

Romania Collective
11-12 April 2018
Un Coup de Main d'Emmaus Iasi, Romania

Participants

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

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

Aneta Onu, Dana-Maria Andron, Gelu Nichitel, *Romania national delegate*, Iustina Zaharia, Leïla Thouret, Maureen Piot, Mélodie Saura, **Un coup de main d'Emmaüs Iasi, Romania.**

Ivett Szilagyi, Jean-Philippe Légaut, *collective representative, member of the Emmaus Europe Regional Executive*, Sorin Onica, **Frères Europa de Satu Mare, Romania.**

John McGovern, Mark Boden, **Emmaus Cambridge, UK.**

Isabelle Müller, **Emmaus Berne, Switzerland**
Vincent Gasparin, Vincent Potron, **Emmaus Sion, Switzerland.**

Lise Daviet, **Emmaus International Secretariat**

Théo Robin, **Emmaus Europe Secretariat.**

Group news

The groups' news appears in the table on page 5.

Târgu Jiu was unable to attend and sent some news via email. It was stated that it was a shame that all the Romanian groups did not attend the meeting, as it is important for the groups to spend time together in order to develop Emmaus Romania.

Emmaus Bucharest

Elena was scheduled to attend but was unable to come in the end, so little information was available for the meeting. It is important to help her to attend the next time.

The association has been set up and it is now a question of getting the income-generating activity going. They will undoubtedly need funds to set in motion the project. Contact needs to be made with the Emmaus Europe Secretariat to discuss the next phases involved in setting up the group.

Lorry loads of donated goods

The issue of organising and sharing out the loads of donated goods was raised. The intention is to ensure that the system is fair for all groups and also to develop existing partnerships.

A need for communication about the groups' donated goods requirements was raised. The following was suggested:

- Create a web-based tool listing the groups' needs and the loads received in order to improve transparency.
- Give groups the opportunity to quickly advise online that they have received a load in order to improve monitoring.
- Possibly set up a discussion group (WhatsApp, for instance) so that the groups can chat to each other.

Several other ideas were put forward:

- Share a truck in order to cut transport costs. NB: If the truck is to be cost-efficient, it should always carry a full load, and this will require significant extra logistical planning.
- Get in touch with logistics training institutions (such as Bioforce) to improve our practices. However, at the present time, the lorry loads are managed in a highly decentralised fashion, and centralised organisation is not necessarily possible.

Finally, it was reiterated that the members of the European collectives are not the only communities with needs.

For instance, the meeting was reminded about how the international container programme works: every year the groups express their needs and the list is approved by the region (international). The groups can send container loads to a specific group in order not to jeopardize partnerships but when a container has not been allocated, Emmaus International suggests a recipient using the list of priorities drawn up by the regions. Moreover, each receiving group has a “handbook” listing all the shipping information required and a rundown of the goods of interest to it.

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.

The participants discussed how to publicize the ECI in Romania, a country in which society is generally hostile to taking in migrants. The authorities are therefore reluctant to back the shelter and support initiatives proposed by the groups. Likewise, the media does not talk about migration and there are few shelters for migrants.

However, this ECI quite deliberately involves little in the way of political commitment, and therefore enables the subject to be broached, even with people who are rather against the idea. The groups expressed their interest and the need to have more detailed tools and documents so that they can publicize the initiative.

Solidarity criteria

Presentation of the process

At the 2016 Jesolo World Assembly, the movement’s member groups focused on reviewing the movement’s values in order to work out how they are reflected in our work and initiatives. There were three major findings: there is a wide range of initiatives, it is difficult to showcase their impact in their local areas, and it is important that solidarity initiatives are a lever for change in order to address the root causes of extreme poverty.

Following this discussion and the selection of the 10 principles of action listed in the founding text approved in a vote in Jesolo, work got underway to start utilising these principles as a way of interpreting our projects. The aim is to be able to better explain and showcase our projects and their impact, while always placing our ethos at the heart of our initiatives. The intention is to demonstrate that the Emmaus groups implement alternatives to help the most socially-excluded people, which will help fuel our campaigning work, and show that we champion alternatives.

Our projects already tend to meet these criteria, so the main aim is to re-emphasize some core principles to enable us to showcase them and more widely champion ideas for social change. The aim is also to highlight the deep-rooted causes that we are addressing in order not to just take action on the consequences of these problems.

Reactions

This discussion process is important and we always keep in mind the principles, but day-to-day energy is mainly channelled into community life, which does not always leave time to take a step

back in this way. However, it is always important that we remind ourselves of the ethos behind our work and the aims and objectives of our solidarity.

A key point was raised: the solidarity criteria will enable the EI Board to approve or reject projects submitted to it. However, solidarity should also be spontaneous, and it would be a shame if these criteria were to take precedence. However, the Board cannot be aware of the local circumstances of each and every group, and needs shared criteria to analyse the projects.

