



**Quaker  
Council for  
European  
Affairs**

# Rethinking security

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An overview of the  
QCEA Peace Programme  
2017—2022

**November 2018**

# Our Peace Programme at a glance

Broadly speaking, QCEA's Peace Programme works to:

- promote **nonviolent, whole-of-society peacebuilding** policies;
- advocate for **"peace education"** which fosters stable societies;
- encourage **cooperation and collaboration** among peacebuilders;
- challenge **militaristic definitions of security** at the European level.

Together, our projects seek to **"rethink security"**. We want to create a new narrative around European security which emphasises sustainable peacebuilding and a human-centred approach.

In this era of polarisation, a multi-layered and evidence-based approach to conflict prevention and resolution is more vital than ever. However, the EU and other international actors remain focused on hard security responses to conflict – motivated in part by a desire to contain instability and prevent the emergence of new refugee flows. QCEA believes that this is the wrong approach, both politically and morally, and that the path to **"positive peace"** is built on inclusivity, long-term societal engagement and collaboration within and between institutional actors.

In particular, evidence suggests that successful peacebuilding can and should involve actors at all levels of society, from community sports initiatives to the cultural sector and private business. In particular, an education system which fosters tolerance and communication can lay the foundations for lasting peace. Through our research and advocacy, we aim to demonstrate not only that nonviolent peacebuilding works on the ground, but that it should become the norm in EU security policy and programming.

The EU's proposed new budget foresees up to €21bn for the development of military equipment – with compulsory procurement for member states.

Sustainable conflict prevention relies on public services and private sector actors just as much as international negotiators. But this whole-of-society approach is often overlooked in favour of short-term results.

## Accessible peacebuilding toolkit

There is consensus around the benefits of a whole-of-society approach to peacebuilding, yet practical examples of conflict resolution techniques in sectors such as culture or business are hard to find – and therefore poorly understood.

QCEA has published *Building Peace Together*, a collection of forty peacebuilding "tools" covering a variety of sectors which **makes the case for inclusive peacebuilding** among policymakers and practitioners.

## Peace education

Sustainable peace begins in the classroom through education which fosters tolerance and cooperation. We believe the EU should be mainstreaming peace education in its external action.

QCEA has produced research on how peace education can be used, building on centuries of Quaker teaching tradition and global best practice. We are now working with EU stakeholders to build awareness of how **education can help resolve and prevent conflict**.

## Promoting collaboration and joined-up thinking

EU policymakers – who allocate millions of euros in funding to vital peacebuilding efforts – often work in "silos", rarely engaging in the cross-cutting discussions which lead to new ideas and synergies.

Our quiet diplomacy work **creates space for meetings and conversations** which might not otherwise have taken place. Not only do we advocate for multi-layered peacebuilding, we facilitate it.

## Militarisation at the EU level

Faced with security challenges at home and on its borders, the EU is increasingly investing in military technology and strict border controls, backed up with ever-closer defence integration.

As the EU negotiates its next multi-annual budget, QCEA is working with civil society partners to **call for a return to the values of peace and humanitarianism** upon which the EU was founded.

## How we work

Our theory of change is built around three methods of engagement: **research, advocacy** and **quiet diplomacy**. We undertake research to identify real-world examples of nonviolent peacebuilding efforts, as well as to demonstrate their efficacy as a response to insecurity. In the case of education, we identified that teachers could play a key role in conflict prevention in our *Building Peace Together* report. Since then, we've undertaken a more comprehensive study of "peace education", providing evidence of the clear link between the values instilled in the classroom and the stability of society as a whole.

Our advocacy work builds on QCEA's substantial network of policymakers and civil society actors in Brussels and elsewhere in Europe. We maintain good relations with key personnel in all the main EU institutions, through both bilateral contacts and advocacy events which we organise on a regular basis. This allows us to be part of important conversations on matters of relevance to our work, and our presence is highly productive. For example, QCEA serves as chair of a newly-formed working group in the European Parliament, bringing together sixteen MEPs and human rights organisations to foster exchange and cooperation. We are also the current chair of the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office, which enjoys close links with the office of the EU's High Representative for External Affairs, and are also an accredited NGO at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg.

QCEA currently chairs the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO), which brings together over twenty organisations working on peace and conflict issues at the European level.

### What is "quiet diplomacy"?

Our third working method, which we practice almost uniquely in the Brussels "Eurobubble", is quiet diplomacy. We bring together decision-makers and others, providing a supportive space where they can frankly discuss policy and build common ground in an informal, off-the-record setting. QCEA is rare in its capacity to perform this role: as Quakers, our reputation for trustworthiness and integrity has proven vital in helping us to bring the right people together, meaning we can facilitate the discreet discussions which lead to real change. While the specific content and outcomes of these meetings need to remain confidential, we are increasingly seeing governments send senior security personnel to our meetings. It is clear that there is a type of conversation that people can have at Quaker House which they can't get elsewhere.

"This is one of the most honest conversations we've had in Brussels"

FEEDBACK ON A QCEA QUIET DIPLOMACY MEETING

This cyclical process – quality research, allowing us to build connections which bring people together in the name of advancing an issue at the practical level – is at the core of QCEA's work to build a new consensus on peace and security.

### About the Quaker Council for European Affairs

Since 1979, QCEA has worked to bring a vision based on the Quaker commitment to peace, justice and equality to Europe and its institutions. We seek to build support for humane, non-military policies at the EU level, both inside and outside its borders. We do so in the spirit of peaceful cooperation which forms the foundation of European politics. QCEA has just under 300 "Supporters" – individuals or Quaker groups who each make a small yearly donation to our work. In addition, we receive block donations from national Quaker bodies across Europe, as well as grants from several Trusts and Foundations (16% of total income in 2017).

