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June 2022

Emmaus in Europe



emmaus

EUROPE

ACTIVISTS FOR CHANGE

Dear friends,

After such a long time apart, meeting up in Uruguay at the World Assembly did us the world of good! The World Assembly plays a pivotal role in our movement. It is part of our way of working and growing together in order to build a better world.

As we are keen to meet up again and work together on adapting the global policy directions to the European context, we are delighted to inform you that the **next Emmaus Europe Regional Assembly will be held on 24-27 October 2023 in the university city of Iasi in Romania.**

The Emmaus Iasi team is ready to welcome us, and we will have the chance to discover the breadth of their many initiatives, ranging from solidarity work to farming, in the city and in the surrounding countryside. We gained a glimpse during our recent organisational visit, and we are putting together a programme that we hope will fill you with enthusiasm!

In the meantime, this month's edition contains the latest solidarity and activism news from Emmaus in Europe. In line with the ethos of sharing donations, a large number of container loads of donations are shipped by the European groups to each other every year, and particularly at this time, due to the situation in Ukraine. Therefore, we also met with Jean-Philippe from Emmaus Satu-Mare, who tells us about organising this sort of human and solidarity venture, and what it means to the groups. As the summer is approaching, the work camps are also back! We therefore go behind the scenes of this movement institution, a gateway into the movement for many future Emmaus members.

Enjoy the newsletter, and have a good summer!

The team of Emmaus Europe

Emmaus stories

Container loads - solidarity that goes beyond donated goods



Two young people from Emmaus Satu Mare unloading a container from Emmaus Chaux de Fonds, Switzerland, May 2022,

Romania - © Emmaus Satu Mare

This month, we are taking the chance to chat to Jean-Philippe, the leader of Emmaus Satu Mare in Romania. He tells us about how container loads are arranged, but above all, reveals what underpins these initiatives to share donations between the Emmaus groups who receive a lot of donated goods, and those who receive less.

Can you give us a quick overview of Emmaus Satu Mare?

Our community is home to 25 young people aged 18-30. They are care system leavers. They are particularly vulnerable, and most of them have experienced trauma during their childhood and teenage years. They come to us with major interpersonal, educational, inclusion and other issues.

We are therefore at a crossroads between a community and a social enterprise. On the one hand, the community: the companions learn to live independently, take care of themselves, etc. All of this is linked to in-depth educational work: getting back into education, individual discussions and support groups on certain topics (managing emotions, relationships, etc).

And on the other, the social enterprise: two furniture shops, bric-a-brac...which give the young people work experience, and enable Emmaus Satu Mare to cover its costs.

Where does the stock for the two shops come from?

Just like most Emmaus groups, we collect locally, but this is inevitably limited: there is no culture of giving in Romania, and we receive poor-quality donations, and even

waste... There is a real risk of waste being sent to landfill when it is dumped in wheelie bins, as recycling facilities have not been developed here. Most of our stock is therefore supplied by solidarity container loads, sent by Emmaus partner groups with whom we have forged strong links.

What underpins this type of partnership and connection between Emmaus groups?

While the financial support provided by the solidarity container loads is vital, these partnerships are also the chance to forge real relationships with the other groups in Europe via companion exchanges, group visits, etc.

Many of our young people undertake internships in our partner groups. They spend several days or weeks there, preparing the next load, and also learn a lot about life outside their community. They “fly the nest” as it were, and find themselves in a new yet protective setting, which turns upside down their habits (new language, rubbing shoulders with older people, etc.). Most of the young people come back more mature, with increased self-confidence. These exchanges are truly beneficial. They have been referred to as a “companion Erasmus scheme”, and that definitely rings true!

[Read more...](#)

If you wish to find out more about container loads, you can refer to the [European container handbook](#), and [contact Emmanuel](#) for more information!



Exchange of practices

Our farming and food practices in Europe

17-18 September 2022 - Iasi, Romania

There are still spaces available on the European farming exchange.

