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**Emmaus in Europe**

**March 2022**



**emmaus**

**EUROPE**

ACTIVISTS FOR CHANGE

Dear friends,

After a month of conflict in Ukraine, and even though our thoughts remain with the Ukrainians, we are resuming our newsletter to provide you with news about the work of the groups across Europe.

This issue focuses on the partnership between the Italian and Bosnian groups to condemn the conditions experienced by refugees on the Balkan Route. Indeed, while we are glad that Europe has welcomed the Ukrainian refugees with open arms, we are flagging up the fate reserved for other refugees. Will this generous welcome be a lever for transforming European migration policy so that there is proper provision for all refugees, or, on the other hand, will it constitute an argument for further closing our borders to the rest of the world? Over the coming weeks, each European Emmaus group can take action in its own way to tip the scales.

We provide an update on the situation in Ukraine and the rest of Europe in the solidarity section of this issue. We will continue to update you regularly so that we work together to find ways of offering long-term support to the victims of this war, and adapt to the impact of the war on the most vulnerable members of society and on our groups.

The Emmaus Europe team

**Emmaus stories**

**The Balkan Route**

## supporting the Emmaus groups

This month we are giving the floor to Maria Luisa Testori, the leader of the Italian community Emmaus Erba, and a CEI. She tells us about the campaign launched in Italy to support the initiatives run by Emmaus in Bosnia along the Balkan Route.



© Emmaus Erba

**Emmaus Italy has been supporting the Bosnian group Emmaus-ISF for many years. What are the origins of this solidarity connection?**

Emmaus Italy (and subsequently Emmaus France and Emmaus International) rallied round to help refugees in the Vukovar region when the civil war broke out in the former Yugoslavia in 1992. We continued to help the refugee families who were trying to return home after the war. At this time, a partnership got underway with a group, an offshoot of the Red Crescent, which joined forces with Emmaus and took the name of ISF (International Solidarity Forum). The various initiatives undertaken stemmed from this focus on the migrant question.

**We hear a lot about the migration crisis on the Balkan Route. Can you tell us what is happening at the moment?**

According to the data recently provided by Leila S from ISF, the number of migrants has dropped from 29,196 in 2019 to 15,488 in 2021. This drop in the number of people travelling through Bosnia is also caused by the reopening of the Hungary-Romania route, as highlighted by workers on the ground. However, the situation in Bosnia is still disastrous and concerning with an increase in family arrivals since

the Taliban took control in Afghanistan. The Lipa camp has been rebuilt following the 2020 fire, but the migrants do not want to enter it, preferring to live in hiding in squats in the woods closest to the border. In addition to destroying makeshift camps, lately the police have also banned the outdoor distribution of food.

**Emmaus Italy has therefore launched a campaign in support, can you tell us more?**

Emmaus Italy is particularly mindful of the migration crisis, as our country is significantly impacted by this phenomenon. Our longstanding links with ISF have made us go above and beyond the initiatives that some Emmaus groups were already running in order to foster a shared commitment by the Emmaus Movement. Along these lines, we launched a fundraiser in 2020, which continues to this day. This campaign aims to raise awareness about the migration crisis and provide funding for a tangible grassroots initiative. Emmaus-ISF helps thousands of refugees

every year by providing them with meals, clothing, and the opportunity to have a wash or charge their mobile phones. They do everything they can on a daily basis to deal with the refugees' most urgent needs.

[Read more...](#)

## Exchange of practices

### Shop layout:

### how can we share Emmaus's uniqueness?

**5 April - 10:30-12:30 (Paris time - GMT+2) - online meeting**

Interpreting provided in French, English and Spanish

Registration by 31 March

Emmaus shops are second-hand stores, but they are also much more! How can we convey to customers and the general public that they are in an Emmaus store? And how do Emmaus stores differ from other second-hand shops?

Are you interested in talking about this topic?

Then don't hesitate, you only have a few more days to sign up for this event which is open to all. These discussions will allow us to learn from one another, from our current practices and from our doubts and questions.

For more information, please click [here](#) to see the invitation.

Registration

## Ukraine Solidarity

### Groups' news

We are in contact on a daily basis with the groups in the region, so that we can effectively address their rapidly-changing needs, and coordinate European and international solidarity.

Despite the bombing getting closer to Lviv, Oselya and Nasha Khata are still hard at work helping the displaced people. Our groups in Poland are doing amazing work receiving the lorry loads of goods sent from Western Europe and bound for Ukraine, while being actively involved in welcoming refugees.

All the countries of Europe, and notably France, where the majority of the European groups are located, are starting to really feel the effects of the conflict. Some Emmaus groups have been asked by local or central government to help with receiving refugees: furnishing flats made available by the authorities, and accommodation in ad hoc shelters created to meet the need for refugee accommodation.

