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QCEA film screening seeks to put trafficking and slavery on Brussels agenda

On Wednesday May 23, QCEA hosted a screening of the film Trafficked. It shows the brutality and exploitation of women who are caught in the global human trafficking trade, and highlights the shocking truth that trafficking generates $100 billion in annual profits – more than leading companies such as Google and Starbucks combined.

Our event was followed by a discussion featuring two globally-recognised experts in human trafficking, as well as the film’s producer, Conroy Kanter, who spoke about her personal motivations as a mother in producing the film. In previous screenings, she has also shown the film to NGOs to generate discussions about trafficking and what can be done to help people escape it.

Kevin Bales, author of the Global Slavery Index, which estimates that 40.3 million people live in slavery around the world, explained that it is difficult to define slavery in a way that captures how intense the experience is for a person. He offered a definition of slavery as the complete control of one person over another person, both in terms of time and space, and the exploitation of that person. He noted that historically there have been several struggles against legal slavery, and now there is a movement against illegal slavery.

After watching the emotionally gripping film, many in the audience were left wondering: what can be done to address this global phenomenon?

The speakers noted that, around the world, laws exist which aim to reduce trafficking and help victims return to their lives and communities. However, there is still insufficient data to prove how effective law enforcement has been. Furthermore, many laws are not implemented or enforced due to lack of will or corruption.

Panelists suggested that change can come from people and organisations who effectively work together with others to end modern slavery. Nick Grono, CEO of the Freedom Fund, described the front-line work that his organisation undertakes with governments, other organisations and people who are vulnerable to slavery. He emphasised that NGOs and individuals can repeatedly apply pressure to change systems and norms, which over time will make human slavery unacceptable across the world.

The film screening, attended by almost 100 people, was complemented by a lunchtime policy discussion on the European Union's response to trafficking and modern slavery, as well as the exploitation of that person. He noted that historically there have been several struggles against legal slavery, and now there is a movement against illegal slavery.

In order to do this, we’re working on translating the resource into other languages, prioritising translations which will bring Building Peace Together to the places where it could offer the greatest benefit. So far, the Executive Summary is available in French, German and Dutch, and the full versions are available in English and now Russian.

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Our peacebuilding resource, Building Peace Together, is going from strength to strength. The previous issue of Around Europe reported some of the great feedback QCEA has had from EU policymakers (see below), as well as staff on EU operations in Africa and the Middle East. Now it’s time to spread our message of nonviolent conflict resolution as widely as possible among policymakers, academics and grassroots activists around the world.

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By publishing a Russian version, we hope to reach potential peacebuilders in the Russophone world, which includes several conflict-affected territories, as well as European countries with ethnic Russian minorities. These are areas which could make practical, meaningful use of the content of Building Peace Together, and this translation makes it possible.

We’ll soon be publishing Building Peace Together in full in Arabic and French via the QCEA website.

The translation is available at www.qcea.org/BldngPeaceTogether. If you have Russian-speaking contacts who you think we may not know, please contact olivia.caeymaex@qcea.org

Inspiring new leadership in Europe

In May QCEA held its first three-day leadership course in Quaker House Brussels, facilitated by Quaker leadership trainer and coach John Gray. The aim of the course was to instil the values of adaptive and inclusive leadership, as an antedote to management styles which are immune to learning or human needs. More than a dozen people took part.

Servant leadership is a leadership philosophy. Traditional leadership generally involves the exercise of power by one at the “top of the pyramid.” By comparison, the servant-leader shares power, puts the needs of others first and helps people develop and perform as highly as possible. Servant leadership turns the power pyramid upside down; instead of the people working to serve the leader, the leader exists to serve the people.

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Toolkit for welcoming refugees launched

Across Europe, people are welcoming refugees and asylum seekers into their communities and providing them with a foundation to adapt to a stable life in a new community. Some of these arrivals are pre-planned and the local community is involved before arrival; some may arrive with no prior planning. In all cases, communities and local groups scramble to help their new neighbours settle in and adapt to their new life and culture.

QCEA has compiled a new guide for local groups who are working with refugees and asylum seekers in their local communities. These checklists provide information and suggestions on how to make the refugees and asylum seekers more comfortable in each step of the transition to their new community. One of the key pieces of advice given by our toolkit is to seek to support refugees-led projects, or find creative ways for involving the intended audience for local guides in their development.

