



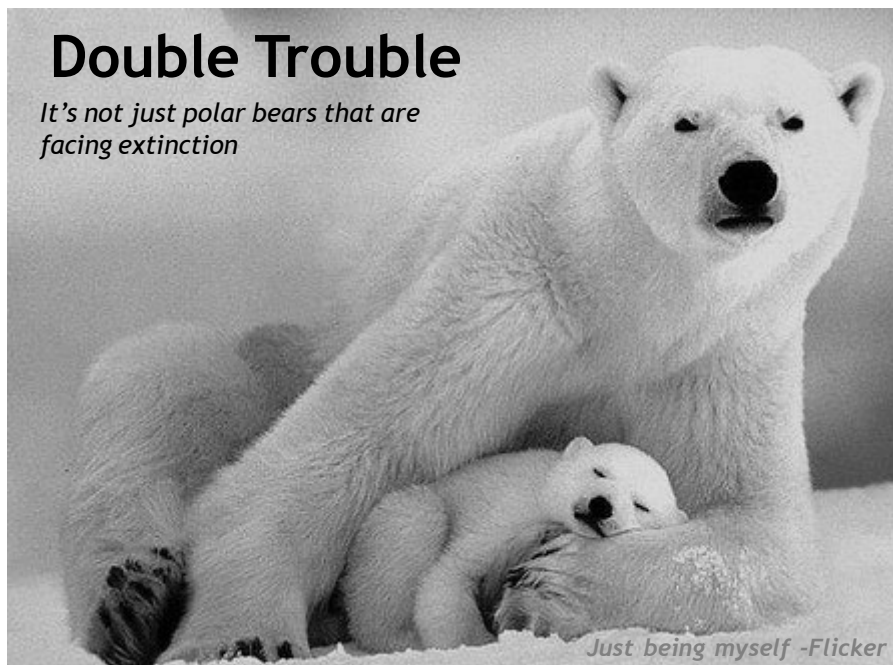
Around Europe

Quaker Council for European Affairs

No.316 October 2009

Double Trouble

It's not just polar bears that are facing extinction



Just being myself -Flicker

temperature in which the negative impacts would occur is much lower than previously thought. If we stick to below the 2°C guard rail we will almost certainly guarantee the extinction of some species and witness extreme weather events, whilst leaving a moderate chance of runaway climate change. The report comments that even a small risk of triggering them [tipping points] would be considered dangerous. One of the report's authors compared our situation to that of playing Russian roulette with climate change, just with bigger risks involved.

This, however, is just one reason to be concerned. The second is the political reality which is occurring

Recently climate change has been consistently in the news, and rightly so. It is slowly becoming accepted as the biggest threat to face humanity in the 21st century. Yet the news reporting, for a number of reasons, excludes two very important points which should leave us all very, very scared.

We constantly hear that to avoid serious climate change we must stay below the 2°C guard rail of average global temperature rise since 1990 levels. This was set in relation to the risk factors of our experiencing potential negative impacts from global warming (species extinction, extreme weather events, severe impacts on livelihoods and finally runaway climate change). The 2001 IPCC report calculated the 2°C guard rail to avoid the risk of runaway climate change. Runaway climate change is the point at which we reach certain tipping points, such as permafrost melting, which would release so much methane that it would set off a chain of other reactions totally out of human control. It is like a line of dominoes and if we get to the stage of pushing the first one over, then there is nothing we can do to prevent the others falling and we have no idea where the line ends. These calculations on how to avoid runaway climate change are now considered outdated.

The University of Copenhagen has produced a report (written by some of the same IPCC authors) that sums up the latest climate science. It suggests that the

around us. It is increasingly looking as if we will miss our 2°C guard rail target. The IPCC (2007) estimates that we will experience a rise in temperature of between 1.8°C and 4°C while others predict possible temperature rises of up to 11°C. This will have very serious consequences. For example, two tipping points, the arctic summer sea ice and the Greenland ice sheet could be triggered by a rise of just 1-2°C.

We know that our targets are woefully inadequate, and that the actions we are taking to try and reach these targets are also woefully inadequate. We know that the repercussions of this could be severe. So why are we not in emergency mode, why is this not considered a national (or global) emergency? Climate change has to be understood as the number one priority for everyone, for it will affect everyone.

Dangerous climate change is not something that will either happen or not happen. It is a process, a scale. We will inevitably suffer some negative consequences of climate change. I have no doubt that we will witness the extinction of many more species for example. How far we slip on this scale is up to us. Human beings are in a unique situation. We can act now to limit the consequences of climate change or we can go down in history as the only species that monitored ourselves into extinction.

Steve Hynd



Will the European External Action Service Deliver?

