



Quaker  
Council for  
European  
Affairs

around  
europe

ISSUE 376 • MAR—APR 2018

# BUILDING PEACE TOGETHER

Ordinary people,  
working together,  
can build peace.

Our new report  
shows how.

PAGES 6-7

ALSO INSIDE

Stop Fuelling War: a call to action against the arms trade

PAGE 8

Community support for refugees and migrants

PAGE 9

Online hate speech: Europe acts, what can citizens do?

PAGE 10

## THE NEED FOR #SANCTUARYEVERYWHERE REMAINS HIGH ACROSS EUROPE

- In February, six African migrants were shot and injured in the Italian city of Macerata in a racially motivated attack. Migration had featured strongly in the election campaign, which included a promise to send back 600,000 of an estimated 630,000 migrants in Italy.
- In Bulgaria, the government was slow to condemn a march by hundreds of far-right supporters in honour of a Bulgarian general who led a pro-Nazi organisation in the 1940s. A co-President of the Green group in the European Parliament visited Bulgaria, which currently holds the rotating presidency of the EU. A government minister described Ska Keller MEP as an example of “extreme left-wing green extremists supporting the Islamic invasion of Europe.”
- Poland’s parliament has passed legislation to prosecute people who accuse Poles of complicity with the Holocaust, and matched this with an extensive social media campaign called “German Death Camps.” This example of historical revisionism comes as the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) launches a new report on the state of Holocaust remembrance across Europe. Read more at: [www.osce.org/odahr/hmd2018](http://www.osce.org/odahr/hmd2018)
- Hungary’s government has introduced legislation that would empower the interior minister to ban civil society organisations that support migration, saying they represent a “national security risk.”

## EUROPEAN POLICYMAKERS WORK TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION OF REFUGEES

The Council of Europe’s Committee of Experts on Administrative Detention of Migrants held its most recent meeting on 21-22 February. The Committee is working to draft a common instrument which will codify the standards and procedures for immigration detention across the Council’s 47 Member States. QCEA has already written a report on the experiences of children who are detained for their refugee status; you can read it at [www.qcea.org/human-rights](http://www.qcea.org/human-rights)

Meanwhile, QCEA took part in a two-day conference in Brussels which explored how to better communicate refugee-related matters to the wider public. *Telling Europe’s Migration Stories* brought together civil society staff from across Europe to discuss how the public discourse could become more humane and solutions-oriented. This challenge remains of vital importance given the widespread public antipathy towards refugees.



↑ Brussels’ Parc Maximilien, which has become a highly visible example of the shortcomings of Europe’s refugee policy.

PHOTO: KATE McNALLY

## Women in prison

Women make up a small fraction of Europe’s overall prison population, but this means that their fundamental rights as women – not to mention their distinctive biological and social needs – are often overlooked by penal authorities and staff. The European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT), run by the Council of Europe, has just published a series of recommendations for the humane detention of women which takes these factors into consideration. These include—

- appropriate accommodation;
- equal access to activities;
- adequate hygiene and healthcare provision;
- ante- and post-natal care where necessary;
- gender-sensitive body searches.

The factsheet also explores the difficulty of striking a balance between the benefits of mixed-gender interaction and the risk of sexual violence that it brings. You can read the full document at: [bit.ly/2DT0vEX](http://bit.ly/2DT0vEX)

Another challenge facing prison administrators, as well as prisoners themselves, is the propagation of violent ideology in detention. The European Commission currently funds 19 projects which aim to address this phenomenon, and on 27 February it held a conference to explore what further steps could be taken. According to the Commission, the focus of the discussions was “how to prevent prisons becoming breeding grounds for terrorists, how to manage radicalised prisoners, how to share information between different agencies and what does and what does not work.”

## EU MILITARISATION: EUROPEAN INVESTMENT BANK

On 28 February, Jorge Domecq, Chief Executive of the European Defence Agency (EDA) and Alexander Stubb, Vice-President of the European Investment Bank (EIB) signed a Memorandum of Understanding to “strengthen cooperation” between the two institutions.

The Memorandum, signed “with a view to supporting investments in defence research and development activities,” follows a year of rapid militarisation across the EU institutions, which has occurred in the name of creating more permanent defence cooperation between Member States.

