



Around Europe

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Challenges ahead for Kosovo and its civil society

Administered by the United Nations (UN) since 1999 but still officially a province of Serbia, Kosovo is finally about to see its political status determined. This will provide a long-awaited answer to a fundamental question about Kosovo's future, but also create many new opportunities and challenges for improving security and rule of law. The European Union (EU) is expected to play a vital role in making the most of the opportunities and facing the challenges.

The UN-brokered negotiations on Kosovo's future status between Pristina and Belgrade have been inconclusive with the majority Albanian population of Kosovo demanding nothing less than full independence, and the Serbian government agreeing only to grant the province a high level of autonomy. The parties are therefore expecting the solution to be a compromise carefully crafted but nevertheless imposed by the UN Security Council.

The pessimism and frustration of Kosovo Albanians has grown over the years in the face of slow growth, high unemployment, and insecurity. They have developed very high expectations for the resolution of Kosovo's final status, seeing it as a panacea for most of their problems. There is a very concrete risk that frustration might intensify when citizens realise that this compromise only alters whose responsibility it is to address the severe problems and dire needs of Kosovo, and does not provide an immediate remedy to them.

The EU is expected to take the lead in ensuring some form of international presence after Kosovo's status is resolved and the UN interim administration mission has left. A European Security and Defence Policy mission, focusing on police, justice and correctional services, and an International Civilian Office including an EU Special Representative are being prepared, though the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation is expected to continue providing security in the territory, in collaboration with the 7,000-strong Kosovo Police Service.

This is the most demanding mission the EU will

have ever had to put together and the challenges are numerous and complex. One of those, which is of particular interest to organisations such as the Quaker Council for European Affairs and Saferworld, is the future cooperation between the EU-led international presence and Kosovan civil society. This will be particularly important in the field of security, where there is a dire need for an informed public debate on policies and planned reforms that listens to the views of the people, and for a competent civil society able to engage in debates and monitor progress. Too often in Kosovo, civil society is left aside in important security sector reforms and the future EU-led international presence should take steps to ensure its inclusion into future debates.

At a recent conference in Helsinki on the cooperation between civil society and EU civilian crisis management, Saferworld urged the upcoming EU presence to ensure it works closely and effectively with civil society, and suggested that it devise a strategic approach to improving the everyday safety of ordinary Kosovans through local-level initiatives. For some years now, Saferworld and its Kosovo partner, the Forum of Civic Initiative (FIQ), have been working on small arms control and security sector reform issues in Kosovo. Recently, the partnership has focused on developing new approaches to community safety at the grass-roots level. This approach involves Kosovan NGOs helping local communities analyse their safety problems and then plan and implement responses to them.

The success of this approach suggests certain lessons for others working in this field. Most

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notably, it suggests that the EU should consider the benefits of small-scale community development projects to promote security in Kosovo. These approaches offer enough flexibility to encompass work on whatever issues local communities identify as their priorities, whether they are related to poverty alleviation, public health, or safety and security. Communities often see these issues as interlinked, and they require visible progress to be made on one issue before enough confidence is built to tackle another. The potential role for Kosovan civil society in implementing such initiatives and raising awareness is significant.

Saferworld and FIQ are currently taking this and other issues (such as small arms control and the broader development of civil society capacity on

security sector reform) forward under the umbrella of a project titled 'SafePlace'. In addition to contributing to security sector development and community safety, this programme of activities aims at building the capacity and expertise of local civil society on peace, conflict and security issues through joint research and advocacy.

With the political and security challenges ahead, it will be crucial to strengthen the capacity of Kosovan NGOs in generating meaningful public debates on issues of local or national importance and in exercising their role as public watchdogs and advocates for change.

Jérôme Mellon
Saferworld Project Co-ordinator,
South Eastern Europe

Eleventh International Peace Tax Conference

The Eleventh International Conference on War Tax Resistance and Peace Tax Campaigns was held in Woltersdorf (near Berlin), from 26-29 October with the theme 'Responsibility.' The event was organized by the German Peace Tax Network and around 60 participants attended, with representatives from Europe, Canada, the United States, Nepal, Eritrea, Ghana and India.

The Conference offered participants the chance to hear from representatives from regions particularly affected by conflict and from countries where the right to conscientious objection is still not respected. In the early stages

of the Conference, the group mainly discussed the recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan but participant testimonies also reminded the Conference about the growing problem of small arms and landmines throughout Africa. It reinforced just how many different shades of 'war' there can be and the variety of conflicts public tax money can be used to fuel.

The Conference also provided updates from around the globe on the progression of war tax resistance. There are currently active cases going through the national courts in the UK, Germany and the US. Other countries are perhaps not so fortunate to enjoy the freedom to withhold their taxes in such a way; some face huge fines and imprisonment. Various workshops enabled participants to discuss their feelings, hopes and concerns about the future direction of the Peace Tax movement. The Conference discussed and ratified a draft formula to express the human right to both direct and indirect military conscription. It was also decided that a website, listing the main arguments for and against Peace Tax would serve as useful preparation for any person wishing to approach their MP about this issue and a team of participants volunteered to collect these arguments together.

