



Quaker
Council for
European
Affairs

around
europe

ISSUE 399 • SEPT—MARCH 2025

Investing in peace



PAGE 4
EU Multiannual
Financial Framework

PAGE 8
Migration
Handbook

PAGE 11
QCEA/QPSW
Conference



A word from QCEA Director

Dear Friends,

This is the last time I will be introducing Around Europe. After two and a half very happy years, I am leaving QCEA in June. I have had the good fortune to work with dedicated staff and volunteers who have a wealth of experience and a commitment to bringing the Quaker voice to European institutions. Quaker House has hosted exhibitions and events that showcase the creativity and dedication of people working for peace, climate justice and for just migration.

I wish I could say I'll be leaving Europe a better place but the challenges are many.

Defence spending is increasing; the Migration and Asylum Pact is already seen by some as too lenient; there is a backlash against legislation on climate and the environment. My successor will have plenty to keep them busy. But I am hopeful. Civil society, including faith-based organisations, is holding its ground. Our dialogue work shows that many people are hungry for a more collaborative approach to the problems we face.

Thank you all for the support you have given me and please do consider serving as a representative of your Yearly Meeting at our General Assembly or an Executive Committee member. You will not regret it.

Tracey Martin
QCEA's Director

New team member: Feblezi Huebi

Migration and Peace Officer

We're excited to welcome Feblezi Huebi to the QCEA team as the new Migration and Peace Officer! With a background in Sociology, as well as in International Migration and Human Rights Law, Feblezi is passionate about fostering humane migration policies and supporting displaced communities.

A little about Feblezi: She currently volunteers with the Migration Youth and Children Platform as Regional Lead for the Europe region's activities, and has previously worked with UNHCR and JESC (Jesuit European Social Centre). She's dedicated to advocating for vulnerable populations and is passionate about migration policy-making. When not working, she enjoys playing football or travelling to discover new cuisines, which helps her stay balanced and inspired.



A changing landscape

The political landscape in the EU has shifted dramatically, making advocacy for peace, climate justice, and migration increasingly difficult. A growing trend toward financing war and defense at the expense of these priorities threatens long-term stability and security. As policymakers focus on military investments, the crucial work of peacebuilding and addressing social and environmental justice is being deprioritized. This shift is not only a political challenge but also an ethical one, as it undermines the EU's commitment to a just and peaceful world.

In the last year of the previous Commission and the first few months of this one, the European political climate has become more hostile to progressive climate and social policies. The Green Deal, once a flagship initiative, has faced increasing resistance. The European People's Party (EPP), once a pillar of the political consensus around the Deal, shifted its stance in the context of elections, leveraging economic fears to position climate action as a burden, rather than a necessary and urgent response to the climate crisis. Similarly, migration policies are becoming more restrictive, with securitization taking precedence over human rights and integration efforts. Meanwhile, the push for increased defense spending has overshadowed investments in long-term peacebuilding. We are witnessing a narrative shift, with an increased emphasis on competitiveness, securitization and simplification rather than on promoting justice, equality and peace.

The prioritization of military spending comes at a high cost. In the previous EU budget, the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), far more funds were allocated to the European Peace Facility, primarily funding military operations, than to the Thematic Programme on Peace, Stability, and Conflict Prevention. This imbalance reflects a broader trend: funding prevention and peacebuilding has not been at the top of the agenda. Furthermore, there is a growing concern over the lack of transparency in how these funds are allocated and spent, with limited public scrutiny or accountability. Civil society organizations, which play a crucial role in advocating for peacebuilding solutions and ensuring that peace and justice remain central to policymaking, are often excluded from key decision-making processes.

In this challenging political environment, **upholding truth and integrity in advocacy work is more important than ever.** At the Quaker Council for European Affairs, we continue to push for policies that prioritize human dignity, environmental sustainability, and conflict prevention.



↑ CREDIT: CANVA

EU Multiannual Financial Framework

What is it?