Although the legal provision for these developments has existed since the 2007 Lisbon Treaty, concrete steps have only been taken recently in light of security challenges on the EU’s borders, as well as a perception that NATO has become an unreliable security partner since Donald Trump’s election.

## EU SPEAKS OUT ON LGBTI RIGHTS ABUSES IN RUSSIA AND TURKEY

On 8 February, the European Parliament adopted a resolution calling on the Russian authorities to end the recent campaign of persecution against people perceived to be LGBTI in Chechnya, previously mentioned in *Around Europe*. The resolution also raised the worsening situation of sexual minorities in Turkey, including an indefinite ban on events organised by LGBTI organisations in Ankara.

Meanwhile, on 1 March, the EU Justice Commissioner Vera Jourová presented the second annual report on the *List of Actions to Advance LGBTI Equality*. The report set out the progress made in implementing the EU-wide actions – particularly the development of an Equal Treatment Directive which would prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in education, social protection and access to goods and services across the European Union.

## ONLINE HATE SPEECH: EUROPE RESPONDS

Anyone who uses the internet will know that “hate speech” is all too common online, particularly on social media and in the comments sections of websites. The European Commission recently released a set of recommendations to be taken by both companies and Member States to help tackle incitement to hatred or violence on the internet. Meanwhile, the European Court of Human Rights has published its latest factsheet on the issue. To find out more, and to read about what QCEA is doing, see p10.



PHOTO: CAMERA DI DEPUTATI (CC)

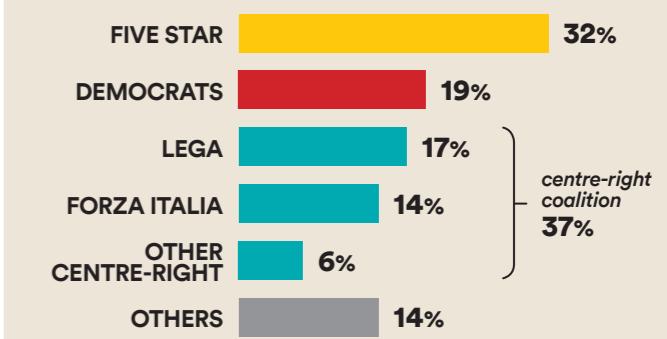
## Italian elections: populist rise leaves country in deadlock

Just months after an indecisive result in the German elections, another major EU country looks set to endure weeks of political negotiations after Italy’s parliamentary ballot on 4 March produced no clear winner. With 40% of the vote required to govern outright, no one party or coalition won enough support for a clear outcome (see below).

The impasse was largely the result of a surge in support for populist parties – most notably the Five Star Movement, led by political newcomer Luigi Di Maio (above, left). Little more than a fringe movement a few years ago, its anti-establishment and Eurosceptic message has struck a chord with Italians, siphoning support away from “traditional” parties in the same way as similar movements across Europe. Now Italy’s most popular party, the Five Star Movement is nevertheless limited by its pledge not to form coalitions – a promise which it hoped would push them above 40% of the vote, but which has now tied their hands.

Another populist party, Lega – “The League” – had no such reluctance, running on a coalition ticket with Silvio Berlusconi’s centre-right *Forza Italia* and other, smaller parties. However, they too failed to reach the threshold required for power.

The concern now is that these two populist newcomers may abandon their reservations and join forces, completely excluding mainstream voices from Italian government.



# Because words matter: QCEA makes key intervention at Council of Europe

In January the Council of Europe held its biannual International NGO conference, one of the six institutions of the 47-country body. Of the three organisations chosen to speak before the final conference vote, QCEA was the only one to speak in favour of changing the French reference to human rights, from the ‘rights of man – droits de l’homme’ to ‘human rights – droits humains.’ Following two speeches against the change, Kate McNally’s impassioned argument received around of applause, which is uncommon during such events. The INGO conference then formally voted to adopt ‘droits humains’ as their agreed terminology – a decision that is likely to have wide-ranging and long-standing implications.

## QCEA convenes NATO and the EU to discuss the limitations of military power

In February QCEA held an important meeting about the appropriate division of labour between civilian and military organisations. The meeting was organised jointly with EUROMIL, the trade union association for military personnel in Europe. It also included the a Deputy Assistant Secretary General of NATO and several senior EU officials. The conversation asked important questions, such whether current policy makes some people safer at the expense of others.

