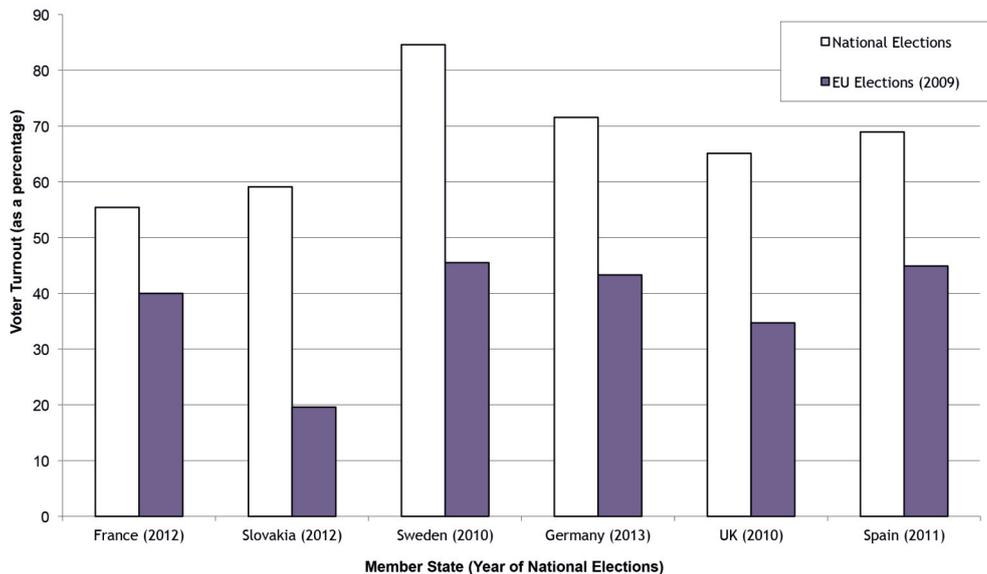




Around Europe

Quaker Council for European Affairs

No. 356 April-May 2014



A comparison between voter turnouts at EU and national elections. Image Credit: Chris Diskin

EU Citizens' Interaction with their Parliaments

2014 is an election year for the European Union (EU). Between 22 and 25 May, EU citizens will choose a new European Parliament (EP). 751 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) will be elected from 28 Member States. For those working in any aspect of EU politics, this is obviously a major event, and it is already being widely discussed. As the elections draw nearer, this debate will spread as it becomes a more pressing concern for national politicians, the press, and civil society.

But what will happen after the elections? What happens when there is no longer a major event coming up to coerce discussion on EU issues? As the elected representatives settle into their parliamentary duties, do ordinary people disregard the EP and, more generally, European policy-making?

Research shows that EU citizens see the EP as less important than their national legislative institutions. It is also clear that citizens trust their MEPs less than their national representatives. A 2012 report from an independent think-tank found that 50 per cent of participants said they did not trust the EP. Voter turnouts are almost always lower in EP elections than in national ballots. In 2009 just 43 per cent of the EU electorate voted in the EP elections, far fewer than in the majority of EU Member State national legislative elections (as shown in the graph above). According to

the EU's own monitoring service, Eurobarometer, while 90 per cent of Europeans said they had an understanding of the EP, only 19 per cent said they connected the word 'democracy' with the institutions. In Finland this dropped to 12 per cent, and in the UK it plummeted to just 7 per cent. Clearly, many citizens do not think that voting for their MEP is necessary, do not see the EU as democratic, and do not trust the EP. It should be noted that the same research showed that people are not particularly hostile to the EU. Although about a fifth (18 per cent) of EU citizens saw membership as a 'bad thing', 48 per cent saw it as a 'good thing'. A further 31 per cent saw it as neutral, 'neither good nor bad'. Collectively, these statistics suggest an overall indifference towards the EU: people

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do not have an aversion to the EU, but they do not take an active role through actions such as voting.

One key area of QCEA's work is democratic governance: encouraging citizens to interact with EU legislators and to participate in EU policy formulations, helping to improve decision making. There are various opportunities for Quakers (and, indeed, anyone) to engage with the EU. Voting is an obvious method of engaging with legislators, but so is responding to EU consultations wherever possible or writing to local MEPs to raise concerns. QCEA is here to help and support such interactions.