In 2025 negotiations will start about how EU money gets spent from 2028 to at least 2032. The current multiannual financial framework runs until 2027. 2028 seems a long way away - a lot can happen between now and then - but the need for negotiations between Member States and between political groups in the European Parliament, followed by negotiations between the European Commission, the European Council and the European Parliament, means that the process needs to start now.

The allocation of funding to the different workstreams of the Commission will have an impact on how many staff work on an issue, how the EU is represented in different parts of the world and what legislation gets passed.

Why should Quakers care?

The trend towards increasing spending on defence, the focus on investment rather than development in international partnerships and the emphasis on the competitiveness of Europe, means that funding for development, humanitarian and peace work may be threatened. Internally, the possibility of Member States using social cohesion funds to boost defence spending has already been proposed as a revision to the current budget.

What is QCEA doing?

QCEA is a signatory to the MFF Hub, a coalition of civil society organisations that is lobbying the EU to increase spending on climate, development, humanitarian aid and peace. In November 2024 we put out a statement making the case for the importance of allocating funds to address the challenges facing the world today. The EU must continue to support those who are most vulnerable, promote and maintain peace and maintain its commitment to addressing the climate and environmental crises.

What can Quakers do?

The Member States have the most power when it comes to taking decisions about the budget of the EU. National politicians need to know that their citizens want the EU to continue to be a leading provider of development and humanitarian aid, to continue to support peacebuilders, to continue to work to prevent violent conflict and to stay committed to climate goals. You might want to write a letter to your Minister of Finance individually or as a meeting. Look out for campaigns by faith-based and civil society organisations in your country. You can let the European Commission know what you think.



↑ CREDIT: CANVA

EU budget & peace

Over many years QCEA, as a founder member of the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO), has supported the European Commission, and in particular the European External Action Service, to integrate conflict analysis into all its work and to allocate funding for peacebuilding in countries at risk of violent conflict, experiencing violent conflict and emerging from violent conflict.

In the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework 871 million euros are allocated to the Thematic Programme on Peace, Stability and Conflict Prevention. Further funding for peacebuilding work can be assigned in budgets related to specific countries and regions but this is much harder to track. In comparison, the European Peace Facility, has a budget of 17 billion euros. It finances EU military missions and training and equipment support to the military of other countries.

According to a 2024 paper, the cost of violent conflict was EUR 18.2 trillion globally in 2023, equivalent to 13.5% of the world's economic activity, or EUR 2,266 per person. Preventing conflict and working to end it by nonviolent means is more cost-effective and less damaging to people and planet than military interventions. And yet it is possible that the money available for peacebuilding will be reduced in the next multiannual financial framework. At the same time, countries such as the UK, France and the Netherlands are reducing their development and peacebuilding budgets.

EPLO have issued an initial statement pointing out the strategic and economic advantages of investment in peacebuilding. It asks the EU to:

1. Uphold, at a minimum, the total value of the budget allocation to external action from the current Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) to post-2027.
2. Increase the budget allocations for the Thematic Programme on Peace, Stability, and Conflict Prevention.
3. Include conflict prevention and peacebuilding as objectives in all External Financing Instruments (EFIs).
4. Increase meaningful engagement with and budget allocations to civil society.
5. Ensure that all EU external action is conflict- and gender-sensitive.

You can read the statement at the [EPLO's website](#).

With other members, QCEA is making sure this statement is widely shared with MEPs and representatives of Member States. Further statements will be issued as the details of the proposed budget are announced.





EU Budget & Climate Justice

↑ CREDIT: CANVA

The green transition needs to be financed, not only because of the environmental emergency but also as a matter of justice and peace.

The European Union's green transition through the EU Green Deal seeks to mitigate vulnerabilities caused by climate change. It should also address the socio-economic vulnerabilities arising from the transition itself. These vulnerabilities feed resistance and climate discontent, threatening not only the green transition and the narrow window of opportunity we have to mitigate and adapt to the climate crisis, but also our democracies.