## Quaker peacebuilder speaks at QCEA event on Bosnia

Launching our new partnership with Young Professionals in Foreign Policy, QCEA held an event on the future of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Former Quaker Peace and Social Witness peacebuilder Goran Bubalo spoke at the event which also included EU Military Staff, the European Commission and Julie Ward MEP. The event heard that a much deeper peacebuilding is needed, including an end to the separate school curricula which continues to divide and create grievance. Participants also heard the positive example of how the Sarajevo residents have cared for people fleeing Syria, Afghanistan and elsewhere. More details about the event can be found on the QCEA blog. <http://bit.ly/2Gdoldh>



↑ 100,000 European citizens stand against arms funding.  
PHOTO: ENAAT

## High-level arms trade meeting

In January QCEA's Olivia Caeymaex joined other members of the European Network Against the Arms Trade (ENAAT) to discuss increasing European support for the arms trade. The delegation met with Oliver Rentschler, deputy-head of cabinet for Federica Mogherini, who is the European Commission Vice President for Foreign and Security Policy. During the meeting ENAAT delivered a petition signed by more than 100,000 citizens (above) calling for EU weapons research funding to be halted and instead go to projects developing nonviolent ways of preventing and resolving conflicts.

**Did you know that the major arms trade fair Eurosatory takes place this summer in Paris?**  
Find out more on page 8.

## Woodbrooke European politics course a success

“Quakers and European Politics” was the subject of a course in Birmingham in February. It was organised as a partnership between Woodbrooke (Meet – Stay – Learn). Participants considered the question “What does Europe mean to me?” We analysed William Penn’s 1693 proposals for interstate cooperation to halt the almost endless war on the European mainland, and discussed QCEA’s peace and human rights work in 2018. A summary of the course can be found on the QCEA blog. [bit.ly/2DM0mly](http://bit.ly/2DM0mly)

## QCEA's innovative new peacebuilding tool launched

After months of detailed research and writing, QCEA has just launched *Building Peace Together*, a major new resource for civilian peacebuilding. We've already brought our work to the attention of dozens of policymakers and peacebuilders via three launch events, at Quaker House Brussels (15/3), the European Parliament (19/3) and Friends House in London (21/3).

Our event in the Parliament was co-hosted with Quaker MEP Molly Scott Cato, who rightly said that “we need to shift the balance of time, energy and money away from preparing for war and towards preparing for peace.” Also speaking was 2018 Finnish Presidential Candidate and Chair of the European Institute of Peace, Pekka Haavisto, who explained his work and the amazing impact dialogue can have. The meeting also heard from QCEA's Peace Programme Lead Olivia Caeymaex, European Parliament Vice President Mairead McGuinness MEP and Ben Moore from the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office.

*Building Peace Together* has already been very well received by key decision-makers and peacebuilding advocates, and we fully expect that the report will continue to have an influence in the months and years to come. To find out more about it, see our article overleaf.

As part of our launch activities for the report, QCEA's Olivia Caeymaex was interviewed on Radio France Internationale. To listen to the broadcast, visit our YouTube channel.

## Race and privilege reading group launched

Since February a weekly ‘race and privilege’ reading group has been taking place in Quaker House. The group has begun with the Debbie Irving book *Waking Up White, and finding myself in the story of race*. The formation of the group follows interest shown in the #BrusselsSoWhite series of Politico articles in December. Quaker House is a relaxed venue for anyone who wants to explore the uncomfortable reality of white supremacy in detail, and particularly what it means for us personally.

## Upcoming QCEA Study Tour

**Save the date!** QCEA will be organising its next Study Tour 27 March - 1 April 2019 – the same week as the likely “Brexit Day,” which makes it an especially important time to come together to witness against the tide of division and separation.

We'll publish more details about registering for the Study Tour both here and on our website in the Spring. If you'd like to take part in this fascinating trip to Brussels, look out for our announcements.



↑ Impressions of the launch events for our peacebuilding report at Quaker House (top) and the European Parliament. PHOTOS: VITTORIO CAPICI / ANDREW LANE

# BUILDING PEACE TOGETHER

The evidence is clear: conflict resolution works best when all of society is involved. Yet despite this, civilian peacebuilding is too often overlooked. Our new publication aims to change that. QCEA Peace Programme Officer Dilia Zwart looks back at its launch.

