



Quaker
Council for
European
Affairs

around
europe

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Peacebuilder joins QCEA team

QCEA is delighted to have been joined by Dilia Zwart as Peace Programme Assistant. Prior to joining us in March, Dilia worked at the European Parliament for a Romanian politician and former Minister of Justice, and focused on foreign affairs and EU enlargement.

Dilia joins our peace programme at an exciting time. We are currently beginning a research project that will bring together evidence to show that peacebuilding approaches work, and are a credible alternative to current European security policy.

Dilia already has experience in peacebuilding through field work and education in the Western Balkans. After a summer teaching fellowship in northern Bosnia-Herzegovina in 2013, she co-founded the Mostar Summer Youth Programme (MSYP) which creates a hub of critical thinking, voluntarism, and entrepreneurship for local and international youth in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Dilia remains on the board MSYP, an organisation which combines academic courses and skills based workshops to encourage young people to think critically about social issues and engage in active citizenship. The program aspires to bring together young people in the Western Balkans to discuss and find solutions for pressing social issues in the region, where levels of brain drain and youth unemployment are sky-high, and where tensions from the recent wars remain largely unresolved. Dilia has worked with various stakeholders in the education system and civil society to foster participation in the program from youth of all backgrounds and to encourage cooperation on a higher level.

Dilia first became interested in peace and human rights work while growing up near the Mexican-Arizona border and volunteering for refugee resettlement programs. Her Dutch upbringing combined with Arizona's multicultural, multilingual environment inspired her interest in language, culture, and dialogue. She obtained an MA degree in International Studies and Diplomacy at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) and a BA degree in Social Anthropology at Harvard. Dilia conducted ethnographic research for her MA and BA dissertations on conflict transformation and political participation in Bosnia-Herzegovina. She has also worked as a research assistant at the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative. Dilia is bilingual in English and Dutch.



↑ *Our new Peace Programme Assistant, Dilia Zwart.*
PHOTO: KATE McNALLY

Quaker House lunch held on militarisation of aid

QCEA has organised an event to connect development, human rights, peacebuilding and faith-based organisations working on European proposals to reallocate development funds to train and equip the armies and border guards of third countries. In partnership with development agency Brot für die Welt, QCEA brought 14 organisations together in February to identify areas where different actors could partner and/or mobilize on this issue and outline next steps. Further decisions will be taken by EU member states in the second half of 2017. Our work continues.

Paris meeting discusses future of European security policy

In March, QCEA Peace Programme Lead Olivia Caeymaex attended a meeting in Paris with representatives of the French government and other members of the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO). The meeting discussed French implementation of the EU Global Strategy. The EU Global Strategy was agreed in June 2016, replacing the European Security Strategy from 2003. At the meeting Olivia encouraged policy makers to opt for nonviolent peacebuilding, as a sustainable, effective and ethical alternative to military deployments.

Creating a culture of peace

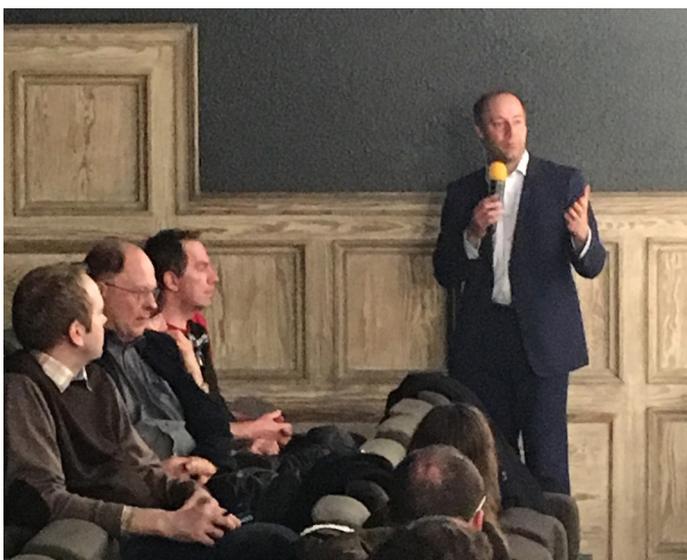
QCEA sells out cinema with awareness-raising arms trade event