Moreover, without adequate financing, the costs of inaction will far exceed the investments needed today. The consequences of climate inaction are well-documented. Climate-induced disasters such as floods, droughts, food and water scarcity and pollution, exacerbate existing inequalities and fuel conflict. The UN and the World Bank have demonstrated that investments in prevention yield significant returns, with every euro invested in peacebuilding saving EUR 16 in conflict-related costs. Investing in climate action mitigates economic disruptions, displacement, and social unrest, fostering stability and peace.

We now see that EU climate action and environmental restoration are being deprioritized in favor of defence spending. The EU's Multiannual Financial Framework must reflect the urgent need for climate investments. The 2014-2020 budget had a political target of allocating 20% of spending to climate action. As the next MFF is negotiated and the situation is not getting better in order to achieve 2030 and 2050 climate targets, ambitions must be raised. Simply maintaining past commitments is insufficient. The EU needs to raise the budget for EU climate action and environmental restoration to be able to face the scale of the crisis.

At the same time, climate justice remains critically underfunded. The transition to a green economy must not reinforce existing inequalities or create new conflicts. The EU must recognize that **environmental sustainability and social justice go hand in hand**. Structural inequalities mean that marginalized communities, both within Europe and globally, bear the brunt of climate change while often having the least capacity to adapt. Without meaningful financial commitments to climate adaptation, resilience-building and equitable economic support, the green transition risks becoming a source of further instability and exclusion.



EU Budget & Migration

↑ CREDIT: CANVA

Financing a “Fortress Europe” approach

The current Multiannual Financial Framework allocates €22.7 billion for migration and border management, reflecting the EU's increasing emphasis on security and control. Although this investment aims to enhance the efficiency of migration governance, it raises concerns about balancing humanitarian obligations with securitisation.

A significant portion of the funding is directed toward border security measures, highlighting the EU's broader **securitisation agenda**. This prioritization of surveillance, border fortification and return operations tends to overshadow policies that promote safe and legal migration pathways. The expansion of Frontex's (EU agency managing external borders) mandate signals a **militarised** approach to migration management, undermining asylum rights and humanitarian protections. It also reflects the EU's focus on deterrence rather than solidarity and protection. Furthermore, the reliance on **external agreements** with third countries, such as Turkey and Libya, raises ethical concerns, as these partnerships often involve controversial regimes with poor human rights records. Such practices can strain relations with neighboring countries, as the challenges of migration are delegated to more fragile states, exacerbating regional instability and potentially fuelling further migration flows.

The securitisation of migration raises critical questions about the effectiveness and ethical implications of this approach. Focusing financial allocations on securitization may lead to increased militarization of borders and potential human rights violations.

The emphasis on controlling irregular migration can overshadow the need for humane and comprehensive migration policies that address the root causes of migration and protect the rights of migrants.

To address these issues, it is crucial to challenge the current securitisation approach and advocate for a human rights and solidarity-based framework. This framework should prioritise the safety and well-being of migrants, promote peace and stability in their regions of origin, and encourage a more equitable distribution of responsibilities among EU member states. Instead of relying on security-driven solutions, QCEA advocates for nonviolent and just solutions that ensure the protection and dignity of all migrants. It is essential to view migration as a human reality rather than a threat.

Europe needs to invest more in conflict prevention, climate resilience, and fair development policies that address the root causes of forced migration. Migration management approaches should support safe and legal pathways and foster international cooperation and dialogue, rather than depending on the militarization of borders and the externalization of migration control.

A more comprehensive and cooperative approach to migration—one that tackles root causes and promotes regional stability - is necessary to develop sustainable and ethical migration policies.

Migration Handbook

Moving with Dignity: a positive peace approach to migration



Migration has always been a fundamental part of human history, shaped by opportunity, necessity, and survival. People move to seek safety, economic stability, education or a better quality of life. Yet, despite migration being a natural and longstanding reality, today's policies are increasingly shaped by

securitisation, exclusion, and political narratives that fail to uphold the dignity of migrants.

