



Minutes of the 4 June 2021 Regional Executive of Emmaüs Europe - Zoom meeting

emmaüs
EUROPE

PRESENT

Carina Aaltonen (president), Aurore Querel (secretary), Jean-Philippe Légaut (treasurer – only attended the first hour of the meeting), Leila Thouret, and Eduardo Sanchez.

EUROPE REGIONAL SECRETARIAT

Marie Tixier (events coordinator), Théo Robin (solidarity coordinator), and Eve Poulteau (chief executive).

EXCUSED

Véronica Acevedo-Caro(admin-finance assistant), Maryse Faure, Rosa Gil Elorduy

- PREAMBLE

Carina introduced the meeting.

Since our last meeting on 4 March, we have had two RCEE meetings in April, a very interesting exchange of practices on online sales, a meeting with Switzerland as part of the Tour of Europe, along with Eve I took part in the European social economy summit and I represented EE at two conferences, one with RREUSE on the environmental issues faced by the social economy, and the other on recognition of a special status for social economy enterprises in Europe with the *Advocating for non-profit enterprises* coalition (thank you to Jean-Philippe for his examples about the legislative situation in Romania!). I also tried to correctly read out a speech in French at the EF GA at the start of this week. Therefore, this has been a very busy period for us all.

She suggested adding an item to the agenda on help for India.

AGENDA ITEM	DISCUSSION / DEBATE	CONCLUSIONS DECISIONS
1. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS	<p><u>Approval of the minutes of the March 2021 Executive</u> None of the participants wished to make any additions, remarks or oppose the proposed minutes of the March 2021 Regional Executive meeting held by videoconference.</p>	<p>The minutes of the 4 March 2021 Regional Executive were unanimously approved.</p>
2. NEW GROUPS SUPPORT METHOD	<p>One of the points highlighted in the policy report was to strengthen support for new groups. We got this underway in a working group with Simon and JP (elected representatives) and Théo and Eve. The detailed proposals in the table sent to the executive are as follows: Continue using El's effective guides and the collectives in order to support trial members. However, there is a need to strengthen support for groups before they become trial members. Do not use the collectives as a first point of contact for the groups but instead use them for subsequent monitoring. Endeavour to make at least one visit a year to trial members (the original intention was to visit twice a year, but to date not one visit a year has been paid): we are trying to make more regular visits (see recent Georgia visit). Strengthen support for trial members with themed representatives in line with their needs (sales, accounting, farming?). Make things easier for the mentor groups as they are not trained or monitored at the present time. Courses more suited to groups joining the Movement also need to be developed.</p> <p>Does this seem appropriate to you? Leila: Yes, it fits with the questions that we raised in Georgia. Carina: Yes, and we also need someone to replace Simon in this working group.</p> <p>JP: 20% of our groups are new ones who have joined in the last few years, and they sometimes differ greatly from the long-standing groups. However, we have never really asked ourselves about the type of new</p>	<p>The executive approved the thrust of the working proposal and will submit it to the RCEE. OK to offer initial support to the emerging Romanian groups. A request needs to be made at the next RCEE to form a pool of CEIs to support the new groups.</p>

groups that we want to see joining the movement. The only time that we raise the question is when the RCEE has to approve their membership. The debate seemingly being launched by EI for the next WA could enable these issues to be addressed.

This could enable us to hone our decision-making method on trial membership applications in both the executive and the RCEE.

Moreover, two emerging Romanian groups have contacted us (Cluj and Bucharest). This could be a good opportunity to trial these new support mechanisms.

Eve: As part of this work, we also met with the national organisations, who are discussing bolstering support for groups wanting to join the movement. Only the UK has a real development strategy and organised support mechanism for emerging groups. These questions are starting to be raised in France, but otherwise as for the other national organisations the main aim is to support trial member groups. We also need to coordinate with EI about the planned training for leaders in conjunction with the training courses that we are planning for the new groups.

Aurore: There is also a need to take into consideration groups' levels of economic sustainability and the diversity of their activities. The discussion on self-sufficiency to be undertaken in EE will be useful even if we should see ourselves as complementary organisations.

Carina: Sustainability could also be a membership criterion: economic, social and environmental sustainability, as well as gender equality in the association, for example, because it is vital that groups can live on after their founders are no longer involved.

With Aurore: We also need to tailor the activities to make them economically sustainable. However, it is difficult to know at the outset how the economy will be in the future.

Eduardo: Of course, and we need to be mindful about striking a balance with political independence too.