For more information see the dedicated QCEA webpage www.qcea.org/welcoming-refugees

Quakers organise security conference in Dublin

NATO, EU, academia and NGOs all gathered in Dublin in April to rethink what security means. The conference, entitled Building Security: Trust or Fear, was jointly organised by QCEA, Dublin City University’s Institute for International Conflict Resolution and Reconstruction (IICRR) and Dublin Monthly Meeting Peace Committee. The morning event examined the question, ‘What is Security?’ and the afternoon session looked at ‘Who provides or contributes to security?’

One academic said that he thought that this mixture of organisations had not been brought together before, especially in Ireland. Many people commented on the very different perspectives of participants. Everyone seemed to have been challenged in some way by the discussion.

EU foreign and security policy needs to be agreed by all member states. Ireland has an historic reluctance to engage in military conflict, so it is important that QCEA and Irish Quakers are #RethinkingSecurity and making the case for #EU4Peacebuilding.

The group is principally concerned about the rise of far-right political forces in Europe who seek to repeal European human rights standards agreed almost 70 years ago. A key test will be the European Parliament elections taking place in May 2019, where populist successes at the national level may translate into gains in the European Parliament.

So far, 16 MEPs have agreed to be part of the group, including Quaker MEP Jude Kirton-Darling (below). QCEA will chair the group, building on our existing responsibility as coordinator for the Human Rights and Democracy Network’s engagement with the European Parliament.

For more information see the dedicated QCEA webpage www.qcea.org/welcoming-refugees

QCEA coordinating new European Parliament human rights group

A platform bringing together Members of the European Parliament and human rights organisations has been created to foster a better exchange of information and to coordinate joint action in response to the major human rights challenges facing Europe today. After several preliminary meetings, the group has now been formally launched and will meet monthly.

The group is designed to address the need for “Europe” to develop a common response to the continuing arrival of refugees, as well as security challenges on the EU’s border.

QCEA and other members of the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO) met with Federica Mogherini, European Commission Vice President and High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy, in Brussels in May.

The purpose of the meeting was to speak directly to Federica Mogherini about current negotiations for the EU 2021-2027 budget, which will be agreed over the next year. The EU is a major funder of peacebuilding activity around the world, but this money is likely to be merged into a larger fund in the years to come that will not be dedicated solely to this purpose. EPLO used this meeting to discuss the budget, as well as European peacebuilding activity more generally.

Overall, the upcoming EU budget is likely to focus much more on migration and militarism that it has done in the past. This trend follows the many calls for “Europe” to develop a common response to the continuing arrival of refugees, as well as security challenges on the EU’s border.

The United Kingdom was a long-standing opponent of a more militarised EU, preferring not to risk duplication of existing NATO structures. However, its imminent withdrawal from the EU has allowed these plans to proceed.

QCEA joins peacebuilding leaders to meet EU foreign policy chief

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NEGOTIATING THE EU’S BUDGET

The EU’s spending is determined by a Multi-annual Financial Framework (MFF), a general budget agreed by all member states which covers a seven-year period. The upcoming MFF is for 2021-2027. Although more detailed budgets are agreed annually, it is the MFF which determines the EU’s strategic direction for many years, and is therefore subject to extensive negotiation.

As mentioned opposite, the upcoming MFF will likely allocate a large tranche of funding to matters such as EU military research and border guards in the neighbouring countries – although more traditional recipients of European money, such as agriculture, retain the majority of the budget.

At the time of going to print, the draft MFF foresees a seven-year EU budget of €1,279.4bn, although this is still subject to discussion by member states before a final agreement in 2019. This represents roughly 1% of the EU’s gross national income (GNI).

It remains to be seen how EU leaders will account for the loss of the UK budget contribution after Brexit, which is set to take place in March 2019.
Differences of opinion are the keystone of a healthy democracy, but dehumanising language corrodes public discourse and inflames the hate which can lead to violence.

As the far right advances in parts of Europe, anti-migrant rhetoric is becoming normalised, particularly on the internet where anonymity trumps accountability.

