



Friends World Committee  
for Consultation

EUROPE & MIDDLE EAST SECTION

**Europe & Middle East Section**

PO Box 18578,

Birmingham. B30 9GH UK

Tel: +447934310715

Email: [michael@fwccemes.org](mailto:michael@fwccemes.org)

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

Registered Charity No: SC036528

**Executive Secretary: Michael Eccles**

**Epistle from the FWCC Europe and Middle East Section Annual Meeting held Online  
28 - 30 May 2026**

***To Friends everywhere, greetings:***

Dear friends, annwyl cyfeillion, beannachtaí a chairde, kjære venner, chers amis, liebe Freunde, lieve vrienden, queridos amigos, cari amici, kära vänner, kære venner, rakkaat ystävät, kallid sõbrad, drazí přátelé, dārgie draugi, dragi prijatelji, дорогі друзі, дорогие друзья, kedves barátaim, drodzy przyjaciele, Shanovni Droozi, Salamaat Asdiqa, ძვირფასო მეგობრებო!

From across Europe and the Middle East, about 80 Friends gathered for worship, fellowship and consideration of business matters at our Annual Meeting. Throughout the gathering, our hearts and minds were especially occupied with the Friends affected by the wars in our section, in Ukraine and across the Middle East. For an epilogue on the first evening, an Estonian Friend read a poem by Merle Veesalu Rand that begins, "Nobody knows how many prayers have been said for them". These words speak to the fragile moment we are in and remind us of the spiritual bonds between us, even when we are far apart.

This year we took time at the Annual Meeting to hear about the experiences of Friends across the section. A Friend from Lebanon spoke of the desperate situation in his country and for the Brummana Friends School. In his words, we heard deep sadness but also resilience. Friends in Lebanon have done what they can to assist refugees, even as Friends themselves are suffering from the devastation to their country. Support from international Quakers is invaluable. Middle East Yearly Meeting was scheduled for this spring but had to be cancelled. Friends hope for "better times".

A Georgian Friend living in Ukraine described his experiences there. Since the Russian invasion in February 2022, hundreds of thousands of people have been killed and many towns destroyed. International Laws of War have been ignored as civilians and basic infrastructure have been targeted. Air raid sirens have become so ubiquitous that people usually do not seek shelter, but just go on trying to live their normal lives despite the risks. Many Russians do not support the war, giving rise to a large number of Russian deserters and conscientious objectors. Georgian Friends have been assisting some of these COs who have fled to other countries. Rumours about the end of the war circulate regularly. People are weary of war and see no end in sight.

In contrast to these reports, we heard others that offered the promise of creative possibility. A Russian Friend introduced us to the young and diverse Friends Worship Group in St Petersburg and we were encouraged that it is able to offer a space for exploration of the “Quaker Way”. We note with regret that some conversations cannot be voiced but are happy that Friends there are committed to peace.

A Friend from Britain Yearly Meeting reported on a 7 years-long process to revise the BYM Quaker Faith & Practice. This has required much work but also brought unexpected rewards through deepened friendships, reminding us that service on committees is a valuable way to experience community.

QUNO Geneva staff hosted a workshop on what values EMES Friends hope the United Nations will prioritise. Friends at the workshop expressed their thoughts, including that the idea of the Security Council be reviewed; that conscientious objection be respected; and that a culture of mutual understanding and respect among governments and peoples be fostered.

We began an important discussion about the future form and frequency of our EMES meetings. How much should be digital and how much should be in-person? We continue to explore different possibilities for nurturing our Quaker community.

On the last afternoon, a social programme afforded time for fun and laughter. Our Annual Meeting revealed the range of experiences in our section at this time: the despair and hope, and also the generosity and many possibilities. We will meet all of these challenges and opportunities together, hand-in-hand, as Friends.

In Friendship, mewn cyfeillgarwch, i vennskap, i vänskap, i venskab, ystävydessä, bien amicalement, in Freundschaft, I gCairdeas, in Vriendschap, en amistad, in amicizia, v přátelství, u prijateljstvu, draudzībā, baráti üdvözlettel, sǫpruses, w przyjaźni, Zi Droozhnim privitom, В дружби, в дружбе, le cairdeas, fi alsadaqa, მეგობრული მოკითხვით.

Signed on behalf of FWCC Europe & Middle East Section

Ethel Livermore

Clerk FWCC-EMES