

European Bosnia-Herzegovina Collective

30 November 2017

Emmaus building, Montreuil, France

Participants

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Next meeting

The next meeting will be held in **Banja Luka on 3-4 May 2018** hosted by Nova Generacija.

The possibility of getting the meeting to coincide with Emmaus-ISF's anniversary (7 April) was raised, but proved complicated in terms of dates. However, an Emmaus Europe delegation could nevertheless attend the anniversary.

Thank you to the participants for the worthwhile and constructive discussions!

Introduction

Hans Van Beek, the Collective representative and member of the Emmaus Europe Regional Executive, introduced the meeting by briefly reiterating the main thrusts of the previous meeting held on 2 April in Dobož Istok. Nova Generacija announced future developments for their land, containers and selling work on that occasion.

He expressed the wish that this collective should be an umbrella group for the Bosnian groups. Furthermore, it would be desirable that in addition to the French groups, other groups from Europe join the collective (just like the Dutch and UK groups at this meeting) **to make for a truly European collective**, as more and more countries have contact with Bosnia-Herzegovina.

He then spoke about the possibility of taking advantage of collective meetings in order to discuss the complex economic and political situation in the country.

Bosnia-Herzegovina - Netherlands

It is important that the term “exchange” is used and not just sending donated goods, as the Dutch groups learn a lot from the volunteers who come from Bosnia-Herzegovina. The exchange of goods is therefore of secondary importance.

The exchange took place for the second time this year and a new community in the Netherlands joined the partnership, as well as two volunteers from Nova Generacija. A few transport difficulties were encountered this time, particularly with border taxes, which are very high for social activists. A possible response would be for **Emmaus Europe to take a stance on this issue** in order to put pressure on the European authorities.

BBF partnership (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Burkina Faso and France)

This partnership has been mentioned for a long time at the collective meetings without there ever being the opportunity to more comprehensively present it. As members of Emmaus Angoulême are involved in the project and are present at this meeting, the opportunity has now arisen. The backstory is as follows:

2008 A proposal was put to the General Assembly of Emmaus Angoulême to set up a Burkina Faso – Bosnia – France partnership.

2010 Visit paid by the director of Emmaus-ISF and four members to Limoges, donation of a vehicle.

2011 A number of French groups join the initiative: Angoulême, Limoges, Niort, Ruffec. A meeting at the end of the year brought together 11 French, six Bosnian and one Burkinabe stakeholder in order to get to know each other, discuss cultures and initiatives.

March 2012 **A memorandum of understanding was signed.**

2013 A visit was organised to Burkina Faso. **A BBF account, known as the joint fund, was set up, and the groups involved in the partnership started paying money in to the account.**

2014 Meeting with Jean Rousseau to set the framework, with representatives of the three countries, and make each partner’s actions coherent again.

2015 Meeting in Limoges and discussion about the Ouagadougou agricultural college expansion project. In late December a team left for Burkina Faso, followed by another in January 2016, to start the work, and materials were sent from Bosnia-Herzegovina.

2017 Cost of transport and travel covered by the joint BBF fund.

The current projects focus on education (working with primary schools in Ruffec, project approved at two levels, a secondary school could be involved in the future) and women in difficulty.

Social workers could be invited to attend the next partnership meeting.

The following point was raised: It is often felt that Emmaus-ISF needs help, but here is an instance of them providing help to others, which echoes one of Emmaus' core values.

The exchanges are multi-faceted because the three countries are very different. Therefore, it is very constructive that this is not simply an exchange of goods, and it is interesting for Emmaus Europe to move beyond the giver/receiver dynamic.

2017 solidarity programme.

For the record, the European solidarity programme encompassed initiatives run by Emmaus Padua (Italy), MPFSC (Lithuania), Frères Europa, Iasi (Romania), Nasha Khata and Oselya (Ukraine). The deadline for submission of applications for 2018 funding was 23 November. Emmaus-ISF has submitted an application.

The meeting was reminded that the programme solely relies on group donations and that Emmaus Europe does not have any funds to support these initiatives. **Donations are down in 2017.**

Communication about the programme was then discussed. **The funding appeal is not attractive enough** and there is a need to provide more information about the initiatives being supported and the groups' general activities. The more people know about them, the closer they will feel and the more willing they will be to donate.

The peace march

A death march took place during the Srebrenica massacre in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1995. In response, in 2005 the first "peace march" was organised in the opposite direction to symbolise people returning to the region. 200 to 300 people took part, with the number being limited for security reasons. In 2006, close to 1,000 people attended, and nowadays **every year over 5,000 people of all ages from across the world take part** (70-80% are young people). This event educates the world about the consequences of the war.

