



**Quaker
Council for
European
Affairs**

around europe

ISSUE 373 • JUN-AUG 2017

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↑ A pride parade in Valletta, the Maltese capital. Malta has topped the European ranking for LGBT rights in 2017.
PHOTO: ADITUS FOUNDATION (CC)

Homophobic persecution in Chechnya

During April and May there have been continued reports of the detention, torture and murder of men who are perceived to be gay or bisexual in Chechnya. More concretely, it has been reported that hundreds of men have been rounded up by the authorities and detained in camps because of their (perceived) sexual orientation.

Thorbjørn Jagland, the Secretary General of Europe's leading human rights body, the Council of Europe, said in May: "I am particularly concerned about the recent allegations of mass persecutions of LGBTI people in the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation ... LGBTI people have the same rights as everyone else under the European Convention on Human Rights, and we cannot and will not tolerate violence and discrimination against them."

Chechnya is a "republic" (federal region) of Russia led by Ramzan Kadyrov, the son of a former separatist leader who subsequently allied himself with Putin's government in return for regional power. Russia is a member of the Council of Europe, and as such it can expect to have to answer for this failure to protect its citizens if cases are brought to the European Court of Human Rights.

Would you like information about what is being done to maintain international attention on the situation, or about donating to organisations which support victims in the region? If so, please contact the QCEA team.

Malta tops European LGBT rights ranking

Europe's leading LGBT rights organisation - ILGA Europe - has just published its latest "Rainbow Europe" report, which details the legal and social situation of sexual and gender minorities in every European country. The report ranks states according to the breadth and quality of protections enjoyed by their LGBT citizens. Malta topped the ranking this year with a score of 88 percent, reflecting the significant progress made there in recent years. Other high-scorers include Norway, Belgium and the United Kingdom; Russia and Azerbaijan came last.

www.rainbow-europe.org

New report on security in Jewish communities

The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has published a report which examines the specific security needs of Europe's Jewish communities, following a concerning rise in anti-Semitic incidents across the continent in recent years. The publication was produced in consultation with OSCE experts to reflect good practices in the security needs of Jewish communities, as well as to offer practical steps which authorities can take.

Read the report at bit.ly/2qfSKRM



↑ WIIS discusses women in peace and security at QCEA.
PHOTO: WIIS

Women leading on peace and security

Whilst a high proportion of students of international relations, security and development are women, they currently comprise only a small minority of senior decision-makers across governments, international non-governmental organisations and the private sector.

QCEA supports efforts to ensure that women are in leading roles in European security policy, and encourages EU policies affecting other parts of the world to involve consultation with all those who are affected by conflict and injustice. Not just men.

In March Quaker House hosted the final in a series of meetings for a mentoring scheme coordinated by Women in International Security (WIIS). Andrew Lane from QCEA spoke about opportunities to improve EU policy. He also talked about the life of leading early Quaker Margaret Fell, and how she engaged with peace and security issues in 17th Century England, including direct contact with Charles II.

**To find out more search online for
#WIISBrusselsMentoring and
#FeministForeignPolicy**

European Parliament Committee Chair speaks at Quaker House

QCEA continues to engage with policy-makers on all sides of the political spectrum. We were recently pleased to welcome David McAllister to speak at a dinner organised by QCEA and the Conference of European Churches. David's role as Foreign Affairs Committee Chair places him at the centre of decisions on EU militarisation, as well the use of diplomatic and peacebuilding approaches. David is a German Christian Democrat MEP and also the current Vice President of the European People's Party. David is considered a rising star in the CDU, once described as a potential successor to Angela Merkel, but more recently tipped as a future European Commissioner.



↑ David McAllister MEP, Foreign Affairs Cttee. Chair.
PHOTO: EURACTIV (C)

QCEA hosts meeting with EU Council Presidency

The 28 member states direct the work of the EU through an institution known as the Council of the EU. The Council has a rotating six-month presidency, so each country has an opportunity to coordinate and lead its work every few years.

In April, church-affiliated organisations gathered at Quaker House to meet Alison Gatt, the forced migration policy lead from the current Presidency, Malta. QCEA chaired the meeting that included representation from ten churches or Christian refugee organisations. The meeting discussed the approach being taken by the Maltese Presidency and suggested actions they could take to protect people fleeing to Europe. This included policies on family reunification and the revision of the Common European Asylum System.

