



Quaker
Council for
European
Affairs

around
europe

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This December, Friends from across Europe will come together to explore how we can create Sanctuary Everywhere. Join us.

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↑ *Angela Merkel enjoys a recent campaign event in Bavaria. The Chancellor has secured an historic fourth term.*
PHOTO: EPA (C)

For migration policy, German elections anything but certain

With a large and consistent lead in opinion polling, it was perhaps little surprise that German Chancellor Angela Merkel won an historic fourth term in office this September. But her reduced majority, as well as the significant success of right-wing populists, raises questions for the future of Germany's refugee policy.

Alternative für Deutschland, a new party which ran a vocally anti-Islam and Eurosceptic campaign, has caused an establishment upset by coming third. Its 13% vote-share is the largest achieved by a far-right party in Germany for decades, and will translate to almost 100 seats in the Bundestag. Although the party will not enter government, its increased influence will surely have a chilling effect on German refugee policy – one of Europe's most welcoming.

A resurgent FDP (liberal party), which looks set to become a junior coalition partner, has recently floated the idea of establishing migrant processing facilities in Africa, in an attempt to "push back" Europe's border and stop perceived economic migrants from ever reaching the Mediterranean. This proposal has been criticised as it would make it more difficult for vulnerable people to flee persecution or conflict.

Negotiations over a coalition will take time, although the most likely outcome is an alliance between Merkel's CDU/CSU, the Greens and the FDP. The social democrats, led by former European Parliament President Martin Schulz, fared badly in the elections and have ruled themselves out of government.

European Parliament votes for Saudi arms embargo

The European Parliament recently voted in favour of a resolution which would seek to ban arms sales to Saudi Arabia in light of its ongoing military action in Yemen. The non-binding resolution, the second in less than two years, is aimed primarily at putting pressure on EU member states who continue to sell vast amounts of weaponry to the Gulf kingdom, despite the 13,000 civilian deaths which have resulted from its bombardment of Yemen since 2015.

The United Kingdom alone sells more than £3bn of arms to Saudi Arabia per year. The previous resolution in the Parliament was passed despite efforts to block it by the ECR political group, which is led by MEPs from Britain's Conservative Party.

OSCE to publish new standards for penal treatment

In November, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) will be publishing a major update to its guidelines on the treatment of prisoners. The document has been designed to help justice departments and prison officials better implement the so-called "Nelson Mandela Rules," which were adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015. The updated guidelines are the result of a two-year joint project with Penal Reform International, with the aim being to help states effectively implement humane penal standards.

Understanding the ECHR

The European Convention on Human Rights, and its associated Court, have played a vital role in defending human rights across Europe for over sixty years. However, this institution is little understood, and has recently been the target of criticism from right-wing populists across the continent. Who could forget the “scandal” over prisoner voting rights in the United Kingdom?

QCEA have produced an easy-to-understand brochure which explains the workings of the ECHR and why it is now more important than ever given the concerning trends in European political discourse. The brochure is a useful reminder of just how vital this “common endeavour” really is, and equips you with the information you need to speak up in its favour in the future.

Read the brochure at bit.ly/2vpMD2W



QCEA publishes new report on child immigration detention

European countries have reacted to the political challenge of migration by adopting approaches which aim to substantially reduce the number of migrants entering Europe and increase the number of people returned. However, there is widespread concern that human rights and refugee protection standards are being undermined in the process. One of those concerns is the use of detention, including detention of children.

In this context, QCEA has published a report which explores aspects of child immigration detention in Europe. After briefly describing the legal framework and standards at international and European levels, the report gives an overview of the situation in Europe by addressing three main questions: How many children are detained in the context of migration? Which laws and policies regulate the practice, and what are the existing alternatives to child immigration detention? The report also discusses the impacts of detention, giving special attention to the different impacts on girls and boys in detention.

The report formed the basis of QCEA's advocacy on this issue in September, including meetings with the EU's Fundamental Rights Agency and the Council of Europe's Special Representative on Migration. Read it at bit.ly/2xt9BqU

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contact martin.leng@qcea.org

New peace and security calendar launched

For those working in European affairs, one of the hardest tasks is simply keeping track of the myriad events and happenings taking place every week. For people working in peace and security, at least, that job just got a little easier.

