

Report of the meeting of the European Poland/ Ukraine Collective

25-6 April 2018

Nasha Khata, Drohobytch, Ukraine

Participants

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

Gernot Krassnitzer, Hansjörg Egger-Stern, **Emmaus Innsbruck, Austria.**

Herbert Bitter, **Minsk, Belarus.**

Anu Hyle, Ulla Hoyer, **Emmaus Helsinki, Finland.**

Pascal Louvet, **Emmaus Annemasse, France.**

Marc Mazur, **Emmaus Auxerre, France.**

Annick Berthier, **Emmaus Chalon-sur-Saone, France.**

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

Mireille Bucher, **Emmaus Le Russey, France.**

Christian Calmejane, **Emmaus Montauban, France.**

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

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

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

Jorris de Wildt, **Emmaus Haarzuilens, Netherlands.**

Grzegorz Hadjuk, *Poland national delegate*, Leszek Lizon, Robert Opoka, Wojtek Chmura, **Emmaus Brat Albert, Poland.**

Tadeusz Młynarczyk, **Emmaus Lublin, Poland.** Krzysztof Serwinski, Grazyna Moskal, **Emmaus Rzeszów, Poland.**

Charly Viguier, Julia Wierzchoslawska, Orlane Messey, **Frères Europa de Satu Mare, Romania.**

Father Andrej, Lucia, Oksana Kolodiy, Taraz, Vasyl Holod, Viktor, **Emmaus Nasha Khata, Ukraine.**

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

Father Igor, **Caritas, Ukraine.**

Gabriela Martin, Théo Robin, **Emmaus Europe Secretariat.**

The following tables list the activities, news and future prospects for the groups, and their European solidarity and transport programme requirements.

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- Ukrainian groups: page 3
- Non-member guest associations: page 5

Other matters raised when discussing the groups' news, and Emmaus' latest European and international news, are found at the end of the document (page 8).

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

We look forward to meeting up on 13-14 November for the next collective meeting!

POLISH GROUPS

<i>Group</i>	Brat Albert	Emmaus Lublin	Emmaus Rzeszów
<i>Latest news</i>	<p>Everything is going well in the community's two branches.</p> <p><u>Local authorities</u> The group in Nowy Sacz won a public competition open to associations working with the homeless. The group will receive state funding. It was reiterated that the Emmaus communities undertake work that falls within the state's remit: working with the local authorities is therefore essential. (It has taken Brat Albert 25 years to develop a good relationship).</p>	<p><u>Solidarity programme</u> Currently, the group's main challenge is building a new shop, as shared at the last collective. A town centre plot has been identified and would be suited to a 300m² building. The total cost would be 500,000 ZL (€120K). A 1.5% loan from a social fund will cover some of the cost (200,000 ZL, €50K). The next stage is to obtain Emmaus International's agreement for the remaining €70,000. The group should receive an answer in May. The group hopes that income will increase by 30% as a result of this project.</p>	<p><u>Results</u> Good results were achieved in the winter but sales dropped in spring because there have been roadworks on the shop access road for a year, which is stopping people from coming.</p> <p><u>Governance</u> The general assembly was held on 13 April. Pierre Dubois, appointed by Emmaus Europe to support the group, was elected onto the Board. The association now has public interest status, which will make collecting goods easier.</p> <p><u>Activities</u> Sodablastering machine purchased via Emmaus Europe.</p>
<i>Main activities</i>	Accommodation for the homeless: night shelter, handing out clothing etc.	The pizzeria is a success. The group has more customers and therefore more work.	18 companions. <u>Activities</u> Collecting, distributing, selling in two shops, textile recycling. Advertising via the website.
<i>Lorry loads of donated goods</i>	Emmaus Bougival sent a truck to the Krakow community.	Seven loads received in 2018 (Jura, Cologne and Fredriksdal). There was also an exchange with Fredriksdal and five companions worked there in February. The content of some trucks was of poor quality and the group was unable to sell these goods. A decision has also been taken to send small loads to Oselya every month.	The group needs 12 truck loads in 2018. It is unable to cover haulage costs. NB: One of the latest trucks brought very poor quality goods and 70-80% of the goods were thrown away. <u>Local solidarity</u> Brat Albert is helping by sending goods.
<i>Prospects</i>	The group is offering to host Ukrainian companions and cover their travel/stay costs.		

