



MINUTES OF THE REGIONAL COUNCIL OF EMMAUS EUROPE (RCEE)

12 JULY 2021

ZOOM MEETING



MEMBERS OF THE REGIONAL COUNCIL			
PRESENT	Carina Aaltonen, president of Emmaus Europe Jean-Philippe Légaut, Emmaus Europe treasurer		
			NUMBER OF VOTERS
	Serena Lemmens, Germany Sabina Arnaut Jahic, Bosnia-Herzegovina Anu Lahde, Finland Annick Berthier, France	Jos Van der Meer, the Netherlands Tony Ferrier, UK Charlotte Wester, Sweden Grigory Semenchuk, Ukraine	Eight voters
	COUNCILLORS OF EMMAUS INTERNATIONAL (CEIs) – EUROPE REGION		NUMBER OF VOTERS
	Christian Calmejane, France Maryse Faure, France Michael Hudson, UK Aurore Querel, Emmaus Europe Secretary, France	Eduardo Sanchez, Spain Maria Luisa Testori, Italy Leila Thouret, Romania	Seven voters
	EX OFFICIO MEMBER		
	Patrick Atohoun, chair of Emmaus International		
	GUEST PARTICIPANTS WITHOUT VOTING RIGHTS	SECRETARIAT OF EMMAUS EUROPE	
	Hélène Perrot, Emmaus International Secretariat	Véronica Acevedo-Caro, admin-finance assistant Eve Poulteau, chief executive Théo Robin, solidarity coordinator Marie Tixier, Emmaus Europe events assistant	
	APOLOGIES RECEIVED	Mikel Azkona, CEI, Spain Julio De La Granja, ND, Belgium José Maria Garcia Bresó, ND, Spain Rosa Gil Elorduy, CEI, Spain Grzegorz Hajduk, ND, Poland	Martha Hannus, CEI, Finland Gelu Nichitel, ND, Romania Amanda Steckly, CEI, UK Virginia Tallone, ND, Italy Jérémie Udry, ND, Switzerland

<p style="text-align: center;">Preamble</p>	<p>Carina Aaltonen opened the meeting by mentioning several events which have taken place since the last meeting: several meetings have been held with the Swedish groups and EI, trial membership visits have been organised in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia, Emmaus Europe took part in the EF general assembly, and Emmaus International held an online meeting with all the movement's groups on 1 July. Carina thanked everyone for attending and for being so dedicated to the European and international dimension of the movement. She also thanked our groups and the interpreters, who enable the meeting to take place.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">AGENDA ITEM</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">DISCUSSION / DEBATE</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">CONCLUSIONS DECISIONS</p>
<p>1. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS</p>	<p><u>Approval of the April 2021 Regional Council minutes</u> None of the participants wished to make any additions, remarks or oppose the proposed minutes of the 27 April 2021 videoconference Regional Council meeting.</p>	<p>The Regional Council unanimously approved the minutes of the April 2021 Regional Council: ✓ <u>For:</u> 14 votes ✗ <u>Against:</u> 0 votes ● <u>Abstentions:</u> 0 votes</p>
<p>2. CALL FOR CANDIDATES TO FILL THE POST OF ND ON THE EXECUTIVE AND REPLACE A CEI</p>	<p>A CEI place on the RCEE needs to be filled, following the resignation of Simon Grainge. Marie-France Bedleem wishes to stand for election, in accordance with our statutes.</p> <p>Simon also sat on the executive, which still does not have a ND, contrary to our statutes. It was therefore proposed that a national delegate should join the executive. Sabina Arnaut-Jahic wishes to stand for election but firstly wants to confirm with her group that they would support her. If needs be, the vote will be by e-mail, if possible before the September executive.</p>	<p>The Regional Council elected Marie-France Bedleem to the post of CEI: ✓ <u>For:</u> 15 votes ✗ <u>Against:</u> One vote ● <u>Abstentions:</u> Two votes</p>
<p>3. TEXTILE CAMPAIGNS AND INITIATIVES</p>	<p>Our action plan includes a section on the issue of textiles, with two issues:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The rollout of compulsory separate collection of textiles in each EU country from 2025: do the countries in question want support from EE, or would they like to discuss the matter with each other? 2. Raising the awareness of charity shop customers and citizens about the international, environmental and social facets of fast fashion, and about Emmaus' work in this area. In the EU countries, this awareness-raising campaign could be linked to the European textile strategy to be discussed by the European authorities over the coming months. <p>A country roundtable was organised on the mandatory separate collection of textiles and the stance taken by the Emmaus groups in each country in question:</p> <p>In the <u>Netherlands</u>, a new centralised collection system is being prepared for 2023 and the Emmaus groups are trying to play a part in the creation of this structure.</p> <p>In <u>Finland</u>, two groups have been working with waste management bodies for several years: the groups sort non-reusable textiles, and in return do not pay landfill charges.</p> <p>In <u>France</u>, the movement is already very organised at the national level, and textiles are generally handled by the regional platforms. For instance, Le Relais (an Emmaus France member and a social enterprise) is a major player in this sector. The groups undertake an initial sort and then send textiles to these platforms. An eco-tax funding mechanism has been put in place for the platforms (but it is not always easy to benefit</p>	

