



Emmaus Europe is shaping its future

The president's message by Julio de la Granja

In 2011, the social, economic and political indicators that remained on orange in 2010 switched on to red, a situation that is forecasted to continue in 2012, and not only in Europe but worldwide. Emmaus is more topical than ever in a Europe that is feeling its way and where the entitlements secured in the 20th century are now being challenged.

In 2011, our fourth Regional Assembly in Paris confirmed our commitments and our work areas involving all the European Emmaus stakeholders. The development of the Emmaus groups and partner groups in Eastern Europe and of ambitious projects that are difficult to consolidate is leaving the way open for Emmaus Europe's work over the coming years.

Focus on the institutional environment

After 20 years of treaties, what progress has been achieved regarding Europe's commitment to socially responsibility? The European Union is continuing adapt to an evolving political and institutional context. The extension of the co-decision procedure and the European Parliament's increased power has both limited the European Commission's influence. A triologue has been put in place, which means that the Council and the Parliament, as holders of legislative power, negotiate more directly. However, the Member States appear to be unwilling to transfer further powers to Europe.

In this context what is left for the protection of human rights and the European Union's Charter of Fundamental Rights? It should be incorporated into all European policies. At a time when everyone is talking about the Euro zone (or the supportive Euro zone), **Emmaus Europe demands that fundamental rights are recognised.**

We are currently in a transitional period and is giving the European Union the opportunity to write a new chapter in its history, the one a **Europe that cares for the most vulnerable people. Politicians: live up to your responsibilities!**

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Regional solidarity

As in 2010, most of the meetings of the European Collectives were held in European towns and cities (Haguenau – France, Krakow – Poland, Lviv – Ukraine, Montreuil – France, Bayonne-France). Links between the partner groups were further strengthened between the ‘regulars’ and the new partners who discovered regional life.

Emmaus Europe’s first remit is to *guarantee that solidarity is properly managed* in the region and ensure that the support provided by the groups is transparent, fair and balanced. For this purpose end and just like every year, in 2011 an annual solidarity programme was put together. Its contains the initiatives that were put forward and approved by the February 2011 Regional Council of Emmaus Europe. The Europe region supported four solidarity initiatives:

- The construction of a well at Emmaus Lublin (Poland).
- Paying the wages of five Oselya employees in Ukraine and the shop rent.
- Human trafficking prevention work in Lithuania.
- The construction of the European Community Service Centre in Srebrenica, Bosnia and the youth camp.

All of these initiatives were fully funded and implemented in an optimal way thanks to a massive mobilization of European Emmaus groups.

Overview of key solidarity events in 2011

Group donations and regional solidarity salons, such as the Haguenau Salon which brought together a lot of member groups, also made 2011 a special year. Apart from the 12th Emmaus Paris Salon, which brought together 160 groups, attracted 25,000 visitors and generated €559,005 aimed for international solidarity, the European groups were involved in other events. These included the national salon held on the 10-11 September in Turin in Italy and the 9 October salon in Nice in France.



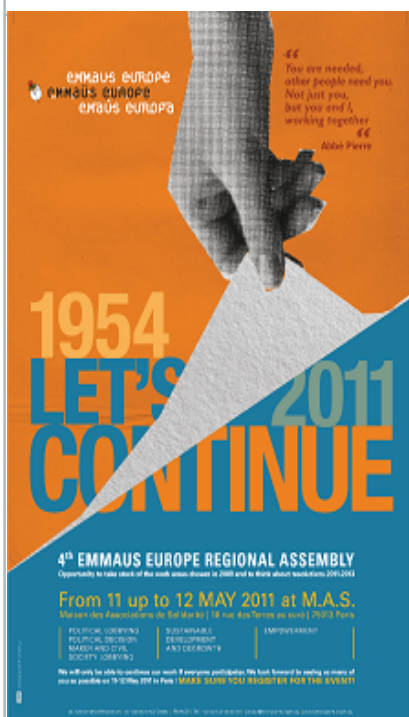
The Movement’s oral culture has been taken into account and the members of the Secretariat and Regional Executive spoke on many occasions at groups meetings to explain the organisation's work. Feedback from participants was often positive.



