

Report of the meeting of the European Poland/ Ukraine Collective

17 March 2017

Emmaus Oselya, Lviv, Ukraine

Participants

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

Natalya Mysula, Natalya Sanotska, Oleh Zharovskyy, Emmaus Oselya, Ukraine.

Zbigniew Drazkowski, Barbara Cholewa, Emmaus Lublin, Poland.

Robert Opoka, Grzegorz Hadjuk, Lesek Lizon, Wojciech Chmura, Emmaus Brat Albert, Poland.

Krzysztof Serwiński, Grazyna Moskal, Emmaus Rzeszów, Poland.

Vasyl Holod, Oksana Kolodiy, Nasha Khata, Ukraine.

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

Anu Lähde, Emmaus Helsinki, Finland

Irène Meunier, Emmaus Roanne, France.

Pierre Dubois, Pascal Louvet, Emmaus Annemasse, France.

Jean-Pierre Girard, Bernard Bourdier, Emmaus Ornans, Franche-Comté Burgundy Emmaus region, France.

Agnès Marmion, Gilles Vasseur, Emmaus Chambéry.

Jean-Philippe Légaut, Ivett Szilagyi, Boby Koce, Frères Europa, Emmaus Satu Mare, Romania.

Emmanuel De Fallois, José-Maria Ruescas Marin, Emmaus La Chaux de Fonds, Switzerland.

Hansjörg Egger-Stern, Wilhelm Bloms, Innsbruck, Austria.

Lise Daviet, Emmaus International Secretariat.

Giorgi Ghelaghutashvili, guest Georgian association.

Camille Decaens, Emmaus Europe Secretariat.

Following **introductory remarks** by Willi Does, the president of Emmaus Europe and collective representative, and the **participants' roundtable**, the **association from Georgia** invited to attend the collective presented its work.

Giorgi Ghelaghutashvili is the association's president. The association was founded in December 2015 with the aim of compensating for the shortcomings of a state which displays little concern for its people. It has two employees and 10 volunteers. The core activity is collecting, sorting and selling donated second-hand goods and clothing in a shop located in the capital Tbilisi. However, the quality leaves something to be desired. Handicrafts are also made to sell to tourists. The association opened a social welfare centre in the town of Marneuli on 24 July 2016. The centre offers social support, healthcare services and free appointments with psychologists, as well as lessons in Georgian, maths and English.

One of the future objectives could be to develop eco-tourism in this country known as the *museum of the Caucasus*. Mr Ghelaghutashvili thanked the collective for the invitation and for the opportunity to learn about the work done in Ukraine. He said that he had learnt a lot and was delighted to spend time with the participants.

The participants visited the **two Ukrainian groups** on the eve of the collective meeting. The participants were able to observe and receive explanations about the activities underway. The purpose of the meeting is to focus on the activities of the Polish groups and the Ukrainian groups' future plans.

Emmaus Lublin

The last collective meeting took place in Lublin and the participants were able to observe the group's various activities.

- The **community's** 33 places are occupied.
- **The shop** is operating as usual but the problem of access remains, with some customers being lost. The group's financial situation is stable. Income in 2016 was roughly €90,000, which is slightly higher than in previous years.
- **The pizzeria** opened in March 2016 made a €9,000 profit in 2016, which enabled the necessary investment to be made. The October 2016 collective meeting participants visited it during their stay in Lublin. It is premature to talk of a success story but increasing customer numbers is a good sign.
- Landscape architecture items, such as park benches, tables and dustbins, are still being produced in the social co-operative. Bus stops are no longer being manufactured and the art workshop has closed down because the necessary chemicals are expensive.

In autumn 2016, Emmaus Lublin was an **award winner at Poland's social enterprise of the year awards**, scooping second place.

Emmaus Brat Albert

Residential community

- 24 companions live at Nowy Sacz. 10 of them work in the homeless shelter. The others collect, repair and sell goods. A group of volunteers helps with the day-to-day work.
- 17 companions live in Krakow in the winter and there are currently 14 residents.

Sales income

- Income from the Nowy Sacz store was €85,000 in 2016. This constitutes a €15,000 drop compared with 2015.
- Emmaus Krakow generated income of €80,000 in 2016.
- The Krinica store generated €26,000, thus offsetting the Nowy Sacz shortfall.

One of the reasons for the fall in sales income could be the reduced number of middle-income clients. The new right-wing government in the country put in place benefits for low-income families 18 months ago. The state now provides 500 zlotys (€125) of child benefit per child per month. Better-off families receive no child benefit for their first child but do receive it for subsequent children. This is a significant sum of money in Poland. Many people now claim this benefit, which is changing their financial situation, enabling them to purchase new goods in shops other than Emmaus. Furthermore, the cheapest furniture displayed by Emmaus no longer sells. Following a question raised about the regional transport programme, the idea is to now send wooden rather than chipboard furniture where possible.