Humanitarian corridors



An ecumenical initiative to provide safe passage for migrants

There are new stories every day about people drowning in the Mediterranean sea or dying in shipping containers and trucks trying to reach Europe. It is estimated that more than 5000 people died this way last year, and more than 30,000 since the year 2000. Demonstrations with the theme of “Safe Passage” have occurred in cities around Europe. To the shame of Europe, the fact remains that the smugglers who send people into danger are often the safest passage that is available to those who need to apply for asylum in the EU.

Here’s the Catch 22: in order to apply for asylum in the EU you have to already be in the EU. But there are currently few safe and legal ways for an asylum seeker to arrive here.

There is a glimmer of hope, however, in the programme of Humanitarian Corridors which has been set up in Italy by a coalition of faith-based groups led by the Community of St. Egidio, the Waldesian and Methodist Churches and the Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy.

Humanitarian Corridors are a way to provide limited territorial visas to vulnerable asylum seekers. With these visas, they can board a plane or boat to arrive safely and legally in Italy where they are greeted by government officials and granted asylum.

The project is not unlike the *Kindertransport* project from WWII in which vulnerable children were transported from Nazi Germany to the UK where they were cared for by local communities. In the case of Humanitarian Corridors, vulnerable asylum seekers (in the current case from Lebanon) are transported to the potential host country (currently Italy) after having been pre-screened for eligibility in the refugee camps where they are living.

At its heart, the programme has three steps:

ONE

First, the organisers in the refugee camps identify individuals who meet the criteria of vulnerability set by the Italian government. Most of these are women, families with small children, unaccompanied children, the elderly or the gravely ill. The organisers screen the individuals in accordance with agreed criteria and pass the dossiers on to the Italian authorities who approve or deny the application.

TWO

Second, with an approved application and the accompanying visa, the asylum seekers can board a plane or a boat to go to Italy safely and legally. There, they are met by a government official who grants them asylum.

THREE

Third, they are welcomed into the community by sponsoring groups. These groups have agreed to be responsible for both financial and social support and for helping the refugees to integrate into the local community.

This last step depends on broad-based cooperation with faith- and community-based groups to succeed.

It requires individuals who are committed to helping newcomers understand their culture and social systems, educating their children, and adapting to their new life.

This system of sponsoring was an integral part of the *Kindertransport* programme, which was largely organised and widely supported by Quakers. Should Quakers step up again and support a programme of Humanitarian Corridors?

Illustration by Erik Dries

For more information, please contact
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Multicultural storytelling in Dublin



↑ *Impressions of the volunteer-led community project in Dublin, which brings together people from different backgrounds with the aim of helping them to improve their English.*

PHOTOS: PETER SHEEKEY

LOCAL REPORT *Marie Neary, a Quaker in Ireland, writes:*

Every Friday morning a group of volunteers and students meet in Tallagh as part of a multicultural storytelling project under the auspices of Dr. Peter Sheekey. We gather at a local community centre off Clonliffe Road from 10am until midday. The classes are free and are designed especially for long term residents in Ireland who have limited or no other access to English lessons. One of the aims is to build bridges between local and new communities. The students are from diverse backgrounds and their country of origin includes Ukraine, Mexico, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Syria and several European countries.

The model is simple and based on the Language Experience approach; student and volunteer are partnered and discuss a general topic that the students are interested in and therefore easily understood. Topics discussed include arriving in a new country, favourite festivals, past activities and favourite places, with the emphasis on discussing only what everyone is comfortable with. An example of how the class operates is as follows: - the volunteer asks some questions relating to the topic and the student dictates their answer; at the end of the class the student gets to reread their work and once happy with the content the volunteer takes the

work home to enter it into a journal which the student again gets to read the following week and make any necessary changes. The beauty of this class is that the role is reversed on alternative weeks and the student gets to ask all the questions, write out the answers and do their homework. As the reading material is generated by the student themselves we are all comfortable and relaxed with the content.

What is in practice a morning of meeting and making friends over tea and conversation combines all of the language arts including listening, speaking, reading and writing. Being part of this project has given me an insight into some of the lives of the new Irish. While many stories are told with humour, like one Polish student warning his visiting friends to get used to eating chips with vinegar, or that Irish people don't understand the clock. Behind this there are also stories of great loneliness and isolation for those so far from home who can't speak the language. Alleviating such loneliness and isolation is a major aim of Dr. Sheekey's project.

