



Quaker
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Affairs

around
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Voicing our Values in the whirlwind

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Europe in brief

NoFrontex Demonstration, 23 April 2022.
PHOTO: MORTAZA SHAHED

EU border agency involved in numerous human rights violations

On 29 April, Fabrice Leggeri, the head of the Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, stepped down following reports of human rights violations and misconduct. The report published by a group of European media organisations found that, between March 2020 and September 2021, Frontex failed to investigate or mitigate at least 22 pushbacks of more than 950 people in the Aegean Sea – the illegal practice of returning migrants who have reached the EU countries without processing their cases on an individual basis. The European Union Anti-Fraud Office, OLAF, also completed its investigation in February looking into alleged fraud, workplace harassment, and human rights violations.

In response to these reports, the European Parliament voted to withhold the approval of the Frontex budget for 2020 at least until the findings of OLAF are made public. While the delay will not have a financial impact on the EU's best-funded agency, it serves as a political censure allowing MEPs to present recommendations to the new director. MEPs also criticised Frontex for continuing its operations in Hungary even after the 2020 ruling by the European Court of Justice saying that Budapest failed to abide by EU law to protect asylum seekers.

The reports have shown serious structural problems with Frontex which need to be addressed urgently. Civil society organisations have warned that a change in leadership may not be sufficient to stop human rights violations and the agency's complicity therein. The new leadership should prioritise acting on human rights monitors' recommendations and ensuring compliance with human rights safeguards at the EU's external borders.

Total EU arms deliveries to Ukraine up to 2 billion Euros

On 23 May, EU foreign ministers agreed to add a further €500 million to fund arms deliveries to Ukraine through the European Peace Facility (EPF), as previous instalments are running out. This raises the total amount to €2 billion since February. Up to 98% of this last instalment could go to reimbursing the delivery of lethal weapons by the Member States, while the previous ceiling was 90%.

This necessarily raises the question of a possible increase of the total EPF budget, initially agreed at €5 billion for 2021-2027. Taking into account other measures agreed, in particular for non-lethal military equipment in Africa and Eastern Europe, more than half of the budget will have been spent in a year and a half. Although such an increase is not officially in the pipeline, it will most probably happen sooner or later and only requires an agreement among the Member States.

Indeed the Strategic Compass adopted in March also calls for increased use of the Peace Facility, not only to provide equipment in the framework of EU training missions but also to make the delivery of lethal weapons and equipment "in times of crisis" a possible line of action based on the Ukrainian precedent. Whatever the legitimacy of delivering weapons to Ukraine, many peace groups fear that this precedent will lower the threshold for the EU to deliver lethal weapons, an issue which was still considered controversial as a matter of principle only months ago.

The EU Strategic Compass fails to answer existential issues about EU common defence

On 21 March 2022, the Foreign Affairs and Defence Ministers of the EU adopted the Strategic Compass, after 2 years of negotiations. Largely publicised as the doctrine or strategic paper on defence for the European Union, it now remains to be seen to what extent the political commitments will actually be kept. What is certain is that the most concrete proposals are a new boon for the arms industry.

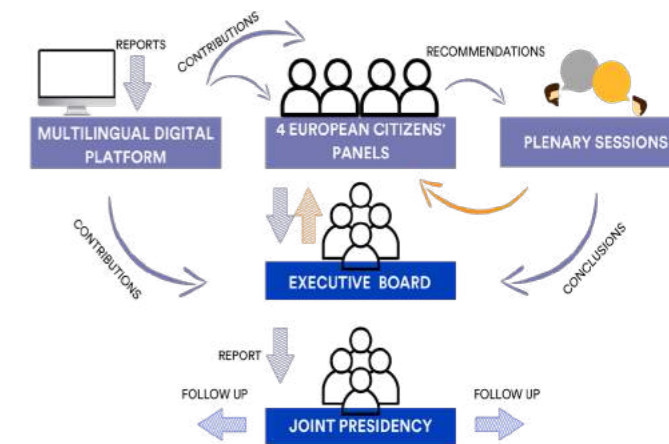
This Compass is not the first of its kind and there have already been several similar attempts in the last two decades, such as the 2016 Global Strategy. Many observers consider that the latest one also fails to answer crucial questions about the EU's role and identity at the global level: in short, should a common defence policy be a path towards EU integration, meaning a gradual transfer of sovereignty to the EU level, EP democratic oversight and possibly a joint EU army? Or should it remain a purely intergovernmental coordination process? And what kind of influence and global world order vision will it promote, including a clarified relationship with NATO? By failing to overcome this lack of common understanding and the prevalence of national vested interests, the Strategic Compass only prolongs the 'constructive ambiguity' that has been going on for 20 years.