Emmaus Brat Albert has therefore focused on developing carpentry workshops in which old furniture is repaired. For the past year, the group has been investing in new 450m² premises in Nowy Sacz, setting up workshops and the shop. This initiative is entirely self-funded, using savings made over two years and made possible because of the food partnerships which enable the group to save up to 80% of its food budget in some months of the year. This situation is the end result of an EU regulation reducing food use-by dates. The dynamic is positive because the companions are able to receive training in the carpentry workshops.

- A group of volunteers arranges a **soup run** for the homeless in Krakow, which also helps to raise the profile of Emmaus' work in the city. This has resulted in increased footfall in the shop. Emmaus Krakow wishes to further raise its profile.

The Nowy Sacz homeless shelter is the group's main activity and has been operating for 27 years. 70 people are accommodated at the centre in winter. However, a large number of legislative changes have added new accommodation standards and regulations. This constitutes a risk as some centres cannot be included on the official list as they fail to meet these standards and therefore cannot receive state support. The Brat Albert centre could fall into this category.

The Polish government has created an organisation tasked with cooperating with NGOs in Poland and with observing them. Brat Albert is concerned about the stranglehold of the government.

Emmaus Rzeszow

Emmaus Rzeszów has been operating for 11 years. 18 companions and seven employees **carry out the traditional Emmaus activities of collecting, repairing, recycling and selling in their charity shop and online.**

The group has two shops: the long-standing rented shop in Rzeszów and the second shop in the community house in the suburbs (owned by the group).

A loan was offered and an audit will take place. Following a decision taken by the December 2016 Regional Executive of Emmaus Europe, Emmaus Rzeszów has been loaned €25,000 to settle the last building works invoice, subject to Emmaus Rzeszów agreeing to an audit. Discussions are underway with a Polish audit firm in tandem with Emmaus Europe's chartered accountants. Emmaus Europe will send out the list of documents to be prepared for the audit. The cost of the audit will be roughly €8,200 exclusive of tax. Emmaus Rzeszów has agreed to the audit taking place in April 2017.

A reminder of the context

A number of amounts for the repayments to be made were mentioned and the group's financial situation was not clearly explained at the last few collective meetings. Emmaus Europe and Emmaus International are very committed to supporting Emmaus Rzeszów and it is important for the collective and all the partners to know the group's repayment capacity and whether it is financially viable. Loan repayments (€470 a month) will need to be made as of October 2017.

- It is a wish of the actors offering to accompany the community Emmaus Rzeszów: Pierre Dubois, Emmanuel de Fallois and Zbigniew Drazkowski, to have a mission statement. However, the group needs to wait for the audit and its findings, which should be known by May 2017.

Sales income

In 2016, sales income amounted to €166,370, i.e. a monthly average of €13,874. It was stated that sales income has increased over the past six months, hitting €17,331 over the past few months.

The community house heating system is technologically complex, so the group has hired someone to keep an eye on and maintain the system online for €25 a month.

The group has simultaneously sought to **cut costs**. Specifically, the bus lease agreement will be abolished, energy savings are being planned, the companion allowance has had to be reduced and new partners are donating food. The total potential monthly saving is estimated at €3,550.

- How did the companions react to the 50 zlotys per week cut to their allowance? The companions were given an allowance of 100Zl a week until February 2017 and were aware that this was the highest amount in Poland. They understand the need to harmonize with the other Polish groups and the group's difficult situation. In return, the companions now have an additional day off each week. A discussion did take place in the group and no companion opposed the move. Moreover, the number of companions has risen from eight to 18. However, the Polish groups have been asked to coordinate more on this type of issue, which falls outside the remit of the collective partners.
- In addition, **legislative changes** are forcing the group to adapt. An expert has been appointed to help the group adapt: Polish law on associations, law on public interest status and volunteering, law on social assistance, law on income tax and VAT, law on public collections. The full service provision and document drafting cost €200.

The 2017 European solidarity programme

Reminder of the process. Applications for support submitted by the Emmaus groups in Europe were examined by the Executive and then approved by the Regional Council of Emmaus Europe on 18 February 2017. The applications were brought together in a programme and then circulated to all the Emmaus groups in Europe. Emmaus Europe does not have a solidarity fund, so voluntary donations made by the Emmaus groups will be used to fund the initiatives.

Specifically, **the 2017 programme supports four initiatives in Ukraine:**

- Expansion of Emmaus Oselya's textile sorting and storage work for €74,000.
- Support Nasha Khata's work by paying the wages for €9,000.
- Support Nasha Khata's farming business for €1,800.
- Building a well for €5,680.

Descriptions of each initiative are attached to these minutes.

