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Report of the meeting of the European Poland / Ukraine collective

26-27 March 2019

Emmaus Oselya, Lviv, Ukraine

Participants

Willi Does, *collective representative and president of Emmaus Europe*, **Emmaus Cologne, Germany.**

Benedikt Zecha, Hansjörg Egger-Stern, **Emmaus Innsbruck, Austria.**

Helka Ahava, **Emmaus Helsinki, Finland.**

Eric Bitaux and Pascal Louvet, **Emmaus Annemasse, France.**

Anne Lahaye, **Emmaus Bougival, France.**

Gilles Vasseur, **Emmaus Chambéry, France.**

Yolande Bury, Jean-Claude Lapeyre, **Emmaus Longjumeau, France.**

Jean-Pierre Girard, **Emmaus Ornans, France.**

Irène Meunier, **Emmaus Roanne, France.**

Dieudonné Moussavou, **Emmaus Solidarité, France.**

Christophe Pauvel, **Emmaus Synergie, France.**

Bernard Dumoulin, Pierre Dubois, **EMRA, France.**

Giorgi Ghelaghutashvili, **Emmaus Geo, Georgia.**

Jean Amblard, Solvita Fibiga, **Amis3, Latvia.**

Jos Van Der Meer and Herbert Bitter, **Emmaus Haarzuilens, Netherlands.**

Grzegorz Hadjuk, *Poland national delegate*, Jacek Kraus, Wojtek Chmura, **Emmaus Brat Albert, Poland.**

Zbigniew Drązkowski, **Emmaus Lublin, Poland.**

Krzysztof Serwinski, Grazyna Moskal, **Emmaus Rzeszów, Poland.**

Manon Bouvard, Orlane Messey, **Frères Europa, Romania.**

Grigoriy Semenchuk, *Ukraine national delegate*, Natalya Sanotska, Oksana Buchkovska, **Emmaus Oselya, Ukraine**

Julia Yavorivska, Savka Andryi, Vasyl Golod, **Nasha Khata, Ukraine**

Eve Poulteau, Théo Robin, **Emmaus Europe Secretariat.**

Willi opened the meeting by reminding participants that they were in Oselya in particular to ask Lviv Council for more support for Oselya's projects and activities. A meeting was arranged alongside the collective meeting, and a small delegation met Lviv's mayor and deputy mayor. The meeting focused on waste handling and was positive.

The collective meeting also gave participants the chance to attend the inauguration of an exhibition of photos of Emmaus Oselya. The exhibition was put together by a photographer and author from the Netherlands with the support of Emmaus Haarzuilens (Netherlands).

There were also a few practical developments at the meeting. For the very first time, simultaneous interpreting was provided in order to improve communication between the participants. It should be noted that interpreting is expensive and we will not always be able to incur this expense. Furthermore, a small facilitation team was formed to help out the representative. Finally, the vast majority of the groups submitted their news in advance so that the roundtable news session could be prepared before the meeting, and this proved to be a real time-saver at the meeting.

Group news

A recap of group news since the previous meeting was sent out prior to the meeting and can be found by clicking on the following link:

https://app.sugarsync.com/iris/wf/D3942006_06545816_7441715.

The discussions are reported in the tables at the end of this document.

Containers

124 lorry loads criss-crossed Europe in 2018, sent and received by the region's Emmaus groups. This practice constitutes a significant source of support for many groups but needs to be well thought-out and organised in order to be effective and justify the time and resources devoted to it. Time was taken to discuss the matter, and questions were raised about the groups' needs, competition between groups (receiving but also sending groups), the quality of the goods shipped...and several ideas for tools to be developed to help us with this programme were floated.

It was reiterated that for several groups receiving container loads is very important from an economic perspective. Nonetheless, it is worth stating that shipping a container load can also suit the sending group, which collects more goods than it can sell. The emphasis should always be placed on balanced partnerships and not one-way aid. The goods sent must always meet a specific need expressed by the receiving group and the expression of this need should not be taken "badly" by the sending groups.

