



## Minutes of the Emmaüs Europe regional executive meeting of 4 March 2021 - Video conference

EMMAÛS

EUROPE

### **PRESENT**

Carina Aaltonen (president), Aurore Querel (secretary), Jean-Philippe Légaut (treasurer), Simon Grainge, Leila Thouret, Eduardo Sanchez, and Rosa Gil Elorduy.

Guest participant: Maryse Faure

### **EUROPE REGIONAL SECRETARIAT**

Véronica Acevedo Caro (admin-finance assistant), Marie Tixier (events coordinator), Théo Robin (solidarity coordinator), and Eve Poulteau (chief executive).

### **- PREAMBLE**

Carina: It is exactly a year since our last meeting all together in Montreuil. Who could have imagined then the year that we were going to have? I have not left my island since then...

Today is also a special day as we are welcoming Maryse, who has been elected as a CEI, and is once again acting as the link with the EI executive.

A big thank you to the interpreters who make all of this possible, and thank you to the team who help keep the European dynamic alive.

I also wish to tell you that we have restarted our “tour of Europe” with Italy. The meeting was great, because there were around 15 participants, and we tackled the important issue for the Italians of handing over to the new generations of community leaders, this is a topic of concern for other countries, and we will undoubtedly be returning to it.

We will be meeting with the Netherlands on 12 March and you are welcome to join us; the discussion will be in English.

AGENDA ITEM	DISCUSSION / DEBATE	CONCLUSIONS   DECISIONS
<p><b>1. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS</b></p>	<p><b><u>Approval of the minutes of the Regional Executive held in December 2020</u></b>  None of the participants wished to make any additions, remarks or oppose the proposed minutes of the December 2020 Regional Executive meeting held by videoconference.</p>	<p>The minutes of the December 2020 executive were approved.</p>
<p><b>2. 2020 FINAL ACCOUNTS</b></p>	<p>The surplus amounts to €117,028.  Previous executive: decision to be prudent (carry forward the surplus).  Are we sticking to this decision or do we want to use the surplus in another way? Yes</p> <p><b>Regulatory changes and a new chartered accountant, with issues that need addressing in order to close the accounts.</b></p> <p><b><u>1. Allocated funds</u></b> (solidarity funds, these funds differ from the organisation’s operating funds, which are provided by membership dues).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently, some allocated funds have been “allotted” to specific groups or projects, plus one large sum (€200K) of general solidarity (or “unallocated”, i.e., a large sum of money built up over the years with solidarity surpluses, and currently stagnant).</li> <li>• Regulatory change: allocated funds need to be specifically earmarked and used within a reasonable timeframe.</li> <li>• We have two options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <b>Switch the “allocated funds” that have not been allotted to a “reserve for the organisation’s development”. The funds would then appear in the organisation’s liabilities, and systematically allot unallocated funds received over the year (= earmark or spend) so as not to build up allocated but not allotted funds again (recommendation made by the chartered accountant).</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Plus points</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>The executive agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To allocate the 2020 surplus (to be voted on by the RCEE) to the reserve for the organisation’s development.</li> <li>- To switch unallocated “allocated funds” into a “reserve for the organisation’s development” and a sub-reserve for “general solidarity”.</li> <li>- To abolish provisions for expenses, allocating the funds to a reserve for the organisation’s development, which could be used to fund the regional assemblies, for example, and requesting the agreement of the auditor, so that this sum does not inflate the 2020 surplus.</li> <li>- To switch the balance carried forward accumulated over the years into another general reserve for the organisation’s development, “operations” sub-reserve.</li> </ul>

- We would be strictly complying with the legislation.
- The balance sheet would be easier for the groups to understand.
- Obligation to use funds received over the course of the year, and to increase our work to bring it into line with the groups' contributions (avoid hoarding money).

- **Disadvantages**

- If we want to use the money from the “reserve” that has built up, we would need to submit a budget in deficit and make up the shortfall with the funds from the reserve (however, we could differentiate between the ordinary result and the exceptional result).

**b. “Allocate” the unallocated solidarity, by earmarking, in quite a specific way, how these funds are to be used, for instance, by country, by aim, etc. (Solution chosen by EI)**

- **Plus points**

- The allocated funds do not create a deficit or a surplus, they balance out.

- **Disadvantages**

- We would only have a short length of time to decide on how to allocate this sum built up over the years.
- A degree of precision, which binds us in the future with regard to how the funds are used.

