

Dear Friends

Greetings from Quaker house in Brussels where QCEA's General assembly has met over November 17&18. The work of repair, renewal and planning has brought challenges of rebuilding to our organisation after the upheavals of the last few years, against the backdrop of rising violence and its tragic outcomes in the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East.

Yearly meeting representatives and their alternates, funding support group representatives from BYM, Ireland *and* Netherlands, representatives from EMES and EMEYF, together with the Staff team, gathered to agree the necessary changes to the statutes for governance and the levels of authority revisions needed to renew and progress the work of QCEA. Quite extraordinarily this was achieved very rapidly, a testament to the prior work of the General Assembly and its officers.

The willingness to discern and discuss strategic changes being put in place for more transformative dialogue, brought us together to participate in the first of a series of conversations on anti- racism, diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging led by Sarah Diedro Jordao. We are invited to open our hearts and minds to find transformation in silence and bring it into language and action; having the brave conversations and leaning into our discomforts as we listen to the experiences of racism and oppression of racialised and otherwise marginalised people.

We have been excited by the efforts of the QCEA team in their work of peace building in the areas of Migration, Climate Justice and communication along with development of policies in upgrading the staff handbook. We heard about the development and care of the Brussels House with its status as a listed building. The panel from the Quaker tapestry project in the entrance hallway of the House is a daily reminder to us all that every step to diminish fear is a step towards peace. Thankfully we are reassured that the values of peaceful practice continues to be integrated into all aspects of the work of QCEA and we leave this meeting with hope and inspiration.

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