

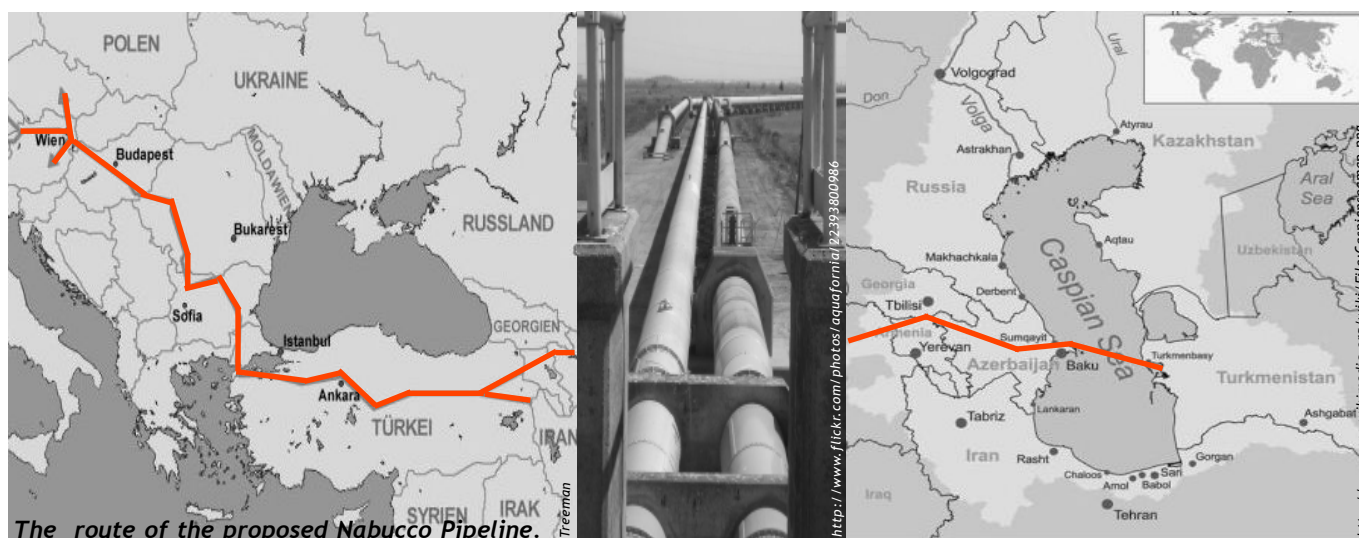


Around Europe

Quaker Council for European Affairs

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Energy Security and European Values Are they compatible?



The Nabucco gas pipeline is the flagship project of the EU's gas supply security strategy. The pipeline will traverse 3,300km, crossing four countries - Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary - before terminating in Austria.

Nabucco is intended to transport gas from Central Asia and the Middle East to the European market. In the long-term the European Commission pinpoints Iran as the major gas supplier for Nabucco. Iran's gas is however off limits until political disagreements between the US, Europe and Iran are resolved.

The Commission is instead hoping to get Nabucco started by securing gas supply from former Soviet republic Turkmenistan, a country described by Human Rights Watch as 'one of the most repressive and authoritarian' in the world. In Turkmenistan Amnesty International documents 'harassment, detention and imprisonment of dissidents, independent journalists, civil society activists and members of religious minorities'. Freedom House recently included Turkmenistan in their 2009 'Worst of the Worst' list of countries without social and political freedoms, alongside Burma, Saudi Arabia and North Korea. This miserable situation is well-known to the EU, yet without access to Turkmenistan's

huge gas reserves, Nabucco is likely to be delayed or even cancelled.

