

[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)[RSS](#)[View this email in your browser](#)**Emmaus in Europe****February 2022****emmaus****EUROPE****ACTIVISTS FOR CHANGE**

Dear friends,

Europe is currently going through a major political crisis whilst the health crisis continues to simmer in the background. The conflict between Russia, Ukraine and the members of NATO is intensifying. The Russian military build-up near the border with Ukraine is growing by the day, leading us to believe that armed conflict is a very real possibility. We will be there to support the Emmaus groups in Ukraine, Poland and Romania who are on the front lines during this crisis.

We hope that the current negotiations will steer us away from conflict, a course of action which would be an aberration in 21st-century Europe.

However, today's newsletter will be focusing on more constructive initiatives led in Europe by the Emmaus movement. We will be discussing the great work done by Emmaus France looking into the links between poverty and prison, something we at Emmaus are all aware of. The 25 recommendations put forward by our French friends could help people in other countries to put an end to the vicious circle of poverty and prison.

On a more practical topic Emmaus Ghlin will be sharing their solutions for recycling unused wood with us this month! And, last but not least, we will be looking at the latest solidarity and advocacy news from our region.

Happy reading,

The team of Emmaus Europe

## Under the microscope...

### Breaking free of the vicious circle of poverty and prison: a survey and 25 proposals



Emmaus started out in 1949 when Abbé Pierre met Georges, a former prisoner and the first Emmaus companion, and suggested that he “help him help others”. Loyal to our tradition of unconditional welcome, the Emmaus movement has always reached out to people who have had issues with the law. Over 1,000 such people are hosted by the 296 French groups every year. Emmaus denounces the idea that prison is the answer to all of society’s issues and we also help the recently-released to reintegrate social and professional life. In the groups across Europe many of our companions have spent time in prison.

In addition to our communities and get-back-to-work structures, Emmaus in France has also created special structures to help these people, such as the recent

[farming initiatives](#). Such structures offer accommodation to people who have been in prison for a long time as well as work on an organic farm and socio-professional support. Thanks to our partnership with the French Ministry of Justice this scheme is beginning to take off: 5 new projects are currently in development, to be added to the 4 existing farming initiatives. These initiatives were recently praised by the Council of Europe Development Bank in their paper [‘Beyond Bars and Walls: Modernising Prison Systems to Unlock Social Inclusion’](#).

Based on their field experience and in order to ensure the ‘voice of the voiceless’ continues to be heard, Emmaus France and Caritas France decided to look into how the links between prison and poverty are formed and grow over time.

[Read more...](#)

An event to present and debate these findings is scheduled to be held on 17 February in Paris. The event (in

French only) will be available online and will be recorded so that you can watch it at your leisure ([click here](#)).

## European Mobilisation

### 6th African Union - European Union Summit

#### For a renewed partnership that takes into account the realities experienced by African and European civil society

With only hours to go before the opening of the sixth African Union (AU) - European Union (EU) Summit, Emmaus Africa, Emmaus Europe and Emmaus International are calling on the decision-makers at the negotiating table to co-construct a truly ambitious partnership that places the protection of people and their social and environmental rights at the heart of their priorities.

At the last Summit held in Abidjan in 2017, the leaders of the AU and the EU, as well as those of their respective member States, had made economic opportunities for young people, peace and security, and mobility and migration the future priorities for cooperation between the two continents. Five years on, the Emmaus movement, which works in the field with excluded populations, is not optimistic about the progress made in these areas.

[Read more...](#)

### Webinar 'North-South Analysis of the European Pact on Migration and Asylum'

**24 February 2022, 9:30-13:30 (GMT+1)**

Emmaus Europe, the CNCD and Migreurop are co-organising a webinar to analyse recent developments with the EU's new pact on migration and asylum. This pact, which is currently being debated by the European Parliament and the member states of the European Council, should serve as a guide for European migration policy in the next few years.

We thought it would be interesting to hear the perspectives of African associations at the upcoming EU/African Union summit on 16-17 February and to look at how the negotiations have been progressing.

Language interpretation available into English and French

Participants must register for this event in advance ([click here](#))

Agenda

## Detention centres at border crossings must be closed

On 17 January Emmaus Europe co-signed a text by ANAFE demanding the closure of all waiting areas and detention centres at border crossings.

ANAFE is an association which has been working for 30 years in the waiting areas where exiles without residence permits are detained in France's airports and land border posts.

Based on their experience ANAFE has drawn up an analysis which clearly shows the lack of humanity and the useless nature of these zones. Given that the EU's new pact on migration and asylum plans to make border detention the norm we believe that it is important to support and share ANAFE's analysis.



[Read the text \(available in French only\)](#)

## Emmaus in action

### Emmaus Ghlin, a solidarity carpentry initiative: Holy-Wood

This month we're heading over to Belgium to hear about Emmaus Ghlin's solutions for recycling second-hand wood.



**This initiative began in the Belgian community when people decided to look for ways to bring added value to wood that they couldn't sell in the shop. The Holy-Wood project is aimed at providing a second life for scrap wood as well as offering a local, ethical and solidarity-focused alternative to our customers.**

Holy-Wood collects, sorts and reworks unique pieces or small sets of furniture whilst using environmentally-friendly products (oils and natural paints). The initiative focuses on creating designer furniture and both a shop and a carpentry workshop have been opened in order to share this passion for wood with others.

The Holy-Wood partnership was launched due to a nagging issue that bothered certain members of the Emmaus group. Despite the increasing quality of the donations received in Ghlin, a lot of wooden products had to be thrown away. The wood category represented 30 tons of waste for Emmaus Ghlin in 2017 and disposing of these waste products came at a cost for the group. Thus the idea of providing added value to this wood was born. This initiative also came about because the community cares about the impact it has on the environment.

[Read more...](#)



## Solidarity of the Emmaus Movement

### The 2022 transport programme is starting to take shape

Thanks to you we now have a clear understanding of the needs of the groups and the possibilities for sending solidarity transports this year! A [summary table](#) is available on our website and will be updated throughout the year as the transports are sent out.

As you are aware we set up a support fund for the transport programme last year. This fund will help to reduce the costs incurred by the sender groups. To find out more about how this programme works, to plan a transport or to inform us that a lorry has been sent then please get in touch with [Emmanuel](#).

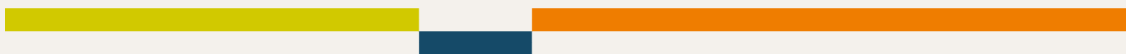
And, once again, thank you for helping us to keep this important solidarity programme going!

### The 2022 summer camps

We're still in the middle of winter but thinking about the warmth of summer will do us some good! If you would like to organise a summer camp event this year then please get in touch with [Emmanuel](#) who can help you with your project and can spread the word about your event on the Emmaus Europe website. The [section about our camp events](#) will include all relevant information about the various European summer camps set to be held this year.

We have received several applications from people who would like to volunteer for a European Emmaus group. The

scouts are also always interested in discovering new cultures and helping others. So if you're interested in hosting some young people (or some not-so-young people) in your group this summer then please let Emmanuel know!



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