UKRAINIAN GROUPS

Group	Nasha Khata	Oselya
Latest news	<p><u>New building Drohobych council is loaning Nasha Khata a building for 25 years.</u> Talks took six years and a lot of effort was required to achieve the end goal. The group were given the keys to the building on the eve of this meeting. The building is well-located in the centre. It is 620m² and has three floors. The idea is to open a shop and workshops, and a social centre for the homeless.</p> <p><u>Trial membership application Nasha Khata wants to officially join the movement.</u> A member group will need to mentor Nasha Khata during the trial period (it might be an idea to discuss the matter with Emmaus Oselya). The EE Secretariat will send out the necessary documents and will provide support throughout the process. The application must be sent to both EE and EI.</p> <p><u>Economic situation</u> In conjunction with the request for support with paying the salaries, the issue of the community's financial independence was raised. It is worth remembering that the group makes practically no profit and that the income generated is paid back to the companions as a matter of priority, is used to organise group holidays etc. Salaries account for 25% of turnover and there are insufficient funds to cover them.</p> <p>The group was asked to provide a rough date for when it would be able to cover this. This is a difficult question to answer, as the number of companions is rising constantly. The farm work and carpentry workshop are doing well this year and making a profit. Income should also increase because of the street markets. At the same time, the development of the community requires regular investment in premises renovation work. In any event, the group still sees this as a medium-term goal.</p> <p><u>Team</u> Following comments made at the last collective meeting, the psychologist has been officially declared.</p>	<p><u>Events</u> Special sale, companions took part in a fashion show organised by a local designer, literary evenings attended by writers, decorating workshops.</p> <p><u>Truck</u> One of the trucks has broken down and will be repaired but the truck will need replacing in the near future.</p> <p><u>Premises search</u> The group currently needs new premises for the following: the charity shop rent is too high (~€1,000), the sorting building is too small (see the European solidarity programme), and the shelter is full to bursting (see below).</p> <p><u>New building</u> For the last of these requirements, the government has agreed to lend a plot, containing a building, for 15 years. A full renovation is required (apart from the roof and the floors). Some of this very large building could also be used to house the companions.</p> <p>Two points were raised. Firstly, the group's investment capacity is low, because all the income is currently used to pay salaries. The group is looking into the possibility of being remunerated by the state for this social service. Moreover, the issue of the long-term future after the 15-year lease runs out was raised. It is problematic to make long-term plans when the matter is still being finalised. Initiatives can generally be continued or plots can generally be bought at the end of the period but nothing is set in stone.</p> <p>A summer camp would be a way of helping with the renovations.</p> <p><u>Economic situation</u> The community is financially self-sufficient apart from in the aforementioned areas.</p>

<p><i>Main activities</i></p>	<p>40 people are housed by the organisation: six women, two children (3-4 years old) and 32 men.</p> <p><u>Agriculture</u> The group has received a tractor which has enabled them to make savings. French partners travelled to Ukraine in the spring to help out. The companions are pleased to be doing farm work and to be producing their own organic good quality food. This year's harvest should provide all the food needed by the farm animals.</p> <p><u>Workshop</u> A companion repairs sofas and armchairs and this income-generating activity is a success. The participating groups were very interested to learn more and a proposal was made to host the companion for a few days in France so that he can share his skills.</p>	<p><u>Team</u> 10 volunteers, 11 employees, 21 companions.</p> <p><u>Income-generating activity</u> 23 containers, two charity shops and two trucks. 10 tonnes of clothing, books and toys are collected each week.</p> <p><u>Social initiative</u> The group supports 55 people on a daily basis at the shelter and support centre, offering: showers, clothes washing facilities, hairdressing, meals and clothing. Soup run on the streets in winter and Christmas and Easter meals for 500 people.</p> <p><u>Recycling</u> A partnership with the local authorities enables the group to dispose of textile waste free of charge.</p> <p><u>Promotion</u> The book <i>The Emmaus Movement – a story of solidarity</i> has been presented on three occasions.</p>
<p><i>Regional solidarity programme</i></p>	<p>Three projects were approved by the RCEE in March 2018 for a total funding amount of €18,150.</p> <p><u>Purchase of a minibus</u> to transport community members and goods. The aim is to facilitate the income-generating activity and increase the collection of second-hand clothes and market sales. The minibus will enable the group to also work in Stry in addition to Drohobych.</p> <p>In addition to Emmaus Europe's funding (€8K), the group will self-fund €1K and Emmaus Innsbruck will provide €3K.</p> <p><u>Agriculture</u> The initiative has been underway for three years. A request has been made for €1,150 this year (reduced amount). The funding would be used to lay out the area for the hens (around 200 to lay eggs), purchase seeds, and produce fodder.</p> <p><u>Salaries</u> for three employees (€9K) as per previous years.</p>	<p>The application for support made to Emmaus Europe in late 2016 is still relevant. The group needs more room for sorting textiles and therefore needs a new plot.</p> <p>A rented plot would not be a good idea because it would prove too expensive (due to the commercial aim). The idea is to find a plot where a new sorting centre can be built. A plot has already been earmarked 4km from the community.</p> <p>It was stressed that the aforementioned plot loaned by the state is not suitable as the state's current priority is offering shelter and support rather than backing social enterprises.</p>