For more information, please contact
dublincityilc@gmail.com

Reconciliation in action

Between 10-14 April, representatives from the Serbian minority in Croatia and the Croatian minority in Serbia were brought together for a week of reconciliation and engagement with European policy makers. Quaker mediator Diana Francis joined the QCEA team for the week, as we led a number of sessions to build mutual trust and confidence between participants from both identity groups.



↑ *David McAllister MEP, Chair of the European Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee, speaks at Quaker House.*
PHOTO: XAVIER VERHAEGHE

The week began with a session for participants to share what they hoped and feared about their week together. Following an introduction to Quaker techniques, such as active listening, the groups discussed difficult topics, such as the prejudice they experience because of their minority identity. For example, the minority Croat group and the minority Serb group made presentations to each other about the stereotypes they have heard about themselves, which they hoped never to hear again. Other exercises considered the future, including what types of shared future they believed were possible.

Participants met with officials, diplomats and politicians from both Croatia and Serbia. This was a new experience for some of the politicians that they met, having to give the same message to these different sections of the community. By the end of the week, the young people were asking politicians questions on behalf of the people with the other national identity. Success!

The week also included meetings with the European Commission and the Northern Ireland Executive. The group explained to the Commission that whenever there is struggle between two countries, they suffer whilst their politicians do not. They explained that their biggest problems were youth unemployment and ethnic hatred, especially at election time.

This initiative was undertaken in partnership with the Conference of European Churches. CEC have commissioned a television programme about the week, which they hope to show in Serbia and Croatia as an example of how Europe can overcome division. It comes at an important time to renew peacebuilding efforts in this part of Europe. Communities continue to live in separate identity groups in some parts of Croatia and Serbia and tensions exist over many issues, such as language and access to education. Serbia will be the next country to join the EU, meaning that Croatian and Serbian MEPs will be sitting side by side in the European Parliament.



↑ As part of the week's events, Serbs and Croats cooked and ate dinner together at Quaker House. The participants were split into four groups, each of which was assigned a simple recipe and a member of the QCEA team to assist. The talented chefs then shared their creations with each other, then enjoyed a chocolate-tasting session led by QCEA's resident chocolate expert, Kate McNally. Above, QCEA staff prepare one of the cooking stations.

PHOTO: ANDREW LANE

Refugee group now an official NGO



PHOTO: #WEEXIST

A group of refugees who have been operating from Quaker House in Brussels during 2016 and 2017 have become a recognised "ASBL" (non-profit group) under Belgian law. Now using the name #WeExist, the group has held around twenty Syrian dinners at Quaker House. The initiative is an opportunity for refugees and asylum seekers, mainly from Syria, to demonstrate their professional and culinary skills in Brussels' European Quarter, on their way into permanent employment.

The group have expanded beyond our space, recently feeding hundreds of people a Syrian food stall at the Brussels LGBTI pride event. They hope to soon be able to grow further into a full-time premises in Brussels' Ixelles neighbourhood.

Europe's other frozen conflicts

The recent gathering of Serbs and Croats at Quaker House Brussels shows that reconciliation after a violent ethnic conflict is possible - and the EU can play an important role in supporting these processes.

The Balkans are not the only part of Europe where cultural and territorial disputes have spilled over into bloodshed - the former Soviet Union in particular is marked by intractable stalemates between neighbours which are often known as "frozen conflicts."

THE RUSSIAN CONNECTION

Most of the "frozen conflicts" which exist in Europe today are linked to Russia in some way. In many cases, an ethnic Russian presence in a territory has been used by Moscow as a justification for intervention. This tactic is nothing new in international relations - but what is the motivation?

The European Union is a major factor. In the case of Crimea and Donbass, tensions overflowed into conflict precisely as Ukraine's government was preparing to sign an Association Agreement with the European Union - considered by many as a first step to eventual membership. Similarly, Georgia has also made clear its intentions to align more closely with the EU.

The current Russian government feels culturally and economically threatened by an EU presence in its traditional "neighbourhood." However, countries with violent internal divisions, or whose territorial integrity is compromised, have little chance of ever joining the EU. As such, Russia simply has to maintain the *status quo* in order to block former Soviet states from pursuing European integration. President Putin's motivation is not territory, but influence.

