

Dear Friend

Getting involved in the European Parliament Elections 2009

Is your Meeting interested in the 2009 elections to the European Parliament?

Turnout in the UK for European elections is low as a rule: less than 40% in 2004. Many people in the UK don't care much for the EU, as far as they know anything about it, and ignorance of what the EU does is widespread. The UK holds itself apart from aspects of the EU that many other Member States embrace – the single currency, the Schengen agreement on travel, the working time directive, among others.

Successive British governments have failed to explain the real virtues of EU membership to voters. This has created space for all the myths and legends about unelected Commissioners and corrupt MEPs, banana straightness regulations, and allegedly intrusive constitutional revisions. UK politicians are said to 'go native' when they get to Brussels, as though Europe wasn't home to British people as well as anyone else.

The EU plays a major role in the lives of the almost 500 million citizens in 27 Member States. It isn't perfect, but it is a strong democratic institution - one of history's great achievements. We would like to invite you, as Quakers, to do something to push against Euro-apathy and help get the vote out on 4 June 2009.

Bad governments are made by good people who don't vote. The EU is a consensual organisation and aims to encourage equality. But extremist parties take advantage of low turnouts, and the possibility of them acquiring disproportionate democratic legitimacy should impel anyone interested in fairness and democracy to want to encourage a high voter turnout.

The Quaker Council for European Affairs British Committee have put together this information pack for Local and Area Meetings. Please use the information provided as you think best.

In Friendship
QCEA British Committee

The EU is the most extensive peacebuilding project in history. As well as eliminating conflict between Member States since its foundation in the wake of the second world war, the EU is the world's largest provider of international development aid - €671 million in 2006.

As a regulated trading bloc the EU is potentially a force for good in areas like workers' rights, migrant labour and corporate social responsibility. Companies in Europe have cleaned up their acts both in relation to domestic labour practices and also their global supply chains.

The EU is the major force in the world working for climate change mitigation. Challenging targets for CO2 reduction - 20% by 2020 - have been agreed and set by governments and industries. Key components of this are regulation and enforcement, with a long term strategy to reduce dependency on unsustainable ways of living and working.

This pack of information includes the following material:

- A one-page guide to the institutions and processes of the EU to give information on what you are voting for on 4 June.
- A map of European Parliament constituencies - and corresponding BYM areas - with a list of candidates and an outline of the voting and registration process, to give you information on how to vote on 4 June.
- Some guidance on how to use this material, including organising meetings and contacts with candidates, to give you information on finding out who to vote for.

How to use this material

Raise awareness within the meeting

This material comes to you from the Quaker Council of European Affairs (QCEA) and its British Committee: you may wish to mention it in the regular announcements space at the end of Meeting for Worship.

Make the one-page guide to the EU institutions available widely in the meeting. Refer to the map of constituencies and identify the BYM area and local meetings in your constituency.

Get in contact with other Meetings or other groups to assess the interest in some joint activity in the constituency. This could be an open meeting in the form of a candidates' debate, an invitation to candidates to address Friends, a coordinated emailing of questions to candidates (and distribution of the responses), among other possible ideas.

Organise a candidates' debate

Arrange a venue and a date and contact the candidates to invite them to an open meeting. How open depends on you: if you can pack a meeting with Friends, good: more likely the meeting will be a local event open to all.

Contact all the candidates (not just the mainstream parties or the ones Quakers are likely to support) and invite them to a meeting where they can give an outline of their party's platform and take questions from the audience. The BBC Question Time programme is a good format to adopt. Find someone to chair the meeting who will (ideally) keep things under control with some good humour. Candidates should welcome a public platform: it's what politics is about. If some candidates refuse to take part, tell them about others who are participating.

Run the event. Make sure your local/ regional media contacts know it's happening: an event run by Quakers may be a new angle for them and could lead to some good coverage for

the event itself and the Society of Friends.

For more advice on how to hold a hustings, go to www.electoralcommission.org.uk and search for "hustings".

If you don't want to organise a debate consider polling the candidates with a list of questions, and collecting the answers together for information, dissemination or publication.

Questions on issues of Quaker concern

Ask the candidates questions about issues which matter to you. For example, you could start by thinking about:

- Role of the EU, parties' attitude to EU functions, the Lisbon Treaty
- Security, counter-terrorism, disarmament, relations with USA
- Economic development, regional policies, migration, labour rights
- Environment policy, climate change mitigation, emissions targets, sustainability
- Development aid, relations with the Balkans, Turkey, the Middle East

Spread the word

Talk to your relatives, friends, neighbours, colleagues about the EP elections. How much do they know? Are they planning to vote? Would they like to know more about the EU in general and the local candidates in particular?

