



Around Europe

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The Role of the EU in the Western Balkans - Grassroots perspectives

In April, I participated in a seminar of some forty peacebuilding activists in Brcko. I had been invited to this event by the three Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW) representatives based in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia, who had arranged the seminar. My brief was to be a resource person. I was asked to speak about the role of the European Union in peacebuilding and to assist in some reflections about the accession of the countries of that region to the European Union.

I was surprised by many aspects of our discussions.

There has been significant involvement of the EU in the region. There have been three completed European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) missions and there are three ongoing ones. There have been EU Special Representatives in Bosnia and Herzegovina (two including the current incumbent), in (the former Yugoslav Republic of) Macedonia (six including the current incumbent), and in Kosovo. The European Commission has offices in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, (the former Yugoslav Republic of) Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia.

But when I asked the activists I met what they thought of the EU missions, the general response was that they were either not very visible, not very effective (one early mission in Sarajevo was locally referred to as the 'ice-cream men' because they were noted for their white suits and their presence in local hotel and café bars), or not trusted because they only relate to the government and not to civil society. The latter response was particularly evident from activists from Serbia.

Looking at the websites of the Commission delegations, it is evident that much effort has been made to be visible - but it does not seem to translate into actual visibility on the ground.

The other aspect of the discussion was about

the possible accession of the countries of the Western Balkans to the EU. Generally, there was a sense of 'we don't really want this, we can see that this will be expensive and we will be second-class citizens in the EU' but at the same time a resignation that this would happen whatever people wanted. There was also a general feeling that citizens were not interested enough in this to take a stand.

Sounds familiar to western European ears, doesn't it? But it is, sadly, too important an issue to be left at that.

One suggestion, put forward by a veteran from Bosnia and Herzegovina, rang a note of sanity in this debate: the countries of the Western Balkans should undergo a process of integration similar to the process undergone by the original members of the EU to the point where the region was integrated and established as an equal partner on an EU-wide playing field.

What a splendid idea! This would allow for integration work locally before the task of adopting the plethora of the EU *acquis communautaire*. This would allow local issues to be addressed and resolved. This would allow for the use of the EU model for post-conflict conflict prevention. It would need the support of the EU. It would require the use of the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance to support the process. It would need a clear signal that there could be no piecemeal accession. And most of all, it would need a recognition that
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accession of these countries should be for their benefit first and foremost and that rigid and untenable divisions that now exist would not be transported into and cemented in the EU.

So instead of small-scale missions which are not visible to civil society, and instead of an enlargement process which has significant

doubters both in the region and in the EU, might a better approach be in-depth discussions with local people leading to an export of the founding principles, ideas and ideals of the EU rather than the imposition of legislation and rules made mostly in western Europe which may or may not be relevant for this region?

Martina Weitsch

Terrorism and the Foreigner: A Book Review

Alongside democracy and the rule of law, respect for human rights is one of the core values of the European Union (EU). Legislation introduced by the EU and its Member States has led to much discussion surrounding the extent to which certain rights can be curtailed when a security threat is high enough.

Terrorism and the Foreigner compares the treatment of immigrants and asylum seekers in five EU Member States following both the 1990-1991 Gulf crisis and the attacks in the United States on 11 September 2001. The effect that each of these events had on law, and particularly human rights law, is examined in detail and some interesting comparisons and conclusions are made.

These two events occurred in very different international environments. The first Gulf War was an attack on a state, Iraq, in response to the presence of Iraqi troops in neighbouring Kuwait. The 'enemies of the state' were quite clearly defined (Iraq and, potentially, Iraqis in Europe), and the conflict was short. On the other hand, the 11 September attacks raised fears of the 'enemy within' and of a foe who does not fit into any meaningful category. An indefinite timescale to the conflict also distinguishes this event from the Gulf crisis. However, both events were accompanied by a significant terrorist scare and both led to changes in immigration and asylum policy across Europe.

This book provides a comprehensive account of how immigration and asylum policy has changed since 1990 and pays particular regard to the two

events above. The various policy measures enacted within the EU Member States of the UK, Germany, France, the Netherlands, and Italy are closely considered.

A relationship between terrorism and immigration law is ever-present. It seems clear that one of the most powerful and consequential responses by European states to recent acts of terror has been to try to tighten the borders of the country. This includes reinforcing the legal filters for people seeking to enter, detaining potential suspects (sometimes indefinitely), and utilising the intelligence services and the military in matters traditionally addressed by police departments. Just how effective these measures are is open to serious debate. *Terrorism and the Foreigner* goes further to examine how compatible these responses are to EU and international human rights law.

Human rights must always be defended. To consider that security requires their weakening is to misunderstand the threat facing European societies. Immigration and asylum law is highly exposed to amendments and knee-jerk changes when security is in doubt. We must remember that this should not mean a compromising of human rights.

Terrorism and the Foreigner is highly recommended for anyone interested in following asylum and immigration law in Europe over the past fifteen years. Analysis of the major events is lively and detailed. This book will contribute to more informed debate surrounding the relationship between human rights and security.

