

Emmaus in Europe



Dear friend,

A new year allows me to thank you for your presence, for your hard work and for bringing forward the core values of the movement. Thank you so much for all you do for Emmaus locally, nationally and at the European and international level. We can always do more and better – but sometimes it is necessary to take a step back and celebrate the result of our work. I am convinced that every time we meet with others within the movement, we get more energy, new perspectives and a stronger sense of belonging. Let the coming year be a year where you and your colleagues visit other Emmaus groups in your country or outside, and attend assemblies and meetings like the World Forum of Alternatives in the autumn. Let also this year be the year when you open up and invite more people to your group or community. Invite decision-makers, students, and the candidates for the coming European Parliament election in June. Create a vivid meeting place where thoughts can be exchanged, and experiences can be learned.

We will very soon be highlighting the 70th anniversary of the Abbe Pierre appeal called the Uprising of Kindness. In this very speech, on French radio on the 1st of February 1954, he touched the inner soul of the French people and the answer was immediate and an unexpectedly great amount of people wanted to take action and help out.

I am convinced that people are the same today. Many among us would like to reach out donate money or goods or even open their homes if they are given the possibility to do so. We need a new version of the uprising of solidarity and kindness as a counterforce to the destructive violence we see in Gaza, Ukraine and many other places. It is unbearable for many of us to learn about the violence that migrants face at the borders of Europe and it's hard to accept the discrimination that people face when they are applying for a visa to Europe.

Let's use the coming weeks and months to make our movement more visible. Tell the people around us, customers in the shop, members of your association, family and friends that their voice and vote matters. We need to build a more open, warm and friendly Europe and the coming elections (European for the countries members of the union but also the local elections) are crucial for creating a different political landscape in Europe where social, solidarity and environmental issues are priorities.

Let the following words from Abbe Pierre give us both strength and perspective: "If you are suffering, whoever you are, come in, eat, sleep and regain hope. Here, you are loved."

I wish you all the best in the coming year. Don't hesitate to contact me or the staff at the secretariat. We are here for you.

In solidarity,

Carina Aaltonen
Chair of Emmaus Europe

European Elections

2024 Elections
A crucial issue for Emmaus Europe and the social and solidarity economy



The European elections will be held between 6 and 9 June this year, depending on the country. This is an opportunity for European Union citizens to shape the political future of Europe.

European policies play a crucial role in the day-to-day work of the Emmaus groups, particularly in collection, sorting, reuse and recycling activities. European Union directives on waste management set the framework for collection and sorting and influence the percentage of reuse that countries must achieve, which in turn has an impact on our practices. For example, European regulations on waste electrical and electronic equipment guide our approach to collecting and reusing electronic equipment. In addition, European targets on reuse represent a major opportunity to guarantee the place of social economy players in the circular economy and reuse sector.

responsible for shaping future rules on reuse and the social economy. They will be more or less receptive to arguments put forward by Emmaus, but we need allies in Parliament! They will also have the power to legislate in other areas that are central to our work, such as tackling poverty and providing a dignified welcome to refugees, asylum seekers and migrants.

As a reminder, we have created a page focused on the European elections in the member's area. You will find all the latest Emmaus Europe news on the topic, as well as all the materials available to help you get involved. In particular, we suggest that you use the standard letter to invite election candidates to visit your groups so you can make these future elected representatives aware of Emmaus' issues.

The European elections are therefore a crucial issue for all Emmaus groups in Europe. Once elected, MEPs will be

More information on the page focused on the European elections:
https://emmaus-europe.org/language/en/2024-european-parliament-elections/

Spotlight on...

Emmaus Grenoble creates its own work integration scheme: the Lucie Coutaz Workshop



Credit: Atelier Lucie Coutaz (Lucie Coutaz Workshop)

The French community, Emmaus Grenoble, has inaugurated its new work integration scheme aimed at sorting, reusing and recycling textiles donated to the organisation.

To meet the expectations of its companions, Emmaus Grenoble launched a series of initiatives several years ago to help them find work after their time in the community. Following the implementation of a training plan and the recruitment of a work integration adviser, the organisation decided to go one step further to meet the needs of people living in extreme hardship who cannot be housed in the community, or those who need extra support to help them to get back into the labour market. In a few key figures, Emmaus Grenoble has 78 companions and recycles over 1,000 tonnes of goods every year, including 450 tonnes of textiles.