NON-MEMBER GUEST ASSOCIATIONS

<i>Group</i>	Minsk (Belarus)	Amis3 (Latvia)	Georgian association
<i>Latest news</i>	<p><u>Setting up Emmaus Minsk</u> Herbert Bitter, a former member of Emmaus Haarzuilens, left the Netherlands in late 2017 to move to Minsk in Belarus. He was contacted by the director of a major NGO in the country. The director wanted more information about Emmaus. A meeting is scheduled for early May to discuss the possibility of setting up an Emmaus organisation in Belarus.</p> <p><u>Local legislation</u></p> <p>Two recent changes would facilitate the idea of setting up a group. Private companies can now be set up (rather than having to be connected to the state), and it is now easier for foreign nationals to obtain visas and stay for longer in the country.</p>	<p><u>Community experience in France</u> Jean and Solvita spent two months at Montauban in France. They lived with the companions, took part in the group’s meetings, and were able to present their plans in the region. They wish to draw inspiration from this experience when setting up their organisation in Latvia.</p> <p>The <u>local economic situation</u> has worsened even more because the last business was a sawmill which is now going bankrupt. The bulk of young people go abroad to work and only needy people stay behind.</p> <p><u>Activity:</u> First donations received from local residents.</p> <p><u>Group sustainability</u></p> <p>Amis3 is financially supported by the French groups from the Toulouse area (in particular). They have already been able to purchase a second-hand truck and this will also enable them to create the post of community leader and purchase premises. Property purchase formalities are underway and renovation work is set to take place next year.</p> <p>The tax office asked the group to explain its situation. They explained the project and how the profits would be used. The authorities understood and were supportive.</p>	<p><i>The Georgian association was represented by Pascal Louvet from Emmaus Annemasse because Giorgi Ghelaghutashvili had to stay in Georgia to receive a container load from Annemasse. Giorgi thanked the collective for inviting him.</i></p> <p>Two members of the Annemasse group travelled to Georgia to meet the association’s members. They purchased a truck for the association and are planning to support it.</p> <p>There is a very large textile market in the country and the association is only asking for clothing at the present time.</p>

<i>Main activities</i>		Helping the most deprived people in Metriena. Sales income is used to fund surgery and help the most deprived people. Initiatives are run in partnership with local social services and the medical centre, which refers people who need help (the experience of the association's members is also beneficial, as they know the local social fabric).	Textiles sent by Annemasse will provide work for deprived people in Tbilisi.
<i>Lorry loads of donated goods</i>		Several Emmaus groups help to replenish stocks as the group does not yet collect its own goods. Trucks from Fredriksdal (Sweden) and the Toulouse area of France have been received, a lorry load from Helsinki and Westervik is scheduled.	The group was receiving a first load of clothing from Annemasse during the meeting. If everything goes well, the experience will be repeated.
<i>Prospects</i>		The group wants to become an Emmaus committee of friends in the long term.	The association is planning to create an Emmaus-type residential community.

Migration and the European Citizens' Initiative

At its March meeting the Regional Council of Emmaus Europe (RCEE) decided to support the ECI We are a welcoming Europe, let us help! The initiative revolves around a petition with legal status. If one million signatures are collected in at least seven EU states, the authorities must examine the issue. **The petition can be signed online on EE's website:** www.emmaus-europe.org. More information is available from the EE Secretariat.

