



Around Europe

Quaker Council for European Affairs

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New QCEA Project Area: Energy, Environment and Conflict

European energy policy is, whether we like it or not, intricately linked to conflict and conflict prevention. Current and future conflicts related directly or indirectly to energy demand is an area in which all of the themes of QCEA's work - peace, human rights and economic justice - come into play, and which needs to be systematically explored. As Quakers working at a European level, we see a need for a Quaker voice in the discourse on energy, environmental change and conflict. Several Quaker agencies and bodies are already undertaking work in the broad area of environmental issues, and we have identified that the specific QCEA contribution to this work is the focus on policy development and advocacy at the European level, drawing on the results and outcomes of the work of other Quaker organisations.

These considerations have led QCEA (with the approval of its Council) to undertake a project examining the links between energy, environment and conflict. This project, beginning in 2008, will include a literature review of relevant literature and research available, as well as research into the various actors involved with the issues: governmental, business, non-governmental, and faith groups. The body of the project will entail original research, including an analysis of a number of types of conflicts, leading into one or two more detailed case studies to show the links between energy and conflict, and how changes in policy and in lifestyles with regard to the use of energy can contribute to a more peaceful world. Conclusions and recommendations from this work will then be used for advocacy with relevant decision-makers. It will cover a wide range of policy areas, including those where the EU in particular, (but also Member States), act in ways that could encourage or discourage appropriate developments.

Some of the key priorities for QCEA in this work would be: to achieve clarity over the

differentiation between decision-making at EU and at national levels; to identify strategic priorities for advocacy in light of the research done by QCEA, as well as the work done by the project partner and insights gained from work of other Quaker agencies and bodies; to ensure that messages about 'true security', reflections on alternative models of society and energy use, and the importance of human rights issues and conflict sensitivity in relevant policy areas are clearly developed and made available to decision-makers.

As a result of recent consultations with other Quaker bodies working in this area, QCEA sees the possibility of a close partnership with another Quaker agency working specifically on changes in our own behaviour that can be undertaken to address the issues of climate change. The Living Witness Project in the UK stands out as just such a potential project partner.

The EU's climate change policy and energy policy are in the process of evolving, and now is the time to address these issues in order to be better able to impact policies as they develop.

QCEA will soon be hiring a Policy Officer to work on this project. Please contact info@qcea.org if you would like to be notified when the position becomes available.

Sophie Miller

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Education and the Prevention of Violent Radicalisation

In its efforts to address the threat from terrorism, the European Commission has focussed activity on addressing violent radicalism. Violent radicalism, or 'the process by which some individuals come to adopt a set of attitudes or beliefs that justify the use of violence and of terrorism; a specific type of violence', needs to be better understood in order for European societies to counter more effectively the threats that face them. One area particularly lacking in research is the role played by education in the radicalisation process.

At a two-day conference held in Brussels last month, the Directorate-General for Justice, Freedom and Security of the European Commission (DG JLS) invited a range of experts to consider more precisely the connection between education and radicalisation processes, particularly among young people. The conference heard that the Commission has undertaken various initiatives which focus on this connection. These include commissioning three studies on violent radicalism in 2006, contracting a further study on best practices in cooperation efforts with a view to prevention of violent radicalism in early 2007, and setting up an Expert Group on Violent Radicalisation to receive advice on policymaking in this field. This conference was a further opportunity for important issues in the field to be discussed, before the Commission produces a policy document (expected in 2008) outlining good practices and suggesting concrete recommendations.

Feelings of anger, hatred and frustration were highlighted as factors leading to individuals' susceptibility to violent, radical messages. When these feelings are recognised and channelled into a clear ideology by like-minded people, angry individuals are offered an appropriate way to affirm an identity - something many radicals are striving for. The conference heard that an identity given by a social climate which tolerates radicalism and violence is a crucial component. Where people do not feel able to integrate and do not feel that the benefits of a certain society are open to them they are more likely to look for other sources of acceptance. A Muslim sheikh gave examples of some Muslims in Europe finding it difficult to assume a European identity. This made radicalisation more likely in their cases, he said.

A series of presentations discussed radicalisation among young Muslims and how this can be addressed. Suggestions from sheikhs and imams included: introducing legislation which demands that all imams and mosques be officially registered; a need for all registered mosques to have officially accepted 'Western values' (this was a hotly disputed point); greater emphasis inside mosques on individual people, not teachings; and allowing radicals to air their views in discussion with the 'mute majority' of Muslims inside mosques.

Allowing radicals the opportunity to voice their opinions was repeatedly encouraged. Other speakers urged all participants to find a dialogue with extremists. We need to bring them 'out of the darkness and into the light' and have more trust in people's common sense. When radical views are confined to the corners of mosques and to private, clandestine meetings it is easier for ideologies to go unchallenged. By involving the community and the public these can be confronted and discredited.

The conference heard how schools are important in teaching tolerance and understanding of other cultures. An example of a secondary school in the Netherlands was given where a mixture of Christian, Muslim and atheist pupils were asked to debate whether the Qur'an should be banned. Having debated the issue strongly, pupils were then asked to change positions - the Muslims defending the view taken by the atheists and vice versa. This proved to be a genuine learning experience which improved understanding amongst pupils.