from it as a collection organisation). Emmaus France also negotiated the creation of a reuse fund so that extended producer responsibility funds the social economy. However, there are several issues. Despite sorting textiles, platforms still have to burn some textiles because of a lack of outlets. Extended producer responsibility is not really applied in practice. Furthermore, some of the textiles are sent abroad, and the countries in question are less and less keen to agree to receive them.

In terms of outlets, Le Relais has developed an insulation material made from recycled textiles (*Métisse*). It seems to be of good quality but is struggling to find a market.

In Spain, textiles are firstly sorted by the groups to identify the items suitable for reuse. The rest is sorted based on the materials used and sold to companies for recycling. It is worthwhile joining forces to increase bargaining power with these companies.

In Italy, nothing is done in this area. There is no industry to take care of unused garments, which are burned at landfill (costly for the Emmaus groups). Therefore, customers are asked to only donate good-quality clothing. One group has started to turn unsold sheets into cleaning cloths. They are sold instore by the kilo. Two companies purchase some of the unsold textiles for recycling purposes.

Emmaus Italy rejected an offer of free collections made by a large company, as the company wanted to send textiles abroad, and the members do not agree with this principle.

In the UK, there are no plans for mandatory separate collection. Unsold textiles are generally given to other organisations or companies which recycle or export them. However, a “right to repair” has been introduced into UK law (for electrical goods), which is an interesting prospect. Textiles currently account for roughly 10% of groups’ income. Some companies collect people’s unwanted clothing in return for vouchers enabling them to buy new clothes, which generates competition with the Emmaus groups.

Generally, it was noted that it is very important for the groups to work with their local councils or the state on these topics, so that they remain key players in the process. We could also hold a discussion to decide if it would be better to continue exporting or if we should manage textiles locally. This is both a practical and a political issue.

Finally, we must raise awareness about the detrimental impact of fast fashion and the drop in textile quality, which inevitably increases consumption, and significantly reduces reuse.

There was not enough time left to discuss the awareness-raising campaign: a suggestion was made to set up a working group before the next RCEE so that a first proposal can be made. Jérémie Urdy would like to work with Eduardo Sanchez on this topic, and Martha Hannus might also be interested (to be confirmed).

<p>4. NEW MEMBERS/TRIAL MEMBERSHIP</p>	<p>Trial membership applications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Boa vida, Spain</u> In addition to the national organisation approving the group's trial membership application, a pre-trial membership visit took place by videoconference in early July with Maryse as the CEI. • <u>Cent pour Un Vendée Ouest, France</u> The national organisation approved the trial membership application. <p>In addition, several French groups have sorted out their situations thanks to the simplified membership procedure: Emmaüs Grand Sud, Emmaüs Moulins, Evira.</p>	<p>The regional council approved Boa Vida's trial membership: ✓ <u>For:</u> 13 votes ✗ <u>Against:</u> 0 votes • <u>Abstentions:</u> 0 votes</p> <p>The regional council approved Cent pour Un Vendée Ouest's trial membership: ✓ <u>For:</u> 12 votes ✗ <u>Against:</u> 0 votes • <u>Abstentions:</u> 0 votes</p> <p>The following French groups are joining the international movement through the simplified membership procedure: Emmaüs Grand Sud, Emmaüs Moulins, Evira.</p>
<p>5. SUPPORT FOR NEW GROUPS</p>	<p>In accordance with our policy report, we are working to strengthen our support for new member groups. Our action plan is based on improving and creating several support tools.</p> <p>A working group has made suggestions for improvement, and they were approved by the June executive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Trial membership visits</u>: resumed in June (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Georgia) following a stoppage of over a year, and several are planned for the autumn (Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, etc). The intention is to increase the frequency of these visits. • The <u>process for getting in touch with new associations</u> before trial membership begins has been clarified in order to take into account the diverse range of applications received by Emmaus. It will be rolled out with two new applications from groups in Romania. • Support for new groups currently revolves around the <u>mentor group</u> appointed when a group becomes a trial member. The idea is to develop one or more tools to help this group in its work and clarify its role. This work will be done with EI. • <u>Training</u> is an important tool to encourage people to discover and understand the movement. We want to discuss adapting existing training courses or creating new courses aimed at new groups. This topic should also be worked on with EI. <p>The pivotal role played by the mentor groups was stressed. We need to be mindful about supporting them, and not burdening them with too many new groups at the same time. Sabina Arnaut-Jahic is willing to share her experience in this area. Several national organisations, such as Emmaus UK, already have a good support process, and the relevant employees can be contacted about these matters.</p>	