Finances

Thanks to the faithful **financial support** of the majority of the groups, in 2011 Emmaus Europe was able to make significant progress on each of the three work areas approved in 2009, with emphasis on defending the Emmaus values and encourage joint work. You can still access Emmaus Europe’s accounts on the organisation’s website by going to <http://www.emmaus-europe.org/spip.php?rubrique279> (the 2011 accounts will be published in the coming months).

The 2011 edition of the assembly was all about continuity



And for the record...

The extraordinary assembly on 11 May also enabled us, with everyone's support, to update and make more effective the Emmaus Europe statutes. New elected representatives were chosen in a vote on 12 May, with Julio de la Granja being elected president for a four-year term of office.

In addition, 11 Councillors of Emmaus International (CEI) and four World Council on Political Action and Solidarity members were elected. They will take up their positions in March 2012 at the World Assembly.



2011 was marked by the 4th Regional Assembly held in Paris on the 11-12 May. The assembly was organised into themed meetings according to the policy areas set at the previous regional assembly in 2009. Many constructive experiences relating to the four work areas were shared at the meeting – the theme of lobbying politicians and civil society decision-makers, sustainable development and the environment, and the **participation and involvement of the companions in the life of the Movement (empowerment)**. Finally, the **creativity workshop** stressed our need for human contact and the need for ambassadors to visit the groups, discuss and progress together.

Thank you to the leaders and rapporteurs from the eight workshops and see you all at the next RAEE!

The meeting lasted one and a half days bringing together 146 member organisations and 230 participants from Albania, Belgium, Bosnia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine and the UK.

None of this would have been possible without the membership fees being paid, the remarkable work done by the **Emmaus Paris community**, the positive response to the various requests to participate in the preparatory meetings, the presence of the **director of Illégal**, and without the friendly and warm welcome from **Emmaus Rouen** and those in charge of **Esteville**, who presented the future Abbé Pierre Centre to the group on 13th of May. A big thank you also for the jam carefully prepared in Rhone-Alps by the Comité d'Amis de Roanne!

Other statutory meetings

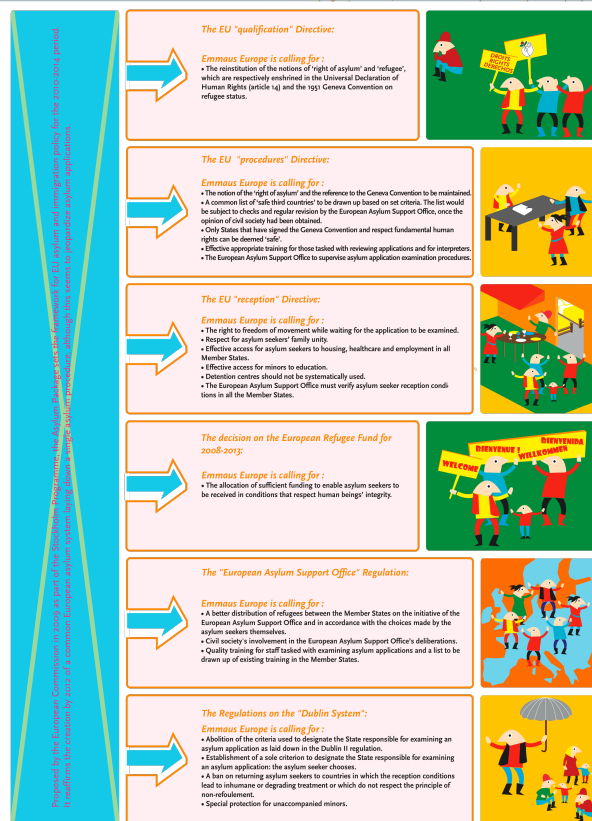
The life of the region was governed throughout 2011 by the rhythm of various gatherings and the statutory meetings. The second **Regional Council of Emmaus Europe** of the year took place on 14-16th of October in Cologne in Germany following a proposal by Emmaus Cologne to act as hosts. The first RCEE was held in Montreuil in February and mainly focused on the preparations for the May 2011 RAEE. The **Regional Executive of Emmaus Europe** met four times in 2011 in order to manage Emmaus Europe's day-to-day affairs. In addition to the meetings, the member's discuss issues when required as they care about the day-to-day running of the organisation and are aware of the sheer scale of the job. Furthermore, it should be highlighted that the members of the Regional Executive of Emmaus Europe were invited to meetings with the **Emmaus International Executive Committee** in February and October 2011.

