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## Romania Collective 14-15 May 2019 Frères Europa, Satu Mare, Romania

### Participants

Patrick Atohoun, *chair of Emmaus International*,  
**Emmaus Pahou, Benin.**

Laura Pihlaja, **Emmaus Westervik, Finland**

Maryse Faure, **Emmaus Chalon-sur-Saône, France.**

Jean-Luc Ferstler, **Emmaus Forbach, France**

Freddy Ouari, Laure Pavesi, **Emmaus Rédéné, France**

Justine Brunet, Marie-France Tirot, Patrick Chopart,  
Sorin Ilie, **Emmaus Rennes, France**

Gilles Thèvenon, **Emmaus Roanne, France.**

Mihaela Cinomela, Rodica Bizu, Tudor Carnu, **Amicii  
d'Emmaüs, Romania**

Dana-Maria Andron, Gelu Nichitel, *Romania national  
delegate*, Leïla Thouret, Simona Magda Apetroaie, **Un  
coup de main d'Emmaüs Iasi, Romania.**

Alexandra, Emmanuel Raboutin, Erwan, Ivett  
Szilagy, Jean-Philippe Légaut, *collective representative,  
member of the Emmaus Europe executive*, Manon  
Bouvard, Orlane Messey, Paul Darouèche, Paul,  
Pierre Pierrat, Sorin Onica, **Frères Europa de Satu  
Mare, Romania.**

Karl-Johan Karlsson, **Emmaus Akvarn, Sweden.**

Arthur Gostkowski, Robert Larsson, **Emmaus  
Fredriksdal, Sweden.**

Jean-Pierre Monnet, Samake Keita Issiaka, Vincent  
Gasparini, **Emmaus Sion, Switzerland.**

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

Jean-Philippe welcomed all the participants. He reminded the meeting that the Romanian groups had agreed to entrust the facilitation of the meeting to Justine.

### 2020-2024 policy report

The meeting got underway with a session spent discussing and collectively developing Emmaus Europe's policy report for 2020-2024 in preparation for the regional assembly. The current version of the report draws on the discussions that took place in 2018 reviewing the collectives and considering their future, among other sources. Within this framework, some of the report focuses on the remit of developing the life of the movement. Emmaus Europe wants to bolster this area in order to offer the groups more help: supporting new groups and developing forums for exchanging practices, among others, thanks to the collectives. The report also refers to Emmaus Europe's longstanding campaign areas, particularly emphasizing climate change issues and ensuring that our practices fit with our values, building a peaceful world by offering shelter and support, combating discrimination, and developing joint initiatives on these topics.

Three discussion sub-groups were set up on the following issues:

- Climate change issues.
- Shelter and support and peace.
- Developing the life of the movement across the region.

### Climate change issues.

Lorry loads

- Despite fuel consumption, the loads have a positive environmental impact as they facilitate reuse instead of waste being sent to landfill. It would be a good idea to try to assess the exact impact.

- As a minimum requirement, the following should be done to limit the environmental impact as much as possible:
  - Take care when loading and packing goods to prevent breakages.
  - Sort before sending, if possible with a member of the receiving group, to prevent a large amount of the load being sent to landfill in the receiving country (an additional expense for the group).

#### Vehicles

- The conflict between purchasing new fuel-efficient vehicles or using the old second-hand vehicles for as long as possible.
- An app enables the Swedish groups to know when to empty their containers, consequently saving them fuel.

Documents: Opt for emails instead of printouts. The groups can then choose to translate and print what they will actually use.

#### Farming/food

What place for a vegetarian diet in the movement?

#### Recycling/repair

- Promote the sharing of experiences and skills in these areas by the groups.
- Campaign to slow down production and combat built-in obsolescence.

### **Combat rejection of others and discrimination**

#### At group level

- Organise open days and invite politicians in order to demonstrate how Emmaus does things.
- Combat discrimination in the groups by training group members and holding internal discussions, and by means of exchanges between groups in Europe to enable people to open up to others.
- Bring to the fore the most discriminated against people and ensure that they undertake customer-facing roles.
- Use the charity shops to inform people about what we do with sales income, and raise customer awareness about our values.