Moving with Dignity: Applying a Positive Peace Approach to Migration Policy is a call to rethink the way we understand and manage migration. This handbook presents an alternative approach—one rooted in positive peace, which not only addresses direct violence but also tackles the structural and cultural forms of violence that make migration unsafe, exploitative, and undignified. By shifting the focus from national security to human security, it advocates for policies that promote peace, inclusion, and the well-being of both migrants and host communities.

Why This Handbook Matters:

Migration policies today often fail to recognize the complexity of why people move. While war and economic hardship are widely acknowledged as drivers of migration, other factors—such as corruption, climate change, gender-based violence, and systemic discrimination—play equally significant roles. However, many existing migration policies fail to address these root causes and instead criminalize or restrict migration, leading to greater suffering.

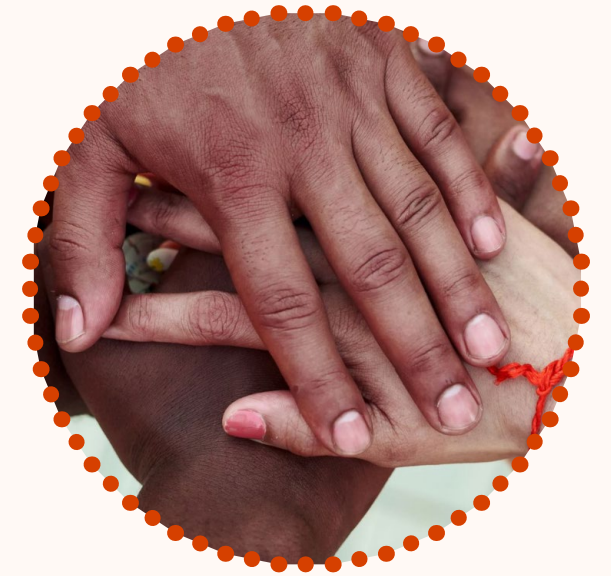
This handbook challenges the current harmful migration practices and presents a framework that ensures migration is a voluntary and dignified choice. Drawing from key peacebuilding principles, it demonstrates how migration governance can move away from coercion and crisis response toward long-term solutions that foster stability, safety, and opportunity for all.

Fostering stability, safety and opportunity for all

By integrating insights from peacebuilding leaders, including Johan Galtung, J.P. Lederach, Heidi Hudson, and Leymah Gbowee, the handbook offers a practical, actionable guide for policymakers, practitioners, and civil society actors seeking to transform migration policies.

A positive peace approach to migration:

Across its chapters, *Moving with Dignity* explores migration in different contexts—from **countries of origin, transit, and destination, to return after conflict**. It examines how migration can be transformed from a struggle for survival into a dignified choice. With a focus on human security, community-driven solutions, and inclusive participation, this handbook is a vital tool for those committed to developing policies that promote peace and protect the rights of migrants. More specifically, it provides a roadmap for governments, organisations, and communities to create migration policies that are fair, effective and centered on human dignity by addressing migration through this comprehensive lens.



↑ CREDIT: CANVA

Take action!

At a time when migration narratives are increasingly polarised, this handbook serves as a timely resource to advocate for humane policies and foster meaningful dialogue. We invite you to share it with your networks, partner organizations, and decision-makers who influence migration governance. Whether you are a policymaker, peacebuilder, migration advocate, humanitarian worker, researcher, or concerned global citizen, you can have a role to play in shaping a more just and humane migration system.

Migration should not be about fear—it should be about **choice, dignity, and peace**. By embracing a positive peace approach, we can create a world where migration is a choice, not a necessity—where people move freely, safely, and with dignity. This handbook is a step toward that future.



↑ CREDIT: CANVA

Available online from 24th April!

New EU plans for rearmament: 'more of the same, only worse'

On March 19, the European Commission presented its "White paper for European Defence Readiness 2030", intended as a general framework that includes the measures proposed by the REARM Europe plan of March 4, adds other proposals to it and attempts to bring the whole into line with existing measures in support of the arms industry, such as the European Defence Fund.

