

**Romania Collective**  
**19-20 September 2017**  
**Roanne Committee of Friends, Mably, France**

**Participants**

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Gelu Nichitel, *Romania national delegate*, Mélodie Saura, **Un coup de main d'Emmaüs Iasi, Romania.**  
Charly Viguier, Jean-Philippe Legaut, *collective representative, member of the EE Regional Executive*, Sorin Onica, **Frères Europa de Satu Mare, Romania.**  
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Steve Scott, Tom Blight, **Village Carlton, UK.**  
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Vincent Gasparin, Vincent Potron, **Emmaus Sion, Switzerland.**  
Gabriela Martin, Marine Didier, Théo Robin, **EE Secretariat.**

**News from the Roanne Committee of Friends and state-aided contracts**

The Roanne Committee of Friends is made up of volunteers and employees, the majority of whom are on state-aided contracts (known as CUI-CAE). The reduction in the number of state-aided contracts announced by the French government has put the group in an awkward position. The sub-prefect has confirmed that the committee is renowned for its work and it will not lose all of its state-aided contracts. The group should be able to replace the lost contracts with fixed-term employment contracts, at least in the short term. Local, national and international solidarity will doubtlessly suffer, with a drop of €100K likely in the coming financial year.

These contracts are very important for both the beneficiaries (integration and support) and the committee (maintaining its volume of business).

More generally, this situation raises the issue of the status of the people supported by Emmaus (companions, state-aided contracts etc), which needs to be addressed at European level.

The regional TV channel broadcast a report and a discussion about the committee's situation (please see [here](#) and also [here](#)).

**Circular economy - initiatives undertaken and ideas for the future**

1. Background

In early 2016, Emmaus Europe met with the then president of the European Parliament, Martin Schulz, to discuss the issue of the circular economy. Emmaus Europe held a significant number of meetings with MEPs from the different committees over the course of the year, and several amendments to the Circular Economy Package were tabled.

In addition, in November Emmaus Europe published [The Emmaus groups in Europe - championing alternatives for a circular economy](#) booklet. The booklet showcases the groups' circular economy initiatives.

Advocacy continued to keep up the pressure about Emmaus Europe's amendments to the Circular Economy Package. The amendments were approved by the European Parliament on **14 March 2017**. Trilogue discussions about the waste directive are currently underway. 16 European countries out of the 28 Member States, representing 65% of Europe's population, need to be in favour of the package for it to be approved. The next phase will end on 25 October when a response will be announced. Emmaus Europe's strategy is to target the most heavily populated countries: Germany, France, Italy, Netherlands and Romania (Spain has already announced its support for the package). The states' current stances are listed in the attached document (*map page 36*).

Recently, Jean-Claude Juncker's mid-term review demonstrated a lack of political interest in Europe's social foundations.

## 2. The circular economy in France

Emmaus has occupied a recycling niche in France to date. However, the EU has released funding to support the Member States in their transition and to encourage them to get to grips with the issue. This could well arouse fresh private sector interest in this potential goldmine and could mean that the Emmaus groups may face fierce competition. **Arrangements need to be made for Emmaus Europe to raise the groups' awareness about this issue.**

## 3. Strategy

It is important to re-emphasize the role played by the social and solidarity economy in the circular economy. The priority is to have recognized the role played in the circular economy by social stakeholders, such as Emmaus, and demonstrate the contribution made by these stakeholders in terms of sustainable development and solidarity to the circular economy as a whole.

Work is underway with RREUSE. Emmaus Europe has sent letters to the 28 Member States asking them to involve us in the discussions that affect social and solidarity economy organisations (since late 2016 and in June 2017). A shared RREUSE proposal – Emmaus Europe is a member – is also being put together to discuss the role played by social stakeholders.

