

BREXIT

MEETING FOR WORSHIP

**Friday
29 March 2019**

22:30
GMT
UK / IRELAND

23:30
CET
BELGIUM
FRANCE
GERMANY

00:30
EET
MOSCOW

What is happening?

- The Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) are inviting Friends and Meetings to take part in a Europe-wide dispersed meeting for worship at the time of the expected departure of the UK from the European Union.
- You or your Meeting have the option of being connected online during the worship.
- The event is organised in partnership with Woodbrooke and the Europe and Middle East Section (EMES) of Quakers.

When is this happening?

The meeting for worship will take place at the time indicated above, and last approximately one hour. This means the meeting will be ongoing at the moment Brexit is expected to take place (midnight Brussels time). If Brexit is delayed or cancelled we will still go ahead with the event on this date.

Why are we doing this?

QCEA is running a study tour of the European institutions during 'Brexit week'. As part of this, participants will be holding a meeting for worship outside the European Commission at the point when UK withdrawal occurs. We want to open this up to all Friends, those who wanted to take part in the study tour but couldn't, those wanting to mark Brexit for whatever reason, and those who would like to feel a connection to Quakers across Europe at this time. While attenders will be dispersed across the continent, we hope that we be together in spirit.

How can I connect with people taking part in other places?

To join the online meeting for worship as an individual or Meeting, please register at www.qcea.org/brexitmeeting or email events@qcea.org.

continued overleaf

Is this pro- or anti-Brexit?

It's neither. The meeting isn't making a particular political point, but we recognise that Brexit may be a significant moment for many people, and want to give people a chance to mark that.

What will happen during the meeting? Is it completely open and unprogrammed?

We suggest that at the start of the meeting someone introduces it, perhaps using the following words —

This is a meeting for worship on the occasion of Brexit, the departure of the UK from membership of the EU. This is one of several Quaker meetings taking place across the European continent at this time, including one near the European Commission buildings in Brussels. This is a space for Friends to speak what is on their hearts and to minister on this topic. We, and the other meetings taking part, will worship together for an hour then close by shaking hands.

If you are taking part in the online meeting, you may want to say —

This is a meeting for worship on the occasion of Brexit, the departure of the UK from membership of the EU. This is one of several Quaker meetings taking place across the European continent at this time, including one near the European Commission buildings in Brussels, which we are connected to via the internet. If there are connection problems, please continue to worship, knowing that you are together spiritually if not technologically. This is a space for Friends to speak what is on their hearts and to minister on this topic. We, and the other meetings taking part, will worship together for an hour then close by shaking hands.

What if we can't make it at that time?

We realise that the middle of the night on Friday may not be suitable for everyone. The online worship part is so that people can participate without having to open up their regular place of worship. However, for those who cannot make that time, we suggest two alternative times for worship, of 19:00 GMT on the 29th March, and at 12:00 GMT on Saturday 30th March. By having recommended times, we hope that Friends across Europe will worship then and so maintain the community aspect of the worship. **There will not be an online meeting at these times.**

How can we remain involved after this meeting?

The Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) will continue to represent the interests and concerns of all Quakers across Europe, including Britain. It engages with the EU, the Council of Europe (the seat of the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Court of Human Rights) and other pan-European bodies. European Yearly Meetings have representatives serving on QCEA's governing committee and you can keep up with QCEA's work by subscribing to its newsletter, *Around Europe*, or by visiting the website www.qcea.org.

- **Quakers in Britain** can join *British Friends of QCEA*, the QCEA national support group. It organises talks about QCEA and European affairs, raises money to support QCEA's work and brings together Quakers with an interest in European affairs.
- **In Ireland**, the *QCEA Irish Support Group* runs events and fundraises on behalf of QCEA.
- **In the Netherlands**, *Vrienden voor Brussel* (VVQREA) supports the work of QCEA.

For more information about these support groups email events@qcea.org.