Candidates will provide you with information material about their policies. Spread them around.

Getting the vote out on 4 June

Make sure you know where to vote and whether anyone you know needs encouragement or a lift to the polling station...

Finding out more

QCEA: www.quaker.org/qcea/epelections

European Parliament: www.europarl.org.uk

Conservative Party: www.conservatives.com

Green Party: www.greenparty.org.uk

The Electoral Commission: www.electoralcommission.org.uk and www.aboutmyvote.co.uk

Labour Party: www.labour.org.uk

Liberal Democrat Party: www.libdems.org.uk

Plaid Cymru: www.plaidcymru.org

SNP: www.snp.org

UKIP: www.ukip.org

Feedback: if you can then please let QCEA know what your Meeting did and the responses, discussions or meetings you had f at www.quaker.org/qcea/epelections. Many thanks!

Britain Yearly Meeting: Area Meetings by European Region and MEPs for 2005-2009

How are MEPs elected?

Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) are elected by a closed list system.

Each political party puts forward a list of candidates for each regional constituency. You, the voter, vote for one of these party lists, or for an independent candidate. You cannot vote for a candidate who is part of a political party list – you can only vote for the list.

The votes are counted up by political party. The number of candidates who are elected from each party represents the share of the vote each party receives.

For example:

Imagine that Jill, John and James are standing for the J Party in the North East. Jill is first on the J Party's list, and James is last. Barry, Betty and Bea are standing for the B Party in the North East. Barry is first on the B Party's list, and Bea is last. The North East elects three MEPs.

Now imagine that the J Party receives 33% of the vote, and the B Party receives 67% of the vote. Jill becomes an MEP, because the J Party have enough votes for one MEP and she is first on the J Party's list. Barry and Betty both become MEPs, because the B Party have enough votes for two MEPs and they are first and second on the B Party's list.

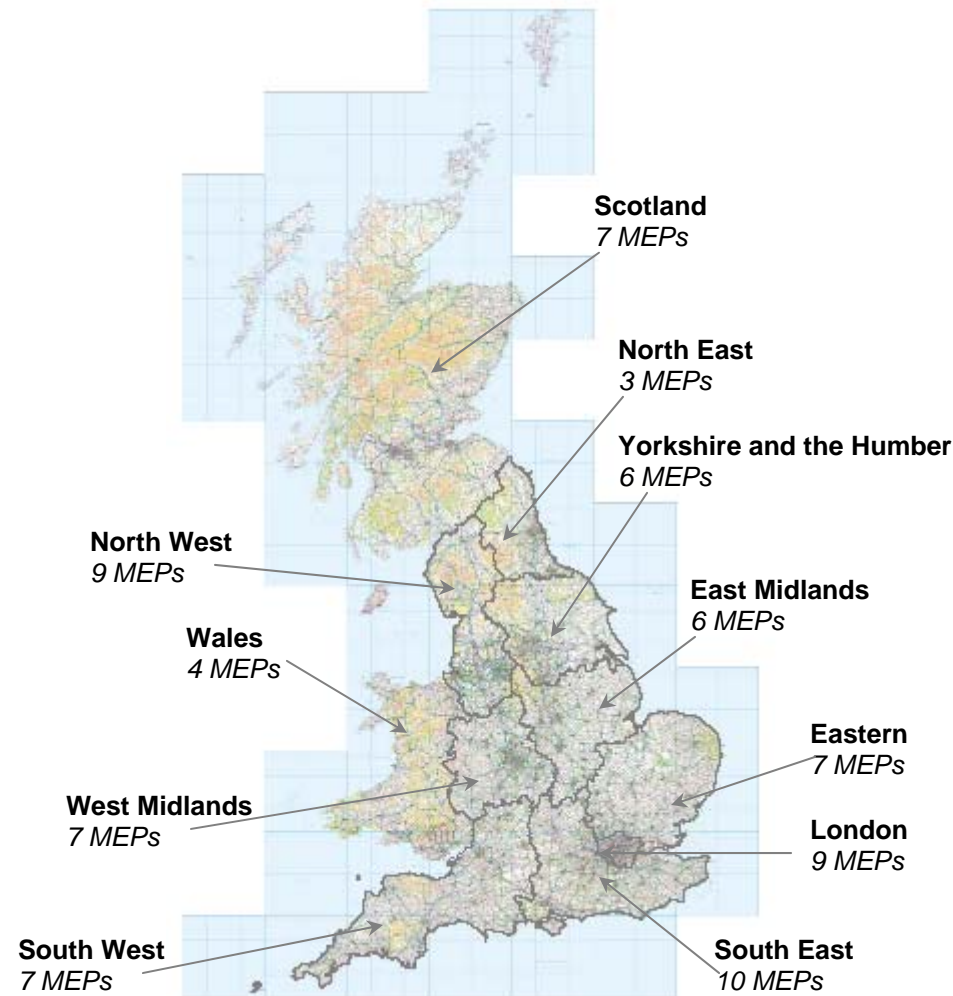
In order to vote in the elections, you must be registered to vote with your local council. To find out how to register to vote, go to www.aboutmyvote.co.uk