It is vital that partner groups get to know each other if they are to really meet their partner's needs. It is also important to have someone who is responsible for the container loads in the long term. This coordinator needs to have in-depth knowledge of the receiving group and its circumstances. Furthermore, several sending groups host members of the receiving groups for a few days, weeks or months in order to prepare the load together. This helps ensure that more appropriate goods are sent, but also enables the participants to get to know each other better and interact more. This practice should be further developed and even standardized wherever possible.

Regarding the issue of loads actually meeting needs, it was reiterated that the first thing to do is to centralize the needs of all the groups in order to improve communication. To this end, the Emmaus Europe Secretariat lists these needs (number of loads and preferred goods) and communicates this information via the regional transport programme tracking table, which is accessible online (<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1WwMldCzUaMSVqdoA9THRMIOscbawM0Bn3rRD5ZGThjM/>). The secretariat is also available to help the groups to organise lorry loads and notably to advise them which receiving group to pick so that goods are fairly shared out. Therefore, it may well be a good idea for each group to check with the secretariat before choosing destinations for its upcoming container loads.

Several discussion topics and resources were mentioned in order to continue working on this matter:

- Produce a container handbook detailing why and how to organise a container load.
- Produce country / group information sheets listing the specific needs, customs clearance information, hauliers to be used, bans, contacts etc.
- Continue discussing container load quality and quantity.
- It might also be a good idea to question the quality and working practices of our hauliers.
 - A working group was set up to undertake this work. It is being facilitated by Pascal and the other members are Jean, Solvita, Willi and Zbigniew, supported by Théo.

Moreover, it was reiterated that the Ukrainian groups cannot receive lorry loads of goods, and the issue of whether to lobby the Ukrainian government about this matter was raised. The Ukrainian groups would need to identify stakeholders to be targeted and/or stakeholders who could support them.

In conjunction with support for containers, the issue of many groups needing vehicles was raised. The issue was not addressed at this meeting, but it was stated that this is a very important subject and that we need to reflect upon how to fund vehicles, maybe by means of a special fund (potentially extending loans) for groups wishing to purchase vehicles.

Finally, it was also stated that transporting container loads of goods does raise some issues, for example their social and environmental impact (the goods may come into competition with locally produced items). The example of the Ukrainian groups who function well without container loads raises the issue of the extent to which these loads are really needed in the long term (and if there isn't an "addiction" to container loads, both on the part of the receiving and the sending groups). It is not desirable for groups to become too directly dependent on this programme.

Regional Assembly of Emmaus Europe (RAEE)

Following on from the discussion of the collectives' aims and running at the autumn 2018 meetings, time was devoted to discussing proposals for the future. The proposals could be incorporated into Emmaus Europe's action plan for the 2020-2024 period as part of the preparations for the RAEE. The RAEE is the organisation's general assembly and therefore its main governing body. The assembly brings together all the EE member groups and is held every four years. The next assembly will take place on 28-31 October 2019 in San Sebastian in Spain.

Several ideas and proposals were mentioned and discussed. Specifically, the review of the collectives brought to light the idea of devoting more time to exchanges of practices, themed discussions, and training. One of the ideas, in order to keep the same number of meetings and a constant overall budget, is to split into two the current collectives: hold geographical meetings focusing on solidarity in autumn in order to prepare the next year's solidarity programme, and dedicate the spring meetings to exchanges of practices, training and themed discussions, breaking down the barriers to enable groups from different collectives and countries to meet.

Several limitations were mentioned, particularly, one of the identified strengths of this collective is the cohesion and links between its members and these must be preserved and maintained. Furthermore, just one yearly meeting would not necessarily enable initiatives to be properly monitored or (new) groups to be properly supported. It was reiterated that in the past the existence of the collective and the moral support that it provided helped several groups to come through difficult periods.