**2. Provisions for expenses (€74K)**

- Longstanding method, but not compliant with the regulations.
- Proposal: abolish provisions for expenses, allocating the funds to a reserve for the organisation's development, and requesting the

	<p>agreement of the auditor, so that this sum does not inflate the 2020 surplus.</p> <p><b>3. Balances carried forward (€258K + 2020 financial year result)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A temporary arrangement, which has stayed in place.</li> <li>• Proposal: switch this balance carried forward into a reserve for the organisation's development.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>3. 2020 ACTIVITY PLAN</b></p>	<p>Editorial: Live, despite the pandemic, by Carina Aaltonen</p> <p><b>The high points of 2020</b></p> <p>Advocacy in the midst of a health and social crisis. A year when we improved communication and exchanges of practices. An exceptional year for solidarity</p> <p><b>2019 at a glance</b></p> <p>Our movement grew Our governing bodies met Financial situation</p>	<p>OK for the suggested plan.</p>
<p><b>4. SOLIDARITY</b></p>	<p>Reminder of how the solidarity programmes work Presentation of the applications and decisions.</p> <p><b>ISF project</b></p> <p>Kitchen for isolated elderly people (mothers): Maryse would like us to work with them on an ethical charter governing their other funds, notably receiving funding from foundations located in undemocratic countries. JP felt that this debate would be worthwhile at the European level. It partially got underway at the last RCEE, and we need to pursue this specific point, drawing on EI's ethical charter.</p> <p>Eduardo agrees but felt that this should be done with all the groups, and also when examining the solidarity projects.</p> <p>Most of the items requested to equip this kitchen could be second-hand, and we have asked them about this, but have not yet received an answer. We need to look into the issue with them and subsequently provide an answer. OK with the overall project.</p> <p><b>CNZD project</b></p> <p>Development of an eco-activity to make up for the closure of their shop due to the COVID-19 crisis, online graphic design and web solutions. Simon: Even if this is not a standard Emmaus activity, it is similar to when</p>	<p>ISF: awaiting additional information about the option of using second-hand goods (approve by email). CNZD: ok Toms: ok Brat Albert truck: ok, standard request. Nasha Khata: already approved last year, ok</p> <p>The executive approved the submission of these applications to the RCEE, subject to them being eligible for the other suggested programmes.</p>

	<p>we help a group in Africa to buy a machine to make earthenware plates, this is a new activity in response to the crisis. OK.</p> <p><b>TOMS</b> Last year, TOMS set up a community restaurant to enable people with disabilities to work and demonstrate their importance to society. They now want to develop a home delivery service to adapt to the coronavirus crisis (to date, they have had a takeaway service). OK.</p> <p><b>Brat Albert</b> truck: ok, standard request. <b>Nasha Khata</b> already approved last year, ok</p> <p><b>Allocation</b> Two projects may be eligible for the FAP and EI programmes. FAP: Nasha Khata EI: ISF We need to ask EI, to see if they agree that these projects meet the criteria of these programmes.</p>	
<p><b>5. NEXT RCEE AGENDA</b></p>	<p><b><u>Questions</u></b> <b>Should we extend the time allocated for an additional RCEE meeting on the NDs and include other questions on the wise persons, the election of the CEIs, and the WA and RA calendar?</b> Yes, schedule three hours with a break, send a survey to the RCEE, and see if we want to add other items to the agenda (in addition to those that we have already worked on about the NDs). <b>Should we opt for a 50-minute discussion, or an oral presentation of the situation in the various countries?</b> Yes to the debate: ask countries to send in their news in writing and to state whether any news items require discussion. <b>Should we allocate time to the admission of new groups, or should we only do it at every other RCEE?</b> It is important for the new groups to see that their application has been examined swiftly, so we should maintain this session at the next RCEE.</p> <p><b>First proposed agenda</b></p>	