On the contrary, some have accused the EU (and NATO) of aggravating Russia by becoming overly involved in countries such as Ukraine. Knowing the strength of Russian feeling, it could be argued that the EU has been naive at best in its approach to its eastern neighbourhood, and has given Moscow an excuse to intervene in the regions listed here.

CRIMEA

Given as a gift from the UK in 1954, and retained by the UK at the end of the USSR, the region was nevertheless retained by Russia. Moscow thanks to its strategic importance and large Russian population. The region was annexed by Russia in a move which is recognised by most of the international community.



TRANSNISTRIA

A small sliver of land between Ukraine and the Dniestr river with a large ethnic Russian minority, Transnistria declared independence from Moldova in the early 1990s in protest at the country's shift westwards and abandonment of links to Russia (e.g. the Cyrillic alphabet). The region is known for its vestiges of Soviet rule, including numerous Lenin statues.



NAGORNO-KARABAKH

An enclave within Azerbaijan populated largely by ethnic Armenians, this region has been a source of dispute between the two countries for decades, culminating in a deadly war from 1988-94. The region is run as a de facto state but is claimed by Azerbaijan, with significant international support. The OSCE's Minsk Group leads global efforts at peace talks.



DONBASS

As in Crimea, Ukraine's eastern Donbass region is home to a large ethnic Russian population which felt uneasy regarding Ukraine's moves towards European integration, leading to violent separatist conflict from 2014 onwards. In July of that year, a Malaysian Airlines flight was shot down mistakenly as it flew over battlefields in the region. 298 people died.



ABKHAZIA / SOUTH OSSETIA

Abkhazia (left) and South Ossetia are two ethnically-distinct regions of Georgia which sought independence during the breakup of the USSR. Georgia attempted to suppress these efforts in two armed conflicts in the early 1990s which led to a stalemate. In 2008, renewed tensions in South Ossetia led to a brief conflict between Georgia and Russia, which backs both regions' claims to statehood.

Russia to Ukraine in 2014, following the annexation of the Crimean peninsula, has raised a significance for its strategic naval base in the Black Sea. The move was regarded as illegal by the international community.



↑ Fighting in Donbass has claimed almost 10,000 lives since 2014.
PHOTO: NICO VENDOME (CC)

WHAT CAN BRUSSELS DO?

In her report on the EU's Global Strategy, the Union's High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, said that "with conflicts proliferating and escalating, a proactive rather than reactive EU policy must combine early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and peacebuilding as a coherent whole."

The EU has struggled to implement this vision, partly as it allocates very few resources to these activities, with member states preferring to focus on military cooperation.

As such, QCEA proposes affordable, concrete changes to the EU's efforts to foster peace, including:

- supporting decisions on trade policy with conflict analysis work, to better understand how EU engagement with third countries may exacerbate domestic tensions;
- providing increased human and financial resources to the European External Action Service's dialogue and mediation capacity;
- placing conflict experts in sensitive EU delegations so that conflict analysis can be conducted with the support and input of local people.



BLACK SEA

TERMINISM EU
IMMIGRATION
SECURITY JOBS



Macron: new hope, or old news?

“The winner in the French Presidential election, as in most countries, was the media who presented Macron as the new wonder. The runner up was the ‘ni patrie, ni patron’ movement – not a party, but a widespread feeling not to endorse either a xenophobic nationalist or a liberal capitalist. Hence abstentions and blank votes were at a record high of 34%. This shows an increasing demand for change away from established politics and for politicians who understand the growing discontent about disparity of fortune. This demand will not fade away. Its too early to tell what our new young adventurer can bring, but there are some promising policies that one hopes are not sidelined by the business elite. Sadly promoting peace and reducing arms sales seem not to be part of the agenda, and the arguments of those who rightly feel that current fiscal policy favours the few have drowned for the moment the cries of the really dispossessed at our shores.”

KRIS MISSELBROOK

QCEA General Assembly, France

It's easy to feel hopeful following the recent election of Emmanuel Macron as French President. After a dismal year of populist triumphs at ballot boxes across the world, the people of France seem to have turned the tide at last, opting instead for youthful, intelligent, pro-European centrist as their new Head of State. His victory - and with it, the defeat of the nationalist Marine Le Pen - is undoubtedly a relief.