Successfully tackling hate speech will require the common effort of governments, political parties, the media and internet companies.

However, this objective will only be achieved if we can work together to build truly inclusive and resilient societies, overcoming the politics of division in the process. Any responsible government or media organisation will relish this challenge.

Moreover, it is shown that these traditional parties adopt nationally xenophobic rhetoric to improve their electoral base and to play on the fear and uncertainties of EU citizens, at a time where economic and social policies are driven by an austerity agenda. In effect, migrants are portrayed as a threat to economic prosperity, national identity and culture, which allows an atmosphere where hate speech and violence can grow in Europe.

In terms of what is being done to tackle the proliferation of anti-migrant hate speech within Europe, the Council of Europe uses:

- **legal instruments**, such as the European Convention on Trans-frontier Television;
- **policy instruments**, such as Recommendation no. R(97) on Hate Speech, which provides guidelines for hate speech prevention;
- **monitoring instruments** such as the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, a Council of Europe human rights body which is composed of independent experts who issue monitoring reports.

The Council of Europe, the European Union and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) all play a role in combatting hate speech. For example, the report draws attention to the Framework Decision on combatting certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law, implemented by the EU. The Decision defines hate speech as “the public incitement to violence and hatred based on race, colour, religion, or national or ethnic origin as well as hate crimes that have a racist or xenophobic motivation”.

Not only does hate speech infringe people’s dignity, but it also has the potential to ignite violence. Most importantly, it impedes integration and undermines social cohesion, thus having a negative impact on society as a whole.

It has been shown through examples such as Article 10 and 17 of the European Convention of Human Rights (in which all forms of expression which incite, spread, promote or justify hatred based on intolerance can be sanctioned) that enforcing and interpreting anti-hate speech legislation is a difficult matter.

This is due to the transnational reach of the internet, which may render legislation ineffective, thereby giving hatemongers increased mobility.

Other challenges of online hate speech include the anonymity offered by pseudonyms, which makes it harder for victims to report such cases. In 2016, anonymity irrefutably trumps accountability. As well as this, the permanence of online comments means that hate speech can manifest itself in different formats and can be shared repeatedly.

The report also notes the link between far-right social media posts and hate crime, as underlined by research from the University of Warwick, in Germany, a strong correlation was found between xenophobic posts made by the far-right political party AfD and the occurrence of hate crimes, to the extent that power cuts led to a decrease in such crimes in affected areas.

Under the Decision, hate speech is a criminal offence and must be penalised by EU member states.

With the rise of online anonymity and profound lack of accountability on the internet, the implementation of anti-hate speech policies by multinational websites and social networking sites is crucial to tackling the problem of online harassment and hate speech.

Although there are rarely formal consequences for voicing hateful ideologies online, both Twitter and Facebook have policies surrounding the issue and may delete a post or suspend an account if they believe it infringes on others’ right not to be harassed or intimidated online. Facebook also acknowledges that hate speech online may well promote real-world violence, as clearly seen in the aforementioned example of the German AfD Facebook page.

There is little doubt that the internet has become the world’s most influential medium for communication of all kinds. Therefore, with the mass spread of hate speech online in recent years, it only makes sense to combat it using online campaigns. These campaigns reach international audiences in mere seconds. Some examples mentioned in the report are:

- The No Hate Speech Movement led by the Council of Europe;
- The #MediaAgainstHate campaign led by the European Federation of Journalists;
- The European Radio Broadcast Campaign by the RESPECT WORDS Project.

These online campaigns all share one aim: to make the internet a safer place for those who are likely to become victims of hate speech, and to discourage such speech by raising awareness of issues such as migration, refugees and religion, thus encouraging internet users to unlearn their prejudices and create a more accepting online environment. This work is also carried out by education projects such as Debunking Myths About Jews and La Stampa. The latter initiative is as follows: when a hateful comment is posted on a website such as Facebook, it is not deleted, but rather a reminder of the rules of online participation is posted underneath it.

The report concludes by offering effective recommendations of what governments, political parties, internet companies and the media can do to combat the growing problem of hate speech, both online and in the real world. QCEA plans to build on these recommendations with all stakeholders in the months to come.

