



emmaus

europe

ACTIVISTS FOR CHANGE

This month we're heading from France to Poland via Ukraine, Srebrenica and Brussels: happy spring everyone!

Emmaus Europe

Spotlight on

Emmaus Solidarity, off the streets and back to life



This month we meet with Lotfi Ouanezar, the director of one of the biggest Emmaus groups in France and which specialises in emergency welcome for people in street situations. Emmaus Solidarity (which was originally called Association Emmaus) was created following Abbé Pierre's appeal in 1954.

The objective in the 1950s was to launch initiatives to provide shelter to people living on the streets thanks to the donations collected following the '54 appeal.

Hi Lotfi, can you give us an idea of what Emmaus Solidarity is today in terms of your activities and the amount of people you welcome into your group?

Since its creation Emmaus Solidarity has been fighting precarity and poverty by providing support for the most

fragile members of our society. We can now put the skills and talent of 900 employees, 500 volunteers and 400 members behind our struggle. In an unconditional manner we provide support for 6,000 people thanks to a wide range of services, there are 118 options that we offer in total including day centres, emergency accommodation centres, get back to work centres, adapted housing and doing the rounds. We work in several domains in order to provide more global social support: cross-cutting missions support our field teams for access to rights and healthcare, for training and employment, for access to sport, for access to culture and for developing practices which foster citizenship and access to housing. We intervene specifically for humanitarian and meteorological emergencies (the Afghan and Ukrainian crises, refugee camps, heat waves, extreme cold, etc.).

Your operations are funded thanks to public donations but you mainly rely on public funds, how do you keep your political independence?

We are known for our independent lobbying of the government and the public authorities. Our field expertise also brings legitimacy to our lobbying initiatives. When reaching out to the media, the general public, business and politicians we remind them of our values and our demand to provide people in street situations with support, notably in the form of unconditional welcome. We often lead our lobbying initiatives as part of collective efforts, via networks of associations and via federations, as doing so brings more weight to our actions. However, we have no difficulties in outlining our expectations and highlighting the contradictions of the departments which finance us. Let's not forget that the State is responsible for fighting against exclusion and that Abbé Pierre thus asked for State funding to help our association to fulfil its mission back in the days when we were known as Association Emmaus. Since then we have been carrying on with this mission, lobbying the departmental, regional and national authorities as well as continuing with our field initiatives. Both of these aspects are combined to make a strong public policy focused on supporting the most fragile members of our society.



The second Emmaus Beauty and Well-Being Space created in collaboration with L'Oréal. Rue Dimey,

75018 Paris. ©Amandine Lauriol

Like all Emmaus groups you attach a lot of importance to the dignity of the people you welcome into your group. You have notably developed some great cultural projects as well as creating well-being areas...

Of course, dignity for all is at the heart of our initiatives. This is of course linked to access to rights as well as other aspects and other levers which can help people to restore a feeling of citizenship and of self-confidence. Our cross-cutting missions also feed into our global support efforts for the people we meet. We focus on health, sport, training, employment, culture, citizenship, leisure and games in order to provide this all-encompassing support. In partnership with a range of public and private stakeholders our teams create projects and innovate in order to meet people's needs and to remain in step with the times. With L'Oreal and their foundation, for example, we have created Beauty and Well-Being spaces which enable poor people to access hygiene and care products as well as providing services for hairdressing/hairstyling. These services help people to restore their self-image, to have the choice to look after themselves, to take pleasure in doing so and to find time for themselves. We also try to make culture accessible to all by providing free tickets and by organising creative projects which call upon the creative talents of all. For example, the Emmaus Solidarity Prize for Contemporary Art attracts volunteer panel members, art connoisseurs and others to choose the artists that they would like to work with. This is a long-term, passionate adventure and a source of pride for all involved.

[Find out more...](#)

The General Assembly

It's only once every 4 years and it's coming soon!



Registration is open until 30 June, please remind other people in your group about this event so that we can have as many participants as possible working together to build the future of Emmaus Europe in Iasi, Romania from 24-27 October!

For more info and to register for this event visit:

<https://emmaus-europe.org/ag2023/>

An exchange of best practices

22-23 June 2023 - An exchange of best practices in Krakow on working with wood



Emmaus Europe and Emmaus Brat Albert are organising an exchange of best practices on working with wood and on the skills developed by the Emmaus groups on reusing and recycling furniture.

This event will be held in Krakow **from 22-23 June**.