Our groups are also drawing on their specialist skills: in Georgia, the trial member Emmaus Geo is handing out clothing and hygiene kits to over 500 Ukrainians who have fled the fighting. They are arriving by plane from Armenia, or were on holiday when war broke out. In Croatia, CNZD, specialising in counselling child victims of human trafficking and violence, is now supporting Ukrainian children who have arrived in Croatia and who are very affected by the war.

## Shipment of supplies to Ukraine



Two lorries of emergency supplies sent by Emmaus Lublin and Emmaus Rzeszow in Poland reached our two groups in Ukraine at the end of last week. These loads were funded by your donations and are enabling Oselya and Nasha Khata to meet urgent needs on the ground: blankets, sleeping bags, floor mats, medicines and non-perishable food items bought locally, etc. This means that they can continue their outreach work and distribution of emergency supplies to the displaced people.

## Informing Emmaus customers and donors

Many of you are still arranging solidarity sales, with the profits being donated to the Ukraine Fund. Last week we sent out three posters to publicize the existence of and work done by our groups in Ukraine, Poland and Romania. They are available if you want to raise the public's awareness and explain how the funds are being used. The posters were only available in French last week, but they are now also available to download in English. If you wish to translate the posters yourself into your language, we can also send you the native InDesign files.

If you are looking to hold solidarity sales in the future, please contact us in advance so that we can assess the needs together. Don't forget that Emmaus is a big movement, and the other regions of the world still have major needs!

[Download the posters](#)



# UKRAINE SOLIDARITY

## EMMAUS ON THE POLISH BORDER

LOCAL ENGAGED APPROPRIATE SUPPORT

Emmaus groups across Europe and worldwide are taking action to help the Ukrainian people. A "Ukraine solidarity" emergency fund was swiftly set up by Emmaus Europe in order to meet the needs in a coordinated way of the two Emmaus groups in Ukraine, and the Emmaus groups in the border regions of Poland and Romania.

### What does Emmaus actually do?

There are three Emmaus groups in Poland, and two of them are located near the Ukrainian border. Located close to the Ukrainian Emmaus groups, their role on the ground is vital in terms of meeting the Ukrainian groups' needs and helping to accommodate refugees.

Emmaus Lublin has created 25 places for Ukrainian refugees in its community, and is coordinating accommodation with local families. The group is in contact with the Emmaus groups in Ukraine, and is managing to send Emmaus Oselya (Lviv) locally-bought emergency supplies (medicines, blankets, foodstuffs, essential items). The group has also partnered with the Red Cross and is providing much-needed emergency supplies, thanks to the support of the European Emmaus groups, and thanks to you!

Emmaus Rzeszow has created 12 accommodation places, and helped create 80 places in emergency shelters, by donating bedding. The group is providing emergency supplies to refugee reception centres in its region. Rzeszow is in constant contact with Emmaus Nasha Khata in Ukraine to meet its needs.

Emmaus Brat Albert (Nowy Sącz and Krakow) is housing refugees who have moved away from the border, and is providing the other Emmaus groups with logistics support.



© Emmaus Lublin, refugee accommodation and support.



In normal times, the three Polish Emmaus groups are each home to some 20 companions and undertake traditional Emmaus work: collecting, sorting, repairing and selling second-hand goods.

They also run local solidarity initiatives, for example, Brat Albert undertakes outreach work with around 100 homeless people. Emmaus Lublin opened a cooperative pizzeria and has been making street furniture for a few years. These original income-generating activities are a resounding success and are enabling the group to develop their work and employment opportunities.

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### What does Emmaus actually do?

There are two Emmaus groups in Ukraine. They are located in Western Ukraine, close to the Polish border. They are continuing with their social initiatives, while also providing support for the population and displaced people.

Emmaus Oselya is welcoming and housing internally displaced people who are flocking to Lviv, and is handing out food and clothing to people who are continuing their journeys to Poland and Romania. The community's 30 companions are continuing with their core work of helping the homeless. Their day centre is open every day in order to maintain the usual services (food, clothing, showers).

Nasha Khata is housing people fleeing the conflict in the East. The 60 companions are arranging clothing distributions and are handing out food and hot meals. They are also keeping an eye on local elderly people. All of the community's income-generating activities have stopped, just like at Oselya. They no longer have any income, and the Emmaus Movement is supporting them so that they can continue their work.



© Emmaus Oselya, group photo.



In normal times, Nasha Khata is a residential Emmaus community, and undertakes traditional Emmaus work: collecting, recovering, recycling and selling goods. The community runs a second-hand shop, and also has a farm. The 60 companions living in the community are given psychological, medical and administrative support.

In normal times, Emmaus Oselya is also a traditional residential community, and was the first Emmaus community founded in Ukraine in 2001. It actively addresses homelessness by helping the homeless, as nobody else cares for them (food, tents in winter, street newspaper etc) and by championing their interests to the local authorities.

Find all Emmaus Europe's news and communications since the start of the conflict, and the up-to-date list of the groups' needs by going to the [members' area](#) on our website.



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