The Presidents of Emmaus Europe and Emmaus International signed the standard contract linking the two organisations on the 13th of May, 2011.

In 2011, Emmaus Europe highlighted its **political lobbying work on migration** with a presentation by Jacques Barrot about the difficulties experienced by European and national executives when attempting to humanely manage this critical issue.

One of the proposals is to keep addressing the causes of poverty and to have a schedule of initiatives shared by all the member organisations. Consequently, and in accordance with the decisions taken at the 4th Regional Assembly of Emmaus Europe, Emmaus Europe's campaigning work on the right of asylum will continue over the coming years.

The reluctance of national governments to further open up their borders to people fleeing all kinds of persecution must be overcome in order to enable asylum legislation to be truly harmonised. However, legislation must be harmonised from the top, meaning that should be brought into line with the legislation that best protects asylum seekers' fundamental rights, and specially human dignity.



Emmaus Europe: work and policy areas

Political lobbying



The active involvement of all the Movement's stakeholders and at all the levels of governance (local, national and European) is needed to secure the long-term future of our work.

Work that has been done only by exclusively involving Emmaus members:

- **Having gathered together the recommendations, an open letter from Emmaus Europe about the whole asylum package** was passed on to the MEPs and the political decision-makers in the run-up to the votes on the **proposal for a recast of Directive 2005/85/EC** relating to minimum standards on procedures in Member States for granting and withdrawing refugee status.
- **Emmaus Europe published a press release on World Refugee Day on the 20th of June** because the issue of asylum needs to be addressed at European level. **"With Europe isolating itself, Emmaus Europe is concerned about the future of Fortress Europe if it stubbornly refuses not to open up."**

- To round off 2011, a **press release** was published on the 22nd of December to reiterate that political issues should not hold sway over the respect for human rights when creating a common asylum system in Europe. True solidarity between the EU states is **BECOMING MORE VITAL THAN EVER**. At the end of the **60th anniversary year of the Geneva Convention**, Emmaus Europe is staying mobilised in order to ensure that the right of asylum is respected everywhere.

We will tirelessly continue to publicise and champion all of these achievements. Our presence on the political stage can be further developed.



Just like in 2010, a European companions' exchange of practice meeting was held in Cologne (Germany) on the 4-8th of April 2011. This



EMPOWERMENT

This sometimes untranslatable word involves enabling everyone to feel at ease and not suffer, and has been worked on, with concrete initiatives being put in place: training oneself and companions, leaders and friends and having to question behaviour towards others: does it enable people to grow?

second seminar had the theme 'Commitment to Emmaus' and focused on the four issues of **shelter and support, work, solidarity and lobbying**, enabling those who were present to reflect and discuss fundamental Emmaus values and community living practices. The concept of **empowerment** was tackled via these topics (empowerment involves being independent and actively participating). The seminar programme comprised work sessions and debates. The programme also included informal social sessions, as one of the objectives was to encourage people to get to know each other

Discussion and practices seminar for friends and volunteers: 2 - 10 June 2011, Aland Islands, Finland

Following the meetings for leaders and companions, the World Council on Training and New Generations invited **friends and volunteers** from Emmaus groups in Europe to discuss and exchange practices at a work and training seminar in Aland (Finland). This first ever training session for Emmaus Europe friends and volunteers brought together 13 participants. The group may have been small but quickly became close-knit, **discussing the Emmaus values and got involved in Emmaus Aland's work**. A sale in the support of international solidarity rounded off this intense and highly sociable week. The accommodation and training venue was conducive to the kind of informal contact that strengthens links.