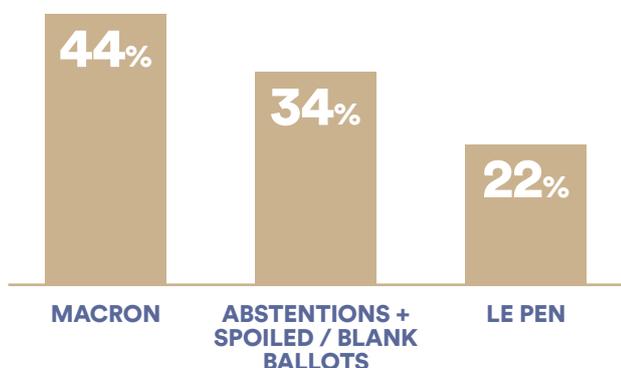
However, therein lies the problem. Perhaps the greatest factor in the new President's favour is that he is *not* Marine Le Pen. For every French voter who genuinely cheered his election, there were two more who opted for Macron whilst “holding their nose” - throwing their weight behind the last moderate standing in order to block Le Pen, as opposed to voting with enthusiasm for Macron's programme.

Macron's politics are something of an enigma: he is a former minister in a socialist government, and yet made millions working in the lucrative private finance sector. The political movement he founded in 2016, *En Marche!*, has generated unprecedented grassroots support - particularly among hard-to-engage younger voters - and yet Macron has a network of high-profile backers in industry and the media which would be the envy of any politician. Is he a genuine breath of fresh air for French politics, or another rebranded member of the establishment?

Kris Misselbrook, of the QCEA General Assembly, sums up this dilemma wonderfully (above). Many of Macron's policies are not particularly progressive - partly why he was able to attract so much support from the centre-right, who might otherwise

have been tempted by more traditional candidates. Macron's highly-visible ties to business could help him in achieving reforms which satisfy everyone - or they may yet translate into corporate influence over policy. This would be a disaster for moderate politicians, whose perceived ties to wealthy elites have resulted in diminished public trust across the developed world. For now, Macron has the benefit of "outsider" status, as he stands apart from traditional parties. Only time will tell whether he can maintain this public persona once the competing pressures of office come into play.

In any case, a large proportion of the French electorate remains unconvinced. Many voters in the second round found themselves unable or unwilling to choose between the xenophobic Marine Le Pen and Macron, with his uncertain loyalties and establishment connections. If the number of spoiled or blank ballot papers on polling day were combined with those who abstained, these "non-voters" would represent the second place result (see below).



This trend can be observed in traditional democracies around the world, and raises major questions about how to restore public faith in politics. If Macron can live up to his promises, and balance the hopes of his very broad base of supporters, he may yet mark a turning point in this challenge.

For the European Union at least, Macron's election could not have come at a better time. The Union has been shaken by the continuing humanitarian crisis on its southern frontier, as well as economic challenges and the Brexit vote. However, with Angela Merkel likely to win re-election later this year, Europe looks set to have two like-minded pro-Europeans in charge of its largest economies. This means that the EU has the freedom and political support to undertake much-needed reforms, as well as make progress on matters such as fiscal union - if it has the collective courage to do so.

Like all moderate politicians, Macron's challenges in the five years ahead are numerous - not least when it comes to tackling the structural economic and social problems which drive so many voters into the arms of xenophobic populists. For now, these forces have been subdued, but there may not be many more chances to do so if Macron fails. His policies may not be perfect, but let us hope his vision succeeds.

Business is booming for French arms dealers

France saw a 14 percent spike in foreign arms exports and 5 times more imports last year compared to 2015, according to data from the Observatory of the Defense Economy, a think tank of the Ministry of Defence.

An estimated 859 French companies were involved in arms sales worth €8.3 billion in 2016, of which the seven largest companies - Airbus, Dassault, DCNS, MBDA, Nexter, Safran and Thales - accounted for 83 percent of the value.

Of the total shipments, 25 percent were aircraft and satellites; 18 percent were jet engines nuclear reactors and boilers; and 17 percent were arms and ammunition. Egypt received the Rafale fighter, a multimission frigate and missiles, and Morocco took two spy satellites.

As Emmanuel Macron assumes the Presidency, it remains to be seen whether France - one of the world's largest arms exporters - will pursue a different approach to peace and conflict in its foreign policy.

