



the

# Quaker Council for European Affairs

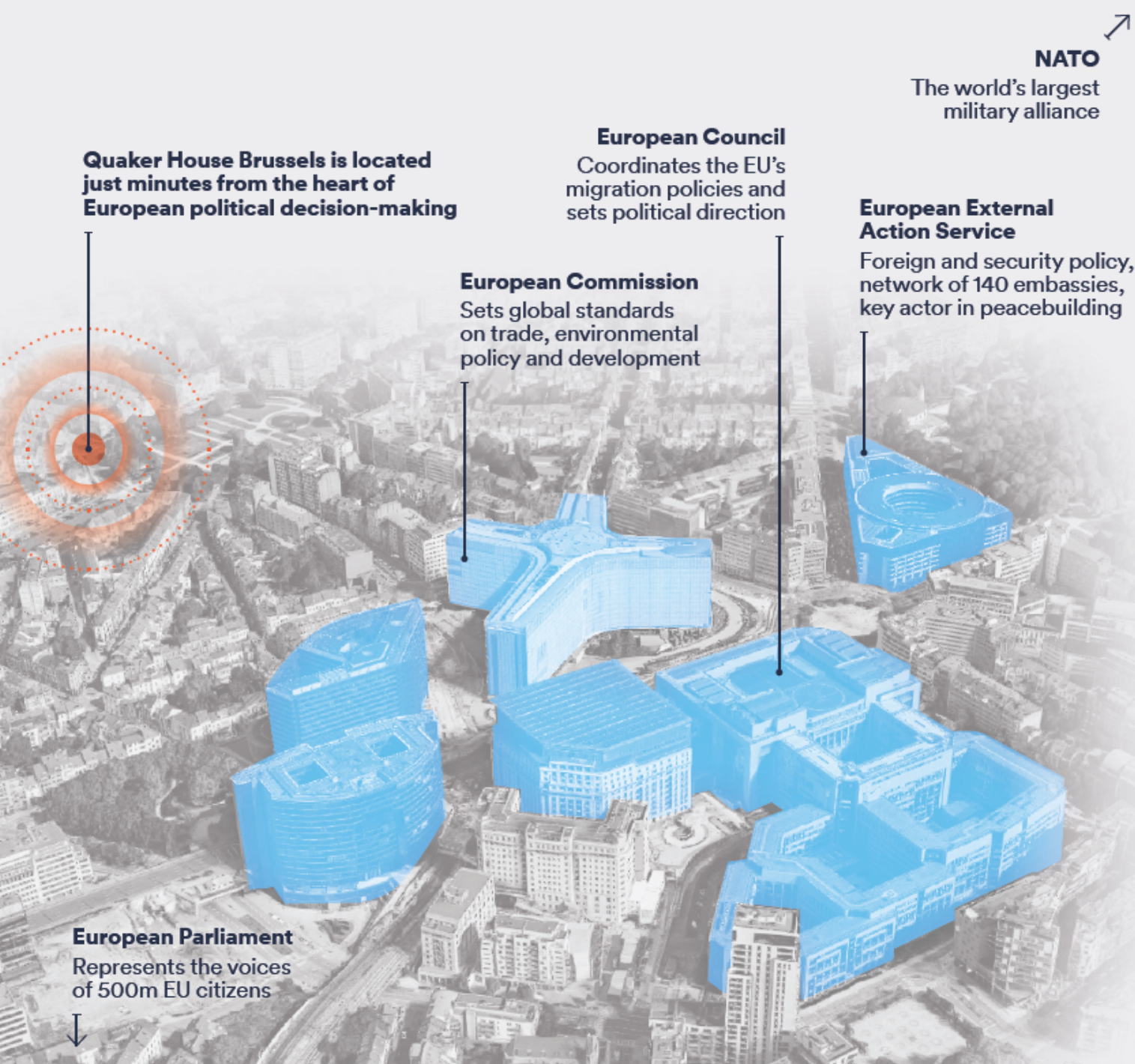
at a glance



Summer 2021

## OUR MISSION

QCEA brings a vision based on the Quaker commitment to **peace, justice and equality**, to Europe and its institutions.



**Quaker House Brussels is located just minutes from the heart of European political decision-making**

**European Council**  
Coordinates the EU's migration policies and sets political direction

**European Commission**  
Sets global standards on trade, environmental policy and development

**European External Action Service**  
Foreign and security policy, network of 140 embassies, key actor in peacebuilding

**European Parliament**  
Represents the voices of 500m EU citizens

**NATO**  
The world's largest military alliance

## **QCEA is a unique actor in peacebuilding and human rights advocacy at the European level.**

Our small size allows us to be more responsive – and drives us to be more innovative – than other organisations with far more resources.