As part of QCEA's Peace Programme, we've launched an online calendar which keeps track of relevant dates in the Brussels calendar for those working towards a more peaceful world. This includes everything from institutional meetings to policy events. The aim is to help make advocacy more effective and more joined-up, and to make QCEA an even more valued resource in the process.

You can find out more about our Peace Programme on the following pages – and you can consult our innovative calendar tool on the Peace section of our website.

placing soft power at the centre of politics

Rhetoric and decisions regarding European cooperation continue to be shaped by the European Global Strategy (EUGS), which envisions security as the cornerstone of European identity. One year after its launch in June 2016, the advancement in European defence was praised in the EUGS progress report. In September, Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker's State of the Union Address envisioned, amongst other things, a future Defence Union. While EU leaders have emphasized that cooperation spans many sectors, the focus on military defence has sidelined many 'soft power' alternatives. The QCEA peace programme is dedicated to bringing 'soft power' peacebuilding tools to the heart of EU internal and external strategies.

Recent global and regional political events have created a context enabling a push towards a European defence agenda at the expense of other sectors. Across the Atlantic, the US President pledged to increase military spending and in June reluctantly backed Article 5 of NATO that enshrines collective defence. In Europe, a series of high-profile terrorist attacks continued to raise concerns about public security. These and other events have been instrumentalised by Member States to increase defence budgets, such as Sweden and Romania.

At the EU level, several steps were made to reinforce EU defence institutions. Council decisions included implementing the Joint Coordination Cell to integrate EU civilian and military missions, the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) to facilitate information sharing between Member States, and the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) to enable Member States to make more binding commitments.

In June, the European Defense Fund was officially launched, dedicating €5.5 billion per year to boost Europe's defence research and capabilities. Portrayed as an effort to counteract fragmentation of national military budgets, what the fund will ultimately ensure is that the arms industry has the funds to research and develop equipment, such as a European drone. Military technology will then be

sold to Member States that could potentially sell them on to third parties. The main beneficiaries will likely be military industries and the arms trade at the cost of other sectors.

The Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) was legally established in June, effectively forming headquarters for non-executive military missions. EU leaders emphasized that MPCC is not meant to militarise the EU. Meanwhile, critics have deemed it merely a Brussels-based call centre for military staff abroad.

In July, the European Parliament's Committee on Legal Affairs (JURI) approved of the legal basis for Capacity Building and Security for Development (CBSD). This made a departure from legal analysis in 2015, which indicated that there was no basis for using development funds for military purposes. The European Parliament has not yet taken a formal position, but analysts believe it is likely to pass in the next voting plenary. This will be a disappointment to the many Quakers who responded to the public consultation.

To complement defence, the EUGS emphasizes the importance of 'softer' strategies such as enlargement, development, and trade. The progress report noted the value of public diplomacy and channels for citizen communication, also considered 'soft' strategies. In July the Foreign Affairs Council agreed to establish programmes to support regional cooperation and global governance.

The 'soft power' tools mentioned in the EUGS are important components of European foreign policy that some fear are being neglected or even misused by defence priorities. How Europe – citizens and leaders – respond to the current security challenges will set the tone of future cooperation. QCEA and other actors such as the OSCE and the Center for European Policy Studies (CEPS) have argued that the future of Europe hinges on value-driven peace projects. The QCEA peace programme is committed to establish what is today perceived as 'soft power' to be at the centre of peace and security policies.

The QCEA Peace Programme: recent activities

The QCEA peace programme looks forward to launching a significant peacebuilding report at the heart of a new approach to security in the beginning of 2018. The report comes out of months of research and will showcase a variety of civilian peacebuilding tools relevant to a wide audience including practitioners and policy makers. It will take the reader through a critical thinking process that interrogates whether they are the right actor to use that tool and how certain tools can enhance peace dynamics and be conducive to building peace.