Matt Loffman

The Militarisation of the EU in Afghanistan?

On 27 March the Intergroup for Peace Initiatives, an unofficial cross-party group of MEPs for which QCEA provides the secretariat, held a successful event on the question of the militarisation of the EU's presence in Afghanistan. Speaking were Dr. Matin Baraki, expert on Afghanistan and professor at the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, Phillips-University, Marburg, Germany, and Tim

Eestermans, of the Asia Task Force at the Council of the European Union. Both Intergroup presidents, Caroline Lucas and Tobias Pflüger, were in attendance, as well as several other MEPs and members of civil society.

The Intergroup chose to hold the event at this time because of the NATO spring offensive in Afghanistan - part of the perceived shift from a
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Elisabeth Baker 1940 - 2007



Photo: Martina Weitsch 2004

Elisabeth Baker died on 14 May 2007. Her name is synonymous with QCEA. She was one of a small group of Friends without whom this Quaker witness would never have got off the ground.

Elisabeth was involved with Quakers and Quaker work for many years. Early on in her career, she worked in London at the Quaker International Centre. Once she had come to Brussels, where she worked for the ACP Secretariat and subsequently for the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union, she was a driving force behind the growth of Brussels Meeting, of the establishment of Belgium and Luxembourg Monthly Meeting and of QCEA.

She served on QCEA Council from 1979 to 2000; during this time, she was Assistant Secretary (1979 - 1984), Secretary (1985 - 1993), and Clerk of Bureau (1996 - 2000). At the end of that year, she retired from Council, due to health problems, but her commitment to and interest in QCEA never stopped. Indeed, in 2006 she was appointed as Clerk of the House Committee, a role she was sadly not able to fulfil for long.

But these facts only reveal the surface of Elisabeth's contribution to QCEA. As another founder member of QCEA and former Clerk put it:

'Elisabeth's contribution, both professionally to the Institutions of the European Union and its partners in the developing world, and to the Religious Society of Friends in continental Europe, was often of great significance and value but frequently passed unrecognised and unremarked. She accepted this with a quiet grace, good humour, and optimism, conveying through her integrity and cheerfulness the message that modesty and humility can carry their own rewards.'

We only met Elisabeth when we took up our appointment as Joint Representatives in 2002, but our friendship with her was a most important part of our lives here in Brussels. She invited us to her house within the first few days we were here, and we embarked on a real friendship effortlessly - it felt as if we had known Elisabeth for a very long time, right from the start, and we benefited from her interest in our work, her support for us and her experience and advice. We know that previous Representatives and others involved in QCEA benefited similarly. This is echoed by a former Representative:

'During my time in QCEA (the calendar years 1995-97) she was a constant source of support for the young people (Programme Assistants) and for (us). When new Programme Assistants arrived in Brussels, Elisabeth would always invite them for lunch at an early opportunity, both to get to know them, and to assure them there was someone they could contact if they had any problems.'

Elisabeth had a real gift for friendship; she made sure all of her friends felt special and supported and she embodied the phrase of 'answering to that of God' in others. She will be very much missed.

Liz Scurfield and Martina Weitsch

A memorial meeting for Elisabeth will be held on 8 September in Brussels. For further details please check the QCEA website.



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stabilisation force to a fighting force - and the possible implications this could have for EU/NATO relations. It was a lively debate made particularly interesting by the different perspectives of the speakers. Dr. Baraki had returned from Afghanistan (where he has family and visits at least once a year), just days before the debate, while Mr. Eestermans was representing the official EU position on Afghanistan.

Dr. Baraki spoke movingly about his experience of the current situation in Afghanistan, where there is much mistrust of the international presence and very little successful reconstruction. He cited corruption at all levels of government, officials beholden to the growing drug mafia, the total destruction of arable land and cessation of production as the key impediments to Afghan recovery post-Taliban.

Mr. Eestermans outlined the EU's shift in approach towards Afghanistan, which includes working more closely with NATO, a goal laid out in

the EU's Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts. Mid-June the EU will deploy a task-force (to be known as EUPOL) to Afghanistan that will consist of over 160 police trainers and law experts, as part of a European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) mission to assist in the coordination of police and rule of law interventions which are currently being undertaken by EU Member States on a bilateral basis. The mission will be stationed in Afghanistan for three years to 'monitor, mentor, advise and train' Afghan officials, with the goal of addressing police reform from local through central levels.

Mr. Eestermans agreed with Dr. Baraki that there is no military solution for Afghanistan. He described instead the ESDP mission as providing the necessary security for development to take place, ignoring the fact that the 160 EU officers will require NATO protection. This underlines the essentially military thinking of the ESDP policy. Afghanistan needs a broader and more differentiated approach.

Sophie Miller

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Quaker Council for European Affairs aisbl
Square Ambiorix 50, B-1000 Brussels, Belgium
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