How the scheme was created

In 2020, a study was launched to try to find an additional work scheme for the community. Setting up a textile work integration organisation gradually emerged as the best solution. Just like the community, this organisation asserts its specific role in combatting exclusion to institutional partners, by offering opportunities to people who are most excluded from the world of work.

As a symbol of the role played by women in the shadows, Emmaus Grenoble decided to name this workshop after Lucie Coutaz who, alongside Abbé Pierre, has a historical connection to Grenoble. In fact, this is where Lucie was born in 1899. She later met Abbé Pierre in Lyon and co-founded the Emmaus movement.

Read more...

More information on https://emmaus-grenoble.org/aci-lucie-coutaz

European action

"Stop the Inhumanity at Europe's Borders" Campaign

All over the world, refugees, asylum seekers and migrants suffer from cruel and illegal treatment. Some European countries systematically fail to respect the rights of people fleeing persecution, conflict, disasters and poverty. At Europe's borders, these people face poverty, detention, exploitation and violence. In the most serious cases, people lose their lives at sea or on land.

respect, dignity and in accordance with the law.

This campaign involves a collective demand for action signed by civil society organisations with a range of experience and expertise, including Emmaus Europe. It also includes a letter sent to European governments, urging them to restore the respect for human dignity that all state institutions should demonstrate when dealing with human beings at the borders.

In response to this unacceptable situation, Emmaus Europe has joined the campaign "Stop the Inhumanity at Europe's Borders," set up by United Against Inhumanity. The aim is to tackle this situation and advocate far-reaching reform of current border policies and practices. The campaign's message is simple: each individual should be treated with humanity

The campaign launch event will take place in person and online in London on Tuesday 30 January 2024 from 11am GMT/12pm CET. Other launch events will take place in Geneva and in Italy. Please contact Manon if you'd like more information.

To find out more about the campaign, click here. The core campaign documents are available in English, French, German, Italian and Spanish.

1 February 1954 - 2024
70th anniversary of the Abbé Pierre's appeal

On 1 February 1954, France was facing a social crisis of devastating proportions. The housing crisis and increasing evictions had forced thousands of people to sleep on the streets in the midst of a freezing winter. Abbé Pierre was outraged by this situation and made a radio appeal for solidarity. This appeal sparked a historic outpouring of generosity from the public, prompting the government to make unprecedented funds available for emergency housing. Two years later, this surge of support was instrumental in securing the adoption of the law banning winter evictions



On 31 January, to commemorate the 70th anniversary of Abbé Pierre's 1954 appeal, representatives from Emmaus Europe will be at the European Parliament in Brussels. We will have a stand inviting Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) to view an exhibition on Abbé Pierre and, above all, to come and meet us to discuss the current challenges facing Emmaus. We will be addressing issues such as the fight against poverty, the social and solidarity-based circular economy, and how to provide a dignified welcome to refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. Our aim is to make as many MEPs as possible aware of these crucial issues and to encourage them to support our demands at the June 2024 elections.

As a reminder, the international digital campaign calling for #IndignAction was launched on 1 January on social media and on the website emmaus-indignaction.org. Don't forget to make your Winter of 2024 video appeal and share it on social media between now and 1 February. Voice your struggles, highlight your groups' solutions, and together let's awaken our power to act!

Emmaus Movement Solidarity

Renovations are well underway at Oselya



Credit: Emmaus Oselya

As we mentioned in the October 2023 newsletter, in August 2023 the Oselya group started renovating an old workshop to cope with the fact that the number of companions welcomed into the community has doubled since the Covid pandemic and the start of the war (from 15 to 30).

And the work is progressing well! In just 4 months, Oselya has already renovated the ground floor, fitted out the bedrooms and bathrooms, and carried out major repairs to the roof and facade. Some companions have already moved in!

The work was made possible thanks to joint funding from the Abbé Pierre Foundation (€36,006) and Emmaus Europe (€33,993 from the Ukraine fund financed by Emmaus groups).

We'll tell you more about the situation in Ukraine following the Russian invasion in the next newsletter.

Geographical Collectives
Dates for the diary!

Good news! The dates of the next three geographical collectives have been set. If you are interested in finding out more about the issues facing groups in these different regions of Europe, please contact Emmanuel for more details and to sign up. These events are an opportunity to meet the groups in these regions and are open to everyone in the movement!

- Poland-Ukraine-Latvia-Lithuania and Georgia collective: held in Annemasse, France, on 11 - 13 March 2024
Romanian collective: held in Satu Mare, Romania, on 25 - 27 March 2024
South-East Europe collective: held in Trogir, Croatia, on 3 - 5 June 2024