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Intro and approval of the minutes: 10 mins</li> <li>2. Approval of the activity report: 10 mins</li> <li>3. Approval of the end-of-year accounts, attended by the auditor: 30 minutes</li> <li>4. Solidarity: 40 mins</li> <li>5. Admission of new groups: Two Spanish member groups? + FR? 20 mins</li> <li>6. NDs, wise persons, and CEIs: opinion on the working group’s proposals following the meeting in early April, preparing a proposal for EI and discussion: 20 mins</li> <li>7. Discussion to be specified: how to tackle the European issue of shared values at a time when we are handing over to the younger generations and in the wake of the coronavirus crisis which is a chance to re-evaluate our practices in order to cope with the new situation? The challenges of supporting new groups and countries wishing to set up national organisations? Or continue the discussions on “how to help more” started at the last RCEE? Or decide following the news update from France.</li> </ol>	
<p><b>6. SITUATION IN FRANCE</b></p>	<p><b>Overview of the situation in France, March 2021</b></p> <p>The issue of the fundraising appeal highlighted by EI is not the only cause of tension at the moment.</p> <p>An issue about which all the stakeholders agree is the need to overhaul the organisational structure for the communities in the federation of Emmaus France. The structure called the Branch 1 has not worked for several years for a number of reasons.</p> <p>One of the reasons is that half of the paid community leaders are employed and supported by an internal organisation within Branch 1 association with its own political vision. At the same time, the elected representatives from these communities are supported directly by Branch 1 as well as the community leaders employed locally. Discussions have been underway for several months in order to identify a better operating method, but they are not to the liking of this organisation within branch 1 (known as ACE).</p> <p>Moreover, the community leaders belonging to ACE in the main, but also leaders from other communities, think that the voice of the communities is not heard enough in the federation, and that the values of the communities are no longer respected.</p>	<p>The executive agreed that EE’s position should still be based on dialogue with Emmaus France, and that we will also have a broader discussion by organising a Europe-level debate on the values that we champion over and above legal statuses, and on the issue of funding.</p>

A dozen of these communities set up a collective on 22 January and this collective recently sent all the communities in France four petitions:

- A petition about the EF membership dues calculation method (they are calling for a boycott in the meantime).
- A petition about the public fundraising appeal that they do not wish to run again (we will go back over this matter).
- Two other petitions regarding two groups from the Social re-integration Branch (Branch 3).

Indeed, this feeling of a lack of recognition for some of the French communities with regard to the development of the movement in France is also caused by the greater growth over the past years of the two other branches (housing/social: Branch 2 and social re-integration: Branch 3), partly because the communities themselves have set up associations to help people who are burdened with debt so as to address the root causes of extreme poverty, the SOS Familles in Branch 2, and textile platforms providing employment access work for people who are out of touch with the job market in Branch 3 in order to manage surplus textiles. The growth has also been caused by the popularity of Emmaus in France: the movement attracts a large number of work integration organisations.

These tensions are part of a long history of discord about the idea of federation (popular among the “managers” or Emmaus pragmatists) versus confederation (favoured by the libertarians of Emmaus who fear losing their freedom) (this debate is also taking place across the French third sector).

These different visions of the organisation and development vision will start to be discussed at the next GA in order to review the almost 13 years that have passed since the last reform of the federation.

It is also worth reiterating that it was only in 1985 that the seven families of communities in France at that time joined forces to try to operate in a more coordinated fashion, and that there were major differences of opinion between the main families. They have also had to coordinate over time with groups that are not residential communities but nevertheless represent the Emmaus ethos: housing organisations, committees of friends, etc.

Furthermore, the difficult situation of Branch B1 (community branch) has been made worse by the fact that the director (hired three years ago) has

been sacked on work-related grounds. However, this also emphasizes the difficulties involved in this organisational post: the previous director was also sacked by another management team, and the previous B1 Vice President resigned when a different board and Chief executive of EF were in place. The B1 VP also resigned last month, but this was not connected to the sacking of the director of the Branch, with which he was in agreement. Three other B1 elected representatives have resigned, stating that B1 was not functioning properly, and that they did not feel that they were listened to by the EF board. Internal elections are underway.

The issue of how to organise the movement in France and development choices for the coming years are important, and are partly relevant to discussions which could also be held at the European level. In any case, the discussions have got underway in France, and while opinions do diverge, at least a debate is being had.

**The tip of the iceberg: the public fundraising appeal**

At the start of the first lockdown Emmaus France launched a fundraising appeal, even though this had not been done on behalf of Emmaus since 1984.

Emmaus International then stepped in to ask for the appeal to be made on behalf of all the Emmaus groups worldwide, and not just the French groups. Emmaus France had already progressed the initiative to launch the appeal purely as a national federation to help the groups of the country. EF refused to backtrack. They stated that this was on grounds of simplicity of communication and also because this was a first for them, there was a fear of the purpose not being clear enough to meet the legal requirements of a public appeal. Emmaus France also stated that as the French groups are the largest contributors to EI, helping the French groups thanks to the appeal would enable the French groups to continue helping the groups around the world.

Carina and Simon were not overly concerned by the fact the federation wanted to help the French groups, given the crisis situation in which the countries found themselves at that point, other countries had launched fundraising appeals without including EI: Italy, UK, and the Romanian groups.