In response to recent EU policy and structural decisions towards strengthening its defence institutions, QCEA organised a film screening and debate with the European Network Against Arms Trade (ENAAT) on 22 March at the Cinéma Galeries in Brussels. The documentary, *Shadow World*, reveals the hard realities of the international arms trade and its role in global economy. It sheds the light on the complicity of governments and intelligence agencies, judicial bodies and weapons manufacturers, and provides evidence of how it fosters corruption, drives economic and foreign policies and undermines democracy.

The film was followed by a debate with Laetitia Sédou, ENAAT EU Programme Officer and Andrew Feinstein, the author of the book that inspired the film, and it was moderated by the QCEA Peace Programme Lead, Olivia Caeymaex. Two Members of the European Parliament responded to the presentations to provide contextual facts on EU security policy decisions. The audience actively participated in the discussion which was concluded with four civil society organisations pitching their work against arms trade or suggesting alternative responses to insecurity, such as Saferworld or Vredesactie.

The event was a big success and was quickly sold out. It provided an opportunity for students, activists, private sector professionals, young and old, Belgian and international to grow awareness on the role of the arms industry and its impact on peace and security, but also to exchange on concerns around these issues. QCEA was delighted that almost 200 people turned up for this event. Cultural activities offer an important avenue to rethink security.



↑ Impressions of QCEA's recent film screening of *Shadow World* in Brussels: using culture to raise awareness of the EU's run towards militarisation. PHOTOS: NICOLAS FAIVRE / KATE McNALLY

For more information about the film, visit shadowworldfilm.com

Lloyd's move to Brussels raises fears of business exodus

Concerns that foreign investment in the UK will fall as a result of Brexit were reinforced on March 30 when Lloyd's of London, the centuries old insurance market, announced it would be establishing a subsidiary in Brussels within the next year and taking up to one hundred London-based staff with them. At the same time, the German Chamber of Commerce (DIHK) announced that 10 percent of German companies were planning to move their British interests to the continent in the coming years. Similar intentions have also been announced by Ryanair and Easyjet, who are seeking to avoid restrictions on non-EU carriers which will affect the UK following its withdrawal.

Serbia's incoming President plans Balkan free trade area

Serbia's newly-elected President, Aleksandar Vucic, has announced that he plans to spearhead the development of a free trade area covering much of the former Yugoslavia. The region's small states - many of which are still aiming to become EU members in the coming decade - have been beset by troubles in the past year, most notably an ongoing political scandal in FYR Macedonia which has reawakened ethnic tensions. Vucic, a pro-European who previously served as Serbia's Prime Minister, declared that economic growth is the key to ensuring stability, and will therefore pursue the free trade initiative as a priority when he takes the Presidential office in June.



↑ Serbia began negotiating EU accession in 2014.
PHOTO: PIERRE MOREL (CC)



↑ Lydia Funck, the newly-appointed General Secretary of Church and Peace.
PHOTO: CHURCH AND PEACE

Church and Peace appoints new General Secretary

Church and Peace - a European network of churches with a commitment to peace and non-violence - has appointed its new General Secretary. Lydia Funck, a German Mennonite with an academic background in peace and conflict studies, will assume her new role from April 1. Funck said that the focus of her tenure would be inspiring younger generations to take up the mantle of past efforts towards justice and peace, commenting that "it is high time that Christians across Europe become more visible and audible in their quest and engagement for peace."