#### At European level

- Work on a companion status at European level, and, in an ideal world, freedom of movement around the Emmaus groups in Europe.
- Further raise the profile of Emmaus at the European level so that our voice resonates more (the movement is well known in France but not necessarily throughout the rest of Europe).
- Convey a message that deconstructs and addresses fear of others.

### **Build group and member capacity**

Arrange for knowledge to be shared via exchanges of group members by centralising information and jointly preparing for exchanges.

Raise awareness internally about the rationale for our initiatives (why we arrange convoys, for example) and encourage knowledge transfer in groups.

Improve induction and support for new groups using tools, closer monitoring, and help with setting up national organisations where possible. Moreover, national organisations enable knowledge and skills to be pooled and collective work within a country to be organised.

With regard to the idea to reduce the frequency of the collective meetings (in order to free up time and resources to arrange exchanges of practices), the majority of the members were not against this idea, provided that the remaining collective meeting takes place in Romania.

### **Regional assembly of Emmaus Europe**

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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 28-30 October 2019 in San Sebastian in Spain.** One of the items on the agenda will be a discussion about Emmaus Europe's future, based on proposals contained in the policy report. Each day of the meeting will have a core theme, discussed at a roundtable and then in various workshops:

- Day 1: Combat rejection of others and discrimination
- Day 2: Environmental issues, limiting final waste, throwaway fashion.
- Day 3: Integrating young people and raising their awareness about Emmaus.

The aim is for this assembly to be first and foremost a chance for participants to discuss their views. Moreover, the RAEE will also be tasked with preparing for the movement's world assembly (autumn 2020 in the Americas) by working on Europe's proposals, voting on the establishment of internal regulations (and amendment of the related statutes), electing the organisation's new president and 12 CEI, the members of the EE and EI boards.

**It is important that registration forms and candidacies are submitted as soon as possible to facilitate the organisation of the meeting.**

### **Group news**

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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\\_8500403](https://app.sugarsync.com/iris/wf/D3942006_06545816_8500403)

A few extra pieces of information were added at the meeting.

#### **Amicii d'Emmaüs Târgu Jiu**

- The group's main project at the present time is the construction of a community house thanks to a €300K loan to be repaid over 20 years and extended by the Forbach-Targu Jiu twinning association. The house will contain 12 studio flats with floor space of roughly 22m<sup>2</sup> with a bedroom, bathroom and kitchen, and a large number of common areas (library, dining room, kitchen, workshops, offices), making for total floor space of 1,500m<sup>2</sup>. It is designed for the young adults who can no longer live in the children's home. The aim is that the residents reintegrate into society during their time living there. The building work should end in 2020.
- A work camp with young people from Forbach is planned for August.
- The shop is doing well and sales figures at the present time mean that the loan can be repaid.
- Forbach-Targu Jiu twinning arrangement - Every year, the two towns set up several projects outside of Emmaus. For the Franco-Romanian season, artists from the two towns are working together on a shared project, and in a more general sense, a co-development concept is starting to replace simple humanitarian aid. At Emmaus Forbach, this partnership has enabled a unique feeling to develop and the companions are very attached to the arrangement. It was

stated that it would be worthwhile sharing this experience in the movement, maybe during the RAEE, with a workshop on co-development.

### **Un Coup de Main d'Emmaus Iasi**

- The Belvédère building work got underway in early May. A gas main not recorded by the local council has caused a few problems, but overall the initiative is going well. In the first instance, six people will live on the plot in three houses.
- The Iasi shop has been renovated and improved heat insulation has been fitted.
- In Popesti, a new herd of goats has arrived, and some renovations are planned. The weaving workshop opened during the winter and three companions have been trained to weave. This had led to a few sales in the charity shop and probably at the Sion big sale.
- Outreach work is still a major undertaking, private individuals regularly volunteer to prepare meals for roughly 100 people, and the group then distributes the food.
- The group is keen to network by taking part in local events with local partners to talk about the association's initiatives, and in circular economy initiatives.