It should be remembered that schools, while important, are not the most important actors when dealing with violent radicalisation. Schools cannot be expected to solve all of society's difficulties. Research shows that personal and social experiences are far more powerful in the forming of radical views than experiences at school. One research paper found that family (forty per cent) and community (forty per cent) played a more crucial role than school (twenty per cent) in shaping a young person's political outlook.

Education plays an important role in addressing radicalisation among young people. More can be



done in schools to promote understanding and appreciation between cultures but society must also take responsibility. We need to have frank and objective discussions with radicals. By engaging with their ideology and finding common

ground we will have made important progress in countering violent radicalisation. I hope this conference will have contributed to the adoption of a relevant and helpful policy document by the Commission in 2008.

Matt Loffman

Prison Health is Public Health

The 2nd International Prisoner Health Conference took place in Varna, from 24-26 September 2007. The Conference brought together 130 delegates from different countries with a broad range of professional interests. Doctors, academics, prisoner workers and policy-makers were all represented as the Conference sought to raise awareness of prisoner health issues and promote good practice.

Speakers from Bulgaria spoke of health concerns related to prison overcrowding and the growing number of prisoners with problematic drug addictions. There are currently between 8,000 and 9,000 prisoners in Bulgaria, despite a capacity of only 3,500. This overcrowding leaves just over two square metres per prisoner in common cells and in some cases up to twenty prisoners share one prison cell. The implications of overcrowding on prisoner health are significant. Infections are spread far more easily and to more individuals. Doctors and other officials are overworked and cannot afford to give each prisoner the attention they need to identify problems. The food budget is spread even more thinly making it impossible for prisoners to maintain a good diet.

A rise in the number of prisoners with drug addictions can be observed in other Council of Europe member states and this creates increased problems for prison doctors and officials. We heard that the Bulgarian probation system, which has been in operation since 2005, supervises 1,606 individuals of whom around 400 have a drug dependency. The Head of the Probation Service told the Conference that to be more successful in coping with these problems we must better identify the specific, drug-related problem; avoid labelling individuals as drug addicts, and focus on the strengths of the offenders to build their self-confidence.

QCEA ran a workshop on the specific health needs of women in prison. The conditions and treatment of pregnant women were discussed, as were child care issues including babies in prison, health care delivery, and medical confidentiality. Participants brought their own knowledge and expertise to the session and it was an excellent opportunity to talk to others in the field with similar interests.

An issue which divided the group was the age limit of babies in prison. This varies across Europe with Norway not allowing babies in prison at all while Estonia and Latvia allow children to stay in prison until they are four years old.

It was also pleasing to see four other presentations on specific issues relating to women in prison. A particularly interesting study that analysed what affects the reintegration of female drug users after release from prison found that prospects for successful reintegration will be improved if a woman has a relationship with a new partner who does not use drugs, maintains strong ties with her parents while imprisoned, and/or moves to a different town.

A series of keynote presentations addressed HIV and AIDS in the prison setting. A prison environment, particularly an overcrowded prison environment, is highly conducive to the spread of HIV infections. A need to better inform prisoners of the risks was widely highlighted. Research-based evidence was presented which showed that where clean needles are provided free of charge, there is no increase in either the number of prisoners injecting drugs or the amount that is injected. Conversely, the number of reported cases of HIV was significantly reduced.

Prison health equals public health. Prisoner health is under-resourced in almost every country in Europe but prison is not an isolated society. Prisons have staff members, doctors and visitors. Prisoners themselves will become members of the general public upon release (which is often within eighteen months following the start of their sentence). The 2006 European Prison Rules state that:

40.3 Prisoners shall have access to the health services available in the country without discrimination on the grounds of their legal situation.

The people who are sent to prison are almost invariably those with the greatest need of health care. It is important for society that this need is not neglected.

Matt Loffman



Austrian Conscientious Objector Franz Jägerstätter beatified

In the presence of his 94 year old widow Franziska and 5000 other people, conscientious objector Franz Jägerstätter was beatified on 1 November 2007 in Linz (Austria). Franz Jägerstätter was called up to the German "Wehrmacht" when he was 36 years old but refused to serve. He was executed in Berlin in 1943. The Catholic church in 1940s Austria had condemned Franz Jägerstätter for his conscientious objection and rejected all support for his religiously motivated refusal to serve in the German army. Pope Benedict XVI has now stressed that Franz Jägerstätter "gave his life for the values of the human being."

The European Bureau for Conscientious Objection (EBCO) brought the fate of conscientious objector victims of the Nazi terror to a wider public when it inaugurated a memorial stone at the concentration camp in Mauthausen (near Linz) five years ago and then a second in Buchenwald in 2004.

Gerd Greune, President of EBCO

QCEA STUDY TOUR 29 March - 6 April 2008

The Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) Study Tour provides the perfect opportunity to learn, discuss and reflect on what Europe means to you. The Study Tour includes visits to various European Institutions in Brussels and Luxembourg; meetings with MEPs; informative sessions with NGOs; and interactive discussions about security, peace, justice and human rights. We guarantee eight days of learning and fun about all things European!

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