As a result, European citizens get the worst of two worlds: an increasing European militarisation in particular through a serious growth in military expenditure, the development of the next generation of weaponry, exacerbating the global arms race, and the emergence of an EU hard power to the detriment of its traditional soft power; all happening in a democratic vacuum. The European Parliament is not mentioned once in this 47 pages-document, nor are concepts such as scrutiny or accountability. On the other hand, moving militarisation to the EU level will limit the involvement of national parliaments.

REPowerEU: landmark plan falls short by supporting energy giants

On 18 May, the REPowerEU plan was officially launched by the European Commission. The policy package envisages cutting the EU's dependency on Russia as quickly as possible using short and medium-term strategies. The €300 billion plan includes energy savings, the roll-out of renewable energy, replacement of Russian gas with fossil fuels from somewhere else and further investments in gas infrastructure.

While the EU claims that REPowerEU will boost green transformation, environmental groups fear that the plan will not combat climate change. Instead of ending dependence on fossil fuels, the EU aims to import from suppliers other than Russia, relying on energy giants such as Shell and Saudi Aramco. There is concern that in swapping energy suppliers, the EU will continue supporting human rights abuses and exacerbating conflicts around the world while leaving consumers to shoulder the economic and environmental costs.



Process of the Conference on the Future of Europe

Conference on the Future of Europe calls for defensive joint armed forces and full integration of all migrants

The closing event of the Conference on the Future of Europe (COFOE) took place on Europe's day, 9 May, in the European Parliament hemicycle of Strasbourg. The final report of the Conference has been drafted by an Executive Board co-chaired by representatives of the three EU institutions (Belgian MEP Guy Verhofstadt for the EP, French State Secretary Clément Beaune for the EU Council, and Vice-President Dubravka Šuica for the European Commission). It is based on the recommendations from four citizens' panels, input from the national events, and contributions recorded on the multilingual online platform. Summarising the 300 pages-report is a challenge, as it includes 49 main proposals, detailed in more than 320 measures for the EU institutions to follow up on under nine topics, ranging from 'climate change' to 'migration' and 'EU in the world'.

They include calls for adding European values to the school curriculum, the creation of an EU army, strengthening the role of the EU parliament, ensuring the full integration of all migrants and reopening the debate on an EU constitution. Some of the recommendations would require treaty changes, such as the abolition of the veto in several areas of EU decision-making that require unanimity, or a common health system in which healthcare is a shared competence between the EU and member states.

But a successful COFOE relies on what will happen next, and this is essentially in the hands of EU decision-makers, i.e. European Parliament and the Member States. As the EP already called for a treaty revision in a recent Resolution, many Member States are much more reluctant to do it. The second and main danger to the credibility of the process is the seriousness with which citizens' recommendations will be taken into account. Civil society groups such as QCEA will have a key role to play in reminding the EU what citizens' expectations really are.



NEWS FROM Quaker House in Brussels

Since 1979, the Quaker Council for European Affairs has worked to bring a vision based on the Quaker commitment to peace, justice and equality to Europe and its institutions.



Welcome Dovile!

My name is Dovile Bogusyte and I am honoured to join QCEA as a new Communications Officer and Fundraising Coordinator. I will try to fill the shoes of my predecessors Lena Hofmaier and Martin Leng, who have done an amazing job disseminating the organisation's work. My role is to communicate what QCEA is doing with both our supporters as well as others on the political stage in Brussels. We do that through digital communications, online engagement, media and public relations, as well as external and internal communications. I will also be supporting QCEA's fundraising efforts. So it is a very creative and hands-on position!

