



Quaker Council for European Affairs

A Quaker Voice in Europe

Introduction

The Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) has been working on Friends' concerns at a European level since 1979, communicating with decision-makers in the European Union and the Council of Europe on issues relating to peace, human rights, economic justice, sustainable energy security and democratic governance. QCEA is your voice in Europe.

Current Programme Focus

Human Rights: Criminal Justice

Our current programme on criminal justice issues includes the situation of women in prison and their children, alternatives to imprisonment, and the support available to those leaving prison. Each of these themes has been the subject of a survey of the situation in the 47 member states of the Council of Europe which has led to the publication of reports with recommendations. The report on women in prison has been the basis for a report presented to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe which adopted 32 of our 45 recommendations. The report on the support available to those leaving prison will be published in 2010.

Peace: the role of the EU in peacebuilding

QCEA was a founder member of the peacebuilding network called 'European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO). We continue to play a leading role in this network and with other member organisations we work on issues relating to the EU role in peacebuilding, EU foreign policy and EU crisis management. We advocate for transparent foreign policy which is focused on peacebuilding through civilian means. Most recently, we have done significant work on the European External Action Service where QCEA leads the working group within EPLO.

Peace: the role of the EU in the Palestine/Israel conflict

Since 2009, we have been developing a programme of work which relates to the role the EU plays in Palestine/Israel. We focus on the following: The Arms Trade between EU Member States and Israel; Security Cooperation between the EU and Israel; the Crisis Management Missions in the occupied Palestinian Territories (oPTs); Freedom of Movement Issues; the scope for work of Palestinian, Israeli, and international NGOs in the oPTs and Israel; the Association Agreements; Import of goods into the EU; the economic role of the EU in the oPT and Israel; Cooperation with Palestinian, Israeli, and international NGOs

Economic Justice: Sustainable Energy Security

Since 2008, we have been working on a programme of work relating to sustainable energy security and the EU's role in this. We have published papers on the Nabucco pipeline; a critique of the EU Sustainable Consumption and Production Action Plan; a number of ethical factsheets relating to such as travel choice, photovoltaics, sustainable food choices, and car scrappage schemes; and a paper on the proposed Trans-Sahara pipeline and the naval mission in the Gulf of Aden as examples of EU Member States pursuing energy security with military means. We are currently working actively on energy efficiency issues and how this could contribute significantly to the achievement of sustainable energy security.

QCEA Website: www.quaker.org/qcea

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Democratic Accountability: The Quaker Business Method as a solution to community action

Recognising that the Quaker Business Method - or the Quaker Listening Method - might contribute to the ability of community groups (and potentially others including high-level decision-makers) to deal effectively with issues that are difficult to resolve.

Democratic Accountability: EU Enlargement and Peacebuilding

We undertook a major study into the impact of the Enlargement Process in the Western Balkans on the peacebuilding processes in those countries. We published a report in 2009 and have since used the findings and our recommendations for ongoing advocacy in relation to the process towards EU membership which these countries are currently pursuing.

Democratic Accountability: the EU Budget

The EU undertook to review the structure (if not the size) of its budget in 2008/9. QCEA published a set of briefing papers on this issue and has continued to monitor the process of this review. The review was significantly delayed and will now see little discussion before the next multi-annual financial framework is on the agenda in 2011. QCEA will continue to work on this issue to inform Friends of what is happening and to participate in civil society discussions with decision-makers on the shape and size of the budget for the next 7 years and on the distribution of the budget between different priorities. For us, one of the key issues is the degree of transparency of the budget - i.e. do citizens know what it costs them and what the EU does with the money.

The Future

QCEA has continued to work for over 30 years. We see that there is continuing and even growing need for a Quaker Voice in Europe. Our specific programme focus will shift over time as it has in the past, reflecting the concerns of Friends and the political agenda of the Institutions.

We need the support of Friends: first and foremost we need to know that Friends are interested in our work and support the general tenor of our work. For this, it is important that Friends and Meetings subscribe to our publications, use our website and give us feedback on our work.

It is important, too, that we have financial support from Friends. Because we speak for Friends on Friends' concerns the only sources of funding are Friends, Meetings, Yearly Meetings and Quaker Trusts.

Involvement

You can become involved in QCEA's work in many different ways beyond simply subscribing to our publications.

You can come on our annual Study Tour which gives you a week of insights into the EU and Council of Europe Institutions and into the work we do.

You can come to our biennial conferences.

Young Friends in particular can apply to become Programme Assistants - an opportunity to work at QCEA for a year and gain valuable experience.

You can respond regularly to the work we publish and you can participate in calls for advocacy action.

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