

Epistle from Central European Yearly Meeting

4-7 June 2026, Gniezno, Poland

To Friends everywhere, greetings from the heart of Europe.

Would wars be possible if we treated all people as equals?

Would nature and earth be so extremely exploited if humankind didn't feel superior?

Does equality mean „the same to everyone” or „to each one according to their needs”?

Called to ponder together on this, tens of Quakers from the continental area between the Baltic, Black, and Mediterranean seas, and guests from other regions and continents, including America and Australia, gathered in person and online in the good old Gniezno, possible historical site of baptism of Poland.

At our meetings for worship, Friends were humbled by the silent wisdom of elders bearing experience of almost century-long life, and delighted with the ministry of our youngest attender, speaking Truth, as only a baby can.

Being committed to our peace testimony, we heard about sufferings and hold in the Light Ukrainian Friends, and share their hope that Russian war of conquest will end, just and sustainable peace will come as soon as possible, and that conscientious objectors will be allowed to work for peace instead of current cruel treatment and punishments.

The inclusion of a basket full of poetry scrolls featuring a Ghazal 648 by Rumi (in Polish and English) mentioning seekers on a pilgrimage, telling about the God inside, that greeted Friends on their arrival was greatly appreciated. Some Friends were moved to read their own poems. Throughout the weekend it was decidedly thought-provoking and spiritually enriching.

Hana Druckmulerova and Vladimir Kutalek in a presentation "Unequally equal" explored different forms of unfair treatment that people suffer because individual differences and needs are not respected, social barriers hinder diversity, and many people have contempt to others based on stereotypes regarding gender, religion, age, health, ability, and so on. Truth and Simplicity are not straightforward in their expression, what people imagine to be simple is often because we do not see the struggles people go through, in order to appear normal, because of social barriers that are faced by people considered 'different'. Seeking equitable outcomes requires analysis of the injustices we seek to challenge, so that we can properly gauge success in making a positive change. Hana reminded us of the importance of golden rule: treat others the way you want them to treat you.

Arne Springorum told us about his work with colleagues in the Applied Economy Evolution Institute towards more perfect stewardship of global Quaker corporate resources for economic transformation and climate action. The global financial system hurts Earth by generating unsustainable consumption, wasting the riches of nature like a gambler in a casino, risking

extinction of humans. The planet needs our help in healing, building an economy of integrity and renewable energy to prevent ecological and climate disasters.

Nadiya Ivanivna Spassenko challenged us to participate in a discussion about global warming, astronomy, geological history of Earth, and the role of humankind. It was an interesting exercise in seeking truth together.

Krzysztof Krzywania reminded us that humans and animals equally received a gift of life from the Creator and there will be no peace on Earth while blood of innocent creatures is spilled. We were called to care about all life.

Kasia Kaczmarkiewicz invited us to a digital archive on the CEYM website containing historical records of Friends in Central Europe from 2004 to recent time. We enjoyed a short film about a 2005 meeting in Hungary where Brian Phillips led discussion of our worship, testimonies, and theology.

Sharing thoughts, feelings and sudden revelations, rejoicing in hymns, songs, dances, games and poetry, breaking the language barriers with silent worship and friendly conversations, with humor and seriousness, we learned experientially true equality being together in the Spirit. It is our hope that once everyone will experience equal happiness.

Signed in Friendship, Light and Love,
On behalf of Central European Yearly Meeting

Liz Coling and Pawel Milka
Co-clerks