I have an academic background in International Relations, Human Rights and Humanitarian Action. When I was in the second year of my undergraduate studies, I had an opportunity to do an internship at the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson. That was a truly life-changing experience which steered me towards communications in the non-profit sector. In the past I have worked for Covenants Watch, a Taiwanese NGO, the Permanent Delegation of the Republic of Lithuania to UNESCO and the

European Network for Women in Leadership.

I am looking forward to using my skills and experience at QCEA and to getting creative in communicating issues I deeply care about. I am also thrilled to be working with the wonderful team at QCEA and bringing Quaker values to the 'Eurobubble'!



PHOTO: LUDO SEIGERS

QCEA Study Tour



Europe at a Crossroads

After two years of COVID-19 hiatus, QCEA is delighted to announce a new Study Tour which will take place on 14-17 November, in Brussels.

2022 has been a year like few others for the European Union. Several parallel crises continue to dominate the political landscape in Europe, from climate change to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The decisions that are approved in this crucial time will define the direction of the EU for years to come, with the potential of changing its very nature as a political project.

The upcoming Study Tour will provide a space for participants to learn and reflect on key policy areas that shape the present and future of the EU. Particularly, it will focus on three thematic areas: militarisation, climate change and migration. The tour will include visits to EU institutions, workshops and discussions to dive deep into the issues.

You don't need to have any previous knowledge of European politics and a limited number of bursaries are available. Why not join us?

For more details and to register to take part, please visit

<https://www.qcea.org/home/events/study-tours/>

Director recruitment update

QCEA is rebuilding and moving forward after a year of transformation. We are delighted to share some exciting news with Around Europe readers.

The Recruitment Committee has been working tirelessly to recruit a new QCEA Director. A lot of thought has been put into the process and we made sure to listen to Friends. The applications for this role closed on 27 June. QCEA received many letters of interest and the committee will study the applications and take forward the recruitment process over the summer.

We expect the new Director to start their work at QCEA latest by October 2022. We hope that they will help us rebuild an effective staff team and contribute to creating and planning the future strategy and structure of QCEA. As the primary Quaker Representative to the EU, NATO, Council of Europe, OSCE, and a range of interfaith organisations, we expect them to strengthen our advocacy in a changed European context.

We cannot wait to come back stronger than ever before!



Europe's military drift: from a soft power union to 'security provider'

QCEA and YFPF's joint event on Europe's militarisation

On 24 May, we organised a joint event with the Young Professionals in Foreign Policy (YFPF) on "Europe's military drift: from a soft power union to 'security provider'". The event attracted a diverse audience, ranging from young professionals to experts in their fields. Participants heard from Laëtitia Sédou, EU Programme Officer at European Network Against the Arms Trade and Helewise Elfferich, Policy Officer at European Peace Facility (EPF), EEAS.

The experts discussed Europe's place in the world and whether it can remain a peace as well as a military actor. While the point was raised that the world is becoming tougher and a Europe without arms is at risk of attack, Laëtitia Sédou emphasised that a focus on arms could mean that the EU would lose its focus

on conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts. The audience shared positive examples of interventions led by non-violent peace forces, and reflected on lessons learnt from EU military actions and economic sanctions. The case was made for the importance of monitoring EPF assistance measures and the need to establish accountability mechanisms in the event of weapons being used in human rights violations or war crimes. The event served as a space to hear the arguments of both sides and explore together alternatives to militarisation.



Participants at the "Europe's military drift" event, 24 May, 2022.



Saskia Basa at the "Yemen matters" event, 18 May, 2022.



Participants at the "Yemen matters" event, 18 May, 2022.

Yemen matters

QCEA participated in a debate at the European Parliament to discuss European arms exports and its impacts on the war in Yemen.