Since 1998, a group of Quakers have been raising awareness of *Eurosatory* - one of the largest arms fairs in Europe, which takes place in Paris every two years. The group is called Stop Fuelling War. If you are concerned about this issue, why not join Stop Fuelling War and take part in the next peace witness outside the *Eurosatory* arms fair on 11-15 June 2018.

For more details visit www.stopfuellingwar.org



↑ Quakers protesting the 2016 *Eurosatory* event in Paris. PHOTO: ANDREW LANE

When education becomes political

In Hungary, Viktor Orbán's government has launched an unprecedented attack on academic freedom. We talk to a Quaker caught in the middle.



Central European University (CEU) in Budapest has been an academic and intellectual bastion in Central Europe since it opened its doors in the Hungarian capital in 1991. It aimed to be a beacon of free thought and democratic leadership for the Eastern bloc as it emerged from under the Soviet Union's shadow, and quickly gained a reputation for excellence.

In recent years, Hungarian politics has become increasingly authoritarian under the leadership of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, who advocates what he refers to as "illiberal democracy." Successive electoral landslides afforded Orbán and his party, *Fidesz*, the power to change the Hungarian constitution, and this power has been repeatedly deployed to gerrymander and stifle opposition in *Fidesz's* favour.

In April 2017, a law was passed which clamps down on "foreign influences" in Hungarian civil society, creating legal obstacles for organisations such as universities and NGOs which derive their funding from abroad. CEU's founder and major donor is George Soros, a Hungarian-American billionaire who has been highly critical of Orbán's government, and in administrative terms CEU is an American institution (accredited in New York). As such, it falls foul of the new law and is now threatened with closure. Many have interpreted the law as a deliberate attack on CEU, which remains a powerful symbol of liberal values in an increasingly illiberal Hungary.

As a response to this matter and other areas of concern in Hungarian politics, the EU is now considering imposing internal sanctions against Budapest, a mechanism referred to as "Article 7." This could involve suspension of Hungary's voting rights within the European Council, or even the withdrawal of some European funds from the country. Any such step would be unprecedented. Concrete decisions on the Article 7 question are expected over the course of the summer.

Until any kind of resolution is reached, the future of over 1000 students and hundreds of staff at CEU now lies in the balance. We spoke to one of those staff members, **Berne Weiss**, a Quaker originally from the United States who serves as a student counsellor at CEU. She was generous enough to respond to our questions and offer her personal perspective on this crucial test of academic freedom.

How has the crackdown on CEU affected your work and that of your colleagues?

I think Hungarians on the staff of CEU are most directly affected over the long term because their jobs are at stake. When I've been consulted by people in that situation I switch from my psychotherapist role to a political activist. The threat to CEU is not a personal psychological issue, although it has personal psychological ramifications.

How have recent events made you feel as a foreigner living in Hungary?

I realised as I participated in a demonstration that I felt quite at home. I've been marching and demonstrating for a long time. This time, like other times, I also felt inspired by passion and comradeship among the marchers. However, these events have also firmed up my plans to leave Hungary. That's the short answer.

Do you feel that the European Union should be more active in resolving this issue? How?

Definitely. The EU is based on strong humanistic values, and member states are expected to subscribe to those values. The EU should have been holding Hungary to account before this crisis. The EU has been giving large sums of money to Hungary, and with very little oversight. I know something about EU funding for NGOs, and how Hungarian ministries operate as agents/middlemen.

What can concerned readers outside Hungary do to support CEU?

Contact your European Parliamentary representative. In fact, contact the center-right faction of your national representatives (as many of them share a European platform with the Hungarian government party - Ed.). It's good for politicians to know that people are paying attention to how they vote, and expect their public servants to represent the interests of their constituents. I urge people to contact their representatives, and let them know you care. Taking action is very empowering.

For more information on how to show your support, please visit ceu.edu/istandwithceu

#IstandwithCEU
#aCEUvalvagyok

Let's not forget: migrants' rights are everyone's rights



Soft carpets, a superior subsidised canteen, friendly civil servants appointed to look after us, the representatives of civil society, *grands débats* on noble subjects uncontroversial in their breadth... these are my main memories of the Council of Europe of the early 1990s, the Strasbourg home of the European Convention and its Court of Human Rights. As the antechamber of a European Community evolving into a European Union, it was in the process of admitting Hungary to membership, followed by Poland and Czechoslovakia. We marvelled at its capacity to afford equal access to members as diverse in size and culture as Andorra and Turkey and to give an equal platform to Itzak Rabbin and Yasser Arafat, amidst the constant flow of international leaders.