QCEA is excited to announce the publication of its major new peacebuilding resource, *Building Peace Together*. It is a compilation of in-depth research and case studies that make the case for peacebuilding by showing how everyone working in sectors such as Education, Health or Economics can contribute to building sustainable peace. In a time where the nature and actors involved in violent conflict are changing, this resource aims at rethinking the idea of what is an efficient response to these new security challenges by demonstrating the effectiveness and diversity of peacebuilding initiatives.

A series of three launch events gave visibility to *Building Peace Together*—

- in Brussels at Quaker House,
- at the European Parliament, co-organised with Molly Scott Cato MEP
- and in London at Friends House, co-organised with Quaker Peace & Social Witness and its staff.

Each event featured a variety of speakers bridging the European External Action Service, Members of the European Parliament, Member States representatives and civil society. So far, the three events mobilized over 70 participants from civil society, EU institutions, faith-based organisations and government officials, all praising the usefulness of the report for their work.

During the events, panelists highlighted how the resource shows how different actors can orient themselves in peacebuilding, even if they might not have thought of themselves as a peace builder before.

In Brussels on 19 March, Ben Moore, Assistant Director at the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO), highlighted how the resource emphasizes that choosing the right form of engagement takes careful analysis and planning. Pekka Haavisto, President of the European Institute of Peace (EIP), commented on the importance of peacebuilding principles such as building on drivers of peace, and provided practical examples of his experience in less obvious countries such as Finland.

In London on 21 March, Charlotte Morris, Senior Conflict Adviser in the Research and Evidence Division at DFID, referred to the many examples in the resource that show peacebuilding beyond the images often seen in the media, such as a handshake between two political leaders. Furthermore, she noted that the resource demonstrates how peacebuilding can work through partnerships that bridge local knowledge and international expertise. Julian Egan, Head of Advocacy at International Alert, indicated that the resource can help increase understanding around the concept of peacebuilding beyond experts at the UN Peacebuilding Commission to a wider audience.

As the launch events provided hard copies of the resource for the first time, participants were able to comment on the structure and formatting. A common theme among feedback received was the practical, detailed and example-led nature of the resource. The comparative perspective was seen as helpful to draw lessons from across the globe.

The critical timing of the publication of *Building Peace Together* was also well received, as it complements the ‘how’ to several reports that address the ‘why’ in making the case for peacebuilding. These reports and policies include the UN-World Bank *Pathways for Peace*, International Alert’s *Redressing the Balance*, and the EU *Integrated Approach to Conflicts and Crises*.

Participants actively engaged in the discussion, addressing issues such as mainstreaming gender through peacebuilding tools, the place of peacebuilding in EU and government budgets, long-term strategies for peacebuilding, risk assessments for activists, and the key role of peace education in all countries. Several questions addressed next steps for the resource such as its distribution.

With this in mind, a video that was produced for the launch is now available online, and shows how a variety of practitioners find the resource useful in their work. Furthermore, translations of the resource are in progress for Russian, French and Arabic. The executive summary is already available online in Russian, Dutch, German and French. The entire resource is available in English on the QCEA website and an interview on RFI is also available online.

QCEA is also looking forward to events in Dublin and Berlin where the report will be discussed. Finally, the resource is being distributed to libraries, and is already at the library in the European Parliament as well as at Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW).

## THE LAUNCH IN FIGURES

Publishing *Building Peace Together* is one of the most significant moments in QCEA’s 40 year history. It has given us unprecedented exposure in Brussels and beyond, which indirectly benefits all the work we do.

- In addition to the thousand hard copies of the report we aim to distribute, the web version of the report has been accessed almost a thousand times within a month of going online. 85% of those views were “new visitors,” meaning we’re reaching a significant new audience thanks to *Building Peace Together*.
- Our Facebook and Twitter campaigns were views 18,000 and 10,000 times respectively within two weeks of launch. Many of those were in Brussels – in other words, the policymakers and civil society activists who we need to convince.

QCEA’s aim in writing *Building Peace Together* was to bring viable civilian peacebuilding tools to as many people as possible, and these figures show that we’re achieving just that.

## THE TABS



The report is split into 11 sections, with each having a focus on a different “sector” of society, such as education, the media or business. By using the handy coloured tabs down the side of the book, you can quickly navigate to the section that’s most relevant to your work. *Building Peace Together* might be full of ideas, but it’s still user-friendly.