On 18 May, QCEA was invited to participate in a debate at the European Parliament to discuss how arms exports to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are fuelling human rights violations in Yemen. The event was organised by Centre Delàs for Peace Studies, the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights, and Mwatana for Human Rights and hosted by parliamentary groups The Left GUE/NGL and The Greens/EFA.

Two reports were presented, tracing the links between Spanish and French arms exports and alleged war crimes in Yemen. One of the reports shows that Spanish military equipment constitutes a key component of the Eurofighter Typhoon and A330 MRTT used by the Saudi-led coalition. This reveals a direct link between military goods of European origin and aerial warfare which has disproportionately affected Yemeni civilians and fuelled human rights violations.

The Arms Trade Treaty (Art.6) and the EU Common Position set an obligation for states to cease transfers where the state has knowledge they would be used against civilians or to perpetuate war crimes; however, states and corporate actors involved in arms exports to the Saudi-led coalition have failed to comply with these standards. In December 2019, a coalition of human rights organisations submitted a Communication bringing evidence to the attention of the Prosecutor's Office of the International Criminal Court (ICC). The

supply of weapons in contravention of Arms Trade Treaty obligations can be grounds for criminal liability under the Rome Statute of the ICC.

While efforts to make the arms industry accountable continue, we are reminded that Yemeni civilians continue to suffer from the consequences of the war as well as famine and preventable diseases, while the world's attention is focused elsewhere. QCEA's Peace Programme Assistant Saskia Basa concluded that in order to keep alive any hope for peace in the region, arms exports to the Saudi-led coalition need to be suspended. If the EU wishes to live up to its commitments as a peace actor on the global stage, it should put human life over the profits of the arms industry.

WANT TO KNOW MORE? READ THE REPORTS HERE:

- [Spanish arms exports and alleged war crimes in Yemen](#)
- [Arms sales: France and the United Arab Emirates, partners in the crimes committed in Yemen?](#)



Peace at the Heart

PHOTO: QUAKERS IN BRITAIN

New Report from Quakers in Britain makes the case for wider implementation of peace education approaches

In 2020, QCEA produced a [report](#) outlining some key arguments and benefits that come with wider implementation of peace education approaches at the European Level. Quakers in Britain make the same case in the British context in their new publication [‘Peace at the Heart: A Relational Approach to Education in British Schools’](#).

The report outlines some key findings and peace education approaches that can transform classrooms into communities of mutual support and accountability. These practices are rooted in the authors’ own experience of implementing peace education approaches and seeing young people thrive in their confidence and well-being, engaging critically with social phenomena around them. The report concludes that putting healthy relationships at the heart of classroom approaches is what unites peace education practices in their potential to deliver individual and societal benefits.

To illustrate some of the practices in the report, Quakers in Britain also produced a [series of videos](#), showing peace education in action. The report can be read in full through at [this link](#).



“Peace at the heart” report by Quakers in Britain.
PHOTO: QUAKERS IN BRITAIN

QCEA participates in the FWCC/EMES Annual Meeting

On 21 May 2022, QCEA staff and QCEA’s Co-Clerk spoke at the Annual Meeting of the Europe and Middle East Section (EMES) of Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC), which was held in a hybrid format from L’Enclos Rey in Paris. QCEA’s Co-Clerk Jeremy Lester and QCEA’s Peace Programme Assistant Saskia Basa gave an update on QCEA’s ongoing work, and reflected on its changing priorities in light of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The EMES Annual Meeting Epistle can be found on FWCC’s [website](#).

QCEA hosts a session at Britain Yearly Meeting

On 22 May 2022, QCEA hosted a session entitled ‘Voicing our Values in Europe’ at Britain Yearly Meeting, which took place at Friends House in London, in Hemel Hempstead and online. Over 30 Friends from all corners of Britain and beyond joined to hear about the work of QCEA bringing a Quaker voice to EU institutions. The presentation sparked a lively debate on how our policy demands can be guided by Quaker testimonies, and how to best reflect the interconnectedness and complexity of issues society is facing, from peace to migration, to the climate crisis.