The most spectacular and widely publicised announcement is the €800 billion of additional military spending over 4 years. In real terms, the bulk of this astronomical amount actually depends on the Member States' goodwill. And for that the Commission proposes two major incentives: First a €150 billion-worth fund (raised through financial markets), with which the EU would grant loans to requesting member states to finance the joint purchase of military goods for the replenishment of national stocks or to arm Ukraine.

The second proposal is to consider military spending as 'good debt' by excluding increases since 2021 from the calculation of national debts and deficits under EU fiscal rules for the next 4 years. This could "create a fiscal space" of up to €650 billion with an average increase of 1.5% in national military spending, according to Commission's estimates.

The partly hypothetical nature of these measures does not make them any less problematic, when the argument of austerity has been used over again to reduce public spending for health, pensions or education - not to mention the huge investments needed to fight climate change and mitigate its consequences.

Other proposed measures that have received less media coverage are equally concerning, starting with the proposal to make the European Regional Development Fund more accessible to the arms industry under the argument of growth and jobs. The armament sector is presented as the new panacea for ensuring Europe's global competitiveness and economic growth.

Another set of proposals aims at deregulating in favour of the arms industry, not only defence-specific rules governing procurements or intra-EU transfers, but also general regulations that are presented as obstacles to the military industry's ability to boost production and sales and to access private and public finance. This relates to the environmental, social and governance criteria for sustainable finance, a move justified by a greenwashing narrative that has been developing in recent years and which presents weapons as a prerequisite to security, and security a prerequisite to sustainability and democracy.

- **Laëtitia Sédou**
EU Programme Officer, ENAAT

Want to know more?

Visit [European Network Against the Arms Trade's new website](#).



QCEA/QPSW Conference

Faith in action in the age of permacrisis

Register here



Chant d'Oiseau, Brussels



22-25 June 2025

Together with our sister organisations, Quaker Peace and Witness and Quaker United Nations Office Geneva, we have organised a conference for Quakers and our allies in Brussels from 20th to 22nd June.

The conference will take a deep dive into the work of Quaker agencies on climate justice, community peacebuilding and alternatives to militarism. Our work needs to be grounded in our spiritual practice and our commitment to equality, truth, peace and justice. Our ambitions are great and our resources are limited.

- How do we decide where to put our energy?
- Do we focus on speaking out publicly or on working to bring about change behind the scenes?
- Do we take the lead or do we enable others to be heard?

Participants will have the opportunity to engage in these issues, ask questions and will gain a deep understanding of the work carried out on their behalf. In addition, they will have the opportunity to share their own work of witness and discover new things they can do to support Quaker agencies and enhance their own work on social justice and peace.

This is an opportunity for Quakers from across Europe to learn about each other's concerns and witness. In these challenging times we can uphold each other and strengthen the connections between us. QCEA and QPSW are able to offer grants to support people who need them to attend the conference. We hope that meetings will consider sending someone to attend the conference on their behalf. If you've never attended a European Quaker or QCEA event before you are particularly welcome.

The event will be held in Brussels at Chant d'Oiseau, a peaceful Catholic retreat centre with a beautiful garden. There will be space for reflection and discovering Brussels. The conference starts on Friday evening and finishes after lunch on Sunday but participants can stay on Sunday night at no extra cost.



↑ CREDIT: CANVA

Visit our website to learn more and register.



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.**



Bank transfer

£ Pounds Sterling

“British Friends of Quaker
Council for European Affairs”
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



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:**
1 Castle Mews, Maidenhead, SL6 1HP

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.



around
europe

Quaker Council for European Affairs
Square Ambiorix 50
Brussels 1000
Belgium

Éditeur responsable
TRACEY MARTIN

Mise en page
et illustration
CELINA BEBENEK

Numéro d'entreprise
0420.346.728

Join QCEA's online conversation

Want to keep in touch with QCEA's work in a more informal, interactive way? Then follow us on social media!