Updated European guidelines on community sanctions

The Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers has recently issued new joint guidelines aimed at organisations managing community sanctions in Europe. Building on an initial document which was published in 1992, the updated advice outlines best practice and standards for agencies and community bodies which are involved in "restorative justice." In short, this covers initiatives which seek to provide alternatives to prison in the case of less severe offences, ranging from traditional community service to more innovative approaches such as mediation between offenders, victims and their families.

The Council of Europe has long been a source of innovation when it comes to a more humane justice system, and is active in promoting penal reform and efforts to combat overcrowding. QCEA continues to follow their work closely.

Brussels hosts global Syria conference

On 4-5 April more than 70 governments met in Brussels for an important conference called 'Supporting the future of Syria and the region'. QCEA's Director, Andrew Lane, has been involved in facilitating preparatory meetings for the conference. These meetings discussed the humanitarian and human rights dimensions of the Syria conference.

Syria has been overwhelmed by violence and human rights abuses since 2011. The violent conflict now involves regional and international governments and it is expected to continue for several more years. It is therefore important to think about how people can be protected from the current violence, in addition to the wider reconciliation process.

Some of the recommendations at the meetings included that:

- Full access should be granted to independent monitors to visit Syrian prisons. Monitors should include doctors who are able to assess the extent of torture.
- Wealthy countries should accept 10% of refugees currently in countries neighbouring Syria, to meet the UN goal to do so by the end of 2018.
- Governments should be clear that returning refugees to 'so called' safe zones in Syria would be in violation of nonrefoulement (the principle of not returning refugees to their country of origin if they would be in danger).

UPCOMING QCEA EVENT

Sanctuary Everywhere conference in December

Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW) and QCEA are holding a conference in Brussels in December. Europe is facing significant challenges relating to peace and human rights, including an increase in nationalism and fragmentation of some of the cooperation that has developed since the Second World War. As Friends we oppose war, and call for peacebuilding efforts long before war is on the agenda. The question facing European Friends is what should we be doing to swim against the current tide.

The conference will take place in Brussels from 1-3 December 2017. For more information visit www.qcea.org/events



↑ *The EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs, Frederica Mogherini, speaking at the conference together with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.*
PHOTO: EUROPEAN UNION

- Countries that receive refugees, such as Lebanon and Jordan, should ensure the right to work and freedom of association for Syrian refugees. Local and refugee communities that live together should not be divided by different school curricula.
- The international community should deliver on its commitment to have all Syrian children in school by the end of 2017. Little progress is being made, but this could change if funding was provided on multi-annual rather than single year basis, and before the school year starts.
- International non-governmental organisations, such as humanitarian agencies, should have more equal relationships with the local Syrian organisations with whom they are in partnership.

Recommendations from the preparatory meetings were fed into the main conference, of which the European Union was one of the co-chairs. Engagement with the EU offers an opportunity to engage in global processes that is often not found elsewhere. The EU has human rights at the core of its values, as its roots lie in the horrors of the Holocaust and two World Wars. It therefore offers an opportunity to ensure that the protection of people is central to international discussions.

Connect with others talking about this issue on Twitter and Facebook using #SyriaConf2017.



Volunteering with refugees in your area just got easier

Looking for a local place to volunteer to work with refugees? There is now an app that can help you find who is doing what in your area.

Designed to help refugees and asylum seekers find help near them, the app uses geolocalisation to pinpoint the position of the user and allows them to find specific help nearby.

With categories including food, water, health, shelter, and toilet/showers, the app gives access to immediate survival needs. It also has links to centres which provide legal and administrative help, education, activities for parents and children, men, women, and a section for unaccompanied children.

As most asylum seekers and refugees use smartphones to stay in contact with family, the free app is easily available to them, and can be a valuable tool for those seeking help in an unfamiliar environment.

In addition, it is a valuable tool for those seeking to help in their community. Kate McNally, QCEA Forced Migration Project Coordinator said, "I recently used the app to help a Friend who wanted to volunteer in Brussels, and in doing so discovered a refugee centre a few streets from Quaker House. Les Ateliers du Soleil has been working with refugees and asylum seekers in Brussels for 40 years, and their director did some work with the first QCEA representative."