The core of the report provides eleven peacebuilding tool portfolios, structured along government ministries including Education, Economics, Communications and Security. To avoid silos in thinking and action, the report creates linkages to indicate where there is potential for cooperation. In addition to traditional

peacebuilding tools such as dialogue and mediation, the report aims to show creative ways of addressing peace across and between sectors. This approach highlights that while peace work is often conducted at high levels of government, holistic and multi-track tools have the best potential for lasting change by including maximum cross-sections of the population and addressing root causes of conflict across levels of society.

In addition to the report, QCEA is developing a research database. The database compiles over 250 sources on peacebuilding, searchable by theme and geographic area. More details on the peace programme, research project, and database are available on the QCEA peace programme webpage.

www.qcea.org/peace

Religious representations engaging with human rights

QCEA are currently actively involved in two dialogue processes on religion and human rights.

A series of meetings co-organised by QCEA is bringing together policy-makers and faith-based civil society organisations from the human rights, humanitarian, peace and development sectors. Alongside the implementation of the EU Global Strategy and following the publication of the Communication on Resilience, we are discussing the needs of communities suffering from conflict, climate and economic pressure. Three meetings have taken place so far as part of a joint project with the Baha'i representation to the EU, the Conference of European Churches and the Catholic Bishops Conference.

The second dialogue process took place in September, organised by the EU Fundamental Rights Agency. QCEA took part in this two day forum involving international experts in human rights law, religiously motivated thinkers, policymakers and representatives of non-governmental organisations, to identify how people motivated by religion and people motivated by human rights can better come together to help shape fair and just societies.

QCEA had several opportunities to address participants. Our contributions included:

- Sharing contents from the future of Europe booklet published by the Friends World Committee for Consultation – European and Middle East Section after their annual meeting in Bonn in May.
- Recommending specific areas where a diverse range of faith groups could work together and within their own communities to serve the most vulnerable in society. These included proposals on humanitarian corridors for refugees, anti-racism, and global inequality.
- The cases of child immigration detention, and the importance of the European Court of Human Rights (and QCEA's recent publications on these issues).



→
QCEA's Andrew Lane at a recent event.
PHOTO: WIIS

QCEA Study Tour: Photo report

In June 2017, over twenty people joined QCEA's informative tour of the "capitals of Europe," where they got the chance to see how the European institutions work up close. Here are some of our memories of the week. Why not join us next time?



DID YOU KNOW?
Luxembourg City (pop. 110,000) may be one of Europe's smaller capitals, but it is home to the European Court of Justice as well as the HQs of many banks and businesses. Around 70% of its inhabitants are from outside the country, making it one of the most diverse cities of its size in the world.

↑ Visiting the debating chamber of the European Parliament in Brussels' European Quarter.
PHOTO: FRESHTA KARIM



↑ Meeting Sweden's judge at the ECHR.
PHOTO: KATE McNALLY



↑ A Sunday afternoon political talk in Quaker House.
PHOTO: KATE McNALLY

Shared values



↑ *The QCEA Study Tour visits the European Council.*
PHOTO: KATE McNALLY

QCEA's 2017 EU Study Tour offered me a much-needed chance to brush up my hitherto patchy knowledge of European institutions in Brussels and Strasbourg. Earlier this year, together with friends I had been organising pro-EU demonstrations in our home town, promoting liberty, equality and brotherhood, human rights, peace and the rule of law as common European values. We did so under the banner of "Pulse of Europe" (PoE), a politically and denominationally independent citizens' movement. Since it was founded by a husband-and-wife team of lawyers in Frankfurt in 2016, PoE has mobilised thousands of previously often apolitical people and now comprises groups in cities as far apart as Lisbon and Kiev, Tirana and Galway (in the UK, at Bath and High Wycombe). It aims at making the European idea more visible and audible, thus helping voters to understand how European institutions work and what benefits the EU offers its citizens for their personal lives – benefits which are too often taken for granted.

Across Europe, PoE demonstrations take place at 2pm on Sundays. Every PoE group presents its concerns in its own way: Some ask representatives of civil society organizations, local politicians or Union representatives to speak, others interview people who have left their country to settle in another EU state. At Erfurt, I once recited a text by René Char, a French writer and Résistance commander who prophetically described his vision of a unity of nations at the height of WWII. In addition to such presentations, PoE demonstrations always include an open mic session, where onlookers can express their opinions.