### **Frères Europa (Satu Mare)**

- The group is a member of social economy networks which undertake advocacy, but society is not galvanised about these issues.
- The group's priority at the present time is to consolidate its economic model as the legislative context (in particular) is very changeable. (The association is not yet 100% self-sufficient and still receives a few private donations, but they are being reduced and should end soon. They do not affect the community's everyday life). The group is seeking to become more professional. A builder has been hired: since September, some of the young people have been undertaking renovation work on the group's premises, and they are now starting to do work for outside clients. This constitutes a source of income and an activity that is very popular with the young people. A shop manager, a former sales assistant, has been recruited to improve the shop, and the positive effects are already being felt.
- The micro-credit and individual housing project has been altered because of administrative complications and a new bank loan option: the idea now is to purchase/renovate rather than build from scratch. As a result, the land originally intended for the housing will be sold to contribute to the project and to the purchase of another plot for a warehouse.
- The Frères Europa companions are employees at the present time: they earn the Romanian minimum wage (1,263 lei), some of which is deducted as monthly savings, for food and general provision, they receive the sum of 180 lei every Friday.
- There are 16 places in the community house and five young people live more independently in a house opposite the community house (they manage their own food, in particular).

### **Solidarity**

**The RCEE has worked on formalising our solidarity criteria.** The idea is not to revolutionize our practices but to lay down on paper the ideas we already have in mind to enable everyone to work on the same basis. The criteria will supplement the international solidarity principles approved in 2018.

**The RC also rubberstamped the 2019 regional solidarity programme.** It comprises the following:

- CNZD, Croatia: purchase of a vehicle so that they can launch their income-generating activity.
- Huelva, Spain: bring premises into line with standards in order to be able run their circular economy activity.

- Bucharest, Romania: background study prior to setting up a group.
- RAEE: solidarity contribution to enable the most economically vulnerable groups to attend.

### Emmaus Bucharest

The motivation is still there to launch an activity, but time and resources seem to be lacking. There is a gap between Emmaus Europe's desire to see an activity set up before any significant funding is provided, and the group's need for a certain amount of assurance before they launch the activity.

It might be advisable to use the network of local stakeholders in Bucharest: work with associations who could form a solid base, take over a social enterprise running an employment access scheme (contact has already been made), draw on the volunteer emergency outreach service (where Elena works) to set up the group, and so on.

What stance should EE and the Romanian groups take? Should they wait for an activity to be up and running? Or is there a need to be more proactive? A clear discussion is required on the support that EE could provide (paying a wage will not be possible). **A meeting with Elena and the three Romanian groups needs to be arranged.**

### Containers

How to make the most of the partnerships between the groups (very worthwhile in terms of container load quality, exchanges of people, and making this form of solidarity meaningful) but also ensure that solidarity is fairly shared out with groups that do not boast the same sort of network? Also, what about sharing these resources at the international level? Two forums are scheduled to discuss these issues:

- **International container meeting in December 2019.**
- The **container load working group** set up in March in order to disseminate tools and develop best practice in this area (volunteers are welcome).

### Europe international work camp

At the Jesolo World Assembly in 2016, the movement's groups decided to arrange international work camps in each of the Emmaus regions. The camps would enable participants to discover the context in a specific region, take part in the struggles championed by the region's groups, share in the host group's work, learn more and educate themselves about the movement and its struggles, and mobilize the Emmaus groups about future undertakings.

**The Europe international work camp will take place in spring 2020.** We now need to identify a host group and choose the theme (which will focus on combating rejection of others). Any proposals are more than welcome!

### Next meeting

The next meeting will be held **in spring 2020 in Chalon-sur-Saône** in France. Date to be arranged.

**Thank you to the members of Frères Europa for hosting the meeting and to the participants for the worthwhile discussions!**