The Refugee Aid App is available for iPhone and Android. For more information visit refugeeaidapp.com

Quakers gather to develop a response to forced migration

The Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network (QARN), in partnership with Woodbrooke, QCEA, and Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW) sponsored a conference on the issue of forced migration at Woodbrooke in February.

The conference featured workshops on the impact of the 2016 UK Immigration Act, immigration detention, the role of the media and how to change the narrative/speak to 'the other side,' among others. A Quaker member of the Ammerdown group led a workshop on rethinking security.

Keynote speakers included Andrew Lane, QCEA director, who spoke on the European dimensions of the issue and Gina Clayton, who focused on the situation in the UK. Laurel Townhead from Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) spoke about Quaker responses to forced migration at the UN, and Tim Gee from QPSW presented a workshop on movement building.

An excerpt from the minute is below:

Forced migration in its various forms is clearly a concern for Quakers to take forward in our individual lives, through our communities and Meetings, our Quaker bodies and Yearly Meetings, and when we work alongside others. We cannot change the world alone, however we may bring seeds of change and nourish the soil.

Quakers have through time been involved in every aspect of the humanitarian responses to forced migration including advocacy, legal help, trauma care, medical care, language and housing through the common thread of friendship.

If coming in a unsteady boat across the Mediterranean is anyone's safest route, we as humanity can do better. We need a different language for migration because the current situation and discourse is 'othering' people.

We feel a deep leading to act together on a political level in Britain and at the European level. In doing so we are acting upon our heritage, our way of being, and the leading of the spirit.

To hear Andrew Lane's talk at Woodbrooke on Youtube, go to the following link: bit.ly/2o58kQG

Where next for Europe?

While British politicians focus on Brexit, the EU is considering radical change as it marks its 60th anniversary

Sixty years ago, the heads of six European governments gathered in the Italian capital to sign the Treaty of Rome – the document which formed the basis for the European Union as we know it. Back then, the scope of European cooperation was limited to coal and steel production, the idea being to pool control of the two industries which would be necessary to wage war.

The EU has come a long way since then, with subsequent treaties affording the institutions in Brussels a role in matters as diverse as social protection and renewable energy. However, the guiding principle of “ever closer union” between the states and peoples of Europe has always been a constant.

Yet as the EU marks its diamond anniversary, the project is facing a period of fundamental change, as well as a crisis of confidence. Britain’s decision to leave the EU – the most visible expression of a Euroscepticism which exists across the continent – has shaken the Union at the same time as political pressures over migration and the Greek economy threaten its very foundations. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that the European Commission chose to mark the anniversary by publishing its “White Paper on the Future of Europe” - a document which is notably frank about the existential turning point facing the EU, asking whether the principle of “ever closer union” is still realistic.

The document sets out five possible models for the EU going forward, along with the pros and cons of each. One of the “options” is to strip the EU of much of its power, reverting to a lightweight economic organisation which would have seemed familiar to the signatories of the Treaty of Rome. At the other end of the spectrum, a great leap towards federalisation is considered. However, the eventual reality is likely to fall somewhere in the middle.

EU-watchers refer to this compromise as “multi-speed Europe.” In essence, this means that enthusiastic countries can move forward with big ideas – greater defence cooperation or a fiscal union, for example –



↑ *The European Council meeting in Rome this March.*
PHOTO: EUROPEAN UNION

without forcing less willing members to join in. The idea sounds pragmatic, and would address public misconceptions about faceless Brussels bureaucrats hacking away at national sovereignty. However, the idea is not without its risks.