Which regional constituency is my Quaker Meeting in?

The UK is divided into twelve constituencies, representing Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland or a region of England. Different regions elect different numbers of MEPs. See the below table and the next couple of pages for:

- Area Meetings by constituency (on the right hand side) and their MEPs for 2005-2009 (left hand side)
- Candidates with a reasonable chance of being elected

East Midlands		
Northamptonshire Area Quaker Meeting	♂ ♀	Conservative
Lincolnshire Area Quaker Meeting	♂	Independent
Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire Area Quaker Meeting	♂	Labour
Leicester Area Quaker Meeting	♂	Liberal Democrats
	♂	UKIP



Eastern		
Hertford and Hitchin Area Quaker Meeting	♂ ♀ ♀	Conservative
Chilterns Area Quaker Meeting	♂	Labour
Luton & Leighton Area Quaker Meeting	♂	Liberal Democrats
Southern East Anglia Quaker Meeting	♂	UKIP
Ipswich & Diss Area Quaker Meeting	♂ ♀	
Thaxted Area Quaker Meeting		
Mid Essex Area Quaker Meeting		
Cambridgeshire Area Quaker Meeting		
Norfolk & Waveney Area Quaker Meeting		

London			
North London Area Quaker Meeting	♂ ♂ ♂		Conservative
North West London Area Quaker Meeting		♂	Green
Kingston & Wandsworth Area Quaker Meeting	♂ ♂ ♂		Labour
South London Area Quaker Meeting		♂	Liberal Democrats
North East Thames Area Quaker Meeting		♂	Liberal Democrats
South East London Area Quaker Meeting		♂	UKIP
London West Area Quaker Meeting		♂	UKIP

West Midlands			
Staffordshire Area Quaker Meeting	♂ ♂ ♂		Conservative
Central England Area Quaker Meeting		♂ ♂	Labour
Hereford & Mid-Wales Area Quaker Meeting (Hereford)		♂	Liberal Democrats
Worcestershire & Shropshire Area Quaker Meeting		♂	UKIP

North East			
Tees Valley Area Quaker Meeting		♂	Conservative
Northumbria Area Quaker Meeting		♂	Labour
		♂	Liberal Democrats

North West			
North Cumbria Area Quaker Meeting	♂ ♂ ♂ ♂		Conservative
West Cumbria Area Quaker Meeting		♂ ♂ ♂	Labour
East Cheshire Area Quaker Meeting		♂	Liberal Democrats
Manchester & Warrington Area Quaker Meeting		♂	UKIP
Hardshaw and Mann Area Quaker Meeting		♂	UKIP
Pendle Hill Area Quaker Meeting			
Wirral & Chester Area Quaker Meeting			
Kendal & Sedbergh Area Quaker Meeting			
Lancashire Central & North Area Quaker Meeting			
Swarthmoor (South West Cumbria) Area Quaker Meeting			

Scotland			
East Scotland Area Quaker Meeting	♂ ♂		Labour
North Scotland Area Quaker Meeting		♂	Liberal Democrats
South East Scotland Area Quaker Meeting		♂ ♂	Scottish Conservative
West Scotland Area Quaker Meeting		♂ ♂	SNP

South East			
Banbury & Evesham A Area Quaker Meeting	♂ ♂ ♂ ♂		Conservative
Mid-Thames Area Quaker Meeting		♂	Green
Oxford & Swindon Area Quaker Meeting (Oxford)		♂	Independent
Hampshire & Islands Area Quaker Meeting		♂	Labour
East Kent Area Quaker Meeting		♂	Labour
West Kent Area Quaker Meeting		♂	Liberal Democrats
Sussex West Area Quaker Meeting		♂ ♂	Liberal Democrats
West Weald Area Quaker Meeting		♂	UKIP
Surrey & Hampshire Border Area Quaker Meeting			
Sussex East Area Quaker Meeting			