Although I do agree that political structures need an economically sound base in order to work, the common market is not my primary concern. So what motivated me to join PoE? My friends from one of the most troubled regions in the world tell me that they look to the EU for political mechanisms that can help secure democracy and human rights internationally, and have a constructive influence in situations where these are being disregarded by a member state. In other words, the example set by the EU gives them hope for their own battered countries. **Can we – as Quakers and Europeans – allow ourselves to do nothing against the ongoing denigration of such an internationally encouraging model of cooperation?** As PoE's website warns: "We are responsible... to assume that things will somehow sort themselves out is highly dangerous."

Since the EU obviously is not perfect, PoE encourages its supporters to name any shortcomings – as long as such criticism is made on the understanding that it would be disastrous to dismantle the EU as such, a political construct which has helped to secure six decades of uninterrupted peace, economic cooperation and protection of citizens' rights.

www.pulseofeurope.eu

Ursula Seibold-Bultmann is an art historian and a member of the East German Monthly Meeting. She attended the QCEA Study Tour in June.

Sanctuary Everywhere

QCEA / QPSW CONFERENCE
1—3 December 2017, Brussels

Europe is facing significant challenges relating to peace and human rights, including an increase in nationalism and xenophobia. This conference will look at how we can transform Europe into a continent of sanctuary, both for all the people who currently live here, and for other people seeking protection. The conference will be an opportunity for Friends from across Europe to consider the Quaker work on forced migration, but also much broader issues of what they can do to ensure Europe is a continent that values the human dignity of all people.

EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS (ECHR) TRAINING DAY

We will also be hosting a training day about this vital institution on 4 Dec. More info via the link below.

PLACES ARE STILL AVAILABLE!

**FOR MORE INFORMATION
OR TO REGISTER PLEASE VISIT
www.qcea.org/events**

Bare life

by Paul FitzPatrick, Newsletter Editor,
Doncaster Conversation Club

Writers about asylum sometimes make use of the ideas of the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben. He identified two different meanings of the simple word 'life'. It is one thing to be alive, it is another to be, and to be recognised as being, part of a community. The first of these he described simply as 'bare life', and he distinguished this from living with the rights and responsibilities of social and political belonging. If all a person has is 'bare life', they are excluded from communal, political, life. They are barely a person at all.

Asylum seekers are the clearest form of bare life. Although governments may talk about their 'human rights', their practice has not guaranteed respect and justice for asylum seekers.

Another example which brutally illustrates Agamben's distinction is the difference between being thrown into an unmarked grave on death or being buried with a tombstone or other marker of presence. The thousands who have died crossing the Mediterranean thus represent bare life in its starkest form. So too do the unnamed victims of the Grenfell Tower fire. The horrific realisation that the first named victim of the Grenfell Tower fire was a Syrian refugee has revealed how little we value 'bare life' – though at least we can honour his name, Mohammed Alhaj Ali.

As I write, much attention is being paid to the cladding on high-rise buildings. This is important, but I can't help feeling that it is also a distraction. It deflects attention from the inequalities in our society. In the future, buildings may be better clad, but the inequalities will remain, and asylum seekers, migrant workers and people with uncertain immigration status will be foremost in the new precariat.

STRUCTURAL INEQUALITY

This failure to address inequality is looking more and more ridiculous

In July 2017 the European Commission published its Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, with specific measures to improve age, gender, disability and lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) inclusion within its workforce – all of which are important. Despite representations and dialogue with the European Network Against Racism during the development of the strategy, the European Commission did not refer to the vast under-representation of people of colour, including Black and Asian-heritage Europeans, in the 33,000 person organisation and did not include any measures to address this imbalance.

Following a private letter on the same subject, that the Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) wrote to the relevant Commissioner earlier this year, QCEA joined the European Network Against Racism and 27 other organisations in an open letter. We are proud to have signed this, particularly given the support the letter has received from the European networks that represent age, gender, disability and LBGT organisations – that had been included in the strategy.

We are all minorities in one or more ways, but by showing solidarity with each other we can build a Europe that promotes the inclusion and dignity of all people. As Quakers we seek to recognise the value of all people, challenging racism and other forms of injustice.

To read the full letter visit www.qcea.org



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