## 4. Opportunities in Romania

Several ways of working on this topic in Romania were put forward:

- Contact the Romanian delegation - COREPER (Committee of Permanent Representatives) - in Brussels - **EE Secretariat**.
- Contact the president of the Romanian Parliament - **Amicii d'Emmaus Târgu Jiu**.
- Contact the French Embassy in Romania - **Un coup de main d'Emmaus Iasi**.

The French embassy is currently looking to set up a circular economy project and it could be worthwhile for Emmaus Iasi to get in touch.

## 5. Questionnaire sent to the national delegates

During the summer a survey of Emmaus Europe's national delegates was run to find out about the legislative barriers encountered by the groups in their day-to-day activities. The findings are currently being put together and will take the form of a poster and leaflet, so that we can present the barriers encountered and the solutions devised by the groups.

## 6. Status of the people supported by Emmaus in Europe

The focal point of discussions is the need for a recognized status for those supported by Emmaus (their situations currently differ, i.e. companions, state-aided contracts etc).

A few examples

- Romania
  - No companion status, everyone is an employee, which makes it difficult for the groups because of the rapidly rising minimum wage.
  - Emmaus is prohibited from supporting people with mental health problems and alternatives to Emmaus are inadequate.
- France
  - No specific protection for the undocumented migrants supported by Emmaus, despite OACAS status (<http://emmaus72.fr/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/OACAS-d%C3%A9pliant-externe-nov2015.pdf>).
  - The companions are not entitled to unemployment benefit and the work is not recognized by some public services (visa applications).
- Germany
  - Companion allowance equivalent to the minimum wage in order not to generate additional vulnerability.

It seems that our social and solidarity economy objectives are rarely satisfactorily achieved, particularly because they do not fit well with the local legislative framework.

**Recommendation: The idea was raised of developing an internal companion status charter in Europe so that we have a clear shared definition to convey to the outside world. It was proposed that a working group should be set up to progress this issue.**

### **Article 13**

A Crossing the Straits of Gibraltar (swimming and kayaking) event was arranged last year. It was repeated this year with the community branch of Emmaus France. The initiative sought to highlight the dangers faced by the migrants who cross the Mediterranean and the reception they receive on arrival. The weather conditions prevented the crossing from taking place and the programme had to be altered.

A meeting was held between the mayor of Tarifa, the president of Emmaus France, the chair of Emmaus International and the mayor of Grande-Synthe. The participants then visited the cemetery where those who perish at sea are buried, before silently making their way down to the beach where an open door had been symbolically placed. The swimmers and kayakers then put to sea, making their way along the coast.

### **News from the Emmaus groups in Romania and solidarity**

*Please refer to the table at the end of the document.*

#### **Emmaus Bucharest**

Helena has managed to undertake the formalities for the statutes. Gelu is set to visit soon to check that there are members and support for founding a group. The group should find it easy to access premises because it has a good relationship with the mayor.

#### **Upcoming meetings**

- The Romanian groups are planning to meet at Satu Mare on 5 December 2017.
- The next meeting of the Romania Collective will take place on 11-12 April 2018 in Iasi.