Photo Credit: Comedy_nose, CC

The EU elections are in May

[Investment Treaty, which could have a huge impact on European living standards](#). The EU shares responsibility for regulations on the environment, energy, agriculture, and food, ensuring quality, safety, and sustainability. It also invests considerable energy on programmes to foster peace across the globe, including Israel and Palestine.

The EP plays a significant role in creating the laws and agreements which shape our lives. While the [EU employs a more complex system of governance and democracy than the majority of members state legislations](#), the Parliament and MEPs are a critical component of the democratic process. Not voting for the new EP should be

Although national parliaments are important and should not be ignored, the EU plays an important role in making decisions that affect us. [It has competencies in many areas which significantly impact on citizen's lives](#). The EU alone manages the customs union that is so vital to the economies of member states. [It also has an exclusive right to negotiate international Free Trade Agreements such at the Transatlantic Trade and](#)

considered a wasted opportunity for individuals to connect with an institution working on their behalf. This year's elections are an important opportunity to debate EU politics and policy, and, after the elections, EU citizens, including Quakers, should make more efforts to interact with their representative MEPs to help shape EU policies that work towards a more sustainable, equal, and peaceful world.

Chris Diskin

QCEA's Action Alerts

Sign up to participate in calls to action on EU policy! QCEA operates a system of action alerts, in which we send out e-mails to Friends and others who have signed up to receive them, on the following topics;



Peace
Palestine/Israel
Criminal Justice
Sustainability and Energy
Other topics as they arise.



How does it work?

When QCEA identifies an advocacy point on which the input of European citizens and residents may help move things forward, we will let you know. We may ask you to send a letter or e-mail to specific policy-makers, to write to your MEP, or to respond to a call for consultation responses from the public. To help you, we will send a model letter or a series of model answers on the topic, so the background research is prepared for you. You may, of course, use this model letter or send a different one of your own devising. What is important is that EU citizens are participating in the making of policy.

To sign up

To sign up for action alerts, send an e-mail with your name, country of residence, and citizenship to Gordon at office@qcea.org

We look forward to hearing from you!

More information: <http://www.qcea.org/home/involved/action-alerts/>



The European Union Should Prepare for Peace and Not War

Assessing the impact of the European Union on peace in the world is a complex task. The activities of the EU affect people around the globe. The [Lisbon Treaty](#) commits the EU to promoting and contributing to peace. Indeed, how the EU contributes to peace is a theme of this month's QCEA Study Tour, which will have participants from the EU as well as from Ukraine, Lebanon, and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

As a peace project, the EU replaced military confrontation with cooperation and trade. The expansion of the EU has helped to stabilise democracy in southern, central, and eastern Europe. EU Member States also give comparatively generously to development assistance and to international organisations, such as the United Nations and the International Criminal Court. However, the picture is not all positive.

In December 2012 the Norwegian Nobel Committee awarded the Peace Prize to the European Union, praising the transformation of "a continent of war to a continent of peace". This decision was widely criticised, particularly because Europe is home to some of the world's biggest arms dealers. [Desmond Tutu, who received the Peace Prize in 1984 for his role in the anti-apartheid campaign, said the EU's role as a military power was inconsistent with the values of the prize.](#) The military role includes the trade in French missiles, British aircraft, German submarines, and Italian small arms. Furthermore, European governments and the European Commission [have agreed to prioritise support to strengthen European arms companies.](#)

Following the EU's failure to interrupt the violence in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, it was recognised that the EU needed to assume responsibilities for preventing conflict. The [Lisbon Treaty](#), which came into force in December 2009, was a cornerstone in the development of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). It introduced the option for the EU to deploy conflict prevention missions. The treaty also

allowed for the creation of the European External Action Service (EEAS), and the role of High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy was created to provide a strong single voice for the EU in foreign affairs.