<p>6. SURVEY OF THE EUROPEAN GROUPS</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>Discussion of the suggestions put forward by the working group: Several categories could be added to the list proposed in the working document:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solidarity initiatives. • Education/awareness-raising initiatives • Gender of those involved/companions • Initiative sustainability (notably our CO2 emissions to provide reference information for the groups themselves). • Type of group and companion characteristics. <p>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.</p> <p>It was reiterated that an overly long and too frequent questionnaire is less likely to be completed.</p>	<p>Several ideas were put forward at this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have several categories of questionnaire: a basic version aimed at all the groups, and a more comprehensive version for volunteer groups. • Have a simple annual questionnaire (which could focus, for example, on solidarity, shelter and support and work integration, reuse and education), and a more comprehensive questionnaire once in every period of office. • Run a survey every two or even every four years. <p>Martha Hannus volunteered to work on this topic. The executive will continue to progress this work using these foundations.</p>
<p>7. MIGRATION</p>	<p>Rosa Gil Elorduy and Christian Calmejane are the representatives for this issue. At a political level, discussions are underway in the EU institutions about the new Asylum & Migration Pact. If any groups are interested, EE could organise presentations or take part in colloquia to explain the issues or raise citizen awareness.</p> <p>Discussion</p> <p>It is important to get to grips with this subject, because it plays a big part in public debate, but the debate is often led by people who do not share our values. We have positive examples to show in our groups, and our charity shops are a good tool for achieving this. We could also draw on the EI Alternatives Report to be published in October in order to publicize our example.</p> <p>Emmaus International is also working on this issue, in conjunction with the Organisation for Universal Citizenship, to suggest a different form of local governance of migration. Emmaus Europe had suggested floating the idea of the European groups contacting their local governments about this issue. To be continued with EI.</p> <p>A European exchange of practices on this issue is yet to take place. An exchange of practices was listed in the action plan, and must be scheduled for late 2021 or early 2022.</p>	

<p>8. EI NEWS</p>	<p>Work is underway on the statutes at the international level. Similar work is being done at the same time at the European level, and was discussed at the last RCEE, in order to make coherent amendments. A European working group will meet at the end of summer. It will be comprised of Aurore Querel (also a member of the international group so as to coordinate this work), Carina Aaltonen, Jose-Maria Garcia Bresó, Maria-Luisa Testori, and Tony Ferrier.</p> <p>Moreover, the key issue at the moment is preparing for the world assembly as part of a two-phase process (remote, then in-person) with the organisation of a large number of preparatory debates on belonging and self-sufficiency.</p>	
<p>9. NATIONAL NEWS</p>	<p>A new president (Antoine Sueur) was elected by Emmaus France. A meeting was held on 12 July (morning) with him, the EF executive, and EE.</p>	
<p>10. SCHEDULE OF UPCOMING MEETINGS</p>	<p>The next RCEE will take place on <u>26 October</u> and will be online. Meeting times: <u>15:00 – 18:00</u>, in the hope that the following meeting can be held in Paris, France.</p> <p>An executive meeting will be held on <u>17-18 September</u> in Montreuil, France.</p> <p>The intention is also to hold in-person geographical collectives <u>in October</u> (to be confirmed, depending on the situation in September).</p> <p>If you have missed them, the new EE website was launched in June (http://emmaus-europe.org/), as well as a new European container handbook available in the members' area.</p> <p>Carina wanted to particularly thank Marie and Théo for their work on the website and handbook.</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