## THE ICONS



One of the main messages of the report is to show that linkages across sectors and levels of society are vital to the success of any initiative. To get users thinking about this as they read the report, each page has small icons at the top which indicate possible avenues for collaboration. For example, a sports project may benefit from a sponsorship agreement with local businesses, or an infrastructure project might need to consider local farmers if its economic impact is to be maximised.

## THE TOOLS

Each of the 11 sections contains peacebuilding “tools” – real-world initiatives which have a proven track record in addressing the root causes of conflict. Some are aimed at policymakers, others at “peace practitioners,” and some at members of the public who simply want to make a difference in their communities. There are 80 examples in total, meaning that *Building Peace Together* contains plenty of inspiration – whoever you are.



READ THE FULL REPORT NOW AT  
[www.qcea.org/  
BuildingPeaceTogether](http://www.qcea.org/BuildingPeaceTogether)

# A call to action against the arms trade

BY HOLLY SPENCER FROM STOP FUELING WAR



↑ A selection of French-made armaments on display at the Eurosatory event in 2016.  
PHOTO: HENRY GRAND (CC)

Every two years, arms dealers and VIP delegations arrive in Paris to attend one of the largest arms fairs in the world: Eurosatory (11th- 15th June 2018). Quakers from around Europe will be there to make sure that such an event does not go unchallenged. Carrying on the years of Quaker opposition to the arms fair in Paris, and in the wake of the publication of QCEA's *Building Peace Together*, Stop Fuelling War, an organisation in Paris, wants to show that arms sales and traditional military policy are not helping in a world of growing threats of terrorism, cyber attacks, environmental damage and resource scarcity. Peace is possible, but different tactics are needed.

I work for Stop Fuelling War from the Centre Quaker International in Paris, and have been involved in the last two protests, in 2014 and 2016. Having also been involved in actions against DSEI in London, and volunteering for CAAT last summer, I feel that the need to build a similar movement in France is vital. At Eurosatory in 2016, the red carpet was rolled out for human rights abusing regimes such as Egypt, United Arab Emirates and, of course, Saudi Arabia, despite the ongoing humanitarian crisis, famine and civilian deaths in Yemen. Like Britain, France continues to sell weapons to the countries involved in the Saudi-led coalition. However, unlike in Britain, the opposition in France is limited to a few tireless groups, such as *Mouvement de la Paix* and the *Observatoire des Armements*.

It is fair to assume that these VIP delegations and military representatives will be present again this year, and that France, as one of the top 6 arms exporters in the world, will continue to support regimes currently involved in conflicts and potential war crimes, which we will be highlighting to the press and public.



Cessez d'alimenter la guerre

France's arms sales have been booming in the last few years, with the sale of Rafales by Dassault Aviation to Egypt and Qatar. Arms sales are seen as an economic and industrial victory in France, and Stop Fuelling War was created as an organisation to present a counter-voice to the arms fair in Paris, and to promote peaceful possibilities.

We have events running from the 9th to the 15th June, with the Saturday 9th June being our musical and fun event to inform the public that Eurosatory is happening in central Paris, and our position on this. On the Sunday 10th June we will be running a workshop for those participants, how to answer difficult questions about the arms trade, learn more about France's arms trade, as well as information on alternatives. A silent ecumenical worship and witness is planned for Monday 11th June, the day that Eurosatory starts, as well as our continued presence at the entrance to the arms fair. Quakers are joining from Belgium, the UK, Germany, Sweden, France, the Netherlands, Finland, and we hope you will be there too. Despite the enormity of our task, we enjoy our community and spirituality. Protests only work when they apply pressure on the powerful so our presence in France, our network, and visibility from our base at Centre Quaker International Paris must continue to grow.

For more information, please contact Holly Spencer at [noneurosatory@gmail.com](mailto:noneurosatory@gmail.com) or [stopfuellingwar@gmail.com](mailto:stopfuellingwar@gmail.com)

You can sign up for the events in June online at [www.stopfuellingwar.org](http://www.stopfuellingwar.org), or keep up to date via Twitter and Facebook @StopFuellingWar.

## Community support of refugees and migrants

These are not intended to be comprehensive lists, as we know that every individual, country and community will have resources and requirements that are unique. Rather, we have tried to draw up lists to jog your imagination and help to recognise resources you may not have considered. At the end we have suggested resources for information that may help. Your community will have more.