Global Forum for Alternatives run by the most socially-excluded people

The idea to hold this forum also emerged during the 2016 World Assembly and was approved by the movement's member groups. The aim is to give a voice to the most excluded people, showcase the alternatives rolled out by the Emmaus groups, and forge alliances with other anti-poverty movements.

The forum will take place in Geneva in Switzerland on 17-20 September 2018 and around 500 people are expected to attend. Planned activities and events:

- An opening march in Geneva.
- Plenary sessions attended by public figures (including Jean Ziegler, UN human rights advisor).
- Workshops for which all the groups are being asked to suggest topics and act as workshop facilitators.
- A side event is also being formulated. If approved, the event would enable us to present Emmaus' activities and struggles to the Human Rights Council.

The idea is also to start working with partners with whom we could join forces in the future and develop campaigns. Potential partners have been suggested by each region. Europe's list of potential partners will be rubberstamped by the EE Regional Executive in April and suggestions from Romania, and other countries, will be examined.

All the groups should have received the forum presentation leaflet, registration form (to be returned by 31 May) and the workshop topic suggestion form:

- The aim is to have a blend of paid employees, volunteers and companions (in particular).
- As for the workshops, the groups are being asked to suggest topics that they themselves work on so that they can facilitate sessions on these topics. The aim is not just to exchange practices but also to develop a campaigning message to be conveyed in the future.
- Some of the participants will stay in hotels (non-Europeans will be prioritized for hotel accommodation) and others on solidarity stays in people's homes (there is a tradition of hospitality in Geneva and home stays are a great opportunity to interact with local people).
- The exemption rate is aimed at low-income groups without the resources needed to take part.

Other European and international news

The Poland-Ukraine and Bosnia-Herzegovina collectives will take place in late April/early May. The Migration & Human Trafficking Collective will be held on 20-23 June in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia. The programme includes training delivered by Migreurop, visiting centres working on these issues, and personal accounts of migration and trafficking. Finally, the *Emmaus in all of its facets* training course will be held in Cologne just like every year, this time from 3-6 June. Potential participants must contact the EE Secretariat if they wish to register for any of these events.

The Paris Salon will not be taking place in 2018 (due to a drop in footfall and profits). Work is underway to overhaul the big sale in time for 2019. It was stressed that this sale is not just French but is also international. This facet should be emphasized and publicized.

The Emmaus International board decided at the start of the term of office to arrange a work camp in each region between now and the next world assembly. The next camp is set to take place in Benin in December. It will bring together roughly 40 participants, will be open to all the groups, and there should be a balance between paid employees, volunteers and companions (who will be prioritized). The camp will also be the chance to exchange practices. More information will be provided.

Next meeting

The next meeting will be held in Cambridge (UK) in October 2018 at some point during the week of 22-26 October. The date still needs to be confirmed.

It was suggested that the next meeting in Romania should be held in Bucharest and should include the future group.

Thank you to the members of Un coup de main d'Emmaus Iasi for hosting the meeting and to the participants for the worthwhile discussions!

A short film has been made by the group after the meeting; you can find it on this link (French): https://www.sugarsync.com/pf/D3942006_06545816_7728909

Group	Amicii d'Emmaüs Târgu Jiu	Un Coup de Main d'Emmaus Iasi	Frères Europa, Emmaus Satu Mare
<i>Main activities</i>	<p><u>Second-hand shop</u> Up to 300 customers a day. All the products sell well.</p> <p><u>Textiles</u> 20% of the collected clothing is sold, 30-40% is donated to people in difficulty, and the rest is thrown away. Few items apart from textiles are collected.</p> <p><u>Social support</u> 50 families with children and people in difficulty receive clothing, toys and schoolbags every three months. At the same time, we also donate medical equipment: wheelchairs, crutches, medical mattresses, beds.</p> <p><u>Communication</u> Advertising, word-of-mouth, flyers at the market.</p> <p><u>Summer camp</u> Planned. Aimed at former residents of the children's home supported by the group, based on communication initiatives.</p>	<p>30 companions live across the two sites and receive an allowance of 300 lei (increase planned in the near future). They also have their medical costs covered. Six companions have paid employee status.</p> <p><u>Daily outreach work</u>, offering hot meals and clothing to over 200 homeless people, social and admin support. For meals, a partnership with a restaurant enables customers to make a donation; this fully covers the costs and enables us to publicize the initiative.</p> <p><u>Christmas and Easter on the streets</u> We organise a street party and hand out presents to the homeless.</p> <p><u>Market gardening</u> at Popesti with two civic service volunteers supported by the companions.</p> <p><u>Fun activities</u> for the companions include indoor football, ice skating, drama workshop, participatory cooking. Film screening in partnership with the French institute.</p>	<p><u>Social activity</u> Integrating young people aged 18-30 into society by offering a home and work, social security, counselling, and even psychiatric support if needed, organising discussion groups about living together, recycling, hygiene etc.</p> <p>Support provided to young people in legal proceedings against children's services on the grounds of poor care to at least combat impunity.</p> <p><u>Flea market</u> held regularly in the courtyard and bargain sales.</p> <p><u>Direct donations</u> to people in difficulty who come to the store, if possible going through social services as they know and keep track of the families.</p> <p><u>Contact with other Emmaus groups</u>: young people have stayed at Cambridge, Etang-sur-Aroux, Montpellier, Krefeld. Specifically, a young person was trained to repair bicycles in Krefeld's specialist workshop and now works practically full-time doing bike repairs at Satu Mare. Two young people with more issues also went to Switzerland (Berne and La-Chaux-de-Fond) for a "fresh start".</p>
<i>Latest news from the group</i>	<p><u>Premises</u> Shop heating system installed. The plan is to replace the roof to improve heat insulation. Insulation panels</p>	<p><u>Team</u> In October Dana was recruited to coordinate the outreach programme and she will also be involved in social initiatives. A key community leader has also</p>	<p><u>Activities</u> The amount of collected goods has increased but donations are still poor quality. Increasing number of customers.</p> <p><u>Recycling</u> The reuse and recycling system is better</p>