3. STATISTICS ON THE GROUPS' ACTIVITIES

In line with our action plan, we want to launch a **process of regular surveys of the European groups in order to have data and statistics about the movement's work**. This will fuel our advocacy (and, for example, the annual RREUSE surveys) and our thinking on our own initiatives and priorities.

Surveys need to be as brief as possible so as not to overload the groups, as they have little free time. Data already available at the national level will be used as much as possible (Spain, France, UK), and we must make sure that we only ask for truly useful information.

Leila: Frequency should be every four years before the RAEE as this would enable a connection to be forged with the other groups at this important moment in the life of the movement.

Carina: This is important so that the groups realise that it is valuable for them to have reference statistics for their group to show to their customers and local politicians. In this regard, it would be better to have more regular surveys than every four years. This would also enable the groups to have tools to help them to improve, if for instance we include sustainability criteria.

Eduardo: Agreed with Carina that a more regular frequency than every four years is needed. In Spain we conduct surveys every year. I think that it is important to have very basic criteria in order to provide a clear vision of the movement and be easy for the groups to complete. Only five or seven criteria and as often as possible, once a year is a good rhythm. For example, if we had the number of companions every year, this would really show the strength of the movement and the impact of our work across Europe.

This task could be undertaken by the NDs.

Aurore: In France, not all the groups complete or properly complete the questionnaires sent by EF, particularly the communities, because there is no obligation to be accountable in order to receive funding. However, it is important that this is done in order to demonstrate our impact.

OK to present this item to the RCEE and work on the criteria and frequency with them.

	<p>Eve: We could work with EF on how to contact the communities who have not completed the French questionnaire in order to obtain this information. It is important that we do not keep asking the groups more and more questions.</p>	
<p>4. India emergency appeal</p>	<p>The dramatic situation in India because of the new COVID-19 variant was raised at the last RCEE and we were waiting for our Indian colleagues to formulate their needs so that we could help them. This has now been done, and EI has just launched an appeal for donations to raise €80K. We could use the unallocated European solidarity budget to contribute to this funding appeal.</p>	<p>The executive decided to allocate a sum of €10k to the India support fund. The donation will be taken from the unallocated solidarity funds.</p>
<p>5. TEXTILE CAMPAIGN INITIAL PROPOSALS</p>	<p>Reminder of the document sent out: Cope with the new challenges of reuse and recycling How should we progress the implementation of our policy directions?</p> <p>We planned the following for environmental topics in the 2020-21 action plan (reviewed in October to adapt to the COVID-19 crisis):</p> <p>Planned: Exchange of practices Done: We held an exchange of practices in late 2020 on the issue of the textiles overdose in Europe.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → The smaller groups felt a bit frustrated during the exchange of practices, as the suggested examples were too big for them. Should we run another exchange? → Furthermore, we have not resolved the issue of recycling, despite the examples provided by Pamplona and France. Should we work more at the European level on shared stances, and even shared tools, for the textiles that we are not able to reuse? <i>Aurore provided additional information by talking about Métisse, an insulation material made from waste textiles developed by Relais in France. It could be of interest to other groups in Europe.</i> <p>Planned: Monitor legislation and contribution with RREUSE.</p>	<p>OK to continue the exchanges of practices not just on the practical issues for small groups in countries where there is no collective organisation of Emmaus groups.</p> <p>At a different time, have a joint discussion about the development of textile laws and challenges in Europe. Also look into the possibility of training groups who are not already trained so that they can apply for public procurement contracts if they wish to get involved in this area.</p> <p>The issue of the development of textile management and the implementation of textiles policies will be raised at the RCEE to see how EE can support the different countries or how we can organise ourselves collectively. (And subsequently maybe focusing on recycling issues, although this is not a priority at the present time).</p> <p>The RCEE will also be asked about whether a campaign on the social, environmental (and international) issues of textiles should be run, as well as its schedule (pandemic and EU schedule).</p>

Done: Several contributions to legislation under review, notably with other associations on the textiles strategy (upstream and downstream), which is set to be put forward by the Commission in the very near future.

- One of the initiatives which could be developed is support for countries with the implementation of the waste directives, and particularly the obligation to collect textiles separately in 2025. What are the needs in your country?
- Regarding the next phases of the textiles strategy, in addition to monitoring with RREUSE, should we capitalize on the situation and launch the planned campaign (see below) over the coming months?

Planned: **Campaign highlighting the social and environmental impact of fast fashion?** With EI? 2021? 2022?

= Shape our message based on our unique features + choose our means of action (charity shops are one of our main communication channels) + link-up with the national organisations, because this is an effective level for some campaigns (Emmaus ambassadors? + link-up with universities and higher education institutions).

