



TO FIND OUT MORE...

Using QCEA!

The Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) publishes a monthly newsletter, *Around Europe*, containing information and analysis on current developments at the European level, as well as updates on our work and projects. Subscribe by contacting us at the address below, or go to the website (<http://qcea.quaker.org>) to read back copies, find out more about what we do as well as for links to other institutions, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and Quaker organisations (and for more details of this project, the Convention process and the contributions of Quakers). Other NGOs also provide information on specific issues and advise on campaigning and lobbying techniques. Find out if organisations that you are a member of have a European office, or if they are members of European umbrella organisations.

To find out about and contact the European institutions, the easiest method (if you have access) is to use the internet. See overleaf for more details and website addresses. However, if you do not have access to the internet you can write, fax, telephone, or use national European information offices (these tend to be in major cities). Some contact addresses are listed below:

Members of the European Parliament

Contact with MEPs is probably the best way to communicate directly with the EU. After all, MEPs are directly elected to represent their constituents and moreover have a legal obligation to reply. Each EU Member State has a different procedure for electing MEPs; the European Parliament website (<http://www.europarl.eu.int>), or the information offices for each country can tell you more.

Once you know the name of the MEP you want to contact you can write to them at this address:

European Parliament
rue Wiertz 60
B-1047 Bruxelles

Telephone the switchboard to find the phone number of your MEP: +32 (0)2 284 21 11

MEPs email addresses all follow the same pattern:

initial of first name followed by last name@europarl.eu.int

eg if your MEP is called Jane Smith her email address would be jsmith@europarl.eu.int

European Commission

The European Commission can be contacted by telephone. This works best if you know the name of the person you want to speak to, or the relevant department or unit.

European Commission switchboard: +32 2 299 11 11

Council of the European Union

Many decisions are taken by the Council of the EU, which is made up of representatives of the national government of each Member State. The Council is probably the least open institution of the EU; meetings are not open to the public, and documents are not available. However, this is where some of the most important decisions are taken. Therefore it is worth lobbying your government to urge them to act responsibly at the European level. If an issue with a European dimension arises, write to national MPs and relevant government ministers.

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USING THE INTERNET

The European Union websites can be extremely useful but can also be incredibly frustrating! The information you want is probably there somewhere, but it takes a little time to find your way around. Some useful starting points:

Institutions and Information

Europa - <http://europa.eu.int>

The central website for the EU. From here you can access the websites of the European Commission, Parliament and Council, as well as find documents such as the Treaties, Charter of Fundamental Rights, Presidency Conclusions etc.

General Information about the EU - <http://europa.eu.int/abc-en.htm>

Institutional structure, history, treaties...

Glossary - <http://europa.eu.int/scadplus/leg/en/cig/g4000.htm>

What is the community acquis? How about Coreper? Who is 'Mr/Ms CFSP'? For that matter, what is the CFSP? Find out here! EU jargon explained.

Citizens' Rights - http://europa.eu.int/abc/rights_en.htm

Information about rights of citizens in the EU, including a link to the text of the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

The Convention and the Future of Europe

The Convention on the Future of Europe - <http://european-convention.eu.int/>

The Convention set up by the Laeken Declaration has the task of coming up with answers to how the Europe of the future should look. Meetings and documents are open to the public through the Convention website. If you do not have web access you can write to the secretariat of the Convention at:

Secretariat of the European Convention
Rue de la Loi 175
B-1048 Brussels

Write to the members of the Convention representing your government or parliament to put forward your opinions and to find out how to get involved in national debates.

Forum - http://europa.eu.int/futurum/forum_convention

The civil society Forum of the Convention. The website includes contributions to the Convention from organisations in civil society (including the QCEA initial contribution!)

The Future of Europe debate - <http://europa.eu.int/futurum>

Official documents such as the Laeken Declaration, plus contributions from institutions, politicians, NGOs, academics etc. Also has an on-line discussion forum.

Governance - <http://europa.eu.int/comm/governance>

Includes the White Paper on Governance, reports of working groups which contributed to the White Paper and reactions/contributions.

Participation

Your Voice in Europe - <http://europa.eu.int/yourvoice>

The EU wants you to "play an active role in the European Union's policy-making process" and apparently "wants to listen to your ideas, face up to your criticism and learn from your experience."

Europe Direct - <http://europa.eu.int/europedirect>

"a service to help you find answers to your questions about the European Union."