In the midst of global crises (e.g. climate change, the financial crisis, recession), the European Union continues to struggle with institutional reform. This has been going on (at least in terms of the 'current round') since 2001 when the Convention on the Future of Europe was set up. Eight years on we have seen a European Constitutional Treaty come and go and the Lisbon Treaty trying to save what could be saved of this, only for it to be rejected by Irish voters in June 2008. This month, Ireland gets another chance.

All of these treaties have in part attempted a restructuring of how the EU does what we might loosely call foreign policy. This is complicated because there is still no real clarity about whether the EU wants to do foreign policy and if so, how this should be delineated from the foreign policy of Member States. So there is a bit of institutional schizophrenia here.

Currently, several European Commissioners and their Directorates General deal in matters called 'external action': trade, development assistance, humanitarian aid, enlargement, and political relationships with countries outside the EU. In addition, the Council of the European Union (which is the Member States acting jointly together with its General Secretariat) does what it refers to as Common Foreign and Security Policy. Many people don't understand the distinction. Finally, there are the Delegations of the European Union (which are currently Delegations of the European Commission) which function as local bases or one might argue 'embassies' in countries outside the EU.

If the Lisbon Treaty is ratified, all this is set to change. There will be a new 'High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy'. This person will be at one and the same time representing the Council of the European Union and be a Vice President of the Commission with the External Action portfolio. This person - and it is fair to assume this person will be 'he' - will be supported by a new External Action Service (EAS).

The discussion about an EAS has been ongoing since 2004 when the ink on the erstwhile European Constitutional Treaty was only just dry. But there have been no official public discussions about what it will look like and what it will include or exclude.

The European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO) has been following this debate. QCEA has taken an active part in this. Finally, EPLO decided that if the decision-

makers would not have the discussion publicly, the NGO community should. EPLO organized a roundtable discussion, hosted by the Spanish Permanent Representation in Brussels on 11 September 2009 to have the debate. NGOs were well represented and a few of the decision-makers came to listen. On the whole, we consider it to have been a success.

But the prospects for the EAS are less encouraging: the wisdom among specialist analysts in the field (on the think tank and NGO side) is broadly that this will be a small set-up, unambitious in terms of its political clout and possibly not even achieving any kind of improvement in terms of the current level of duplication and overlap.

Another issue is accountability: at present, the European Parliament has responsibility for holding the European Commission to account on matters relating to European Commission competence; this excludes a large part of development funding funded through the European Development Fund which is not part of the European Union budget but administered by DG Development. The European Parliament has no political say over the Common Foreign and Security Policy, though it controls the budget for some of the activities that come under this heading. An ambitious EAS would be fully accountable to the European Parliament; there would be regular and timely reports to the European Parliament (and to national parliaments) about what the EU is doing on the global stage; and these reports and debates would find their way into mainstream news coverage. But given that so far none of the discussions about the EAS has been held in public, and that it is supposed to start in January 2010 (if the Lisbon Treaty is ratified), there will not be much time for a transparent debate.

For QCEA, the issue is simple and clear: The European Union is, in itself, a peace project. This could be its most important export - the knowledge, experience and skill of working out conflicts without resorting to violence among nations who had previously been routinely at war with each other. The EAS could be one of the most important vehicles for this to happen. If the EAS is not focused on peacebuilding, it misses the point.

So the discussion about what this Service should look like - the demand, for example, that it should have a peacebuilding directorate in a prominent position - is critically important. If foreign policy within and beyond this Service is going to prioritize the narrow security and economic interests of the Member States, then much of its potential will be wasted. Discussion now could make all the difference.

We call on you to ask your governments to commit to an open and public debate. Write to your MP; write to your Ministers for Foreign and European Affairs; write to your MEP. And let us know what they say.



Across the Troubled Wave



Those of you who came to the QCEA/QPSW conference in Brussels in December 2008 will remember the dulcet tones of David Ferrard, Scottish-American folk singer, peace activist and former QCEA programme assistant. His concert was a highlight for many Quakers who attended, so much so that he sold out of

all the CDs he had brought to the event.

David has won several awards (Celtic connections 2006, Burnsong 2007) for his folk songs, many of which have been inspired by the peace movement. His new album *Across the Troubled Wave*, which came out in July this year, reflects his background by exploring the links between Scottish and American music. Recorded in Blue Ridge Mountains it grew out of a trip funded by the Scottish Arts Council where he met with singers from North Carolina who still play the songs of their Scottish forefathers. With traditional songs from both sides of the Atlantic, David explores themes of parting, loss and homecoming including tracks such as 'the Slave's Lament' by Scotland's national poet Robert Burns and 'Hard times come again no more' by Stephen Burns, described as the 'father of American Music'.

