



Friends World Committee
for Consultation
EUROPE & MIDDLE EAST SECTION

Europe & Middle East Section
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Registered Charity No: SC036528
Executive Secretary: Michael Eccles

To everyone attending Britain Yearly Meeting, 28 April-1 May 2023

20 April 2023

Dear Friends,

We send loving greetings from the Friends World Committee for Consultation Europe and Middle East Section (FWCC EMES) as you meet. We hold you all in the Light as you are in God's presence as you spend time together. Evan Welkin, EMES Communication and Programme Officer, will join you as a representative from our Section along with our Executive Secretary Michael Eccles and myself, our Executive Committee Clerk.

You are a part of our FWCC Section and with us and through us you are connected to thousands of Quakers across Europe and the Middle East consisting of 12 Yearly Meetings, one Monthly Meeting, many worship groups, international members and other individuals, spread across over 30 countries and speaking many languages.

We are a thriving, vibrant, inclusive, all-age, spiritual community of Friends in Europe and the Middle East. Woven together in transformative faith and love, working and connecting with others, listening to the Spirit, we are actively living out our Quaker testimonies of truth and integrity, equality and community, simplicity, peace, and care for the earth and the environment.

We pray fervently for peace, a peace that upholds and respects every person. At the time of writing, war is among us with the Russian invasion of Ukraine. We uphold Friends and friends-of-Friends in Ukraine, in Kyiv and other towns and cities who are suffering. We uphold Friends in Russia who endure life under a difficult regime. We uphold all of those across our Section who have taken strangers into their homes and who have offered other kinds of support to refugees.

Conflict is no stranger to Europe and the Middle East. Friends in many places around Europe and the Middle East continue to live in difficult circumstances. We uphold them all. Conflict is not the only crisis that we are living through. The pandemic continues throughout the world coupled with the ongoing climate emergency.

Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

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At our Annual Meeting, held in Paris in May last year, we considered the theme *From Crisis to Connection: working creatively to heal our fractured world*. Our epistle included the following words:

We met in the long shadow of the war in Ukraine which has fallen over Europe and the rest of the world. We recognise the on-going suffering in other parts of the world which could be forgotten at this time. On Sunday morning we joined in Meeting for Worship with Quakers in Kyiv. We heard first hand accounts of the work being done by Friends across Europe to support those affected by the war, notably in Georgia, Estonia, Czechia and Poland . We listened to the fears. Our prayers are with all those involved. We uphold the Quaker organisations who are working both through social activism and methods of quiet diplomacy to help end conflict and support those affected.

Our next Annual Meeting is planned for this coming 4-7 May, 2023 at Woodbrooke in the UK. We warmly welcome your representatives to attend and the meeting theme will be ***“Responding with hope to God’s call to cherish creation – and one another. ‘For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Jeremiah 29:11 (NRSV)’”***

Finally, I would like to invite your yearly meeting to consider making a contribution to our appeal campaign in support of the World Plenary Gathering 2024. We aim to make that gathering as inclusive as possible, and your yearly meeting’s contribution can help those who otherwise could not participate to join us. Details about how to contribute can be found at our “Donate” page, being sure to include the reference **“GFC2023”** so we can account for the campaign properly.

We wish you an inspired and hopeful meeting.

In friendship,



Ethel Livermore

Clerk

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