FAQ about Emmaus Oselya

- The location of the plot that Oselya wants to buy is as yet unknown, but the cost has been calculated using market rates i.e. €40,000 for 2,000m². An experienced firm has been contacted in order to estimate the cost of building work. The total cost will depend upon the plot of land and the work required, electrical work and other aspects, meaning that the project could be altered depending upon the location.
- Would it not be simpler to buy a plot with a building needing renovation?
Oselya wants to buy instead of renting to avoid any problems with property owners or being controlled by them. Furthermore, the businesses consulted by the group have talked about existing old buildings which do not incorporate new technology and would need to be demolished in order to create a new building.
- What will be the process if the opportunity to buy a plot arises? The first phase will take time because buying a plot and obtaining building permits is not a simple matter. Emmaus Europe had €13,695 of funds allocated to Oselya as of 31 December 2016, as per the 2016 certified

accounts. In 2016, Oselya also received €20,000 of European solidarity funding for the 2016 initiative, which has been put on ice upon Oselya's request. A further €6,305 therefore needs to be found to reach the amount needed to purchase a plot, i.e. €40,000 based on the approved funding application.

Nasha Khata provided more in-depth information following the visit.

The group thanked Emmaus Europe and all the groups for the visit and support.

- **Upcoming shipment of farming equipment**

The Franche-Comté Burgundy region of France (Region 9) will soon be sending a second-hand tractor and agricultural machinery collected by the region. Permission to bring the equipment to Ukraine is currently being requested.

- **A new shop has been set up at Nasha Khata** containing clothing and a storage area. Members of Nasha Khata are also going to sell furniture and textiles in various locations in the region two to three times a week, making use of their truck.
- **Help with renovating lock-ups so that they can be used as storage and workshops** is planned. Austrian volunteers will be on the spot from 29 May to 2 June 2017 to get the work underway. Region 9 will be sending out people to continue the work on 12-17 June. A minibus carrying nine people will make the journey and if the weather is good, they will be able to help with work on the farm.

Sustainable development challenges. Experience of collection and sorting work.

What is co-operation like with local government?

In attendance: Andriy Moskalenko, deputy mayor of Lviv, responsible for the city's development, accompanied by the environmental activists Iryna Myronova, forest projects communication officer for WWF (World Wide Fund For Nature), and Yulia Yurchenko, Zero waste programme coordinator.

The deputy mayor expressed his thanks for this opportunity to talk and share initiatives. He also explained the challenges currently faced by the city and plans for the future.

- **The city of Lviv currently has to manage 500-600 tonnes of waste every day.** Waste composition: 8% textiles, 5.5% wood, 3% leather and plastic. The public authorities are therefore reflecting upon the issue of reuse and the idea of setting up a closed waste management cycle. They are considering joining the Zero Waste initiative. Businesses recycle plastic waste but paper and glass are collected by individuals who resell them.
- **Emmaus Oselya is the only association in the region to recycle textiles.** The council would like to set up a sorting and recycling goods partnership with Oselya. The aim would be to expand Oselya's income-generating activity, support the group and invest. For instance, one idea would be to co-finance a social enterprise or plot of land purchase. Emmaus Oselya is suggesting opening a shop in the city centre if Lviv council makes premises available.
- **Another challenge is that many people rummage through the bins and earn a living by selling to businesses the reusable materials that they find in the rubbish.** Indeed, not only the homeless do this work, retired people and people on low incomes are also involved. Waste transport companies are not interested in installing waste sorting containers because anything sellable would be collected by these people. The council therefore wants to include these people in the development of recycling projects.

- **The stakeholders in attendance were interested in hearing about Emmaus' expertise.** Willi Does presented the European Collective, a working group focusing on Emmaus in Poland and Ukraine, and explained that for the past 70 years, Emmaus has built up expertise in collecting and recycling textiles, fridges, electronics, food etc. Emmaus also champions an alternative to over-consumption and runs awareness-raising initiatives. This is why Emmaus also needs partners such as local councils to work at the local level: raise awareness and create jobs in recovery.

At European level, Emmaus Europe is working on the circular economy package currently being voted on and discussed by the European Parliament. Waste can be profitable. It should not be forgotten that Emmaus places people at the heart of its work. Emmaus Europe advocates on this issue. Examples mentioned were Emmaus Pamplona in Spain and the numerous social enterprises in France, among others. An invitation was made to the deputy mayor to visit Emmaus groups.

How should we work with the new groups?

The collective has a tradition of welcoming partners and including new groups around the table. Associations in Latvia and Lithuania, which have been operating for a long time and already have partners in the Emmaus Movement, were mentioned at this point. If plans are in place for elected representatives of Emmaus International and Emmaus Europe to visit the groups, the groups should be invited to attend the next Collective in order to meet them, get to know each other and enable them to discover other Emmaus groups.