Friends shared ideas on how to enhance our work’s impact, relevance and resilience through youth engagement, intersectional analysis and Quaker diplomacy. By remaining dynamic and responsive

to changing circumstances in EU policy, QCEA can make sure it maximises its impact and added value. Participants recognised the difficulties that come with opposing increased military budgets in times of polarised public and media debate. Lastly, Friends reflected on the opportunities for transformation that may arise from bringing Quaker ways to policy makers, particularly now that our quiet diplomacy work can resume after the pandemic.

Friends were invited to participate in the upcoming Brussels Study Tour and get involved in QCEA’s British support group: [British Friends of QCEA](#). To attend the next monthly coordination meeting, please email Rebecca Gumbrell-McCormick gumbrellmcc@gmail.com.

To read the BYM Epistle in full please click on [this link](#).

QCEA opposes the proposed reform of the Schengen Borders Code

The reform risks authorising internal pushbacks, legitimising racial profiling and stepping up the use of AI and automated decision-making systems.

In December 2021 the European Commission published a [proposal](#) for an amended Schengen Borders Code, which regulates border controls at the internal and external borders of the Schengen zone. The Schengen Borders Code -with some limited exceptions- prohibits any internal checks so as to guarantee free movement within the Schengen area.

QCEA signed a [joint civil society statement](#), highlighting the main areas of concern in response to the reform, and putting forward some concrete recommendations to EU institutions. The reform would authorise police to carry out checks at internal border areas to “prevent irregular migration”, in practice legalising systemic border controls based on people’s racial, ethnic, national or religious characteristics. It is likely that ‘random’ document checks will lead to racial profiling, with police choosing to check the documents of those who look like they may not have valid papers. This would lead to discriminatory treatment of ethnic minorities and racialised communities, which stands in contradiction with the Commission’s commitments under the [Anti-Racism Action Plan](#).

Particularly concerning is the de facto legalisation of internal pushbacks resulting from this reform. In concrete terms, the reform contemplates the introduction of joint police patrols, which could be deployed to identify, apprehend and detain undocumented people for up to 24 hours. They would then be transferred to the member state where officials think the person came from. This

procedure would take place without an individual assessment, and would also apply to children, despite an abundance of legal decisions and evidence showing that child detention, even for short periods of time, is harmful and constitutes a human rights violation (for more information, read our report [‘Child Immigration Detention in Europe’](#)).

Lastly, the reform would step up the use of surveillance technology such as biometric identification artificial intelligence-powered systems. Its application in the context of migration procedures is problematic given that automated decision-making systems overlook all the applicable safeguards.

The EU Justice and Home Affairs Ministers met on 9-10 June to discuss the reform. We ask EU ministers to honour the spirit of Schengen as well as the principle of non-discrimination, and uphold the right of people on the move to apply for asylum. More detailed recommendations can be found [here](#).





ENAAT Annual Meeting

On 10, 11 and 12 June, QCEA participated in the Annual Meeting of ENAAT (European Network Against the Arms Trade), which took place in a hybrid format in Berlin and online. ENAAT member organisations came together for three days of reflection and exchange, sharing insights on Europe's mounting military budgets, and strategies to make the arms industry more accountable vis-à-vis their human rights and environmental impacts.

The Annual Meeting kicked off on 10 June with a public panel discussion, wherein different actors gave their views on the current context of European rearmament. Speakers reflected on the new challenges the Russian invasion of Ukraine has generated for the peace movement. The audience heard from academics, think tanks, policy-makers and a diverse array of NGOs operating at national and European level.

In the following two days, ENAAT members met 'en petit comité' to exchange views on the recent events in Ukraine, share country-level reports and resources, and contemplate long-term solutions away from militarisation. Finnish and Swedish members



shared updates on their respective applications for NATO membership and likely accession. In the case of Sweden, civil society groups are focusing their demands on avoiding Sweden's participation in NATO's nuclear programme, and challenging Sweden's expected decision to start exporting weapons to Turkey once Turkey votes in favour of Sweden's NATO membership.