Day one will focus on practical exchanges of practices revolving around the group's livestock farming, market gardening, tree and crop growing work. Day two will enable us to discuss food issues in our groups and meet the Romanian group's local partners.

Finally, a co-development session will enable the participants to help each other with the farming issues arising in our groups.

The meeting will also enable a European farming discussion group to be set up. Please let us know if there are any specific questions that you wish to tackle: eve.poulteau@emmaus-europe.org

Please contact Marie by 31 July if you wish to register: marie.tixier@emmaus-europe.org

Preliminary practical information

- Arrival date: 16 September 2022

Departure date: 18 September evening or 19 September 2022

- Languages: French and English
- Maximum number of participants: 15 (open to all Emmaus stakeholders)
- Registration deadline: as soon as possible and by 31 July 2022 at the latest (if spaces remain).

European action

Africa-Europe: meeting with the European Commissioner for External Relations



We met with the European commissioner tasked with the EU-African Union (AU) partnership on 17 May in order to discuss the next steps following the EU-AU Summit in February. Carina Aaltonen invited Patrick Atohoun to take part in this meeting, as well as Antoine Sueur, within the scope of France's presidency of the EU.

The three Emmaus chairs of Emmaus Europe, International and France shared their concerns about the Ukrainian crisis further impacting an already tough situation in Africa. Many countries, including Burkina Faso where Emmaus is well established, are having to contend with the dangers of terrorist groups, in addition to coping with the very tangible effect of climate change.

While all countries are being affected by increasing oil, cooking oil and wheat prices, North African countries have also become heavily dependent on wheat from Ukraine and Russia, as this means that they do not have to draw on their scarce water resources.

Patrick Atohoun stated that the Emmaus groups in Africa are seeing increasing numbers of people turning to them to ask for food aid (in particular), as they can no longer feed their families. He emphasized that this crisis should enable efforts to be stepped up to lift Africa out of its food dependency.

Carina Aaltonen also suggested that Europe should draw inspiration from how Ukrainian refugees are being welcomed, as it demonstrates that we have the means to properly support refugees. This example of a proper welcome should enable us in the future to better support refugees from Africa and elsewhere who will be forced to

leave their home countries, notably because of climate change. She also called for a larger number of visas to be issued to Africans. As a matter of fact, for a few years it has been practically impossible to obtain a visa; and we experienced this issue ourselves when organising the Emmaus World Assembly.

While Commissioner Jutta Urpilainen said that progress would be made with regard to facilitating visas for legal immigration, we disagreed about what is deemed “illegal immigration” and its root causes.

On the other hand, we praised her proposals to invest 35% of the EU-AU cooperation budget over the next seven years in mitigating the impact of climate change, and to make youth a priority. The commissioner also announced her desire to work more on food self-sufficiency.

Finally, she proposed that the Emmaus groups in Africa meet with the EU delegations in their countries, because this seven-year programme needs to be tailored to the needs of each country. This constitutes the next phase.

Deconstructing fear of foreigners: the Emmaus campaign for humane provision for migrants

Posters are now available to download!



You recently received the four posters for this new awareness-raising campaign launched in conjunction with each European country. The idea behind the posters is to open people’s minds to a discussion about the issue, and they should be displayed in our public areas so as to deconstruct people’s fears about receiving migrants.

The posters are now available to download from the members’ area of our website. For each language version, there is a web format, a standard print format for use with an office printer, and a printer’s format, if you want to get them professionally printed.

However, we do still have a number of posters in stock, so feel free to request them if you want more copies.

[Download the posters](#)

Spotlight on...

Youth Camps: a shared and exciting adventure!



The IFS-Emmaus 2019 summer work camp, Srebrenica, Bosnia-Herzegovina - © FIS-Emmaus

Every year, a number of Emmaus groups across Europe welcome young people – and not-so-young people – to spend time in the groups, and get involved in a solidarity initiative. Known variously as “summer camps” and “youth camps”, but with the same outcome: a great experience and meaningful interaction. So, how does a group arrange a summer camp, and what motivates people to want to help a group help others?