Some French communities (largely the ones involved in the 22 January collective) supported EI's request, calling for the appeal to be extended



and for EF to contribute to the appeal that EI had just launched with EE. Emmaus France had already donated the €50K earmarked for the world assembly to the international solidarity fund, and then donated €350K, thus covering half of the amount that EI was trying to raise at the time. Italy and the UK also contributed to this appeal as national organisations or by utilising foundation funds. We discussed this matter in the executive of EE at the time.

The communities involved and EI are now calling for the public fundraising appeal not to be relaunched. This request has already been made at the EF board and communication about the appeal stopped in late December. The donors were thanked in January but not recontacted because a commitment had been made to discuss continuing this appeal at the GA. Since then, a schedule of debates on whether or not to relaunch the appeal was set in late January and will be starting soon. (Following the discussion: donations can still be made in accordance with the 2017 and 2018 GA decisions, but there is no new communication, likewise donations can be made to EI on their website).

Some of the EF board and of the team of employees wanted to continue so as not to lose touch with the first donors, and because they feel that the Emmaus groups, and particularly the communities, need funds to offer better provision and provide more places in response to the impending crisis.

The arguments against the fundraising appeal are laid out in EI's letter.

As a reminder, in 1984 when Abbé Pierre relaunched a fundraising appeal which enabled Emmaus to return to the media centre stage in France 30 years after the first appeal, there was some criticism of the charitable nature of this initiative and the lack of a radical advocacy message.

#### **Update on EE's stance to date**

Since tensions emerged between EI and EF about the fundraising appeal in April, and then subsequent tensions between some French groups and EF, Carina and Simon have tried on several occasions to arrange a meeting with EF and EI to discuss the different points of view and see how everyone can move forward together. However, this proved difficult for EI. It took time to discuss the matter of this potential meeting, and then to find a date, and finally EI wanted to ask EF to get its VPs to take part as well. All of these proposals were accepted by EE and EF, who suggested dates at

the end of January but EI couldn't find a date for the meeting. Carina recontacted EI last week and received a response that a meeting could be held on 25 or 30 March. Clearly, now that EI has already communicated the EI executive's view to all the world's groups about how France should conclude its internal debate on fundraising, the purpose of the meeting will undoubtedly be different to that suggested by EE last July and which aimed to restore a dialogue.

#### **Discussion**

##### Simon

We need to keep in mind that this affects one country and that, as EE, we need to think of the wider impact, even if France is a key country for the movement and the biggest nation.

##### Aurore

The fact that the EF board decided to stop the fundraising appeal should be enough to put an end to this matter. However, a consultation of the groups does not respect the board's decision.

I do also feel that France has an international responsibility that the other groups do not have, we cannot demand the same from Italy or the UK, for instance.

Elections are going to be held and the community branch committee is in the process of being reformed, notably with Antoine Sueur, who is one of the pillars of the movement. This means that the community branch should work better and will make its voice heard. I don't believe that there is tension between the branches, and people should speak up when they disagree with something, but we need to calm things down, and I feel that there will be a revival with the general assembly (scheduled for late May).

##### Maryse

This is not a problem between EI and EF. EI has pointed out problems and the EF board is coming to life, as well as the French Wise Persons' Committee. The problem is also that Branch 3 has grown significantly and incorporates increasing numbers of enterprises (offering access to employment), and solidarity is not mentioned in the enterprises, and that EF is managed as if it were a business with 80 employees, and the team of

employees have slightly supplanted the board lately, but the board is now coming to life, and that is important.

Rosa

The last time we talked about the issue at EI, solidarity was highlighted as being the primary concern: Emmaus France raised millions and did not give enough to EI. There is another side to the conflict: how do we address the public to ask for financial support.

This is also an opportunity to clarify things. In Spain, many Emmaus groups are work integration social enterprises, but we do not take decisions in a corporate way, maybe the line is easier to cross for us than for an association, but it is important that we rediscuss the whole issue, and that we take advantage of this opportunity to get to know each other better. France is THE country, the most important country in Emmaus, and when a debate takes place in France, it can have a butterfly effect on the rest of the world. We have had the same debate in Spain and it created tensions, but it did not reach EI. It is not an organisation's legal status that counts but its values. There could now be an opportunity to discuss it together. Just because we are work integration social enterprises, that does not mean that we are capitalist companies. Our values are what matters.

Simon

You are right, our role as international bodies should be to organise the debate, which is a lot broader than the discussion about the fundraising appeal.