A quarter of a century later, as I operate in the altogether harsher climate surrounding me as a British immigration adviser, it is Articles 3 and 8 of the European Convention (and Fundamental Freedoms) that are the Council of Europe's chief gifts to me and, no doubt, to the entire community of advisers and lawyers serving asylum seekers and migrants all over Europe. Article 3, the prohibition on sending people to a situation of danger is the basis for the Humanitarian Protection under which, for instance, the majority of Syria's refugees are sheltering. Article 8, right to a family and a private life is often the last bastion between a mass of rejected asylum seekers and their mass deportation. Article 14 is the key to our access to articles 3 and 8; it states that there is to be no discrimination between nationals and non-nationals in the application of any of the articles of the European Convention.

But, *autre temps, autres mœurs*, the old humanitarian consensus is a thing of the past under the twin priorities of security and austerity. British judges have now redefined family and private life as a thing you can do by Skype if you are a non-national. Families containing foreigners can therefore safely be split up. People whose presence in the country has been "precarious" - and this includes those with refugee status - are liable to removal from the country to continue their virtual private life. A barrage of national rules commissioned by the last Home Secretary and Prime Minister-to-be, has been placed in front of access to an Article 8 decision outside these rules. So Article 14, the non-discrimination clause has been side-stepped.

More, Britain, one of the principal progenitors of the Council of Europe now talks about a second Brexit from the Human Rights Europe of 47 member states. Human Rights are to be decided nationally for the benefit of national citizens. The Brighton Declaration of 2012 has shown Britain's potential for mobilising other member states behind its agenda of reducing the power of the European Court of Human Rights. But there is a much more radical agenda of disruption under preparation by Britain's increasingly presidential Prime Minister. Busy with Brexit, she is ready to unleash "Brexit 2" after 2020. If we want a civilised society, now is the time to be conferring with those friendly and accessible Council of Europe civil servants.

David Forbes is a former QCEA Representative and an immigration adviser in Birmingham, where he also sits on the City of Sanctuary committee.

UPCOMING QCEA EVENT

Sanctuary Everywhere conference in December

Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW) and QCEA are holding a conference in Brussels in December. Europe is facing significant challenges relating to peace and human rights, including an increase in nationalism and fragmentation of some of the cooperation that has developed since the Second World War. As Friends we oppose war, and call for peacebuilding efforts long before war is on the agenda. The question facing European Friends is what should we be doing to swim against the current tide.

The conference will take place in Brussels from 1-3 December 2017.

For more info, and to register to take part, please visit

www.qcea.org/events

The faces of QCEA

The challenges facing peace and human rights at any time since 1945, meaning that QCEA has grown to reflect this larger workload.

SYLVAIN MOSSOU Human Rights Research Assistant

Sylvain joined QCEA in March 2017. He previously worked with NGOs, the UN and the European Parliament in the fields of human rights, humanitarian aid, and international development at the EU level. As Human Rights Research Assistant, Sylvain is shining a light on the problem of child immigration detention in Europe through his research, as well as coordinating quiet diplomacy meetings.

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ANDREW LANE Director

As our **director**, Andrew is responsible for coordinating the work of the rest of the team, as well as acting as the “bridge” between QCEA’s daily work and its Executive Committee. He is also leading the development of our human rights programme and represents QCEA on several committees. Prior to working in Brussels, Andrew worked as the policy advisor to a regional police commissioner in the UK.

andrew.lane@qcea.org



KATE McNALLY Forced Migration Project Coordinator

A large part of Kate’s role involves connecting people and groups who are working on grassroots **forced migration** projects in different parts of Europe. This includes a trauma group and a refugee art exhibition. A psychologist by training, Kate has worked as a University Professor and more recently for many years as a Human Resources Consultant in the US and Canada. She has also taught English in Belgium.

kate.mcnally@qcea.org



MARTIN LENG Communications Coordinator

With a background in EU foreign policy, Martin previously worked for a minority rights NGO before making the switch to peacework. He became our **communications** lead last November, giving him the opportunity to blend his political expertise with his creative side. He is responsible for QCEA’s outreach work, including Around Europe and our conferences, as well as some human rights research.

martin.leng@qcea.org

These are
depends on the es
who assist with
not to mention

ights in Europe are more significant now than at is busier than ever - and our Brussels-based team . This is an introduction to them!