To read our full report on anti-migrant hate speech, go to www.qcea.org/human-rights
How can peacebuilding principles be ensured when implementing national security strategies?

On Thursday 14 June, QCEA and the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) co-organised a policy discussion in The Hague that explored how national security strategies can be implemented in line with peacebuilding principles, such as local ownership and inclusiveness. The event bridged civil society, civil servants from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the EU, as well as faith-based organisations.

The discussion was organised following the March 2018 publication of the Dutch integrated international security strategy for 2018-2020. Points of the strategy welcomed by QCEA and GPPAC include the centrality of human security and the emphasis on prevention of conflict by addressing its root causes. The strategy includes several peacebuilding principles, such as awareness of socio-economic and political factors with references to gender and inequality. It also seeks to encourage accountable governance by tackling corruption. The policy discussion asked: “how can we implement the strategy in a way that reflects these concepts in practice?”

To begin thinking about the ‘how,’ the event drew on examples from GPPAC’s Whole of Society Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding (WOSCAP) project and QCEA’s report Building Peace Together. WOSCAP analyses the EU’s contribution to conflict prevention and peacebuilding through research, including a report on how the EU can ensure local ownership. Furthermore, WOSCAP shows how inclusiveness can work in practice through multi-stakeholder policy dialogue and engaging local partners in research. In addition to local ownership, peacebuilding principles such as inclusiveness and engaging populations are highlighted in Building Peace Together as important parts of any engagement. Case studies featured in the report demonstrate how these principles can be applied in practice across sectors by governments, civil society and others.

The Dutch strategy links to international documents that make the case for peace such as the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the UN-World Bank Pathways for Peace report, and the EU Global Strategy’s Integrated Approach to Conflicts and Crises. The Dutch strategy quotes Prime Minister Mark Rutte’s remarks that the SDGs are the “ultimate prevention agenda” and his belief in the importance of a world governed by international law. The event explored how international organisations as well as local actors and civil society can work together. QCEA is looking forward to co-organising policy discussions around other national and international security frameworks, exploring how they can contribute to peace in the long-term.

QCEA is a member of the Christian Group on Migration (CGM), a platform of faith-based NGOs working on issues related to forced migration for more than 25 years. Recently, with input from QCEA, the CGM produced a position paper with recommendations for humane return policies of those whose applications for asylum are refused. This paper will be sent to policy makers and used in meetings to discuss a better way to handle human beings who cannot stay in Europe.

European countries have the right to refuse protection to those who do not meet the requirements set for asylum seekers. The question of how to deal with those whose application has been refused is currently being reconsidered. Individual states have policies designed to increase the return of migrants to their countries of origin or to third countries and the projected EU budget for 2021-2027 provides for a substantial increase in funding for border guards.

The Geneva Convention forbids returning someone to a potentially life-threatening situation; the European Convention on Human Rights expressly forbids the collective expulsion of aliens. It is argued that both of these practices are being used within the EU: more countries are being designated as ‘safe’ and Italy and Malta are now refusing to allow humanitarian rescue boats to dock for the purpose of unloading refugees.

Within the context of increased pressure to return migrants, the CGM has developed recommendations for a human rights based return policy. These recommendations include:

- Safeguards of guaranteed human rights during return procedures: Fundamental rights should be safeguarded in the case of forced removals as well as in transit, border or airport zones, and the right to to appeal must be guaranteed.
- Putting the well-being of people first by prioritising the investment in voluntary returns: The choice of voluntary return to country of origin should always be based on an informed decision and never be the result of coercion; special care must be taken in the case of minors.
- Maintaining a clear separation between international protection and return policies: For example, encouraging asylum seekers to interrupt their process and return to their home country using financial or other incentives is not acceptable. Information on voluntary return should never be provided with the aim to encourage the withdrawal of an asylum application.
- Prioritising alternatives to detention and applying immigration detention only as a last resort: Detention should never be indefinite; children should never be detained; alternatives such as bail or supervision have been shown to be as effective as detention.
- Ensuring a return policy that does not criminalise migrants or force them into destitution: Entry bans in the case of refused asylum application criminalise asylum seeking; social support policies should not force migrants into destitution.
- Stop using development aid as a migration control tool: Development aid should never be linked to return policies.
- Do not return people to conflict countries: Several EU countries want to increase returns of refused asylum seekers to conflict areas. This should not happen.