A knock-on effect would be a rise in the number of participants, so the meeting work sessions would need to be reorganized. A presentation of the groups could be sent out prior to the meeting.

Resolutions made by the April 2016 World Assembly in Jesolo

- Keep our heritage alive.
- Tackle the causes of poverty.
- Strengthen our movement.

The meeting then focused on the three resolutions as a means of tackling the causes of poverty.

The resolutions seek to raise the profile of what is being done internally and externally to achieve:

- An ethical and solidarity-based economy.
- Social and environmental justice.
- Peace and universal citizenship.

The ActEmmaus platform was also mentioned and the participants watched a video on Emmaus in India. Click on the link to watch the videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLXQgDImdYsKaXuDYuGPWMmUg90OnEgmbv>



2017 intra-European transport programme schedule.

Loads requested	Name of the sending group	January	February	March	April
12 loads for Emmaus Brat Albert	Emmaus Cologne		1		
	Emmaus Annemasse	1			1
Emmaus Lublin 12 loads	Emmaus Annemasse			1	
	Emmaus Jura		1	1	
Emmaus Rzeszow 12 loads	Emmaus Helsinki / Westervik	1		1	
	Emmaus Roanne			1	
	Emmaus La Chaux-de-Fonds*	1	1		
	Emmaus Annemasse		1		
	Emmaus Rhône Alpes	1			
	Emmaus Feniks			1	
	Emmaus Köln				1

To date there are no plans for the rest of the year but if any groups want to send a load to Poland, they can contact the Emmaus Europe Secretariat by emailing camille.decaens@emmaus-europe.org or by calling 00 33 1 41 58 25 73.

*Regarding lorry loads being dispatched from Switzerland, La Chaux de Fonds had an understanding with Emmaus Rzeszów that the Swiss group would gradually stop covering transport costs. However, they have realized that when the sending group does not pay the transport costs, Emmaus Rzeszów (the receiving group) has to pay additional taxes. Emmaus La Chaux de Fonds has therefore decided to continue paying the full transport costs. In return, a potential solution could be that the recipient group makes a solidarity contribution to the sending group.

**The next Poland-Ukraine Collective will take place on
October 27th and 28th 2017 at Nowy Sacz, Poland.**

Thank you to Emmaus Oselya for hosting the meeting and for arranging the visits, thanks to
Nasha Khata for hosting us too, and thanks to the participants for their contributions.



Emmaus Oselya UKRAINE

The organization was founded in 2001 and the main activity of “Oselya” is organization of life and work in the Community of homeless people. This is a group of people who live and work together, have a common household, solve their life problems and help those who are more poor.

The association is composed of :

- a community where people can get a medical and psychological support, personal development trainings, can be involved in solidarity actions.
- Workshops for renovation of furnitures, sewing, where people can start to believe in their own strength and feel confident again.
- a second-hand store and a sorting place,
- a social hostel,
- a social support centre providing showers, cloakrooms, hairdressing for homeless people from Lviv city.



Oselya is possessing 20 containers for used clothes in the city of Lviv and is the first organization in Ukraine to implement such kind of initiative. Every second day out trucks go to empty the containers and than 7-8 companions and volunteers are engaged in sorting of the clothes.

Locally donated clothing and things is the main source of income. For 2017, the municipality is willing to donate 5 more containers but the sorting and storage capacity in the currently rented depot of 280 square meters, old without heating or ventilation is currently very limited. Also, the owner of the place intends to sell it.



The objectives are to :

- Find and purchase a 2000 square meters of land.
- Study the experience of sorting of other groups.
- Construct the new depot.

**Amount needed to implement the initiative:
€ 74,000**



Nasha Khata Ukraine

The association was founded in 2009 and is located in a former military base, some 12km from Drohobych (80km from Lvov).

The partly destroyed building has been renovated to create accommodation in order to support homeless and people in difficult life situations.

31 companions lives in the community and worked in the various activities implemented by the group, help by 10 volunteers. They are provided with psychological, medical and administrative support.

Group's activities :

- Collection and selling of used clothes.
- Farm and agriculture, breeding and selling. Planting and harvesting.
- Renovation of the building.
- External solidarity activities, soup distribution, Easter and Christmas meals.
- Hosting volunteers.



The Emmaus groups in Europe are supporting the development of the group's activities, by :

- **Paying the wages** of the three staff members.
- **Developing of agricultural activities.** To achieve better results in farming business, to grow agro cereals that can cheapen the costs of the forage, to grow potatoes and vegetable for food of the community and to offer the possibility for the people who live in the community to work on the farm. Preparing and ploughing the field, planting crops and harvesting.

- **Building a well.** To provide decent living conditions for companions, improve the living and the activity of the community. Be more independent having an own water access.



Interested in finding out more?
www.emmaus-europe.org