Civilian peacebuilding

Since its first civilian police operation in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 2002, the EU has conducted 30 civilian and military CSDP missions. [Most operations have been](#)



The EU's Civilian Monitoring Mission to Georgia.
Photo Credit: International Crisis Group, CC

[civilian in nature and seek to prevent violence by identifying the risk of conflict at an earlier stage, understanding the conflict better, and taking action earlier.](#)

QCEA welcomes the civilian nature of these missions, which has allowed the EU to focus on security of the individuals and communities within a territory, rather than

specific Member State interests. CSDP missions have shown that addressing the needs of the population creates more sustainable outcomes; it is particularly beneficial where the legitimacy of the government and security services are disputed. The positive results of civilian approaches can be seen in Georgia where the [EU monitoring mission helped to reduce conflict "through liaison, facilitation of contacts between parties and other confidence building measures".](#)

Finding peaceful solutions

Early action frequently involves the use of mediation. In 2009 the European Commission and Council developed the concept '[Strengthening EU Mediation and Dialogue Capacities](#)' which provides a basis for increasing the use of mediation to prevent conflict. EU Special Representatives, EU Delegations, and CSDP missions often undertake mediation with groups ranging from political leaders to local communities, sometimes supported by local civil society groups.



Palestinian Police with motorcycles provided by the EU CSDP mission. Photo Credit: EEAS, CC

There is much more to do. For example, CSDP missions need a more detailed understanding of each conflict, including an appreciation of the way men and women experience the conflict differently. This means properly taking account of the insecurity of women vis-à-vis personal violence, but importantly also ensuring women are involved in shaping the new peace. Unfortunately the gender balance of the CSDP missions sets a poor example: they still include very few women in the international staff, particularly at a senior level. The European Peacebuilding Liaison Office has recommended that at least [50 per cent of people seconded to staff CSDP missions are women](#).

Civilian CSDP is undermined by the European Arms Trade

CSDP was on the agenda of the December 2013 European Council meeting with EU heads of government. In the last edition of *Around Europe* (No. 355, February-March 2014), QCEA criticised the overwhelming focus of the Council discussion on

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defence capabilities and support for the defence industry. This focus included a political steer from the Council in favour of military technologies, such as [Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems \(drones\)](#).

[According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institutes's Fifteenth Annual Report on Control of Exports of Military Technology and Equipment](#), the EU currently spends 274 billion euro on arms - money which could be better spent on resourcing civilian CSDP operations. Whilst EU Member States claim not to export arms to countries at war, in practice, European arms are sold widely to the detriment of peace. And arms exports into a conflict area increase the likelihood of conflict by fuelling arms races and strengthening oppressive governments involved in human rights abuses. [European weapons were used against civilian populations in the Middle East and North Africa during the political unrest in 2011](#). They have also been used in Sri Lanka, Columbia, Libya, and Georgia. [Sales of small arms to Libya have helped create the need for the current EU CSDP mission in Mali](#).

Photo Credit: EU CSDP, CC



EU Member States have enhanced military cooperation

Prepare for war, and you get war

The European Union should be preparing for peace through the development of civilian CSDP capabilities and reducing the production and supply of arms. To play a positive role in the world, we must use our considerable global influence to promote a sustainable peace rather than focusing on short-term arms sales to create profit for arms companies.

It was unfortunate that the Lisbon Treaty committed EU Member States to enhancing their military cooperation rather than the civilian peacebuilding capabilities that are more effective at reducing conflict. After gaining vast experience from 30 CSDP missions, EU Member States now know what is required to promote peace. They should refocus their investment onto civilian missions.

Andrew Lane



EU citizens should be treated equally regardless of which member state they are in.
Photo Credit: @European Union 2014 - European Parliament, CC.

2014: An Important Moment for Criminal Justice in the EU

Thousands of European Union (EU) citizens face prosecution or conviction for crimes in an EU Member State other than their own, each year. Under the Stockholm Programme, which sets out the EU's priorities in the areas of justice, freedom, and security between 2010 and 2014, prisoners have more rights codified than ever before. However, in the coming year the EU will face many challenges in setting its agenda for criminal justice.

In a recent report, the current European Commission has expressed its desire to consolidate, codify, and complement the framework that is already in place for the area of justice. The strategy agreed in 2014 will set the benchmark for the next five years, as the EU continues to work towards the adoption of laws which are bolstered by robust enforcement mechanisms at a European, national, and civil society level. And it is important that the EU continues to move forward in 2014 with the rights of EU citizens at the heart of its actions.