Credit - Emmaus Europe - practice exchange - Krakow

On the agenda for this event:

- 4 workshops on wood: renovating and painting wood, applying French polish, creating designer objects using reclaimed wood and building traditional fences using hazelwood (Taras, a companion from the Nasha Khata group in Ukraine, will be sharing his experience of using this type of wood)
- Debates in order to discuss the challenges the different participants face in terms of transforming pieces of furniture that have been donated to Emmaus
- A cultural visit of Krakow organised by a Polish artist/volunteer at the community
- Given that the Brat Albert group is great at building bonds through music a concert was a must-have on the agenda for this event!

This meeting also represents an opportunity to find out more about the Brat Albert community whose companions are split across two sites, one of which is in Krakow.

The working languages for the event will be French and English (Spanish can also be provided by our interpreters if requested in advance). The Krakow community is an alcohol-free space and this event will, therefore, be entirely alcohol-free!

The costs incurred by the participants in Krakow will be covered by Emmaus Europe, with support from Emmaus Brat Albert. The groups will cover the costs of travel to and from Krakow.

To register for this event please get in touch with Emmanuel at: emmanuel.rabourdin@emmaus-europe.org.

Please note that there are only 15 spots available for this event.

A European Mobilisation

Reuse: things are beginning to change in Brussels!

We recently attended the general assembly of RREUSE, our European partner for reuse. Let's take a look at recent legislative developments on this topic and how we have contributed to this via our networks.

The Waste Framework Directive

This text, which was most recently revised in 2018, was one which we worked on with our partners and which defines the fundamental principles of waste prevention and management (definition, hierarchy, etc.).

You can read about RREUSE's stance on this framework directive [here](#).

The stakes

We will be focusing on two points in particular

1. Prioritising reuse

Ensuring that there are distinct, ambitious, quantitative goals for separated collection in order to boost reuse. Similar objectives already exist in France, Spain and in the different regions of Belgium so these could be used as a base for drafting EU-level objectives.

2. Implementing EPR (extended producer responsibility)

The objectives that have been announced (such as the obligation for all Member States to organise a separate collection of textiles by 2025) would require an acceleration by all Member States on transposing the EPR provision for the textile sector into their national laws. France's experience leads us to send out an alert on this provision: it should not be solely guided by the producers themselves, it should truly prioritise reuse and should foster the involvement of associations/social stakeholders who are active in this sector.

You can read RREUSE's paper on ERP [here](#).

Next steps

The public consultation phase that we participated in alongside RREUSE came to an end in August 2022. The Commission was meant to publish its proposal on 7 June but it has since been delayed following a negative opinion rendered by the Regulatory Scrutiny Board.

If you would like more information or would like to be involved in this work then please get in touch.

Directive 2014/24 - Public Procurement

This directive, revised for the last time in 2014, allows the public authorities a lot of room for manoeuvre as regards including social and environmental considerations in their call for tender procedures. RREUSE wants to tighten this legislation so that in certain key sectors for the environmental transition (such as the waste management sector) it becomes more important, or even compulsory, to take into account certain social criteria.

The stakes

This topic is a priority on the political agenda in light of the 2021 Social Economy Action Plan which presented initiatives to make the most of public procurement in the social economy sector, mainly via funding

opportunities and non-binding mechanisms (advice and workshops to link the social economy with the traditional economy and with public procurement staff).

Next steps

A revision is not currently planned for this directive but RREUSE and its members believe that this is absolutely essential and they are thus going to try to include a public procurement aspect in various other directives that are currently undergoing revision.

If you have any examples of best practices in your countries which are beneficial for Emmaus and its waste collection work then please get in touch with us about these.

FOOTBALL and PEACE

27-31 July: the first Emmaus Football Cup for Peace and Human Rights, Srebrenica



A football match at the 2022 summer camp on the premises of IFS-Emmaus

Credit: Emmaus Europe

The first Emmaus Football Cup for Peace and Human Rights is beginning to take shape! Kick off is scheduled for 27 July.

On the agenda for this event are three days of football, exchanges and workshop events on how to promote peace within our movement. We will also be visiting the memorial for the victims of the Srebrenica genocide and the museum which is just next to the memorial.

[Sign Up](#)

Logistics:

You should arrive in Sarajevo on Thursday 27 July and leave on Monday 31 July. There are buses to Srebrenica and IFS-Emmaus will also be putting on shuttle buses to Srebrenica and back.