Our home, Quaker House, is a much-loved “safe space” at the heart of the European Quarter, where a wide range of actors can meet in a neutral, discreet setting, to think and speak freely.

And our centuries-long Quaker heritage gives us something which money cannot buy: a reputation for integrity and trustworthiness.

QCEA brings people together, and builds the bridges which are needed to respond to the cross-cutting challenges facing the world today. And we believe we are among the very few organisations in Brussels which are placed to perform this vital role.

This short pamphlet contains some concrete examples of how we undertook this work recently. For more information about what we do, please visit **[www.qcea.org](http://www.qcea.org)**



## OUR WORK

# Human-centred responses to key global challenges

## PEACE

We want to create a new approach to European security which emphasises sustainable peacebuilding. Evidence suggests that successful conflict resolution efforts can and should involve actors at all levels of society. 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.

## HUMAN RIGHTS

We seek to reframe migration narratives at the European level, deploying our unique capacity as a facilitator to promote a cross-cutting, inclusive approach to migration policymaking with a base in universal fundamental rights and justice. Our aim is to entrench a new way of thinking about migration among fellow civil society organisations and policymakers, emphasising migrants' agency by building processes around their participation, as opposed to casting them as 'victims' discussed in abstract terms. We believe this will in turn lead to an evolution in policy itself.





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. We are the current chair of the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO), 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.

We offer a supportive space where key stakeholders 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. We call this work 'quiet diplomacy'.



BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

# Making the case for education which fosters real, lasting peace

Quakers have a long tradition of ‘peace education’ – schooling which not only equips learners with the tools to thrive, but also with the skills to be engaged, well-rounded citizens. We believe that such an approach can play a key role in conflict prevention by building societies which are more resilient to the root causes of violence. Our report *Peace Education: Making the case* calls on the EU to adopt peace education as part of a cohesive, coordinated peacebuilding and conflict prevention strategy.

## WHY IT MATTERS

EU peacebuilding policy is at a turning point, with military responses to insecurity enjoying increasing support and existing funding for civilian conflict resolution threatened by cuts. Now more than ever, EU policymakers need concrete evidence of workable alternatives like peace education, which put people at the heart of peacebuilding.

## OUR ADDED VALUE

QCEA’s previous Peace Programme publication, *Building Peace Together*, has already brought civilian peacebuilding approaches to the attention of hundreds of key stakeholders across Europe. We were subsequently able to build on those relationships when advocating for peace education. What’s more, the long Quaker history of this idea made QCEA the natural advocates for peace education in Brussels.



# 2

## Bringing a message of truth and compassion to one million EU voters (choose respect)

Hate speech against migrants and refugees has become increasingly common, especially on social media. In the context of the European Elections in May 2019, QCEA launched a campaign called #ChooseRespect, which sought to equip EU voters with facts about migration in order to tackle the misinformation which lies behind a great deal of xenophobia. We also called on Europe's Twitter users to reflect on their choice of words and to have more constructive conversations about migrants and refugees. In the space of one month we reached 1.1 million voters with these "messages of love."



### WHY IT MATTERS

History tells us that hateful acts begin with hateful words, and the internet has made it easier than ever to disseminate xenophobia and misinformation. Experts agree that we need to start encouraging a healthier public discourse if we're to turn the tide against hate speech and the politicians who foment it. #ChooseRespect played a part in that effort during the EU elections.

### OUR ADDED VALUE

Our small and dynamic team were able to seize the opportunity to develop this project in a limited time, allowing us to run #ChooseRespect during the election campaign. Many social media users who were critical of our efforts were disarmed by our financial independence and Quaker roots, which opened the door to more constructive conversations.





# 3

## Providing the evidence for workable and effective alternatives to militarism

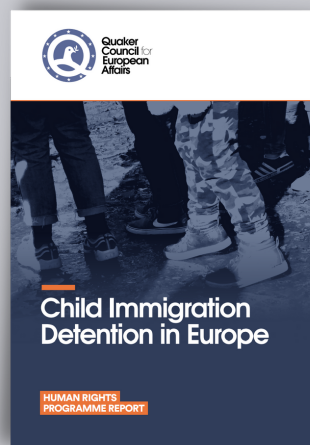
The European Union is being pushed towards a security policy which emphasises military responses to conflict, but civilian-led peacebuilding approaches can often be far more effective. Our report Building Peace Together brings together eighty real-world examples of conflict resolution initiatives from different sectors of society, from justice to the arts. The report is not only a source of inspiration for potential peacebuilders, but also a vital body of evidence which shows how coordinated, civilian-led efforts can be a viable pathway to sustainable peace.