Achievements

Quakers have a long history of promoting fairness within criminal justice. Quaker concerns for criminal justice have been honed by the collective experience of working within and studying criminal justice systems. The current EU justice area is immeasurably better than what came before, due to the pooled sovereignty, mutual cooperation, and goodwill of member states. For example, in October 2012, the EU adopted the Directive establishing minimum standards on the rights, support, and protection of victims of crime. This includes measures to support families of victims, which is a positive step forward in accepting the wider social ramifications of crime.

One of the most significant turning points in EU justice policy was the 2010 - 2014 Stockholm Programme. According to Fair Trials International, the Stockholm Programme represented a 'new era for criminal justice policy'. Following agreement by all EU Member States, three criminal justice directives have already been adopted under the Programme, and five more are in the pipeline. These directives include interpretation and translation for those who do not speak the language used in the criminal proceedings. Another ensures that clear, prompt information is available from the point of arrest onwards, and a third requires that EU citizens have access to legal advice throughout the process.

Beyond the consolidation of citizens' rights during criminal proceedings, the Stockholm Programme has given new roles to the European Commission, civil society, and national courts. This is to ensure that laws are implemented consistently across the many diverse EU Member States. The Stockholm Programme has introduced new legal tools for the key actors in the EU criminal justice system, helped to develop minimum standards for criminal justice across the EU, and promoted mutual trust in the national justice systems.

2014: Looking forward

In order to realise the transformation of EU criminal justice that was envisioned in 2009, more work is needed. The EU has created many positive policies in the area of criminal justice. However, creating policy only goes halfway to ensuring greater rights for citizens. It is the responsibility of the member states to put these policies into practice at the national level. 2014 is a crucial year as the Council of the European Union will lay out strategic guidelines for the



period 2014-2019. Commissioners, including the Commissioner for Justice who will be responsible for continuing the important work that was started under the Stockholm Programme, will be appointed by the Council of the EU and must be approved by the European Parliament after the new parliamentarians arrive in Brussels in July.

2014 also marks the end of a five-year transitional phase for the area of justice following the Treaty of Lisbon. On 1 December 2014, restrictions to judicial control by the European Court of Justice and Commission over police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters will be lifted. This means the European Commission and European Court of Justice will be able to launch and pursue legal infringement proceedings against any EU Member State which has not correctly implemented a directive in the time limit provided. Although member states agree to the adoption of frameworks at the EU level, it is up to each government to implement the directives nationally.

Photo Credit: Victor Casale, CC



From a Quaker perspective there is that of God within every individual.

For example, as of February 2014, fewer than half of EU Member States had implemented the commonly agreed rules for people sentenced or awaiting trial in another country. The European Commission described the lack of implementation as 'regrettable'. The number of EU Member States who have implemented the three frameworks is very low in comparison to directives such as the Water Framework Directive and the Salt Reduction Directive: these have been implemented by almost all member states. The commonly agreed rules for people sentenced or

awaiting trial in another country enable prison sentences, probation decisions or alternative sanctions, and pre-trial supervision measures to be executed. On 1 December, the Commission will be able to begin legal proceedings against the EU Member States that have not yet put these laws into force.

From a Quaker perspective, work in criminal justice to ensure human rights for citizens stems from the deeply held belief that there is that of God in every individual.

The only exception to this rule is the United Kingdom, which has chosen to opt out of approximately 130 EU police and criminal justice measures. The UK negotiated the opt-out clause during the drafting of the Lisbon Treaty. No other EU Member State has chosen to opt out of EU criminal justice measures. The UK's block opt out will represent another landmark for EU criminal justice in 2014 when it comes into force in July. Opting out is not simple: the UK has chosen to opt back into 35 measures that the government considers will serve UK national interests. Europol, the European Union's law enforcement agency, has voiced concerns about the opt out, stating that minimum standard measures in criminal justice are important in terms of 'levelling the playing field for practitioners and eliminating arbitrary distinctions between jurisdictions'. From a Quaker perspective, work in criminal justice to ensure human rights for citizens stems from the deeply held belief that there is that of God in every individual. It is important that all EU Member States work together to ensure these rights.

In 2014 the key actors in EU criminal justice have an opportunity to follow through on the groundwork which has been already been laid down in the last five years. With stronger enforcement mechanisms than ever before, the European Commission should put as much effort into implementing policy as was utilised to adopt it. This will ensure that policy is translated into rights for individuals, which is core to Quaker criminal justice recommendations. At a national level, each member state should work to ensure that EU policy is put into practice effectively and efficiently for the benefit of all EU citizens.

