

Quaker Council for European Affairs in 2024

The Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) operates from Quaker House, Square Ambiorix, Brussels. In 2023 QCEA published its strategy 'Justice and Peace in a Time of Climate Crisis'. Saskia, the Migration and Peace Programme Coordinator, is currently developing a practical peacebuilding handbook for migration by highlighting projects and organisations working to end structural and physical violence towards migrants at every stage of their journey. This will be used to present viable peaceful alternatives that prioritise the safety and agency of migrants.

Alice, QCEA's Climate Justice and Peace Programme Coordinator, has been engaging with the current Belgian Presidency of the EU to call for a just social European Green Deal. When developing QCEA's strategy on climate justice and peace in 2023, she identified the lack of conflict analysis in the development of Green Deal policy as a significant risk to peace in Europe and beyond and therefore a major barrier to moving towards a fossil free Europe. Alice is currently working on a paper to show how conflict sensitivity can be incorporated into green policy in a wide variety of areas, including development, trade and agriculture.

QCEA is committed to promoting dialogue as a way of bringing people together to talk about difficult issues. Three dialogues have already been held to explore different concepts of borders and the effects they have on people.

Dovile, the Communications Officer, is developing a new website that will better reflect QCEA's priorities and be more accessible and engaging. The launch is planned for early April. Dovile is also responsible for the bimonthly digital newsletter, QCEA Digest. You can sign up to receive it here: www.qcea.org.

Xavier, QCEA's long-serving Office Manager, has made sure that Quaker House is open for events again after the pandemic. These events have included a panel discussion on the effects of war on the environment, a Loving Earth exhibition and peace mediation training for young professionals. QCEA also hosts events run by other groups.

Laetitia, EU coordinator for the European Network against the Arms Trade, is also based in the QCEA office and works tirelessly to challenge increasing EU expenditure on militarisation and highlight the corruption and human rights violations associated with the arms trade.

Roger Cassidy, based in Norway and a member of the QCEA Executive Committee, helps to raise issues related to peace, particularly the situation of conscientious objectors in Ukraine and Russia, with policymakers.

2024 is EU election year. QCEA has joined a coalition of organisations calling for more recognition of civil society and the expansion and protection of civic space. The plan is to send postcards to outgoing and incoming MEPs to remind them of the importance of compassion, integrity and respect in their work. QCEA will be asking Quakers to make small textile pieces to attach to the postcards to make them memorable and remind politicians that citizens care about how they conduct themselves. There will be more information about this in the next QCEA Digest in March.

Photo:

Left to right: Saskia Basa, Dovile Bogusyte, Tracey Martin, Xavier Verhaeghe, Laetitia Sedou, Alice Privey