### WHY IT MATTERS

The vast majority of violent conflicts are resolved by peaceful means, but “received wisdom” and a powerful military lobby would have policymakers believe that an armed response is the best path to peace. At a crucial turning point in the EU’s approach to conflict resolution policy, QCEA is providing hard evidence that alternatives exist and should be supported by the EU.

### OUR ADDED VALUE

The Quakers’ record on peace has allowed us to speak with authority on civilian peacebuilding at a global level, and the report has already been translated into French, Russian, Arabic and Turkish. Together with our key role in peace advocacy groups such as EPLO, this has meant our “toolkit” of initiatives has been able to reach peace practitioners around the world.





# 4

## Changing migration narratives among European policymakers



Too often, European political discussions about migration take place without the input of migrants and refugees themselves, resulting in policies which are incoherent, ineffective and inhumane. We aim to bring unheard voices to the table, together with policymakers, in order to begin a process of narrative change around migration. We do this in an issue-specific way which aims to build bridges in the pursuit of new solutions and new policies which respect the agency, dignity and fundamental rights of people on the move.

### WHY IT MATTERS

Creating a Europe of sanctuary and dignity for all people who live here, regardless of origin or migration status, is not possible without dismantling prevailing narratives, as well as the hierarchies, privilege and 'othering' which so often informs them. Even at the level of European policy, there is a consistent and insidious framing which influences much of the debate.

### OUR ADDED VALUE

QCEA's experience and reputation for facilitating challenging conversations means we offer an ideal space for radical thinking on how social justice, solidarity and equality intersect with migration policy. Over the last three years, we've built connections with an incredibly diverse range of stakeholders – now we seek to bring them together for change.



# 5

## Building bridges between Friends across Europe

We work at the level of international politics, but could not do so without the interaction and support QCEA enjoys with Friends at the local and national levels. Representatives of national yearly meetings sit on our General Assembly, meaning the voices of Friends across Europe feed directly into our work programme and our organisational ethos. In turn, we educate and inform Friends across the continent about the work of the European institutions via our Study Tours and biennial conferences. QCEA brings Europe's Quakers together.

### WHY IT MATTERS

In polarised times such as these, it's more important than ever that we reach out the hand of friendship across political and cultural boundaries. What's more, many of the political concerns which matter most to Friends – from peace to migration – are addressed at the European level. QCEA's outreach work equips Europe's Quaker community with the tools to understand and engage.