Environment and sustainable development: challenges for the society

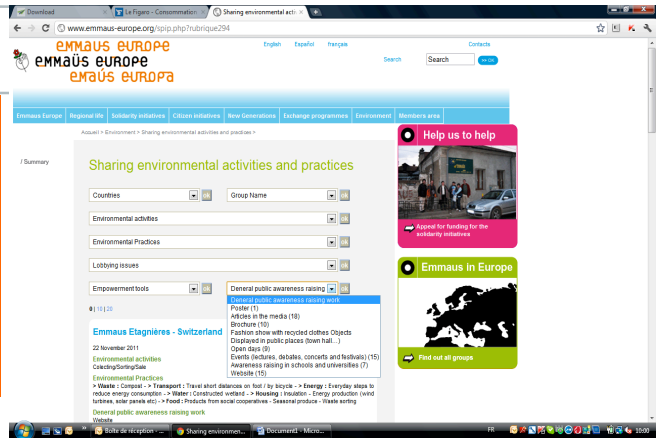
Our work on sustainable development in its many facets continued, with the following being worth highlighting:

- The positive nature of our contribution to recycling and reuse.
- Our everyday actions, which are less noteworthy, although we are becoming more and more responsible.

An exchange of good practices continued to enrich our expertise and fuel our discussion process, supported by our tools.

After a period of collecting examples of good practices, **Emmaus Europe presented in November 2011 the new forum for regional interaction on its website: the environment sub-section** <http://www.emmaus-europe.org/spip.php?rubrique283>

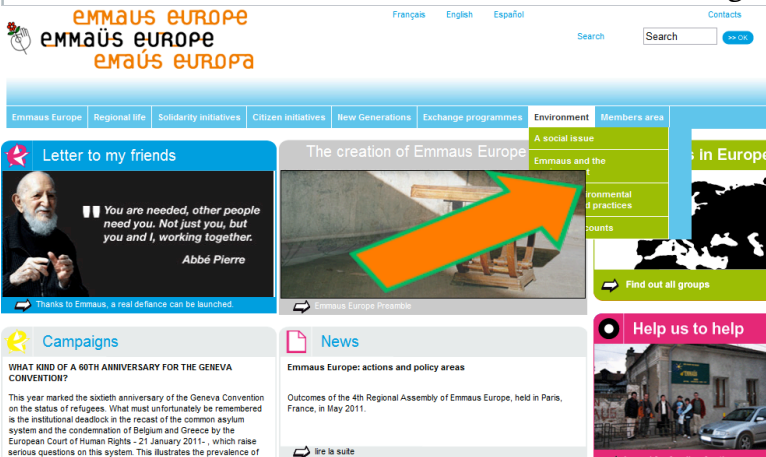
This sub-section aims to **promote practical environmentally-friendly initiatives at European level and to encourage contact between groups based on a common initiative.**



Existing practices can be accessed using the specially-designed search engine. Along with the factsheets, the search engine enables users to do a **field-based search** (by country, economic activity, environmental practices). Group contact details are listed enabling all the groups to get in touch!

If you wish to contribute by telling us about your Knowledge and practices, please contact the Secretariat of Emmaus Europe Secretariat. Everyone's involvement contributes to a process of mutual support in the Movement in the environmental sector and helps to meet **everyone's expectations, namely our desire to truly pool environmental resources.**

Encouraging Movement members to meet (discussion and debates) and facilitating the publication of different environmental issues at various levels are areas that needs to be addressed over the coming years in the region!