Several countries in the EU, particularly Poland and Hungary, have increasingly authoritarian governments whose only real check on their power are European rules. In Poland, the ruling party’s attempts to neuter the judiciary have been all but blocked by the European Commission; in Hungary, inhumane treatment of refugees and crackdowns on civil society have attracted the threat of unprecedented sanctions at the EU level. In the event of a “looser” form of European cooperation, it is foreseeable that national governments could opt out of fundamental rights cooperation and retain the purely economic benefits that the EU brings.

At a time when Europe seems politically fragmented, and faith in the idea of cooperation is waning, it is our common values which become more important than ever. Reflection and reform is healthy – but we must be careful not to throw the baby out with the bathwater as we reassess Europe’s direction.

What is QCEA doing?

In these uncertain times, QCEA is doing its part to reassert our values at the European level. This year we will be launching two new programmes which will focus our efforts where they are needed most. Our Peace Programme will address how Europe can respond to complex challenges whilst avoiding militarisation, and will advocate for a “shared” vision of security. At the same time, our Human Rights Programme will undertake important research on the detention of child refugees, with the aim of putting pressure on European policymakers to end the practice. It will also lobby in favour of Europe’s human rights cooperation framework, the ECHR.

ECJ dress code judgement adds to disadvantage

In March, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) of the European Union ruled that private companies can ban headscarves. This case is likely to have significant implications for Muslim women who already face a range of barriers to gaining employment, are under-represented in the workforce and economically disadvantaged.

The ECJ, not to be confused with the European Court of Human Rights, was considering the issue following referrals from two national courts (Belgium and France). The Belgian case involved a receptionist who was dismissed by the private security company G4S for refusing to take off her headscarf, when there was no uniform for the role and no policy on religious dress at the company.

The cases were able to be considered by the ECJ due to the EU Employment Equality Directive that prohibits direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of religion. The ECJ judgement, which is binding on all 28 EU Member States, excepted the argument that banning religious dress allowed a company to remain neutral toward its customers. At the root of this interpretation of neutrality is the idea that there is a superior 'normal' culture, which is the culture of the majority of citizens.

European societies need to reflect deeply on structures of privilege and disadvantage that already exist, including discrimination many people face when looking for work. However, the European Union institutions are poorly placed to lead this conversation due to the lack of diversity within their own workforce.

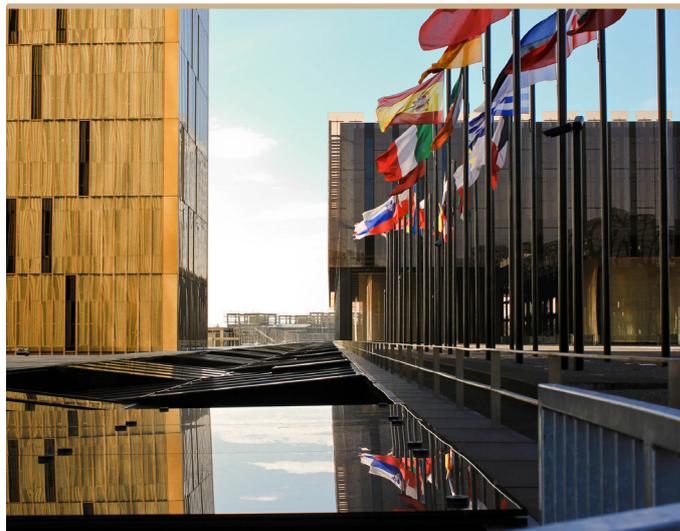


PHOTO: KATARINA DZUREKOVA (CC)

Introduction to the ECJ

The European Court of Justice (ECJ) is the highest court in the European Union. Based in Luxembourg, it is the ultimate arbiter of EU law among the Union's 28 Member States. It consists of one senior judge per Member State, who are each nominated by their respective national governments for six-year terms.

The ECJ only rules on EU law - in other words, matters in which the European Union has some kind of competence. In this case, the EU had legislated on equality in employment, meaning that the case could be heard by the ECJ. Otherwise, national Supreme Courts would have the final say.

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