JP

Regarding EI's letter, I thought that some of the issues raised were very interesting, but I was surprised to learn that such a letter had not been submitted for approval to the board. We need discussion about the fundamentals of the movement such as these topics, and this should also be undertaken at the world assembly, it is a shame that it is not being discussed. We need to find time not only at the French GA but also at the European and international levels if we are to have a more constructive approach.

Simon

I agree. It would have had a greater impact if it had been discussed by the EI board and also if EE had been consulted, because this stance does have

an impact on countries other than France, and it would have been good to be consulted.

Eduardo

I completely agree with Rosa's remarks. There is a permanent internal debate about two different visions of the movement: should we maintain residential communities, or should we set up work integration social enterprises? We have avoided this debate for a long time, but we need to try to understand each other. We all endeavour to bring alive the Emmaus values in different settings. This debate needs to be had at the European level.

Maryse

Since the French fundraising appeal, the EI executive has talked to Carina and Simon, and we were not always in agreement, but this has lasted for several months. A fortnight ago, I wrote to the CEIs, and I am sorry if that offended some people, but in my view, it was important to talk. It is true that EI's message was dispatched rather swiftly, but we were being inundated by messages from French groups wanting EI to take a stance. We have since received a lot of support, notably from long-standing members of the movement in France. Yes, it would be good to have these debates at the world assembly on the values and the ways in which the groups get by, and yes, we need to discuss these topics beforehand in Europe.

Aurore

There have been problems between EI and EF since 2002, so it goes far beyond the teams in place today. I am not shocked about the fact that the board was not consulted, but these issues needed to be put on the table. It is important to say why we are fundamentally in favour of this stance taken today by EI. And I think that this will enable it to be discussed.

Carina

In my eyes, what is problematic is that the five members of the EI executive, only five people, have taken a conclusive stance on public fundraising appeals without debating the matter. They are also delivering a very French vision without taking into account the fact that other national organisations are doing the same thing, as Simon said, a significant chunk of Emmaus UK's resources come from the public fundraising appeal.

	<p>We will try to hold a meeting with EF and EI to see if we can nevertheless progress this matter, and try not to be divided, but instead come together peacefully.</p> <p>Eve</p> <p>Do you agree to maintaining this position with EF? OK. We will come back to the executive to propose continuing this debate on the RCEE, based on the ideas raised in the previous item and following on from this discussion.</p>	
<p>7. PAY SCALE</p>	<p>A pay increase for Marie Tixier and Théo Robin has been put forward: the employees in post have several years of experience (3.5 for Théo and seven for Marie). They have been given new remits to motivate them and so as to implement the new 2020-2024 policy areas, and not have the CEO shouldering the whole burden.</p> <p>The solidarity coordinator works more closely with the CEO on the trial membership application process and support for trial members, as well as providing support for solidarity projects. The coordinator is also tasked with producing resources, such as the container loads handbook.</p> <p>The events coordinator role has evolved into a communications role. It notably involves formatting the newsletter and sometimes writing articles for the website and newsletter, and significant involvement in the creation of the new website (writing articles, increasing monitoring with the technical production team, having first received guidance from the CEO). The coordinator will also be responsible for devising an online module for the Emmaus in all of its facets training course. The coordinator still reports to the CEO but works more and more independently (she runs the organisation's Instagram account almost totally independently, for instance).</p> <p>Marie received Indesign graphic software training in the autumn and she now formats the English and Spanish versions of our documents on the basis of the French version produced by a graphic designer. This is a major cost saving (€450 per report) and has added a technical dimension to her post.</p> <p>Finally, each "coordinator" will take it in turns to facilitate an exchange of practices session (prepared with the CEO).</p> <p>→ The CEO feels that a pay increase is warranted for the current staff.</p>	<p>The executive adopted the new pay scale and approved the pay rise for Théo (who moves to grade 3b) and Marie Tixier (who moves to grade 4).</p>

**Why have a pay scale?**

The joint presidents feel that a pay scale enabling staff to progress based on clear criteria is needed, even for a small team. A pay scale would enable the current request to be reviewed and the recruitment of staff in the future to be foreseen, with these roles offering career development prospects.

The pay scale draws inspiration from the EI scale for the structure of the posts and the suggested pay grades are the same as at EI. It should be noted that EI also offers an extra month's bonus calculated using the average wage in the organisation.

As there were no further items on the agenda, the president closed the meeting.

**Carina Aaltonen**  
President of Emmaus Europe

**Aurore Querel**  
Secretary of Emmaus Europe