“Organising a youth camp is very simple.” From the outset, this comment provides reassurance for those wanting to embark on the adventure. The comment was made by Julio, the leader of Emmaus Peruwez in Belgium, who has been organising summer camps for 14 years. In most cases, the young people travel from all over Europe, and stay with the group, sharing meals and their time with the companions. While room sometimes need to be made to host the young people, the companions are often happy to give up their rooms for one or two weeks. In fact, it is often the companions who keep asking how many people have registered, as they can’t wait for the camp to start.

The summer camp in Bosnia-Herzegovina has a different slant. Every year since 2006, Emmaus-IFS has been organising camps bringing together over 100 young people. The original idea? *“Bring together in Srebrenica young people from all over the world, irrespective of their ethnicity, nationality or faith, so that they meet each other, and help the local communities to break down prejudices and barriers (...)*

[with the aim of] promoting tolerance, living together, and equality for all, in a post-conflict country, such as Bosnia-Herzegovina,” says Mirela, an unparalleled summer camp organiser. Logistics are obviously more challenging because of the size of the camp, but are very well organised, with the help of a large number of volunteers. A real adventure, which gets underway many months before the young people arrive!

What are the logistics in most cases? *“We primarily advertise on the [Emmaus Europe website](#), and word of mouth also works very well”* says Julio. Each group manages its own registration process, and help can be provided by Emmaus Europe and Emmaus France. The latter has created a website devoted to volunteering opportunities in the French Emmaus groups: [Emmaüs Expérience](#). While the organisation of a camp obviously involves a long-term commitment, notably answering the young people’s questions and managing arrivals, the groups are not alone in this adventure!

[Read more...](#)

Emmaus Movement Solidarity

Solidarity loads: our groups in Eastern Europe have urgent needs

For a month, our groups in Poland and Romania have been stressing that they urgently need Emmaus-type goods (furniture, bric-a-brac, knick-knacks, crockery) to sell in their charity shops. If your group is able to send a donation-sharing load to Eastern Europe, please contact [Emmanuel](#).

Since the start of the conflict in Ukraine, our groups have been making massive efforts to transport humanitarian aid to Ukraine, drawing on limited resources. They have been supplying Emmaus Oselya and Emmaus Nasha Khata, and also other Ukrainian associations, which then hand out the donations in areas particularly hard-hit by the war.

This stream of humanitarian aid is making for extra work for our groups, which is impacting their income-generating activity. They really need other groups to send them goods to sell in the charity shops so that they can continue to help others to help.

Ukraine: remind of the main points

Emmaus Europe is continuing transferring the donations collected in the Ukraine Fund, mainly sending them to our groups in Ukraine and Poland. To date, €192,350 has been paid out via the Fund, in support of the solidarity work undertaken by our groups across Europe to help the Ukrainian people. Thanks to the generosity and responsiveness of the Emmaus groups, we have raised €884,346, which will enable us to continue this work over the coming months.

As a reminder, this [dedicated page](#) contains all the information and resources you need to publicize the Movement's work with displaced and refugee populations in Europe.

Collectives - dates for your diary

Summer is almost here, but we are already planning for autumn! The end of the summer holidays will also mark the return of Emmaus Europe's regional collectives. The three meetings with our groups in Poland-Ukraine, Romania, and South-East Europe, are both opportunities to learn more about their issues, their sometimes non-traditional Emmaus activities, and their specific needs, and to forge links and foster more solidarity!

The South-East Europe Collective, bringing together the groups in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, will take place on 23-25 September 2022 in Dobož Istok at Emmaus-ISF's premises.

The next meeting of the Poland-Ukraine Collective will take place on 17-19 October 2022 in Lublin.

The Romania Collective is still being arranged, but should take place in Chalon-sur-Saône in October or early November.

You are all invited! If you are interested in attending, please contact [Emmanuel](#) for more information.



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