The themed discussions should perhaps be linked to discussions on solidarity, and some of each meeting should be allotted to them (this would in all likelihood not be possible with just one meeting a year) by extending meetings if necessary (N.B. this would also have a financial impact and members are not necessarily available for longer periods of time). It was also stated that the collectives are not "closed shops" but are open to anyone interested, regardless of their home country. (In this respect, the issue of our collective's name was raised once again in order to be more inclusive).

However, there is little interaction between the different collectives, even if they are open to the idea. Furthermore, the desire to develop exchanges of practices seems to be fairly widely shared, but it may not be possible to arrange new meetings while also maintaining so many collective meetings.

Aside from the impact on the rhythm of the collectives, the issue of exchanges of practices and themed discussions is of interest to the participants. Several issues were raised during the discussion on a wide range of topics: human trafficking, the Roma community, companion dependency (working with and not for), the dynamic of volunteering in different countries, support for new groups. Several key points about the format were raised: the format should be suited to all participants with a participatory method being used, and subjects should be of interest to developing groups and groups that are more established. Apart from exchanges of practices, training is very important. For themed training, (internal or external) experts could be approached. It would also be a good idea to think about how to develop training based on the *Emmaus in all of its facets* model with other host groups.

These ideas and proposals will be included in the action plan to be submitted to the RAEE. (For the first time, the regional council wants the action plan to be drafted and discussed before the start of the assembly). The current outline was presented so that participants could voice their opinions about its content. The main thrusts are as follows: combating the rise of nationalism and xenophobia, fighting and adapting to climate change, maintaining peace in Europe, developing communication and facilitating the network (training and exchanges of practices, enhanced support for new groups). An additional initiative was suggested by Emmaus Lublin as part of the discussion on how to raise the profile of the work of the groups and communicate with the general public. The idea would be to hold an Emmaus big sale in Poland. This could be a collective undertaking and the profit could be allotted to initiatives that are selected jointly.

Regarding network facilitation, the issue of support for new groups was also highlighted as being important, notably by creating practical resources to support their development. It was also suggested that a workshop should be run at the RAEE on this topic. Wojtek will look to make a preliminary proposal of the content for these tools and workshop.

European and international news

There will be several major movement events in 2019 and 2020:

- Regional Assembly of Emmaus Europe - 28-31 October 2019 in San Sebastian in Spain.
The deadline for registering and standing for election is **30 June 2019.**
 - The registration fee is **€390 per person.** A **solidarity contribution** can be made to help groups in financial difficulty.
 - Each group can register two participants, and more if places are available.
 - All of the registration documents have been sent by post to all the groups.
 - This RAEE will elect 12 CEI and the president of EE for the next four years. It is important that some of the CEI come from the Eastern European member groups.
- The Emmaus International World Assembly: September - October 2020 in Uruguay
 - Groups wishing to participate must be up to date with their EE and EI membership dues.
 - A theme has not yet been chosen but the discussions will revolve around the three Emmaus struggles.

Next meeting

Due to the RAEE, there will be no collective meetings in autumn 2019. The next meeting will be held in **Metriena in Latvia** in spring 2020 and will be hosted by Amis3. The date will be selected at a later stage.

Thank you once again to Emmaus Oselya for hosting and organising this meeting, and to the participants for their discussions over the two days!

POLISH GROUPS

Emmaus Brat Albert	Emmaus Lublin	Emmaus Rzeszów
<i>Nothing to add to the submitted report.</i>	Almost all the permissions have been received for the building of the new shop and building work started three weeks ago. The group's good financial results in 2018 will enable the group to supplement the budget with their own funds if needed.	The sander purchased by the group in 2018 is proving to be a great success and sanded furniture is very popular, and its impact on turnover is being felt.