This is a topical issue in many countries in Europe. France's asylum-immigration law was mentioned. Emmaus France is taking a stand against the law. A minimum response has been suggested, with the submission of an amendment which would lead to Emmaus companions who have been living in communities for over three years being given leave to remain. The amendment was adopted at the first reading against the wishes of the government, but the law is still being reviewed.

Solidarity criteria

It was reiterated that the collective's aim is to organise solidarity. For Emmaus, it has always been important to make a clear distinction between solidarity and charity. The key words that defined our solidarity over two decades ago included: supporting a group's financial and practical independence, fostering local involvement, ensuring that initiatives are monitored and evaluated, and prioritising groups that operate in a democratic fashion.

The world assembly was held in Jesolo. **The discussion focused on how to organise our solidarity so that we change society. It is important to demonstrate that our solidarity work is rooted in activism.** How to include socially-excluded people? How to address extreme poverty? These are the criteria for determining a solidarity initiative in our movement. For instance, when we set up a solidarity project, it needs to be seen through to completion but we also need to **denounce the root causes of poverty**. This proves difficult in some countries (where it is harder to express an opinion) but it is still one of our core 'struggles'. This is why **a discussion is underway on the Emmaus International board about taking greater account of these criteria in our solidarity initiatives and communicating more effectively in this area.**

The participants were asked to discuss the issue in their groups in order to ask themselves what solidarity means to us, how we implement it, and how it enables us to address the root causes and not just the consequences.

European and international news

Upcoming events are as follows:

- European migration / human trafficking collective **20-23 June in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia**, focusing in particular on the outsourcing of border management. The programme includes training delivered by Migreurop, visiting centres working on these issues, and personal accounts of migration and trafficking.
- Training
 - **Emmaus in all of its facets course: 3-6 June in Cologne, Germany**, a course focusing on the history of Emmaus in Europe.
 - There is also a wish to further develop our training: **Groups are invited to get in touch if they wish to organise training courses** (keeping it simple and offering short

courses). A training course on the circular economy is set to take place in the first quarter of 2019 at Emmaus Pamplona in Spain.

- Global Forum for Alternatives run by the most socially-excluded people 17-20 September in Geneva in Switzerland. The forum is being arranged following a decision taken by the Jesolo World Assembly. **All the groups are invited to register (by 31 May) and suggest workshops or topics.** External organisations are also invited to set up joint initiatives.

Other matters raised during the meeting

Regional solidarity programme

As a reminder, the programme is put together based on the groups' proposals and is then rubberstamped by the RCEE. This year's programme includes Nasha Khata's and Emmaus Oselya's initiatives. Furthermore, an Emmaus Lublin initiative has been submitted to the EI solidarity programme and a decision will be taken in May.

Groups needing vehicles

This seems to be a problem shared by all the collectives. Many groups seem to need a vehicle in order to effectively undertake their work. **The EE regional executive wants to think of a way of helping the groups in this area.**

Lorry loads of donated goods

Several comments were made:

- Some long-established groups are receiving increasing numbers of loads, whereas the idea is for groups to become independent. This falls under the same category as Nasha Khata requesting funding for salaries.
- Lorry loads are not fairly shared out.
- Finally, several receiving groups have reported (very) poor quality loads. The importance of organising exchanges between groups was highlighted at this juncture. Exchanges enable the sending group to grasp the situation and requirements of the receiving group, and also allow the latter to express their opinion about the goods being sent.

A wish was expressed to have a special session on this issue at the next collective meeting. However, it was stated that groups need to contact each other directly about the issue of load quality.

General running of the collective

It was once again remarked that the project information supplied is too vague. **The collective needs more detailed information, including a projected budget,** to enable a constructive discussion. (Even if decisions are subsequently taken by Emmaus Europe's elected bodies which require and utilize more precise information when taking decisions).

In the specific case of the projects presented for the first time at this meeting, the groups stated that these ideas are very recent and that they wanted to share them with the collective but have not yet had the time to prepare complete projects, although they plan to finalize all the details in the future.

Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on **13-14 November 2018**. Make it a date for your diary!