For more info, or to get a copy of the paper, contact Kate (kate.mcnelly@qcea.org) or Sylvain (sylvain.mossou@qcea.org)
Challenging injustice: QCEA co-hosts dialogue on future Africa-Europe relations

Over the next year an important agreement between African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries and the European Union will be renegotiated. Given the historical and present day injustices within the relationship between these parts of the world, this should be important to anyone interested in undoing privilege and building a more just world.

Over recent months QCEA has been regularly meeting with our faith-based partners at the Commission of the Bishops’ Conferences of the EU, and the Baha’i International Community, and the Conference of European Churches to discuss the opportunities for promoting justice. The new EU-ACP framework agreement is clearly one of the biggest opportunities in the coming years.

The framework agreement will replace the Cotonou Agreement signed in 2000 in Cotonou (Benin) by 78 ACP countries (Cuba did not sign) and the then fifteen EU member states. Cotonou entered into force in 2003, and was renewed in 2010.

In May we held our event EU-ACP: Implementing a partnership approach, which was well attended by representatives of European Commission departments for Development Cooperation, Foreign Policy and Trade, as well as representatives from the European Parliament, national governments and other faith representatives.

Faith-based organisations are challenging power relationships in a way that I am not hearing elsewhere. We have spent time thinking about what ‘relationship’ really means, and can apply this to what a just relationship between Europe and Africa might look like.

Migration is at the centre of the EU agenda, so many faith groups were keen to mention the need for migration policy to be based on human dignity. Arguments were made against taking such a narrow perspective. Practical proposals for alternative priorities of human security and climate change were offered.

Andrew Lane, who chaired part of the discussion said, “It was a successful meeting. Faith-based organisations are challenging power relationships in a way that I am not hearing elsewhere. We have spent time thinking about what ‘relationship’ really means, and can apply this to what a just relationship between Europe and Africa might look like. All of the faith groups represented today actually have more members in Africa than we do in Europe – and so we have access to different perspectives and an opportunity to help find common ground.”

“Our histories also help us to see the relationship over a longer arc than the comparatively much newer European institutions might naturally do. The EU-ACP framework agreement is just a moment in that much longer relationship between continents. Faith-based NGOs are increasing interested in understanding colonialism, including our part in it. There are wrongs, that have not yet been put right. Justice issues are deeply felt by people of faith. Despite the rumours, people of faith are not going away – in fact, we are only getting louder on global and racial justice.”

Negotiations begin formally in the Autumn, with an agreement in 2019.

FUNDRAISING APPEAL

Funding sought to reduce violence on Europe’s borders

Migrants and their supporters are experiencing violence from police and private security guards. This is happening at EU borders, but also in other locations where migrants seek safety, from forests on the Serbia-Hungary border to the French capital.

It is not a well-known issue, but is a real abuse of human rights for some of the most vulnerable people on our continent. International policing standards have been agreed by almost all European countries, but there is very little knowledge of them among police, civil society or migrants themselves. Standards cover discrimination, levels of force that can be used, and basic accountability measures. All of which are routinely violated in some parts of Europe, such as Calais.

QCEA is keen to produce and distribute a single multilingual publication to inform all stakeholders of standards of conduct they should expect from the police – in a clear and accessible way. By raising awareness of standards agreed at the Council of Europe, QCEA hopes to deter potential violence by making it harder to justify or conceal - minimising abuses.

The inclusion of Arabic, English and French languages will help empower potential victims to understand when their rights have been violated. It will also be used as a basis for engagement with policymakers to reinforce implementation and strengthen rules. We expect a long-term benefit for this project, as the publication's circulation grows via our partners.

QCEA has successfully received a small grant to cover part of the cost of the development, printing and distribution. We are now looking for further contributions to make this idea a reality. If you would like to make a contribution to this project, however small, we would love to hear from you.

Please contact martin.leng@qcea.org
Donate to QCEA today

QCEA’s important work on peace and human rights depends on your generous support. Over 50% of our income in 2017 came from donations, and we receive no money from the European institutions, meaning we can speak truth to power without fear or favour.

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