### OUR ADDED VALUE

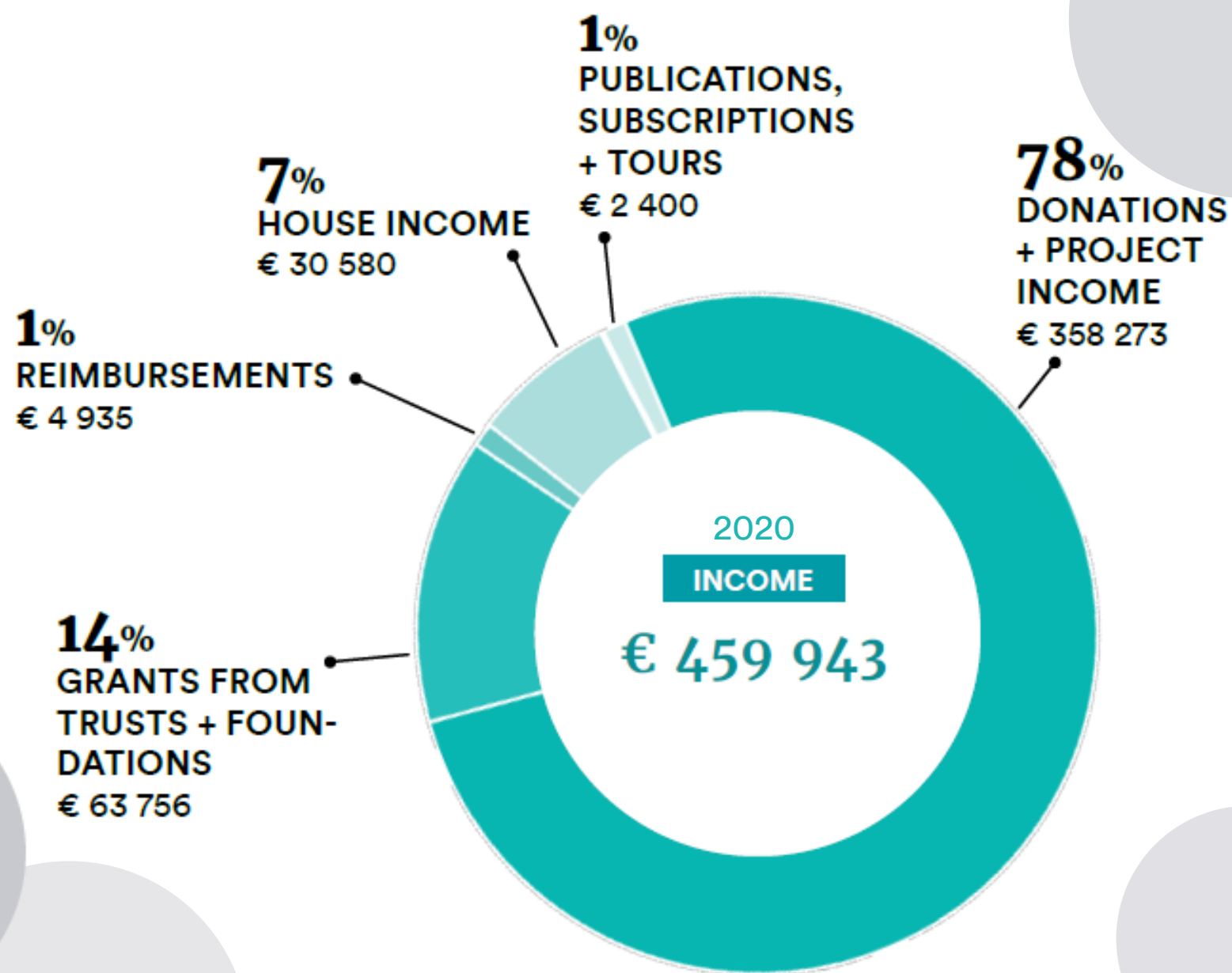
As the Quaker political voice at the European level, we are at the heart of a unique network of Quaker activists, campaigners and academics which spans the continent, and our conferences foster cooperation between them. For example, a British support group for a confidential LGBT hotline in Russia was formed following our most recent conference in Brussels.



Unlike many organisations in Brussels, QCEA receives no money from the EU.

That means we can speak truth to power, without fear or favour.

Over two thirds of our income comes from donations, and our work depends on these generous contributions from Quakers and Quaker Meetings across Europe. However, grants from Foundations and Trusts also make a major contribution to what we do, and can be decisive in helping new projects get off the ground. Find out how you can help on the next page.





# How to support QCEA

Our work to defend peace and human rights is more important than ever. It depends on the generous financial support of Quakers across Europe who believe in policies which put human beings first. If you're one of them, why not consider making a donation?

Alternatively, you can become a **QCEA Supporter** for just £/€ 40 per year. We'll send you regular news and information by email, as well as a print copy of our newsletter, *Around Europe*. Info at [www.qcea.org/support](http://www.qcea.org/support)



## DONATE ONLINE

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



## BANK TRANSFER \*

### IN THE UK

#### British Friends of QCEA

CAF Bank

ACCOUNT 00004748

SORT CODE 40-52-40

### OUTSIDE THE UK

#### Quaker Council for European Affairs

BNP Paribas Fortis

IBAN BE58 2100 5598 1479

BIC GEBA BEBB 36A



## CHEQUE OR CHARITY VOUCHER \*

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

33 Shaw Lane Gardens, Guiseley Leeds West Yorkshire LS20 9JQ

*British Friends of QCEA is a UK charity, no. 293776*

\* If you make a donation by bank transfer or cheque, please let our team know so that we can acknowledge receipt and update our records. Email [office@qcea.org](mailto:office@qcea.org) with your name and details of your donation.

# Thank you



Quaker  
Council for  
European  
Affairs

Quaker Council for European Affairs  
Square Ambiorix 50  
1000 Brussels  
Belgium  
+32 22 30 49 35

[www.qcea.org](http://www.qcea.org)

[f](#) [t](#) @qcea