UKRAINIAN GROUPS

Emmaus Nasha Khata	Emmaus Oselya
<p>Nasha Khata became a trial member of Emmaus Europe and Emmaus International in March 2019 (subject to submitting accounts audited by independent accountants). This two to five-year period should enable the group to continue working on governance, democracy and transparency, among other matters.</p> <p>Two part-time staff currently undertake the administrative and secretarial work. The group feels that it is lacking accounting and financial management skills.</p> <p>Regarding the ever-present issue of the links between Caritas and Emmaus, the group reiterated that it has received a lot of support from Caritas and that they continue to share common objectives, but that they have now started the process of joining the Emmaus Movement and this is the direction in which they wish to head. They hope to be known as Emmaus Nasha Khata in the future.</p> <p>The groups that supported Nasha Khata in 2018 are as follows: Annemasse, Helsinki, Innsbruck, Jura, Longjumeau, Poitiers, Burgundy-Franche-Comté region, Roanne and Thonon.</p>	<p>It was reiterated that as things stand, the council does not take away waste. Instead, the council encourages businesses to handle Oselya's waste free of charge. This constitutes a major item of expenditure for the group, particularly as many people dump their clothing in the donation containers to avoid having to pay to get the clothing recycled.</p> <p>As for the warehouse project, the group now owns the plot, the technical component has been prepared, and work is about to start. From a financial perspective, several ideas are being considered, including Lviv council funding. The council seems favourable but is yet to take an official stance.</p> <p><i>The visit to the plot on the Tuesday afternoon was an opportunity to meet with the project architect and ask him practical questions about the plot, plans, access, connections to utilities etc. Emmaus Oselya still has work to do to try to reduce the cost of the project.</i></p>

GEORGIAN AND LATVIAN GROUPS

Emmaus Geo (Georgia)	Emmaus Smiltene - Latvia	Amis3 (Latvia)
<p>Emmaus Geo became an EE and EI trial member in March 2019.</p> <p>A visit was arranged in February prior to the group joining the movement. The initiatives are very interesting. However, it was reiterated that one of Abbé Pierre's messages was to denounce the root causes of poverty, and not solely help those who suffer most. Advocacy should be undertaken in line with the mentality and options available in each country, but it should remain our core objective.</p> <p>The group recently obtained a 500m² house in a very deprived area. This will enable them to work more with people than for them.</p> <p>The budget is still presented in an incomplete fashion and this is because of different accounting standards in Georgia. The need for complete accounts will be stressed, as this is a pre-requisite for the group's trial membership being confirmed. If necessary, EI has a more stringent framework for groups' accounting reports.</p>	<p><i>Smiltene was not represented at the meeting.</i></p> <p>Amis 3 advised that Emmaus Smiltene needs help. Amis 3 is willing to support Smiltene if another more experienced group also wants to provide support.</p> <p>It was reiterated that Smiltene's project was turned down this year because it was too big for a trial member group, given the process of reflection underway in the RCEE. Furthermore, there are still unanswered questions about the point of the project.</p>	<p>The purchase of a building in early 2018 has enabled the income-generating activity to be properly established. The next planned investment is a warehouse as the group currently has no storage outside the store.</p> <p>Volunteering and donations are currently new concepts in the country, but they are starting to develop. By promoting the movement's values and solidarity, the group hopes that in the future donations will come more from Latvia than from France.</p> <p>The organisation is currently classed as a business and must comply with a number of constraints, including a full inventory of the shop, which requires a lot of work. Furthermore, the group pays for waste collection, which will become a real issue when more and more waste needs collecting.</p>

OTHER GROUPS

Emmaus Helsinki (Finland)	Innsbruck
<p>The group works a lot with the Roma community in two areas. Firstly, locally, a co-op has been established in Finland to employ Roma mothers, and secondly in Bulgaria the intention is to open a second-hand shop in Roma villages (probably in April) using container loads from Helsinki. The partner association has significant Roma rights advocacy experience.</p>	<p>Innsbruck is not a member of the movement. This is because all their application documents will need translating into a movement language. The group had no time to do this in 2018 because of a large number of departures, but the intention is to do it in 2019.</p>