South West			
Oxford & Swindon Area Quaker Meeting (Swindon)	♂ ♂ ♂		Conservative
		♂	Labour
Bristol Area Quaker Meeting		♂	Liberal Democrats
Mid-Somerset Area Quaker Meeting			
North Somerset & Wiltshire Area Quaker Meeting		♂ ♂	UKIP
Dorset & South Wiltshire Area Quaker Meeting			
West Somerset Area Quaker Meeting			
Cornwall Area Quaker Meeting			
Devon Area Quaker Meeting			
Bournemouth Coastal Area Quaker Meeting			
Gloucestershire Area Quaker Meeting			

Wales			
North Wales Area Quaker Meeting / Cyfarfod Crynwyr Rhanbarth Gogledd Cymru		♂	Conservative
		♂ ♂	Labour
Hereford & Mid-Wales Area Quaker Meeting / Cyfarfod Rhanbarth (Mid-Wales)		♂	Plaid Cymru
South Wales Area Quaker Meeting / Cyfarfod Crynwyr Rhanbarth De Cymru			

Yorkshire and the Humber			
Wensleydale & Swaledale Area Quaker Meeting		♂ ♂	Conservative
Sheffield & Balby Area Quaker Meeting		♂ ♂	Labour
Brighouse West Yorkshire Area Meeting		♂	Liberal Democrats
Leeds Area Quaker Meeting			
Pickering & Hull Area Quaker Meeting		♂	UKIP
Central Yorkshire Area Quaker Meeting			
Craven & Keighley Area Meeting			
York Area Quaker Meeting			

Candidates with a reasonable chance of being elected.

Names in bold are candidates who have served as MEPs from 2005 to 2009

Eastern 7 MEPs	Conservative	1. Geoffrey Van Orden 2. Robert Sturdy 3. Vicky Ford 4. John Flack
	Green	1. Rupert Read
	Labour	1. Richard Howitt 2. Beth Kelly
	Liberal Democrat	1. Andrew Duff 2. Linda Jack
	UKIP	1. Stuart Agnew 2. Michael Baker 3. David Campbell Bannerman
East Midlands 6 MEPs	Conservative	1. Roger Helmer 2. Emma McClarkin 3. Rupert Matthews
	Green	1. Sue Blount
	Labour	1. Glenis Willmott 2. Roy Kennedy
	Liberal Democrat	1. Bill Newton Dunn 2. Ed Maxfield
	UKIP	1. Lynette Afshar 2. Stephen Allison
London 9 MEPs	Conservative	1. Dr Charles Tannock 2. Syed Kamall 3. Marina Yannakoudakis 4. JP Floru
	Green	1. Jean Lambert 2. Ute Michel
	Labour	1. Claude Moraes 2. Mary Honeyball 3. Robert Evans 4. Anne Fairweather
	Liberal Democrat	1. Sarah Ludford 2. Jonathon Fryer
	UKIP	1. Ralph Atkinson 2. Gerard Batten
North East 3 MEPs	Conservative	1. Martin Callanan 2. Barbasa Musgrave
	Green	1. Chris Haine
	Labour	1. Stephen Hughes 2. Fay Tinnion
	Liberal Democrat	1. Fiona Hall 2. Chris Foote-Wood
	UKIP	1. Sandra Allison
North West 9 MEPs	Conservative	1. Rt Hon Sir Robert Atkins 2. Den Dover 3. Sajjad Karim 4. Jacqueline Foster 5. Alex Williams
	Green	1. Peter Cranie
	Labour	1. Arlene McCarthy 2. Brian Simpson 3. Theresa Griffin 4. Stephen Carter
	Liberal Democrat	1. Chris Davies 2. Helen Foster-Grime
	UKIP	1. Nigel Brown 2. Graham Cannon
South East 10 MEPs	Conservative	1. Daniel Hannan 2. Richard Ashworth 3. Nirj Joseph Deva DL 4. James Elles 5. Therese Coffey
	Green	1. Caroline Lucas 2. Keith Taylor
	Labour	1. Peter Skinner 2. Janet Sully
	Liberal Democrat	1. Sharon Bowles 2. Catherine Bearder 3. Ben Abbotts
	UKIP	1. Harry Aldridge 2. Marta Andreasen
South West 7 MEPs	Conservative	1. Giles Chichester 2. Julie Girling 3. Ashley Fox 4. Mike Dolley
	Green	1. Ricky Knight
	Labour	1. Glyn Ford 2. Isabel Owen
	Liberal Democrat	1. Graham Watson 2. Kay Barnard
	UKIP	1. Jeffrey Beer 2. Trevor Colman 3. William, Earl of Dartmouth
West Midlands 7 MEPs	Conservative	1. Philip Charles Bradbourn OBE 2. Malcolm Harbour 3. Anthea McIntyre 4. Michael Burnett
	Green	1. Felicity Norman
	Labour	1. Michael Cashman 2. Neena Gill 3. Claire Edwards
	Liberal Democrat	1. Liz Lynne 2. Phil Bennion
	UKIP	1. Elizabeth Hazell 2. Malcolm Hurst
Yorkshire and the Humber 6 MEPs	Conservative	1. Edward McMillan-Scott 2. Timothy Kirkhope 3. Fleur Butler
	Green	1. Martin Hemingway
	Labour	1. Linda McAvan 2. Richard Corbett 3. Emma Hoddinott
	Liberal Democrat	1. Diana Wallis 2. Stewart Arnold
	UKIP	1. Jonathan Arnott 2. Godfrey Bloom
Scotland 7 MEPs	Labour	1. David Martin 2. Catherine Martin 3. Mary Lockhart
	Liberal Democrat	1. George Lyon 2. Euan Robson
	Scottish Conservative	1. Struan Stevenson 2. Belinda Don 3. Helen Gardiner
	Scottish Green	1. Elaine Morrison
	SNP	No information at present
	UKIP	1. Peter Adams
Wales 4 MEPs	Conservative	1. Dr Kay Swinburne 2. Evan Price
	Green	1. Jake Griffiths
	Labour	1. Derek Vaughan 2. Lisa Stevens 3. Gareth Williams
	Liberal Democrat	1. Alan Butt Philip
	Plaid Cymru	1. Jill Evans 2. Eurig Wyn
	UKIP	1. David Bevan