The walkers set off from Tuzla and walk to Srebrenica. Walkers stay with local residents. Emmaus activists have been involved in improving the path over the years.

Centre for Missing and Exploited Children, Croatia

Two leaders from a Croatian association, the Centre for Missing and Exploited Children, came to Montreuil to take part in the meeting, and consequently had the chance to present their organisation. Their visit follows on from cooperation work, which has been going on for some time, with Emmaus-ISF on the issues of children, human trafficking and new social enterprises.

Situation

The association works in Osijek in East Croatia, roughly equidistant from Belgrade, Sarajevo and Zagreb. The town is located in the region of Slavonia, which is known for farming.

There are 18 full-time staff (psychologists, social workers, lawyers) and 118 volunteers.

Activities

- Day centre: 80 children with behavioural issues are supported. These issues stem from their families' vulnerability. The centre provides meals and clothing.

- Telephone helpline for missing children. Every year, roughly 5,000 children run away from children's homes and their families, and are very vulnerable to trafficking. At the same time, the association is known as a refuge for child victims of human trafficking.
- Centre for a safer internet to prevent children from being exposed to inappropriate content.
- Unaccompanied minors: a mobile team exists and has Arabic, Farsi, Pashtu and Urdu interpreters, and is the only one of its kind in the country.
- Individual support for children in education. Language classes are also offered.
- Support for women in difficulty: food, newborn pack, individual advice for mothers and children, workshops for parents. Art therapy workshops.

Prospects

The children are only supported until the age of 18. One **objective is to offer over-18s housing and work.**

The association also wants to open a **residential community for unaccompanied minors.**

The association would like to join Emmaus as the Emmaus Movement has no presence in Croatia. Membership would give them greater weight when lobbying the government and would also enable them to benefit from interaction and advice provided by the other Emmaus groups.

Emmaus Movement membership procedure

A trial membership handbook is available from EI for groups wishing to join the movement. A new and easier-to-understand version was recently published. Trial membership is the first stage towards becoming a member and the group needs to be visited before trial member status is approved.

Emmaus Europe's news

Migration

- Currently, it is EU policy to grant funding to African states so that they stop migrants from making the journey, which simply makes it more dangerous for migrants.
- The budget allocated to Frontex for border surveillance (which has risen from €350,000 to close to €900,000 a day in 2017) is also disputed and could be used more effectively to develop employment opportunities for young migrants.
- A meeting has been arranged **in Brussels on 12-13 December** by a member association of the Migreurop network of which Emmaus Europe is also a member. The event is a counter-summit held at the same time as the last EU summit of the year (13 December in Brussels).

The circular economy

- There is still a month left in which to lobby the member states to get them to adopt the reuse – repurposing –recycling distinction in order to foster reuse and repurposing.
- It seems that Emmaus Europe's amendments on recognition for social stakeholders will not be included by the European Commission, but **the member states can still be advised that the European Parliament did maintain these amendments.**

Governance

- The Regional Executive and Regional Council have started discussing the organisation of the **Regional Assembly of Emmaus Europe, Emmaus Europe's highest authority, which is set to elect a president and 12 CEIs (EI Board members) in autumn 2019 in Europe.**

Article 13

A Crossing the Straits of Gibraltar event was held in September to raise awareness about freedom of movement. A moment of reflection was held at the migrant cemetery in Tarifa, followed by a silent march to the open door placed on the beach, symbolising hope.

The weather conditions prevented the participants from actually crossing the Straits. The symbolic nature of the situation is worth highlighting. Despite all the equipment available, the crossing could not be made, yet migrants cross the Straits in all weather conditions.

Emmaus International's news

Some decisions have been made since Jesolo and are bringing about changes of practice. The following resolutions were approved:

- **Keep our heritage alive:** Abbé Pierre left a large number of archives and a decision needs to be taken about what to do with them.
- **Strengthen our movement:** many groups use the Emmaus name but do not pay their membership dues and are not actively involved in the movement and so on. Things need to progress on this front.
- **Campaign areas** Three campaign areas were adopted by the world assembly:
 - Working for an ethical and social economy in order to guarantee access to fundamental rights.
 - Ensuring social and environmental justice in order to create a world which offers everyone a place, particularly the most deprived people, and which is respectful of the environment.
 - Build a sustainable world for future generations, an open and peaceful world in which everyone can move freely under the auspices of universal citizenship and without harming the environment.
 - Videos have been produced briefly presenting the work done by the groups on these topics and can be viewed via the EI website: <https://www.emmaus-international.org/en/our-struggles.html>.

Several events have been organised following the assembly.