Done: Still to be done

How do we launch this initiative?

- A working group with interested groups to see how a European campaign could be tailored to their groups? Displays in the charity shops? Debate cafés with customers?
- Also involve national organisations (where relevant) so that the campaign can be coordinated with their own schedules and campaigns, and see if we can also lobby elected representatives in their countries about this issue?
- Should we also get the groups to lobby MEPs during the implementation of the textiles strategy? To be coordinated with RREUSE?
- Discussions have been held with EI and need to be continued, but at the present time the staff team is not overly keen on the idea. Could groups with partnerships with India or Bangladesh act as intermediaries?

	<p>→ One of the challenges is how to progress this campaign at a time when the pandemic is preventing many meetings from being held.</p>	
<p>6. MIGRATION INITIATIVES</p>	<p>Plans contained in the 2020-2021 action plan:</p> <p>Between the EE groups Planned: Share our practices of welcoming diverse people, and our methods of fighting discrimination and exclusion. Peer training/exchanges of practice. Practical information resources. Done: Nothing for the moment.</p> <p>European institution advocacy work Planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with the Commissioner responsible for migration? = Develop a position paper with concrete examples to illustrate our vision. • Work with EI on advocacy. • Get back in touch with MEPs who will work on this question. <p>Done:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carina contacted the commissioner but she had already finished the first hearings. - Two press releases with EI but their migration lead has resigned. - EE's contribution to the consultation before the new EU Pact on Migration and Asylum. - Discussion with Migreurop on the new Migration & Asylum Pact: they are planning to provide arguments on the worst aspects today and what is going to become the norm if this pact is implemented (imprisonment on Europe's outlying islands for arrivals, in particular). A shared communications initiative in the autumn could be run in the countries to raise politicians' awareness, but it needs to be developed. <p>Campaigns/awareness-raising with the groups and national organisations</p>	<p>It is not easy to plan initiatives on this topic when in-person meetings cannot be held in the groups. Continue working with partners at the European level. Keep the groups informed via the newsletters.</p> <p>Contact the NDs to check whether they would be able to do this in their countries when in-person meetings are allowed once again.</p> <p>In France, see how to make these proposals (such as those on the textile campaign) at the regional meetings.</p>

	<p>Planned: With EI and its partners: engage in partnerships with cities for a new form of governance of migration.</p> <p>Done: Nothing to date, but we could potentially hold a webinar with EI and the European groups on this topic. However, at the present time EI wishes to move forward with its partners based on shared criteria.</p> <p>Other ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → The European Pact could be an opportunity to mobilise the European groups to talk about these issues and Emmaus' offer of an unconditional welcome. Get specialists to speak at seminars/meetings with our customers, and get companions to speak about their experiences? In France, the Limousin region of Emmaus might be interested in a colloquium. → Documents for EE to produce for the groups and customers? → Suggest that the groups contact their MEPs if the Pact results in draft laws being put forward? (This is not a given, as the countries are very divided on this issue at the moment). → Any other ideas to progress these various policy directions in 2021/2022? <p>Everyone: Difficult to address at the moment because of the lack of meetings.</p> <p>Carina: The current silence on these issues is concerning at a time when countries such as Denmark are now refusing to accept asylum seekers on Danish soil!! We need to remain alert so that we are ready when the time comes for us to act.</p>	
<p>7. UPCOMING EXCHANGES OF PRACTICES</p>	<p>At the previous executive it was decided to have an exchange of practices in June on the topic of helping companions to integrate into society.</p>	<p>OK to organise an autumn exchange of practices on the topic of handing over to new generations in the groups: conveying values and practices, and their evolution, and</p>