Can the EU uphold its values in its dealings with Turkmenistan? In 2006, Javier Solana, the EU's de facto foreign minister, said that 'our energy needs may well limit our ability to push wider foreign policy objectives, not least in the area of conflict resolution, human rights and good governance'. Yet, in 2007 the EU stressed the importance of 'good governance, the rule of law, human rights and democratisation' in its Central Asia Strategy. The EU remains torn between its values and its energy security goals, a problem that is at the heart of QCEA's work in this area. The two major EU players in Nabucco's development are the European Commission, which is playing a diplomatic and administrative role, and the European Investment Bank (EIB) which is proposing to offer a loan to cover up to a third of the final cost of the project, perhaps as much as three billion euros. The EU understands that gas revenues accrue directly to the Turkmen dictatorship, and that state finances
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The European Parliament Elections

What does a Spanish doctor, a Swedish banker and a Bulgarian car manufacturer have in common? They have all had their lives affected by European Union (EU) legislation that was voted for by the European Parliament. As a result of this, the doctor's qualifications are recognized throughout Europe, the banker has to check the identity of any customer who transfers over 15000 euros and the car manufacturer has to improve vehicle motor technology to reduce the emissions of the cars he produces. Whether they are aware of it or not, what has happened in the European Parliament over the last 5 years has had an effect on their lives. Despite this, statistically, only 25% of Europeans will be aware that the European Parliament elections are happening this year .

We may love it or hate it but almost 500 million of us are EU citizens. The European Parliament is one of the three main institutions of the EU. We, the citizens of the EU, directly decide which 736 representatives sit in Parliament. We cannot hope to have any influence over an EU that affects our daily lives if we do not use the limited opportunities we have for democratic involvement.

So what can Friends across Europe do to be more involved in what happens at an EU level? The first



The European Parliament. Martin Whiteside

thing that most of us need to do is to learn more about the EU and how it works. Secondly we need to work out the different ways to influence the EU. This includes learning more about the European Parliament, which represents us to the EU. Finally we need to know how best to raise the issues we care about so that the European Parliament and EU might listen. The following page covers one area that Friends may wish to discuss with their MEP candidates.



Martin Whiteside

A Quick Recap

The Council of the EU consists of Member State government representatives. EU decisions relating to 'Common, Foreign and Security Policy' or 'Justice and Home Affairs' are taken by the Council of the EU, and the European Parliament is only consulted and informed. Most other decisions, all those relating to 'Community Policy', are taken jointly by the Council of the EU and the European Parliament. The European Commission is in charge of initiating, drafting and implementing EU legislation.

The European Parliament elections: the basics

- The European Parliament elections take place on Thursday 4 June in Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands and the UK and on Sunday 7 June in all other countries
- Almost 500 million EU citizens from 27 countries will have the right to vote in the European Parliament elections.

QCEA - the Voice of Friends in Europe



Quaker House. Xavier Verhaeghe

At QCEA we represent the views of Quakers across Europe in the EU institutions and inform Quakers of what is happening within the EU. The European Parliament is one of the key bodies we work with.

I am in the process of putting together information for interested Quakers on the European Parliament elections and on issues that Friends may be particularly interested in discussing with their MEP candidates. Please have a look at our ever-growing webpage on the European Parliament elections available at <http://www.quaker.org/qcea/epelections/index.htm>.

We would love to have your feedback and comments on the material we have. We would also like to hear about any contact or discussions you have had with your MEP candidates. Please contact Anya Whiteside at awhiteside@qcea.org for more information, feedback or comments.



The European Parliament and Peace: An Issue to discuss

The European Union was founded on a desire to create and maintain peace in a war-torn Europe and over 50 years later peace and security are still of the utmost importance to the EU. Quakers are well known for their commitment to peace, laid down in the Quaker Peace testimony. In 2000 the EU made a commitment to mainstream conflict prevention. This means, among other things, making sure that all EU's policies are conflict-sensitive so that they do not inadvertently fuel conflict. To get the EU to do this most effectively we need to understand what influence the European Parliament has over the EU in relation to conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Only then can we know what we should be calling on our MEP candidates to do if they are elected.