**Thank you to the Roanne Committee of Friends for the welcome and to the participants for the worthwhile discussions!**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Amicii d'Emmaüs Târgu Jiu</b>	<b>Un Coup de Main d'Emmaus Iasi</b>	<b>Frères Europa, Emmaus Satu Mare</b>
<i>Main activities</i>	<p>Clothes sorting, with the clothes coming from containers located in the town.</p> <p>Helping families in difficulty.</p>	<p>Farmland: five hectares of sunflowers, six hectares of maize, six hectares of alfalfa, and a few watermelons and courgettes.</p> <p>The outreach programme enables the group to recruit new companions: three people come in every weekday morning.</p> <p>Furniture repair with the Iasi and Popesti carpentry workshops.</p> <p>Popesti: stockbreeding for the group's own consumption and organic produce.</p> <p>The group hosts three community service volunteers a year (via Frères Europa) and the volunteers often remain with the community.</p>	<p>Re-opening of the fast food outlet and a terrace in the summer months.</p> <p>Started local collections with a new part-time employee: more effective than expected.</p> <p>Several of the group's young people are being monitored by a new psychiatrist who sees them once a week.</p> <p>Monthly retreat: three to four young people take part each month and have the chance to take part in different everyday activities.</p>
<i>Latest news from the group</i>	<p>Five paid employees.</p> <p>Sales figures are good and the group has regular customers.</p> <p>The quality of donations is improving too. Currently, 30% of the clothing is sold, 30% is donated to needy families, and 40% is discarded.</p> <p>Meeting with the mayor who has offered an extra container.</p> <p>The gas system for heating the building has been installed.</p> <p>Still repaying the loan.</p>	<p>The agronomist has left. He was supposed to look after the eco-garden.</p> <p>Four paid employees: not enough to support all the companions (some of them are ill).</p> <p>Little investment and building work this year because of a lack of resources.</p> <p>The partnership with the Fribourg farm continues. The second round of internships for Iasi volunteers is underway (Emmaus Fribourg covers the travel and food costs, while the market gardener provides accommodation and delivers the training itself). The aim is to grow organic produce.</p>	<p>The minimum wage in Romania is being regularly increased and it is difficult to keep pace with it.</p>
<i>Regional solidarity programme</i>	<p>No funding requested for 2017.</p> <p>The group is planning to submit an application for 2018 so that it can build an</p>	<p>€6,000 received / €49,360 approved by the RCEE.</p> <p>Five-year project (total budget of €100K, the</p>	<p>€5,059 received / €20,000 approved by the RCEE.</p> <p>The aim is to support the young</p>

	<p>electronics repair workshop and a carpentry workshop and even potentially a greenhouse.</p> <p>The building work could be done at the same time as a youth camp/work camp. The beneficiaries (21 young people who grew up in the children's home) would take part.</p>	<p>other half of the funding still needs to be raised).</p> <p>Permission has just been granted to build an 800m<sup>2</sup> shop and storage area. The aim is now to build the structure over the next year. Work should get underway next April (three to four months). The idea is to utilize a youth camp and appeal to everyone to help with the building work.</p>	<p>people up to the age of 30 by enabling them to build housing which they would then buy over a 10-year term. They also have to save some of their income to finance a micro-credit fund. The formalities can now get underway as the plot has been chosen. Ideally, the group would have the funds by April 2018 so that work can get underway.</p>
<i>Transport programme</i>	<p>18 loads received in 2017 (of which 11 from Forbach). Amicii pays the transport costs and a twinning association between Forbach and Târgu Jiu has been set up to secure the long-term future of these exchanges.</p> <p>On average, a load generates approximately €8K of income (the transport costs of €2 - €2.5K need to be deducted from this amount).</p>	<p>One load from Village Carlton, one from Roanne, one from the Lille sale, and one from the Paris sale.</p> <p>One lorry load a month from Sion (Sion pays the transport costs because if they did not send the goods to Romania, they would have to pay waste reception centre charges instead).</p> <p>One load is scheduled to be sent from Finland.</p> <p>The annual target is 17-18 lorries.</p>	<p>Eight loads received in 2017, of which two from Cambridge, four from Etang-sur-Arroux, one from Bougival and one from Finland.</p> <p>The average tends to be 10-12 loads but the stock level at the end of 2016 has made up the shortfall.</p>
<i>Prospects</i>	<p>More companions: the intention in the future is to take in the ex-residents of the children's home.</p> <p>The intention is also for Amicii to soon cover the operating costs of the children's home (roughly €4K a month).</p>	<p>How can we make the garden sustainable despite the community service volunteers coming and going regularly? The companions need to grasp the benefits of the garden by consuming the produce. The land is suitable for market gardening and the potential is there. There is a need for the companions to take ownership. Tools are needed for all these farming projects.</p>	<p>Plan to build a warehouse (maybe request a loan from Emmaus Europe).</p>