Rebecca Viney-Wood

Are you confused by the complex field of candidates for the European Union elections? You can look online or contact your local parties to find out about the candidates and their views. Websites like www.MyVote2014.eu and www.votewatch.eu/en/votematch.html can help you find the party that is the best fit for your views.



Introducing Our Translation Intern: Anissa Diraa

Anissa joined QCEA in February 2013 as a translator for a 3-month internship as part of her studies.

She is currently completing a Masters in Translation at the Institut Libre Marie Haps and has specialised in European affairs. She is translating political briefs in the field of European affairs.

Anissa came to QCEA to experience the Quaker culture, and to introduce herself to the world of work. She is a Belgian citizen, a native French speaker and fluent in both German and English.



Photo Credit: Gordon Matthews

Anissa Diraa

QUAKER HOUSE NEWS

1 February: Andrew attended the Annual General Meeting of the Quaker Post-Yugoslav Peace Link.

3 February: Alexandra joined other NGOs including EPLO at the annual consultation with the Board of Directors of the European Investment Bank and raised a question on further improving their social and environmental assessments.

11 February: Alexandra participated in a Friends of the Earth seminar on the impact of human use on water, land, carbon, and material ('four footprints').

February 15: Andrew joined the QCEA British Committee meeting in London. The Committee discussed a range of issues including the European elections and the QCEA presence at BYM's Yearly Meeting Gathering.

February 17: Alexandra observed the first-ever hearing on a European Citizen's Initiative (on the right to water).

February 19: Alexandra took part in the AGM of the Human Rights & Democracy Network.

February 22-23: Andrew spoke at the Quakers in Criminal Justice Conference at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre in the UK.

March 1-2: Rebecca and Chris took part in the European Workers Seminar, meeting Programme Assistants from the Quaker United Nations Office and Peaceworkers from Quaker Peace and Social Witness.

March 4: Rebecca and Andrew took part in sessions in the European Parliament on criminal justice, militarism, and the launch of a joint campaign by ecumenical groups.

March 5: Chris put questions directly to decision makers at the Annual Progressive Economic Forum.

March 19: Rebecca attended the Joint Committee Meeting (of national parliaments) on 'Future Priorities in the field of Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs'.

March 23: Alexandra reported on the work of QCEA at the annual meeting of the Dutch 'Friends of Brussels' support group (VVQREA).

March 31: Chris and Alexandra met colleagues from the Quaker United Nations Office to discuss TTIP and international trade.



Becky and Chris (third and fourth from the right) with Quaker Peaceworkers, Brussels, March 2014

Photo Credit: Claire Rodgerson



Call for Action - Tell the Commission What You Think!

The European Union (EU) Commission is currently negotiating a comprehensive new Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the United States of America, known as 'The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership' or simply TTIP.



Currently, negotiators are planning to include an Investor-State Dispute Settlement clause, or ISDS, which would allow corporate organisations to take legal actions against governments in international arbitration courts over legislation that damages, or even just potentially damages, corporate profit.



This ISDS could have a significant negative impact on the well-being of citizens on both sides of the Atlantic through a weakening of democratic institutions. On 27th March 2014 the EU Commission opened a public consultation on ISDS, asking citizens to put forward their opinions within the next three months. QCEA will be putting in submissions, and those signed up to our action alerts will receive our submission which you can use it to form your own response to the questions.

You can:

***Submit a response directly to the European Commission**
<http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/ipm/forms/dispatch?form=ISDS>

***Sign up for QCEA action alerts to receive this and other calls to action on topics of your choice**
(see <http://www.qcea.org/home/involved/action-alerts/> or write to Gordon at office@qcea.org)

***Read more about ISDS on the QCEA blog on**
<http://qceablog.wordpress.com/category/economic-justice/>

Visit our blog at www.QCEAblog.wordpress.com for recent articles on:

*Combating Discrimination in Europe
Climate Change and Energy Use
Israel's Obligations as an Occupying Power
Targeted action needed to tackle racism in European policing?
An Unnecessary Tradition - The Origins of Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS)*



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