- The **Global Forum for Alternatives** run solely by the most socially-excluded people will take place in Geneva in 2018.
- **International work camps** will be organised regularly starting in January 2018. Each group should have received an invitation to a camp in Asia in January and others will follow on a roughly yearly basis in the different Emmaus regions.

As for the regions, Emmaus Africa has been encountering a number of issues since Jesolo. The African groups are meeting from 10-16 December in Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso to discuss how to forge stronger ties and discuss the major Emmaus topics, including self-sufficiency in particular.

Group	Nova Generacija	ISF (International Solidarity Forum)
<i>Main activities</i>	<p><u>Day centre</u> 30-50 children supported every month, the group collects school materials and hands out satchels, self-defence training, free swimming pool for the children in the summer.</p> <p><u>Blue phone</u> The country's only telephone helpline to report violence against children. The group passes on the information to the authorities. Awareness raising campaigns are also organised. N.B. Having this sort of service is a pre-requisite for joining the EU.</p> <p><u>Promoting children's rights</u></p> <p><u>Charity shop</u> selling second-hand goods, two employees on <u>back-to-work contracts</u>.</p>	<p><u>Summer camp</u> Held annually since 2006, starting on 10 July, which is Srebrenica commemoration day, and attended by young people from all over the world.</p> <p><u>Support for elderly people</u> Healthcare, support in the home, outings.</p> <p><u>Three day centres</u> Social rehabilitation, healthcare, learning support for children outside the education system.</p> <p><u>Sarajevo office</u> Preventing trafficking and violence towards children.</p> <p>Support for the <u>Mothers of Srebrenica</u>.</p> <p><u>Humanitarian convoys to Syria</u>.</p>
<i>Latest news from the group</i>	<p><u>Day centre</u> Five international volunteers took part in the activities for two weeks, which also allowed the children to try out their English, and sports sessions help to socially integrate the children.</p> <p><u>Blue phone</u> Over 4,500 calls received, constituting a marked increase (due to publicity and greater trust in the authorities). 70 assaults were reported and led to the police intervening in 45 cases. Three campaigns have been run by the group this year, each lasting 15-20 days, in the media, schools, advertising hoardings etc. The service is now free for all.</p> <p><u>Charity shop</u> The employees are parents of children who attend the day centre and are therefore socially and professionally active, which also sets a good example to their children.</p> <p><u>Financial situation</u> The group reports financial problems due to previous activities. It was asked to send a summary document to the Regional Executive to explain the situation.</p>	<p><u>Summer camp</u> The region is still fighting to bring the local area back to life. The camp is a good experience for the young people, who do farm work for the first time. They can see the results of their efforts when they leave. In 2017, over 80 volunteers from 10 countries took part in renovating a house and supplying water to the Mothers of Srebrenica. The work camp will be held again from 10-24 July 2018. Registration will open in February/March.</p> <p>The Bosnian team took part in the <u>Homeless World Cup</u> for the sixth time. It was held in Norway this year. The team finished seventh.</p> <p><u>Inauguration of three houses</u> for young people able to live more independently.</p>
<i>Regional solidarity</i>		The group wants to submit a funding application for 2018. The initiative aims to offer resources to community leaders so that

<i>programme</i>		<p>they learn to recognize human trafficking. The idea is to stock an online library (www.eurcenter.net) and organise online training. The initiative was mentioned again at the February 2017 migration collective.</p> <p>The initiative in place wants to highlight trafficking, which often goes “under the radar” compared with migration, for example, even though both issues are dealt with by the same collective.</p>
<i>Lorry loads</i>	<p>The group received a load of 18 tonnes from Finland. Despite providing the authorities with an explanation, a large amount of tax had to be paid (around €5,000).</p>	<p>A lorry load was sent by Emmaus Umea.</p> <p>A load was co-organised in late October by Alençon (driver), Bourges (logistics and content, primarily clothing), Lyon (truck) and Val de Brie Insertion (funding). A decision was taken to organise it very transparently (budget, goods etc).</p> <p>The journey went well and ISF gave the truck a warm welcome.</p> <p>Prospects</p> <p>Reinstate an annual convoy of six to seven trucks for the various groups in the country as part of a European initiative. Les Ulis and Val de Brie Insertion have expressed an interest.</p>
<i>Prospects</i>	<p>The group would like to open new charity shops as soon as the income generated by the first shop permits it (the shop is already doing well).</p> <p>The group may also get involved in street markets.</p>	<p>International solidarity: The group wants to continue supporting Syria. Formalities are already underway to obtain visas for Bangladesh to help the Rohingya refugees.</p> <p>The group is looking for a plot of land on which it could build a centre in Srebrenica and would like to develop a nursery.</p> <p>The intention is also to maintain and bolster partnerships, such as their involvement in the BBF and support for NG.</p>