Although a range of views were expressed on the issue of arms deliveries to Ukraine, members were united in their concern over risks of escalation associated with generalised rearmament, and their desire to support peace activists in Russia and Ukraine. Advocating for alternative security systems that guarantee long-term stability was identified as a key priority, and in the year ahead, the ENAAT network will continue to provide a crucial platform to nurture synergies between groups who work to challenge militaristic definitions of security.

Save the date:

Church and Peace's international conference and Annual General Meeting

On 20-23 October, Church and Peace, the European ecumenical peace church network of communities, training centres, peace organisations and peace service agencies, is organising an international conference and Annual General Meeting in Crikvenica, Croatia. In light of the war in Ukraine, the conference will invite participants to reflect on alternatives to war and militarisation. The programme includes panel discussions and workshops on non-violence and peacemaking. The conference will create a safe space where participants can identify and share personal experiences about their own conflict issues and solutions. Find out more and register by visiting [Church and Peace website](#).

Stop Fuelling War launched a campaign on "War Costs us Earth"



On 13-17 June, one of the largest land and air-land trade fairs in the world, Eurosatory, took place in Paris. In the current context of the climate emergency, manufacturers gathered to exhibit and sell "greener" weapons to use in a climate-changed and resource-scarce future scenario. Despite efforts to 'greenwash' the industry, the arms industry is one of the key obstacles to a healthier planet for all, producing greenhouse gas emissions and enabling environmental devastation in the context of war.

On this occasion, on 8-17 June, Stop Fuelling War launched a campaign "War Costs us Earth". Through discussions, conferences and gatherings, the association demanded redirection of funds from the military to the fight against climate change, urgent action on the climate crisis and transparency on the environmental impact of the arms industry and military. QCEA welcomed and endorsed this campaign, urging leaders to move away from militarisation discourse and focus instead on tackling the root causes of the climate crisis.

Find out more about the campaign on the association's website, <https://www.stopfuellingwar.org/en/>

Our peace programme in action

On **15 June 2022**, QCEA's Peace Programme Assistant Saskia Basa delivered a workshop in the context of Europe and Middle East Young Friends (EMEYF)'s Spring Gathering, which took place in Bad Pyrmont and online. The workshop explored some of the key pacifist arguments and counter-arguments, guiding participants to reflect on matters of conscience by learning the stories of well-known peacemakers and advocates who experienced war first hand. The session's purpose was to avoid any normative or prescriptive conclusion, instead offering some nuances, arguments and a space for dialogue through which participants can find their own stance and moral compass.

On **23 June 2022**, QCEA participated in the 'Civil harbours and airports – no arms for war and oppression' networking conference organised by The Left in the European Parliament and the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation. Trade unionists, dockworkers and peace activists from across Europe explored how arms exports amplify violent conflicts and wars. History has shown that no politicians have been as strong to oppose the arms trade as the activists and harbour workers. In an interactive fashion, participants shared examples to show that civil resistance to arms is not only possible but also effective.

Donate to QCEA today

QCEA's important work on peace and human rights **depends on your generous support.** Over 50% of our income comes 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.**



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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



Cheque

Friends in the United Kingdom only can also donate by sending a cheque or charity voucher payable to **British Friends of Quaker Council for European Affairs** to:
**33 Shaw Lane Gardens, Guiseley, Leeds,
West Yorkshire, LS20 9JQ**

Quaker House is Open for Bookings!



It has been a strange two years. As lockdown descended, streets in Brussels emptied and our Quaker House, which used to be bustling with events, had to close to reservations.

Now, as almost all restrictions are already lifted, we are thrilled to announce that Quaker House is open for room hire.

Do you want to hold an event or a meeting in a historical Art Nouveau building next to the European quarter? Please email office@qcea.org for more information!

British Friends of QCEA is a registered charity in the United Kingdom, no. 293776. If you would like confirmation that your donation has been received, please email office@qcea.org with your name and details of your payment. Alternatively, enclose a contact detail with your cheque when posting.



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Quaker Council for European Affairs
Square Ambiorix 50
Brussels 1000
Belgium

Éditeur responsable
JEREMY LESTER

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et illustration
DOVILE BOGUSYTE

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