterans depend on the degree of disability
- Psychological problems are not recognized, PTSD-syndrome does not entitle to disability benefits
- There are no health and/or social services available for veterans and/or their dependents, or those that are available, are insufficient
- There are not enough houses, housing or hospice services for disabled and/or ageing veterans
- There is no personal help for severely disabled and/or ageing veterans
- There are no adequate transportation services for severely disabled and/or ageing veterans
- Modern techniques in prosthesis, orthopaedics etc. are not available to veterans
- No jobs, work places or reintegration are organized for veterans after the end of their service.
- All the benefits granted in legislation are not fulfilled in practice for financial or other reasons

Some member associations (Russia, Serbia, Annexes 1-2) made during the conference proposals in which they commented and/or recommended new regulations or modifications to the Guidelines to the Basic Rights for War Veterans and Victims of War, adopted by the 21st General Assembly of the WVF in Bordeaux, France 1994. Anyhow, it was noted that the principles of the adopted Basic Rights should be realized all over the world.

The financial problems in many countries make it difficult for the governments to take care of veterans' needs, but the ageing veterans of the WWII for example, do not have a long time to wait for improvements on their benefits and care. It is important to support the UN Convention 2007 concerning Disabled People and their rights to Rehabilitation (as a delegate of Portugal proposed) and the fundamental statements of the World Health Organization on the promotion of Mental Health (Draft declaration of the Croatian member association, Annex 3).

Concerning UN Peace keeping soldiers and other Veterans from International Armed forces it is necessary to take care of them and their families before, during and after deployment or service. The model developed in Denmark that was presented during the meeting of Workshop 1 is warmly recommended (Annexes 4-5: The Danish Government Veterans' Policy, October 2010 and Prevalence and Prediction of Mental Health Problems Among 602 Danish Soldiers Deployed to Afghanistan 2009 – a prospective study).

Recognition of veterans comprises, among other things, respect for graves and cemeteries of fallen soldiers, veterans and prisoners of war wherever they have been buried (Annex 6: Ukrainian proposal to the Preparatory Committee of the 7th International Conference on Legislation Concerning Veterans and Victims of War).

The veterans know very well that the basis of peace, security and justice is the understanding and implementation of Human Rights. Living by the human rights rules adopted by the United Nations in 1948 increase veteran's recognition not only in people's opinions but also recognition of veterans as a "value group" in society to create peace, freedom and justice and so a better world. It is only in peace that compensations for veterans and civilian victims of war can really exist and become increasingly respected in the states of the world.