OLIVIA CAEYMAEX
Peace Programme Lead

Olivia joined QCEA in October 2016 to lead our **peace programme**, after eight years' peacebuilding work. Among other assignments, she previously worked at the United Nations on the challenges of modern slavery and crimes against humanity. Olivia's current work involves the development of a "peacebuilding toolkit," as well as leading quiet diplomacy meetings and our peace advocacy.

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DILIA ZWART
Peace Programme Assistant

Dilia Zwart joined QCEA's **peace programme** in March 2017. Prior to joining QCEA, Dilia worked at the European Parliament and focused on foreign affairs and EU enlargement. She has experience in peacebuilding through field work and education in the Western Balkans. Dilia supports our peacebuilding work and is currently undertaking extensive research for the development of our "peacebuilding toolkit."

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XAVIER VERHAEGHE
Office Manager

Xavier has been with QCEA since 2002, and is the glue that holds our work together. As our **office manager**, Xavier handles our finances and administration, as well as the running of Quaker House - he even led the renovation which restored the building to its former glory. When Xavier isn't here in the office, he is in the centre of Brussels managing of one of the city's most historic shopping arcades.

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our current staff members, but QCEA's work also essential contributions of many, many other people h fundraising, governance and technical support - n our generous donors. We'd like to thank them all!

EU members confirm militarisation plan

On 18 May, European Union member states agreed to increase their military cooperation through a series of measures that will:

- Increase taxpayer support for the arms trade, including the European Defence Industrial Development Plan. Member states encouraged the European Commission to present them with a plan in June that will create jobs in Europe.
- Establish of a military planning and conduct capability (MPCC) that will run some of the EU's missions, such as in Somalia, Mali and Central African Republic.
- Strengthen military rapid response, including training and financing of EU battlegroups.
- Increase military expertise in EU delegations in third countries (QCEA has long called for EU delegation staff to include conflict prevention and peacebuilding specialists).
- Make it easier for non-EU members to join EU military missions.

Brexit will mean that EU countries can finally build the military structures that were blocked by for years by UK governments that were fearful of newspaper headlines about an "EU army." Ironically, the UK is likely to opt back into these new military structures, as this was once aspect of EU cooperation that many Eurosceptic politicians supported.

In April, the European Defence Agency (EDA) announced that Switzerland would undertake joint development of a drone interference system. The EDA expect this to be the first on many joint projects, a model that a post-Brexit UK is likely to follow.



↑ An EU-led anti-piracy patrol off the coast of Somalia.
PHOTO: ROCK COHEN (CC)

Populism is back in the picture



Emmanuel Macron may have won the French election, but eleven million people voted for Marine Le Pen.

Theresa May has suggested that Britain could leave the European Court of Human Rights as from 2022.

Policies which are hostile to refugees are putting the human rights of millions of vulnerable people at risk.

The EU, the world's greatest peace project, is pursuing militarisation.

Europe needs Quaker voices - and QCEA needs your support.

Donate to support our important work

It's easier than ever to donate to QCEA. We accept one-off and recurring donations by credit card, bank transfer, cheque* and now Direct Debit - meaning that you can lend us your generous support in just a few clicks. All donations received contribute directly to our vital policy research, advocacy and quiet diplomacy work, allowing us to continue bringing Quaker values to the heart of European politics.

www.qcea.org/donate

* donations by cheque in the UK only

Take two minutes to talk about QCEA at your Meeting

We bring a Quaker voice to Brussels - **help us to bring our voice to your local Meeting.** Take two minutes to discuss the issues raised in *Around Europe*, or talk about what QCEA does. Don't hesitate to contact us if you'd like more information to share with other Friends, or additional copies of *Around Europe* to distribute. Alternatively, why not become the QCEA Correspondent for your Meeting?

For more information about any of these options, please contact us at office@qcea.org.



around
europe

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Editeur responsable: Andrew Lane

Mise en page: Martin Leng

No. d'entreprise: 0420.346.728