Described by Tony Benn as 'Moving, powerful and compelling', David's music is everything good folk music should be; compelling lyrics combined with a strikingly lovely voice. To hear some of David's music or to book a live performance have a look at his website: www.davidferrard.com.

Anya Whiteside

May Peace Prevail on Earth

21 September is International Peace Day, declared by the UN originally in 1981 and fixed on this date in 2002. This day is celebrated with a variety of events around the world. In Germany for example, there is a football match taking place between the staff of Adidas and Puma sport manufacturers. This is the first time the firms have interacted for nearly 60 years since the founding brothers fell out.

In 2009, the year of QCEA's 30th anniversary, QCEA staff and members of Belgium and Luxembourg Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) marked the day by planting a peace pole in the front garden at Quaker House Brussels.

'I had been thinking about this for some time', Martina Weitsch, Joint Representative at QCEA comments. 'But then one of our Council Members from the UK raised the possibility earlier this year and then it suddenly seemed to fit.' The pole, purchased from the World Peace Prayer Organisation in Germany, has the text 'May Peace Prevail on Earth' written on each of the four sides of the pole. The languages we chose (French, Flemish, Arabic and English) reflect the language culture of the Euro-

pean Quarter and the surrounding residential areas in our part of Brussels. The pole will be a permanent feature in our small front garden; we hope it will give visitors and passers-by a prompt for a moment's reflection.

Martina Weitsch



Quakers marking International Peace Day



Changes afoot in the EU's counterterrorism strategy?

"Transparency is a Swedish passion" said Ambassador Tomas Rosander at a policy dialogue (on 17 September 2009) to discuss future EU strategies with regard to counterterrorism. Organised by the European Policy Centre, the Swedish Institute of International Affairs and the Center for Asymmetric Threat Studies, it brought together some of the key players in this field.

Gilles de Kerchove, the EU Counter- Terrorism Coordinator, pointed out that whilst Member States are responsible for their own internal security, the EU still has a role to play in this area. The nature of the problem has fundamentally changed into a more diversified complex threat; with the risk on the one hand of fragile or failed states such as Yemen, Sudan and Mali becoming safe havens for terrorists; and on the other, of 'homegrown' terrorists in Member States with their own agenda. According to a recent Eurobarometer survey, terrorism is a major concern for 79% of EU citizens. And whilst Mr. Kerchove accepted that of the four pillars of the EU's Counterterrorism Strategy, (Prevent, Protect, Pursue and Respond), the EU had spent far more time and resources on Pursue (terrorists) and Protect (civilians), he did not accept that a major review of the strategy was needed. Now is the time to invest much more on Prevent and Respond (to threats).

Data sharing is at the core of this response, he said, but what is lacking is a vision and a strategy. He emphasised the need for Member States to do more to address the issue of 'homegrown' terrorists without stigmatising a single community or religion; he pointed to a recent report from the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) which highlighted discrimination against Muslims in the EU. "Words are weapons" he said, "We need to improve the way we speak". He pointed out that ratification of the Lisbon Treaty should benefit counterterrorism strategies as civil protection and defence would be better integrated.

Christopher Dickey, Newsweek's Paris Bureau Chief and Middle East Regional Editor, said that using the military was "the worst way" to fight terrorism. Terrorism thrives on occupation (real or perceived) Mr Dickey claimed, yet Western powers rarely raise this.

In the discussion Mr Dickey also disagreed with former President Bush's assessment of the scale of the terrorist threat as comparable to that of the Cold War. The scale of the response should be reviewed, he said, given the (limited) scale of the threat.

All participants agreed on the need for an accurate assessment of the threat, with Mr Dickey and Mr de Kerchove also agreeing that Mumbai type attacks were the most likely. Mr de Kerchove also stressed the need for public debate - how far should civil liberties be compromised in the name of combating terrorism? This is a question raised in the 2007 QCEA publication on this issue and one that we should all reflect on.

Liz Scurfield

Take out an annual *Around Europe* Subscription! 22•/£16 for hard copies, 15•/£10 for e-mailed copies. For information on how to subscribe to *Around Europe* please visit our website at: www.quaker.org/qcea, ring us on 0032 2 234 3061 or write to us. We look forward to hearing from you.



Around Europe

Quaker Council for European Affairs aisbt
Square Ambiorix 50, B-1000 Brussels, Belgium
Editeur responsable : Elizabeth Scurfield
N° entreprise 0420.346.728
www.quaker.org/qcea - info@qcea.org
Périodique mensuel. Bureau de dépôt : Bruxelles X

Belgique-België
P.P.-P.B.
Bruxelles X
BC 8843