	<p>However, none of the elected representatives were able to make themselves available to prepare the topic, with everyone being increasingly overloaded with work.</p> <p>Furthermore, this topic is difficult to tackle, as legislation differs greatly from one country to the next, and a common angle needs to be found for all participants.</p> <p>Moreover, the issue of handing over and involving new generations in the groups is increasingly topical, and a discussion between European groups would be very fitting, so that each group can highlight the issues that they are facing. Eduardo: Yes, it is important to move from theory to practice on the issue of conveying our values in particular (see the Forum of Alternatives, etc).</p>	<p>handing over to ensure group continuity/training new leaders etc.</p> <p>Different people's experiences of this issue. Ask Maria Luisa to facilitate the meeting.</p> <p>Keep the topic of companion integration into society for later on.</p>
<p>8. FOLLOW-UP TO THE DEBATES STARTED IN THE RCEE</p>	<p>At the last two debates that we had in the RCEE we discussed the resources that would be needed to offer places to more companions following the coronavirus crisis, all without losing sight of Emmaus' self-sufficiency values.</p> <p>This demonstrated that there were several definitions of self-sufficiency in the movement: for some, being politically independent is the most important thing, and being funded by delivering services for local governments or holding state contracts does not compromise their political independence, while for others, it would be unthinkable to receive public funds if we want to remain politically independent.</p> <p>This issue of the definition of self-sufficiency for all concerned still needs to be clarified so that we know what we are talking about, and to see what common basis is essential, and what we should not depart from.</p> <p>Maybe this will emerge from the debates underway at the moment at the international level in preparation for the WA. Otherwise, we would need to work on it in Europe. In all likelihood we will need to supplement it in Europe with a discussion on social enterprises, as we have also seen differing viewpoints emerge on this subject.</p> <p>Finally, a European exchange on the issue of maintaining the groups' financial independence in the current model could also be useful given changes to legislation and the second-hand market.</p>	<p>OK to ask the NDs about group economic sustainability, notably regarding the issues surrounding the new waste legislation. How will this impact their economic self-sufficiency?</p> <p>What is the groups' development vision?</p> <p>Give them some time to discuss the matter in their countries before revisiting the topic at the RCEE.</p> <p>See if a shared precise definition of economic sustainability emerges in the EI debates. If not, supplement the EI work at the European level, because real differences appeared at the RCEEs.</p>

	<p>Carina: This is also closely linked to group sustainability in the future. Self-sufficiency is bound to be a part of the broader debate.</p>	
<p>9. SITUATION IN FRANCE</p>	<p>A new president has been elected. It is Antoine Sueur, who had been the vice-president of the community branch for a few months. Antoine knew Abbé Pierre well and is now president of Emmaus Charenton (a community).</p> <p>A discussion took place about whether to continue with the appeal for donations: should it be continued, or should it only be used in crisis situations. The majority agreed on the latter option.</p> <p>The new president has close links with the international movement and relations should improve.</p> <p>The idea of the community branch splitting from the other groups is still crossing some minds, but the new president hopes not to get to that point, and Aurore feels that he is in a good position to de-escalate these tensions.</p> <p>The new community branch vice-president, Erwan, is the Emmaus Rochefort community leader, and also enjoys very close links with the international movement.</p> <p>A good number of groups attended and took part, and this was appreciated.</p>	<p>A meeting with the new EF executive also needs to be organised to maintain the links and good relationships with the Europe region.</p>
<p>10.DISCUSSION OF THE CO-PRESIDENCY</p>	<p>Real practical work had started with Simon on the co-presidency, and Carina would like this work to continue, by including the concept in the statutes at the next RAEE.</p> <p>Eduardo: Yes, after two years of operating with “co-presidents” from a work perspective, but not from a responsibilities angle, it would also be a good idea to evaluate what has been done and see how to reflect this in the statutes, up to what level? How should it be arranged?</p> <p>Carina said that it would be good to have co-presidency candidacies from the outset, for example, to enable a co-presidency to be viable with people who would cooperate well together.</p> <p>Aurore stressed that this already happens in France in some communities and in ACE (Association of Emmaus Communities): need to check their statutes and operating arrangements. She highlighted the fact that we</p>	<p>The executive suggested that the ND and statutes working group starts to make co-presidency proposals for the RCEE.</p>

	<p>should not present things as if there has been a co-presidency because at Saint-Sebastian several people emphasized that this was not enshrined in the statutes.</p>	
<p>11.NEXT RCEE</p>	<p>In addition to the usual items: new trial members, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussion about the groups' statistics. - Update on group support mechanism. - Roundtable discussion on textile issues in each country and potential textiles campaign. - Nations' roundtable: suggest a short session in case anyone has any news to share from their country. <p>Meeting documents: update the action plan for information at the RCEE and plan to review it at the autumn executive (indicate which representative is tasked with which issue).</p>	<p>The executive agrees.</p>
<p>12.CONCLUSION & SCHEDULE</p>	<p>We will meet again on 12 July for the RCEE. Maryse, Théo, Eve and Carina will soon be travelling to the Balkans for a trial membership visit. Well done for the container handbook. It is very useful and well put-together! Thank you to the interpreters!</p>	

As there were no further items on the agenda, the president closed the meeting.

Carina Aaltonen
President of Emmaus Europe

Aurore Querel
Secretary of Emmaus Europe