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.

Helping with this is always a learning experience for everyone involved, and communities often find themselves without resources to help them understand what is needed. Forgetting something important can have an impact on the people we are trying to help. It is not always easy to know what newcomers might want or need to make their transition more comfortable.

**QCEA and the Council of Europe have separately developed tools that can be used to make this easier.**

*Welcoming Refugees* is a tool developed by QCEA for local work. We have assembled a series of checklists to help 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.

For QCEA's *Welcoming Refugees* tool, visit [www.qcea.org/welcoming-refugees](http://www.qcea.org/welcoming-refugees)

For the Council of Europe toolkit go to [bit.ly/2DKH7ZV](http://bit.ly/2DKH7ZV)

# online hate speech

Violent or dehumanising comments on the internet are impossible to avoid. But when it comes to anti-refugee sentiment, online “hate speech” can have disastrous effects in the real world. What can be done?

Bigotry and xenophobia have always existed, but the anonymity and reach of the internet have made it easier than ever to incite violence or dehumanise others without consequence. This has become particularly apparent in light of the febrile ongoing debate around refugees and migrants, and their place in our societies.

Although social media and free-to-read news websites may have democratised our access to information, they also provide a forum for what is commonly known as “hate speech.” Some of our best-known media publishers continue to facilitate the spread of such content, often simply because they lack the capacity to moderate it effectively.

Research has shown that real-world violence against refugees (and foreigners more generally) spikes when inflammatory news stories about them are published. But in the 21st century, what is written by journalists is only half the story. The comments beneath these articles, written by members of the public and often left unchecked, also shape opinion on these complex matters – for better, but often for worse. What steps are being taken to limit their corrosive influence?

## ACTION BEING TAKEN AT THE EUROPEAN LEVEL

Among Europe’s institutions, it is perhaps the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) which has been the most responsive to the problem of hate speech. In its 2006 ruling in the case of *Erbakan v. Turkey*, the Court stated that—

*Tolerance and respect for the equal dignity of all human beings constitute the foundations of a democratic, pluralistic society. That being so, as a matter of principle it may be considered necessary in certain democratic societies to sanction or even prevent all forms of expression which spread, incite, promote or justify hatred based on intolerance.*

The case in question dealt with an incendiary speech by a politician, but the ruling has since been applied to cases of hate speech on the internet. The first such example brought before the ECHR was in 2015 (*Delfi AS v. Estonia*) where the Court found that—

*... the rights and interests of others and of society as a whole may entitle Contracting States to impose liability on Internet news portals, without contravening Article 10 of the Convention, if they fail to take measures to remove clearly unlawful comments without delay, even without notice from the alleged victim or from third parties.*

In short, this means that website owners are liable for violent or dehumanising comments posted on their websites, even if they aren’t made aware of them. This is quite significant from a legal perspective when you consider how prevalent hate speech continues to be on the internet.



Victor Young

## Send them back where they come from. Bunch of cockroaches trying to invade.

♥ 45    9

Comment from the website of the British newspaper *The Sun*

Building on this legal basis, the EU has recently started to take seriously the question of “illegal content” online. Their focus is undoubtedly content linked to terrorism, but incitement to violence also falls within this category of material. In March 2018, the European Commission published a set of recommendations for internet companies – including publishers – which are designed to help identify and remove illegal content more quickly. These include fast-tracking complaints made by so-called “trusted flaggers,” and sharing technological solutions among small companies who may be incapable of tackling the problem alone.

These engagements by institutions are important, and may yet provide the legal and political impetus to address the problem of violent and dehumanising comments on the internet. But these are recent developments. What lessons can be learned from existing efforts made by publishers and the public?

## THE SWEDISH EXAMPLE: CITIZENS’ ACTION OR MOB JUSTICE?

In Sweden, which has been at the forefront of efforts to tackle the problem of online hate speech, many major newspapers have closed the comments sections on their websites, preferring to limit discussion to their social media pages. This approach has not yet been widely embraced elsewhere, and has both positive and negative consequences.

