



Around Europe

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Current Staff at QCEA:

Robin Bloomfield, Liz Scurfield, Xavier Verhaeghe, Martina Weitsch, Charlotte Wetton.

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'Partners in Prevention' Conference

From 23 to 24 March, the EU Luxembourg Presidency, the European Peacebuilding Office (EPLO), the Madariaga Foundation and the Folke Bernadotte Academy of Sweden, organised a joint conference on improving the EU's ability to respond to violent conflict and to engage in dialogue with civil society organisations working in this field.

The Conference entitled '*Partners in Prevention: Moving from Theory to Practice - EU Civilian Crisis Management and Development Policies, Sustainable Approaches to Training, and Involvement of Civil Society*' acted as a follow up to the work of the Irish and Dutch EU Presidencies on strengthening civilian capabilities in crisis management. The goal of the Conference was to generate further debate on this topic.

The Conference had approximately 130 participants over the 2 days, including key officials from EU institutions and

representatives from numerous civil society groups both from the EU and from countries affected by conflict. Speakers at the Conference included Javier Niño-Pérez, from the Conflict Prevention Unit at the European Commission and Gyorgi Tatar from the Council of the European Union Policy Unit.

Key topics of the Conference included:

- improving EU and civil society cooperation to help prevent and resolve conflict
- how to develop sustainable approaches to training in this field
- enhancing EU-UN cooperation on conflict prevention
- linking conflict prevention with development policies

EPLO will be publishing a full report on the Conference in the coming months and QCEA will be looking at some of the issues raised at the Conference in upcoming issues of *Around Europe*.

Robin Bloomfield



Panel on "What is the state of play on EU policies of conflict prevention with regard to civilian capabilities?" at the 'Partners in Prevention: Moving from Theory to Practice' Conference.



One Million European Peace Activists Can Bring About Change

There has been much discussion in the peace movement about the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe. On the whole, these discussions have been around the question of whether the militarization of the EU, which is embedded in the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe, should lead peace activists to vote against the Treaty in any referendum taking place in some Member States.

This article is not about that debate. In my view, there is no question that militarization is a negative development within the European Union. It is particularly damaging that this is written into a Constitutional Treaty where it will be difficult to change in the future.

This article is about another approach the peace movement might consider in bringing about gradual changes to the European Common Foreign and Security Policy agenda. It's not going to be easy but it might be possible and it is certainly worth a try.

Article I - 47 (4) of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe states:

Not less than one million citizens who are nationals of a significant number of Member States may take the initiative of inviting the Commission, within the framework of its powers, to submit any appropriate proposal on matters where citizens consider that a legal act of the Union is required for the purpose of implementing the Constitution. European laws shall determine the provisions for the procedures and conditions required for such a citizens' initiative, including the minimum number of Member States from which such citizens must come.

There are a couple of terms in this which make this less of a sure thing than one might hope. First, there is the word 'inviting'; does that mean that the Commission, once invited, must act? Legally, it does not. Politically, I would like to see them try! Particularly if the peace movement gets its act together and comes in very early on after this has become enacted. The Commission, and with it the European Union, would lose a huge amount of credibility if they ignored a submission made by 1 million citizens.

Then there is the phrase 'required for the purpose of implementing the Constitution'. Now this is a lawyer's paradise. It is, of course, open to wide variations in interpretation. But what it means in practice is simply that: if the peace movement wants the Commission to submit an appropriate proposal, it will have to argue that it is necessary for the implementation of the Constitution.

So what does the Constitution say about the European Union's objectives when it comes to peace? First, the Preamble:

'Believing that Europe, reunited after bitter experiences ... wishes ... to strive for peace, justice and solidarity throughout the world.'

Second, the objectives set out in Article I - 3:

'The Union's aim is to promote peace, its values and the well-being of its peoples' (Para 1)

'In its relations with the wider world, the Union shall uphold and promote its values and interests. It shall contribute to peace, security ... and the development of international law, including respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter.' (Para 4)

So what could this mean in practice? Taking QCEA's main focus in this context as an example, we have been lobbying, initially for a European Peacebuilding Agency and more recently for the enhancement of the European Union's civilian capabilities for conflict transformation and peacebuilding.

We believe that peacebuilding is covered by the objectives as set out in the Constitution. We also believe that peacebuilding can only be done successfully and sustainably through civilian means. Furthermore, we are of the view that the EU is putting a disproportionately large amount of effort and resources into its military capabilities and a disproportionately small amount of effort and resources into its civilian capabilities. So we would argue that in order for the EU to achieve its objective successfully and sustainably, it must move forward on increasing and developing its civilian capabilities. A good way to do this would be to establish a European Peacebuilding Agency which would focus on this.

(See page 3)

The EU at the UN

As Koffi Annan has released his report on reforming the United Nations, it is worth examining how the EU and its Member States interact and influence the work of the UN.