Once you have arrived in Srebrenica all costs will be covered by Emmaus Europe and IFS-Emmaus. The participants will have to cover the costs of their travel to Sarajevo. The shuttle buses between Sarajevo and Srebrenica will be paid for by IFS-Emmaus.

If you want to discover the buzzing cultural scene in Sarajevo then try to spend at least a day in the city!

Solidarity

Rising needs for our transport solidarity programme!

The transport European container programme, which is supervised by Emmaus Europe, helps us to create solidarity amongst the European groups whilst also giving a 4th life to Emmaus objects. Since the start of 2023 the drop in the number of solidarity transports has plunged the programme into difficulties and is undermining the financial situations of many of our Eastern European groups.



Unloading a solidarity transport, in Rzeszow, Poland. October 2022

This article is a call for solidarity: **if your group or your region has the opportunity and the resources to organise a transport then please get in touch with Emmanuel (by [email](#)) to organise this.**

The majority of the Emmaus groups in Eastern Europe have informed us that they are currently facing economic difficulties. These difficulties are directly linked to the drop in the number of solidarity transports.

In these countries, where the culture of donating is not yet widely spread, our transports are essential to the groups' social activities: they help provide employment to a large number of companions whilst also giving vulnerable populations access to cheap second-hand goods. These transports are essential as they help the groups to maintain a financial balance and to lead their social initiatives.

Since the start of the year the rise of fuel prices has had an impact, leading to doubts over the profitability of sending these Emmaus goods to other groups.

Whilst it is important that we think about how to keep the scheme profitable, the groups in Eastern Europe are already working on ideas for new economic activities to make them less dependent on the transport scheme. This transition will, however, take at least a few years.

In the meanwhile the donation-sharing between the groups is still very important to many of our Emmaus communities! There are many needs which are still unmet and this solidarity goes way beyond the goods themselves - they help create bonds between people and lead to other forms of solidarity and exchange between the groups.

Furthermore, even though the cost of transporting these goods is on the rise, the environmental cost of destroying furniture still remains a significant burden for the groups. One of the advantages of this programme is to give a 4th life to furniture which cannot be sold in Western Europe (and which would end up in landfill otherwise despite still being in good condition): the majority of "typical" Emmaus furniture is highly sought-after in Poland and Romania, for example!

Below is the link to the transport guide. This guide gives a quick overview of the programme and explains how you can get involved.

Thanks for your solidarity!

[European Container Handbook](#)

A story from Ukraine:

Tamara, welcomed by Emmaus Brat Albert: "*Emmaus is my home*"



Tamara and her dog Brutus, welcomed in Nowy Sącz since March 2022

Credit : Emmaus Brat Albert

For over a year the Emmaus groups in Ukraine and Poland have been welcoming refugees and displaced persons. Let's hear the story of Tamara who has been welcomed by Emmaus Brat Albert, a group which has been receiving financial support from the Ukraine Fund since March 2022.

In March 2022, I arrived in Poland with my granddaughter and daughter due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. We needed to escape from our hometown, Irpin, where the Russian army had been carrying out constant bombings and artillery attacks since the very first day of the invasion.

At that moment, I had to ask good people in Poland for help. The Emmaus Community in Nowy Sącz not only welcomed us in their large and helpful family, they also provided us with comfortable accommodation, food, and other essentials.

Most importantly, however, the community has managed to create and sustain a friendly and mentally-comfortable atmosphere for the residents, which has facilitated my adaptation and rehabilitation.

I've become a full member of the family, I communicate with others, work part-time, look after our dog, go to concerts and visit historical and cultural places in Nowy Sącz as well as learning the Polish language.

The Emmaus community is my home for now.

Ukraine Posters

The last month we sent you posters to help you to understand the impact of your mobilisation to support the Ukrainian groups and the refugees scattered across Eastern Europe.

If you missed the posters last month, don't worry, you still can download them here:

Download the posters

A bit of quiet reading

'Putting people and skills at the core of the circular economy: 18 stories from social enterprises'.



In this new publication by the European Reuse Network RREUSE you will find statements from Emmaus Åland and Emmaus Mundo. You will also hear about reasons why associations and social/solidarity economy enterprises are great at training people and developing know-how in the circular economy sector. The report shows that, on average, a social enterprise creates 70 jobs per 1,000 tons of goods and material collected for reuse.

The full text in English can be found [here](#).



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