the
Quaker Council for European Affairs
at a glance
March 2018
What do all these people and organisations have in common?

QCEA brings them together.

QCEA is a unique actor in peacebuilding and human rights advocacy at the European level.

Our small size allows us to be more responsive – and drives us to be more innovative – than other organisations with far more resources.

Our home, Quaker House, is a much-loved “safe space” at the heart of the European Quarter, where a wide range of actors can meet in a neutral, discreet setting, to think and speak freely.

And our centuries-long Quaker heritage gives us something which money cannot buy: a reputation for integrity and trustworthiness.

QCEA brings people together, and builds the bridges which are needed to respond to the cross-cutting challenges facing the world today. And we believe we are among the very few organisations in Brussels which are placed to perform this vital role.

This short document contains some concrete examples of how we undertook this work recently. For more information about what we do, please visit www.qcea.org
Publishing groundbreaking research on child immigration detention

As part of our Human Rights programme, QCEA undertook a research project into rates of detention of child migrants across Europe. We published a report representing the most comprehensive statistics available regarding detained migrant children for much of 2017.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Many children are detained in Europe simply for their migration status, but the practice remains poorly documented, and therefore at risk of going unchallenged. We drew attention to the reality on the ground, providing evidence on which to act.

QCEA’S ADDED VALUE

By becoming a reference for reliable statistics, QCEA was able to build relationships with key stakeholders working in this area, opening the door for us to attend the EU Child Rights Forum. Our report’s focus on the gender dimension also ensured that the different impacts of detention on women, girls, men and boys were more widely considered than before.

Bringing people together and giving them the tools to make a difference

In December 2017, QCEA and Quaker Peace & Social Witness hosted Sanctuary Everywhere, a two-day conference in Brussels. Over 120 people – from grassroots Quaker human rights activists, to refugees, to EU staff – gathered in order to share their experiences and to learn more about the legal protections at the base of their human rights work.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Facilitating connections between various groups and sectors gives people new avenues through which they can do good work at the grassroots level, and inspires those working in institutions with “best practice” ideas.

QCEA’S ADDED VALUE

Over 30 people – activists, refugees and QCEA staff – gained a formal training in the European Court of Human Rights, building a linkage between their work with migrants and the legal framework on human rights. The aim was to empower people to take action, both morally and legally.

Thanks to contacts made at our conference, a UK-based support group is being set up in aid of an LGBT+ helpline in Russia.
A joint statement between civil society organisations on the EU’s budget

QCEA was part of drafting a joint statement on the EU’s next Multi-Annual Financial Framework (MFF), which will determine what the EU spends for seven years beginning in 2020. The statement was signed by umbrella networks representing roughly 120 organisations working in peacebuilding, human rights, development and humanitarian aid.

**WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**

Taking part in this initiative meant that civil society organisations spoke with one voice on EU funding decisions which will directly affect the issues which matter to us. Working together in this way is vital in order to be heard.

**QCEA’S ADDED VALUE**

Smaller organisations, such as those working on peacebuilding, were able to amplify their voice by joining together with larger partners. **QCEA was the organisation which bridged this gap**, as we work on both peace and human rights.

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Bringing together diverse EU staff and civil society to discuss peacebuilding

The European Commission works in very rigid “silos,” and its different Directorates-General (DGs) rarely meet at the working level. QCEA and its partners came together with staff from a variety of DGs, including development cooperation and agriculture, to discuss the issues we work on in a cross-cutting way.

**WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**

Normalising internal cooperation within the EU is vital to our peacebuilding strategy, and this event created links between policymakers and advocacy workers who may not normally speak. It also exposed peacebuilding to EU staff who might never have considered it as part of their work.

**QCEA’S ADDED VALUE**

The EU Council conclusions on an “Integrated Approach” were subsequently amended to recognise the input of faith-based groups. Together with the many contacts we made in the DGs involved, this **paves the way for effective peace advocacy work across the EU institutions** in the years to come.
An innovative resource which empowers peacebuilders, whoever they may be

Our recent publication, *Building Peace Together*, is a comprehensive “toolkit” of 40 workable non-military initiatives which can be deployed across societies in order to contribute to stabilisation. It’s the result of nearly a year of research and will form the base of QCEA’s peace advocacy in the years to come.

**WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**

Conflict resolution may take place around the negotiating table, but peace is consolidated in fields, factories and classrooms. The complexity of modern conflicts means that everyone has a role to play in peacebuilding, but civilian responses to insecurity receive little support. Our publication proves they exist – and, crucially, shows that they work in practice.

**QCEA’S ADDED VALUE**

The EU’s approach to peacebuilding and stabilisation is at a turning point, as the institution is becoming increasingly militarised. As an advocacy document, *Building Peace Together* allows us to build relationships with key EU stakeholders. As a resource, it provides policymakers with non-military peacebuilding tools at a time when they are needed most.

Providing a unique space for decision-makers to speak — and to listen

There is no shortage of stages and meeting rooms in Brussels – but finding somewhere to have sensitive conversations away from the spotlight is surprisingly difficult. QCEA offers not only a safe space for sensitive discussions, but the guarantee of discretion and non-judgement that only Quakers can be relied upon to offer.

**WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**

Discretion and integrity means that we can bring together people who may not have otherwise met, or get people to say things they may otherwise not have said. A recent example was a “quiet diplomacy” event on military responses to migration, which involved NATO staff speaking off the record.

**QCEA’S ADDED VALUE**

Making difficult conversations possible promotes a more constructive, collaborative kind of politics. Facilitating these discussions also gives QCEA unique insight into the thinking of decision-makers whilst simultaneously growing our collaborative network. And the feedback from those we have hosted is near-unanimous: only we can provide this vital service.
Communicating better so we can work better

QCEA speaks to policymakers in Brussels and beyond on a daily basis. But we also need to communicate with some 30,000 Quaker supporters across Europe whose donations represent the majority of our income (see opposite). We have revised our entire communications strategy in order to rethink what we say to these very different target audiences, and to improve how we say it in terms of message and branding.

**WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**

Differentiating our communications output means that we say the right things to the right people – for example, we are no longer sending complex policy documents to ordinary supporters. By digitising many of our outreach efforts, we have also made QCEA’s communications much more efficient.

**QCEA’S ADDED VALUE**

By improving our brand and our message, we appear more professional in Brussels, and by varying our output we are more accessible to supporters and potential donors. This makes all elements of what we do easier to communicate. Further, by using more digital solutions and by re-branding “in-house,” we maximise the amount of funds available for our programme work.

Unlike many organisations in Brussels, we receive no money from the EU. That means **we can speak truth to power**, without fear or favour.

**Readership of our newsletter, Around Europe, has risen by roughly 300% since we moved to a new distribution system.**

Over half of our income in 2017 was from donations, and our work depends on these generous contributions from Quakers and Quaker Meetings across Europe. However, grants from Foundations and Trusts also make a major contribution to what we do, and can be decisive in helping new projects get off the ground.
How you can help

QCEA’s work would not be possible without the generous support of Friends across Europe and the world. Your donations help us to put Quaker values at the heart of European policymaking whilst allowing us to remain politically neutral, meaning we can advocate for peace and human rights with integrity. Every penny counts - now more than ever.

Donate easily online
To set up a recurring contribution or to make a one-off donation, either via DirectDebit or PayPal account, visit www.qcea.org/donate

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SORT CODE  40-52-40

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BNP Paribas Fortis Bank
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Cheque or charity voucher*

Friends in the United Kingdom can also donate by sending a cheque or charity voucher made payable to QCEA British Committee to:
Simon Bond, 1 Lynton Green, Maidenhead, SL6 6AN
QCEA British Committee is a UK charity, no. 293776

* If you make a donation by bank transfer or cheque, please let our team know so that we can acknowledge receipt and update our records. Email office@qcea.org with your name and details of your donation.

Thank you