	<p>have already been purchased.</p> <p><u>Activities</u> Improving the quality of collected clothing.</p> <p><u>Team</u> A social worker was employed on a part-time basis in October.</p>	<p>left.</p> <p><u>Legal status</u> Application underway to request a social service licence.</p> <p><u>Area</u> Event planned to protest against the closure for building work of a shelter, which houses 60 people, without any alternative accommodation being proposed at the present time.</p> <p><u>Activities</u> Looms provided by a Swiss volunteer.</p>	<p>organised. Paper, metal, glass and plastics are now separated, but no system in place yet for textiles.</p>
<i>Regional solidarity programme</i>	<p>The group does not currently have a European solidarity programme initiative.</p>	<p>Bureaucratic problems (corruption in particular) are delaying the start of the Belvédère project. It is difficult to obtain information from the architect and project manager, but the documents should be ready at the end of May. An appointment has been made with the mayor for mid-April.</p> <p>A summer camp will run from June to September to work on this project. Five to six people have already signed up and a Sion companion will be coming for three months. The volunteers will help the business coordinating the building work. An electricity connection would cost €25K so the architect has suggested considering the option of fitting solar panels.</p>	<p>Individual homes building project for companions leaving the group (because the group's operating licence only allows it to house people up to the age of 30). Independence is a major issue, as the companions have always lived in group settings. A transition phase is organised during which the companions live in a flat rented by Frères Europa. A plot has been bought for two houses. This will also enable storage and two extra houses to be built in good living conditions. The storage area will maintain the link with the group but will also enable the group to save money (the current cost of renting storage is €750 per month). Talks are underway with a bank about obtaining a €40K loan.</p> <p>The project has been financially supported by the European groups (€7.5K) and has now been submitted to the Abbé Pierre Foundation for additional support (€24,500).</p>
<i>Lorry loads of</i>	<p>16 loads were received in <u>2017</u>.</p>	<p>In <u>2017</u>, 15 lorry loads were received, which</p>	<p>In <u>2017</u>, eight lorry loads were received, which</p>

<p><i>donated goods</i></p>	<p>30-40% of the clothing is <u>donated</u>. The group is planning to receive 18 trucks in <u>2018</u>.</p> <p>All the goods <u>sell well</u>.</p>	<p>yielded €19,300 per month. In the case of Switzerland, two Romanian companions travel to the country to select items of interest (out of the unsold stock).</p> <p><u>Sending groups tend to pay</u> haulage costs.</p> <p>20% of the goods received are <u>donated</u> to people in difficulty. The group needs 18 lorry loads in <u>2018</u>.</p> <p>The <u>most popular</u> goods with customers are crockery and furniture.</p>	<p>yielded approximately €8,100 each. (€85K over the year, taking into account previous stock and donations equating to roughly one truck load). This average is brought down by the locally collected goods, as they are sold at lower prices. Members of the groups take part in loading each container, which enables the groups to interact and means that Satu Mare receives goods that are fit for purpose.</p> <p><u>Frères Europa</u> tends to pay the haulage costs, i.e. roughly €2,300, without taking into account the cost of the companions' stay. However, the group does not pay tax because of its social service licence.</p> <p>50% of the clothing is donated to people in difficulty and 10-15% of the furniture.</p> <p>In 2018, the group needs 15-16 trucks to balance the books, because the store has developed and customer numbers have increased, but external resources have dropped.</p> <p>The <u>most popular goods</u> with customers are crockery and furniture.</p>
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