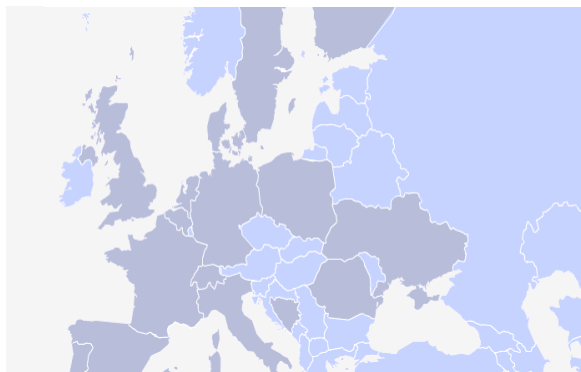
The summer camps in Europe

Just like every summer, between the **15th of June and the 15th September**, a number of member organisations opened their doors to young volunteers to enable them to discover the Emmaus values and to share the companions' daily life.

During the summer on 2011, **32 European organisations from six countries** hosted **727 volunteers**. Camps were held in Belgium, Bosnia, Finland, France, Spain and Italy. For more information, visit the Emmaus Europe website, through which the organisation acts as a channel for information.



The new member organisations...



In the end of 2011, there were 13 trial member groups in Europe as of late 2011: one in Sweden, ten in the UK, one in France and two in Italy. The Europe Region continued to monitor and to inform these trial member groups. Nine French groups became full Emmaus International members and therefore joined Emmaus Europe: Emmaüs Clermont de l'Oise, Emmaüs Planay, SOS Familles Paris, Emmaüs Agen, Emmaüs Pontigny, Les Toits de l'Espoir, Assajuco, Amis d'Emmaüs Paray Le Monial and La Friperie Solidaire. Emmaus Feniks (Netherlands) also became a full member.



Communication and raising the profile of our work

Emmaus Europe's profile continued to rise both internally and externally. The region used and relied its **communications resources, posters and the internet**.

It should be noted that a review of **European solidarity in 2010** was published for the first time in mid-2011. The report summarized the information supplied by the groups who had one or more initiatives supported by European solidarity in 2010.

Significant progress was made on the website during the summer months.

A lot still needs to be done to gain the attention of elected representatives and to reinforce the cohesion of the European groups. The amount of feedback received demonstrates that we need to keep making the Emmaus Europe website more vibrant.

Go to: www.emmaus-europe.org



2011 REVIEW

What are the issues at stake for Emmaus Europe in 2012?

European current affairs are guiding our thinking towards new areas: happiness degrowth, water as a public good and local development are all challenges for us and will direct our actions. These issues should not be disconnected from the issue of human development.

Regarding the issue of migration, it is about time that the Fortress Europe collapses. Indeed, particularly through its border agency FRONTEX, Fortress Europe is doing everything possible to prevent migrants, whoever they may be, from entering European territory, in defiance of international standards on human rights and the Geneva Convention of the status of refugees.

Finally, 2012 will be an important year for the future of the Emmaus Movement. The 100th anniversary of Abbé Pierre's birth, the 5th anniversary of his death, the opening of the Abbé Pierre - Emmaus Centre in Esteville and the Emmaus International World Assembly will be key events. 2012 therefore needs to be a pivotal year full of new hope and new initiatives.

More than ever before, the 270 Emmaus groups in the 16 countries of Europe are called to react and reach out to the others (citizens, associations and authorities) both individually and collectively. To help above all those in difficulty and address the root causes of extreme poverty in the quest for a fairer and more humane society.

Emmaus Europe acts, reacts and adapts. Its member organisations tirelessly continue to bring alive the region. The more of us that champions its policy areas, the better they will be developed and shaped by us all.



“Friends! Awake! There has been enough injustice!” Abbé Pierre



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