All EU Member States are members of the UN, and since 1974 the European Community has had permanent observer status at the UN. Cooperation and co-ordination between EU Member States at the UN and other international organisations has increased since the establishment of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy in 1992. According to the EU Commission at the UN; "*the Member States, together with the Commission, now regularly coordinate their positions, and the EU thus almost always speaks with one voice in the UN General Assembly.*" (www.europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/un/intro/) except in cases of serious disagreement such as the current war in Iraq.

As the UN works on many areas of concern to the EU, efforts have been made to work together and co-operate. The European Commission has stated that it is committed to working with the UN on policy areas such as conflict prevention, human rights, counter terrorism and development co-operation. Further details can be found by visiting www.europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/un/.

The EU Member States also make a significant financial contribution to the UN. According to '*The EU and the UN: Strengthening Global Security*' by Martin Ortega in '*Effective Multilateralism: Europe, Regional Security, and a Revitalised UN*', they pay approximately 38% of the UN budget, compared to US and Japan who pay 22% and 19% respectively.

UN Reform

As reported by EUobserver.com (www.euobserver.com) the EU leaders agreed in March to set out a common position on the proposals for UN Reform put forward by Kofi Annan in his report '*In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all*'. The proposals will be discussed by world leaders in September 2005 when they meet in New York for a summit on the Millennium Development Goals. It remains to be seen if world leaders will be able to reach an agreement on the proposals which include increasing the number of permanent seats on the Security Council.

Robin Bloomfield

Further Information on EU/UN relations and UN Reform:

The official EU@UN Website:
www.europa-eu-un.org

Kofi Annan's Report on Reforming the United Nation, '*In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all*', is available online at:
www.un.org/largerfreedom

Effective Multilateralism: Europe, Regional Security, and a Revitalised UN, edited by Espen Barth Eide can be downloaded from:
www.fpc.org.uk/publications/139

One Million European Peace Activists Can Bring About Change

(Continued from page 2)

Therefore, it could certainly be argued that the proposal to set up such an Agency would meet the requirements set out in Article I - 47 (4).

We are not saying that this will be easy. We are not saying that it is guaranteed to be successful. But then, peacebuilding has never been a walk in the park!

So let us get organised. Let's not even wait for the ratification of the Constitution. Let's do what the Member States have done with regard to the militarization and jump the gun (!). Let's draft a proposal on the basis of which we can invite the Commission to submit any appropriate proposal.

All we then have to do is to collect 1 million signatures. Surely that is not a problem for the European peace movement? And let's make sure we have signatures in as many countries as possible, but in at least 75 % of the Member States.

The first step on this road is to draft the proposal. We will publish our proposal in the next edition of **Around Europe** and will then also place it on our website. If you want to be part of the consultation on the content of this proposal, please contact Martina Weitsch at mweitsch@qcea.org - we will make sure you get to see the draft. We would also like to hear from you if you or your organisation would like to volunteer to collect signatures once the proposal has been agreed.

Martina Weitsch



News in Brief

Briefing Papers on the Peace Tax

This series of briefing papers looks at the QCEA proposals relating to the Peace Tax which we are making at the Council of Europe.

The Papers are available at:
www.quaker.org/qcea/peacetax

Intergroup on Peace Initiatives Website Section

QCEA acts as secretariat for the MEPs Intergroup on Peace Initiatives and has prepared a set of web pages to provide further information on the work of the Intergroup.

For more information please visit:
www.quaker.org/qcea/intergroup

European Peace Directory

QCEA is working to set up an online directory of Organisations and Groups working for Peace in Europe.

The European Peace Directory is being produced in association with:
Mouvement Chrétien Pour la Paix

Further information on how organisations and groups can sign up will be in the next edition of **Around Europe** and is also available at:
www.quaker.org/qcea/peacedirectory

Take Action on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)

There is still time to take action on the NPT and to get involved in the campaign for a Nuclear Free World before the NPT Review Conference in May 2005.

For more information about the NPT and how to take action visit:
www.quaker.org/qcea/npt.htm

Get Involved with QCEA

There are currently two opportunities to get involved with our work:

Study Tour 2005 (2-10 July 2005)

The QCEA Study Tour provides the perfect opportunity to learn, discuss and reflect on what Europe means to you.

Deadline for applications: **2 May 2005**

Application forms are available from:
www.quaker.org/qcea/studytours.htm

Vacancy: Programme Assistant 2005-2006

QCEA is looking for one young person (age 21-30) to work as Programme Assistant from September 2005.

Deadline for applications: **29 April 2005**

Application forms are available from:
www.quaker.org/qcea/pa.htm



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Editeur responsable : Elizabeth Scurfield, Square Ambiorix 50, B-1000 Brussels
Périodique mensuel. Bureau de dépôt : Bruxelles X

Quaker Council for European Affairs

Square Ambiorix 50
B-1000 Bruxelles
Tel.: +32-2-230 49 35
Fax: +32-2-230 63 70
info@qcea.org
www.quaker.org/qcea

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