For the publishers, this strategy has the legal and reputational advantage of shifting inflammatory content away from their websites to pages hosted by third parties such as Facebook. These social networks have their own terms of service aimed at limiting offensive content, but these guidelines often err on the side of freedom of expression. For example, Facebook’s Community Standards only prohibit direct physical threats against individuals, as opposed to incitement to violence against a group. Their definition of hate speech is also limited to specific groups, and moderation relies on reporting by users.

This means that, in terms of hate speech aimed at migrants and refugees, the newspapers themselves remain responsible for the moderation of comments on their Facebook page. This can be just as challenging as regulating their own websites, if not more so: social networks offer little or no functionality for pre-moderating comments, and controlling access is almost impossible, as anyone with an account on the social network in question can comment, even anonymously.

However, media organisations and social networks are not the only actors working to respond to online hate speech, and creating a space for comment on popular social media platforms also democratises the capacity to respond to hate speech. In Sweden, for example, the grassroots initiative #jagärhär (“I’m here”) was created in May 2016 in order to mobilise social media users to respond to hate speech on social media. Rather than moderate in the traditional sense, #jagärhär coordinates its supporters so that they can “drown out” hate speech en masse with positive comments – from simple messages of love to detailed counter-arguments in cases where so-called fake news is cited in support of violent or discriminatory statements. The movement, which is itself run from a private Facebook group, describes itself as apolitical and has strict standards about which comments can be targeted. From humble beginnings, #jagärhär now has almost 75,000 volunteers as of March 2018; they won the 2017 Anna Lindh Prize for their contribution to a more “human and just” public life.

The Swedish approach suggests that there is no single solution to the challenge of hate speech in online comments, and that individual goodwill on a large scale can be complementary to more structural responses. But despite the good intentions of the #jagärhär initiative, its model raises questions. Does it represent an abdication of responsibility on

the part of publishers? How can its high standards be guaranteed? And where is the line between grassroots action and a form of digital mob justice? These are issues which must be addressed before such an initiative can become part of a more global solution – but in the absence of action from industry across most of Europe, #jagärhär’s positivity and sense of cooperation surely represent a net benefit in efforts to tackle hate speech.



feroo338

## Put them against the wall and shoot them – no exceptions.

♥ 66    4

Comment from the website of the Slovak newspaper *Nový Čas*

## WHAT IS QCEA DOING?

As part of our ongoing Human Rights Programme, QCEA has been undertaking research into hateful comments directed at refugees and migrants. We picked six popular newspaper websites from across Europe and, from a six month sample period, collected all the comments we found which either **incited violence** against refugees and migrants or **dehumanised** them (i.e. comparison to animals). Despite these limited criteria, we found no shortage of unpleasant remarks, many of which were theoretically illegal according to the ECHR’s legal definition. Two of them are featured on these pages.

Our plan is to publish a report on this subject soon, which we’ll use to draw attention to the problem in Brussels, but we also hope to engage with representatives of newspaper publishers who are liable for so many of the hateful comments we see online. We’ll keep you posted on this work in future editions of *Around Europe*.

## WHAT CAN I DO?

The single best way to fight online hate speech is to report or “flag” it when you see it. Content providers are fighting a perpetual battle to moderate the comments posted to their websites, and they often rely on their readers to bring violations to their attention. It’s often as simple as clicking a “Report” button next to the comment in question.

For an accessible guide on how to flag hate speech, as well as information about national campaigns on this problem in your country, go to [www.nohatespeechmovement.org](http://www.nohatespeechmovement.org)

# Donate to QCEA today

QCEA's important work on peace and human rights depends on the generous support of Quakers across Europe. 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.

Donating is quick, easy and makes a real difference to our work. **Here's how to help.**

## Bank transfer

### £ GBP Sterling

"QCEA British Committee"  
CAF Bank  
ACCOUNT 00004748  
SORT CODE 40-52-40

### € Euro

"Quaker Council for European Affairs"  
BNP Paribas Fortis Bank  
IBAN BE58 2100 5598 1479  
BIC GEBA BEBB 36A

## Donate online

To set up a recurring contribution or to make a one-off donation, either via DirectDebit or PayPal account, visit [www.qcea.org/donate](http://www.qcea.org/donate)

## Cheque

Friends in the United Kingdom can also donate by sending a cheque or charity voucher made payable to QCEA British Committee to:

Simon Bond,  
1 Lynton Green,  
Maidenhead, SL6 6AN

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Numéro d'entreprise  
0420.346.728