The European Union in outline

- **The Council of the EU** contains ministerial representatives from each of the 27 Member State governments. It meets to discuss and ratify key policies. Finance ministers discuss the budget, trade ministers discuss trade policies, and prime ministers or presidents discuss EU-wide strategic issues. The Council is chaired on a rotating basis by each Member State for 6 months at a time (currently the Czech Republic).
- **The European Commission** is an executive council of 27 senior political figures nominated by Member States and appointed by the European Parliament to serve for 5 years. The Commission is supported by a multi-national group of 25,000 officials. The Commission is in charge of initiating, drafting and implementing EU legislation.
- **The European Parliament** has 785 Members (MEPs) directly elected every 5 years by the voters of the European Union. MEPs sit in political groups rather than as individual parties. The Parliament's role is to scrutinise the work of the Council and Commission, in debates and through a system of committees.

The Council and the Parliament make decisions about what the EU does and what EU law should be. About two thirds of these decisions (those relating to 'Community Policies') are made jointly by the Council and Parliament. The remaining decisions (relating to 'Common, Foreign and Security policies' or 'Justice and Home Affairs') are taken by the Council, and the Parliament is only consulted and informed. So on these issues the national governments of the Member States make the decisions.

The European Parliament elections

- In the UK the European Parliament elections take place on 4 June 2009.
- In June 2009 the United Kingdom will elect 78 MEPs (3 representing Northern Ireland)
- The UK is divided up into 12 regions. In each region there are between 3-10 MEPs who represent the people living in that region.
- Individuals vote for a party list or independent candidate standing in their region.

Each party puts forward a list of candidates for each region. This list is the party's order of preference for their candidates. The first candidate on the list gets elected first followed by the second and third candidates depending on the number of votes and so on. Each adult in Britain (apart from prisoners) has one vote. You can vote for one of the party's lists or for an independent individual in your region. The number of candidates that get elected from each party's regional list directly depends on the number of votes that each list gets.

UK Influence in Europe - your democratic rights

There are many ways in which British citizens can influence the EU. The Council and the Parliament are the key decision making bodies in the EU. So one way to influence the EU and get our voices heard is to approach either our national government ministers (either directly or through our elected MPs) or our MEPs. If the Lisbon treaty is ratified involvement by EU citizens will also be increased by the introduction of a 'citizens' initiative'. This will allow citizens to call on the Commission to take action on issues if one million citizens from a significant number of EU Member States sign a petition calling for it.

The European Parliament's role is to represent the citizens of Europe. It is therefore, more than any other body, our voice in Europe. We directly elect the British MEPs to represent our views to the EU. We will have the opportunity to vote for a new European Parliament along with 340 million European Union voters on 4 June this year. If we don't like how the EU works we should tell our MEP candidates to try to change it, and if we want something done we should demand that they try to do it. Each individual vote counts – so use yours and make sure you vote on 4 June!