QCEA has already written 4 briefing papers dealing with the peace tax in the context of the Council of Europe including one entitled 'The Peace Tax-Frequently Asked Questions'. The briefing papers are available in both English and French at http://www.quaker.org/qcea/briefings/peace_tax/index.html

The next CPTI Conference will be held in the UK in 2008.

Sarah Barnett





Peacebuilding - what is the role of Europe?

On 20-22 October 2006, QCEA, together with the Quaker United Nations Office Geneva (QUNO) and Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW), held its biennial conference. The theme was 'Peacebuilding-what is the role of Europe?'

We were fortunate in having three excellent keynote speakers and a number of skilled workshop facilitators. What follows is intended to give *Around Europe* readers a taste of the Conference and to whet your appetite for the full publication in early 2007.

Carne Ross: 'Diplomacy for those that need it most'

Carne Ross founded 'Independent Diplomat' (ID), which aids the most deprived countries and groups with getting their voices heard where key decisions are made. Carne Ross was chosen in 2004 as one of the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust's centenary 'visionaries'. He rose to the top ranks of the UK diplomatic service, yet chose to resign as a result of the UK government's subterfuge in the run up to the 2003 Iraq war. He detailed a number of major problems surrounding modern diplomacy. These included: diplomacy covering too many areas of our lives, major decisions being taken in fewer capitals and international fora, a lack of specialist local knowledge by those that make decisions, and the prominence of the State in international relations. Are some of us guilty of legitimizing these developments by shedding our own political responsibility?

Independent Diplomat was born of Carne Ross's experience at the UN Security Council and in Kosovo. Kosovo's new constitution is being drawn up in Vienna by countries not including Kosovo or even Serbia. ID succeeded in getting the Kosovan voice heard at UN discussions on its future.

We can all make sure that we don't assume that 'they know best' said Carne Ross. Experts on remote countries often know very little, or have never even set foot in the regions on which they possess 'expertise'.

We should actively pursue and enjoy the right of access to ministers and those that make decisions on our behalf. We should make our voices count. We, as Quakers, were challenged in our traditional forms of protest. Do methods such as peaceful demonstrations, silent vigils etc no longer work? Do rock concerts and text message petitions only serve to trivialise the major political issues of our time?. We need to look for new ways to make our voices heard.

For more information, see Independent Diplomat's website at <http://www.independentdiplomat.com/>

Alan Pleydell: 'Giving meaning to 'Never Again'...'

Alan Pleydell's **keynote speech** on Friday evening 'Giving meaning to 'Never Again': the International Responsibility to Protect' challenged us to think about our Peace Testimony more deeply. Could we, as Quakers, in spite of our Peace Testimony, be persuaded to support intervention where genocide is concerned? What are the moral costs of **not** acting? Think of Rwanda in 1994 and Srebrenica in 1995. Is it possible to conceive of a well- resourced, fully authorised and shared international military intervention that saves many lives without leading to worse consequences later on? Was Kosovo just such a case? Alan emphasized the great moral risk on both sides of the intervention (doing something) and non- intervention (doing nothing) arguments. Where do we stand? And why?

Alan Pleydell's **workshop** on 'Dilemmas of power and trust in Dealing with the Past in the post- Yugoslav Countries' asked us all a key question. Do we remember or do we forget? Can people in these countries move on with their lives without knowing what happened to their loved ones and why? Where is justice in all this?

There have been no Truth and Reconciliation Commissions so far, public scepticism runs too deep for that. The principle objective of QPSW's programme on Dealing with the Past is to contribute to 'the long- term challenge to and deconstruction of cultures of denial within the region'. QPSW's representatives are 'local people rooted in local society, working in local language' and they all lived through the wars. They create safe spaces for the slow and gradual revelation of the moral complexity of what happened in different places to challenge and deconstruct collective myths of communal innocence and denial of guilt. What role do we as Quakers have in facilitating this slow and painful process?

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The Peace Museum

No-one is surprised to learn that there are many hundreds of war or war-related museums in the world - but a peace museum? What might that be?

Peter Nias from the Peace Museum in Bradford, UK, ran two workshops during the weekend giving us an insight into the work of the Peace Museum. He addressed questions about how you can make peace interesting in a form that would fit the concept of a museum and he told us about the outreach work the Peace Museum does with its 5 travelling exhibitions.

One of these exhibitions was displayed throughout the Conference and served as a backdrop to our discussions on peace.

The Peace Museum in Bradford, one of a small number of such museums worldwide (there are around 100 in the world, many of which are in Japan), has a growing collection of artefacts, posters, paintings and books and undertakes 95% of its work in the form of outreach - through the travelling exhibitions, through workshops and through its website.

One of the newest initiatives - and a very exciting one - is a collaboration with the Royal Armouries in Leeds, UK, where the Peace Museum has been invited (and is being funded) to set up a peace room. This will open in late 2006 and Friends visiting Leeds after that date are encouraged to go and see this.

....Look out for details of our publication on the Conference in early 2007. QCEA looks forward to seeing some of our *Around Europe* readers at our next conference in 2008!

QCEA Staff

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