Peacebuilding and Development Aid

Money talks, and like it or not this is certainly true within the EU. The European Parliament has the final say on the EU budget, giving it influence over EU spending, including development aid. The EU is the largest aid donor worldwide. The European Commission has several financial instruments which it uses for its development work. These include the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) which funds thematic development programmes and the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) which aims to support democracy and human rights worldwide. These fund long-term development programmes and come under the EU budget. Despite EU recognition of the interconnectedness between peace and development, however, neither of these instruments makes any clear reference to conflict prevention or insists that money used from these instruments have to be conflict-sensitive.

QCEA recommends

- That the European Parliament uses its influence over the EU budget to insist that conflict prevention is considered within the DCI and EIDHR financial instruments and implemented to ensure that development funded by these instruments is conflict-sensitive. QCEA believes that if the DCI and the EIDHR specifically mentioned how they could be used for peacebuilding they would become more powerful and effective instruments for development.

Questions for MEP candidates

- How do you feel the European Union can make sure its development work effectively mainstreams conflict prevention? How will you work towards making sure that conflict prevention is considered within the financial instruments used for development aid over which the European Parliament has budgetary power?

Peacebuilding and EU structures

Structural aspects of the EU may seem boring, but in fact they are crucial if we want to see an EU that takes peacebuilding and conflict prevention seriously. The European Commission's work relating to external relations is done through one of its directorate - generals, DG Relex. Within this directorate - general, however, there is no single body that has responsibility, time or resources to ensure that peacebuilding and the mainstreaming of conflict prevention is adequately addressed and financed.

If the Lisbon Treaty is ratified, the structure of the European Commission will change. A new body, the Joint European External Action Service, will be created to implement external action. Currently the discussion around the composition and role of this future body are very secretive. The Lisbon Treaty obliges the Council to consult the European Parliament about the External Action Service which means that MEPs could have influence over how it develops and what it includes. The European Parliament could therefore push for conflict prevention and peacebuilding to be an important part of any new structure.

QCEA recommends

- That within DG Relex there should be a well-resourced peacebuilding directorate to make sure that conflict prevention is mainstreamed and peacebuilding adequately coordinated and addressed.

Questions for MEP candidates:

- Will you ask the Commission to make sure conflict prevention is taken seriously by creating a well-resourced peacebuilding directorate within DG Relex?

QCEA recommends that if the Lisbon Treaty is ratified then a well-resourced directorate-level department should be included into the new structure of the External Action Service.

Questions for MEP candidates:

- Will you call for a well-resourced directorate level peacebuilding department to be created within an external action service if such a service is created during the next Parliamentary term?

Text: Anya Whiteside





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are poorly accounted for. UK-based NGO Global Witness has documented a near-total lack of transparency in state budgets in Turkmenistan, where gas revenues have effectively poured into a black hole. According to Global Witness, the former Turkmen dictator Niyazov siphoned gas revenues into his personal account at Deutsche Bank. The current dictator Berdymuhammedov has promised reform, but little has been forthcoming since he took power in 2007. Gas revenues are the Turkmen government's biggest source of income and gas accounts for 90% of the country's exports. If the EU does not use the gas relationship to meaningfully promote reform in Turkmenistan, then European consumers will unwittingly find themselves subsidising repression in that country.

My job is to clarify exactly how the Commission and the EIB are working on the ethical dimension of the gas relationship with Turkmenistan, especially in relation to revenue management issues. This is

difficult because there is little relevant information in the public domain for NGOs to scrutinize. The only way to understand what's going on is to enter into dialogue with the Commission and the Bank, to try to piece together as precisely as possible what their approach is. It is clear that the EU has a window of opportunity to influence the Turkmen government at this early stage, a window that may close as contracts are signed, the pipeline is built and the gas starts to flow. The lock-in of mutual dependence that will occur once we are receiving their gas, and they are receiving our money, is unlikely to provide fertile ground for influence. This means we need to get involved now. In order to understand Commission and EIB work on Nabucco, I have been in contact with officials in both institutions. I am writing a research and advocacy paper which will provide recommendations to the Commission and the EIB, and action points for Quakers around Europe. I look forward to sharing this work with you.

Neil Endicott

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