

Emmaus in Europe



Hello everyone,

In February 2024, we are celebrating the 70th anniversary of Abbé Pierre's radio appeal with a huge response from the movement! Years pass by, but current events still compel us to voice our outrage and continue working for those who suffer most.

Many events were organised across Europe to make sure that Abbé Pierre's words were heard loud and clear – words that are unfortunately still relevant today. Emmaus Europe seized this opportunity to meet Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) in Brussels. Find out more about those discussions at the Parliament below, along with the start of our advocacy campaign ahead of the 2024 European Parliament elections.

February also reminds us of another reason to feel outrage, as it is now two years since the start of Russia's war against Ukraine. We spoke to Natalia Sanotska, Director of Oselya, and Grigory Semenchuk, the National Delegate for Ukraine. Together we discussed domestic politics, the local context in Lviv, and the daily life of an Emmaus group in a country at war.

You can also find the latest solidarity news, including more information on the upcoming meetings of the geographical collectives.

We hope you enjoy reading this newsletter and look forward to seeing you soon!

The Emmaus Europe team

Emmaus stories

Emmaus Oselya: two years of war, two years of resistance!



Natalia Sanotska and Grigory Semenchuk at the 2023 General Assembly of Emmaus Europe. Credit: Emmaüs Oselya

Russia's large-scale invasion of Ukraine began on 24th February 2022. For the last two years the Emmaus Oselya group has been putting up daily resistance in Lviv with its own weapons: solidarity, mutual support, and unconditional welcome of vulnerable people; along with ideas and initiatives to keep helping those who suffer most. We spoke to Natalia Sanotska, Director of Oselya, and Grigory Semenchuk, the National Delegate for Ukraine. Together we discussed domestic politics, the local context in Lviv, and the daily life of an Emmaus group in a country at war.

Could you give us an update on the political situation and mobilisation?

Grigory: The presidential and parliamentary elections, which should have taken place in 2024, have been postponed indefinitely due to the war (5-year term, last elections in 2019). Ukrainians living in the occupied areas wouldn't be able to vote, it wouldn't be possible to campaign nor ensure voters' safety. Moreover, the Constitution does not permit elections to be held while the country is at war. Parliament is preparing a new mobilisation law. It has been under discussion for the last two months, and will mainly help to better define the conditions for those mobilised for combat duty to replace people at the front: duration, people affected, minimum age for mobilisation (which will be lowered from 27 to 25), and so on.

Natalia: Although there are fewer volunteers to go to the front, most people understand that it's necessary to avoid occupation.

What is the situation like in Lviv? Have the profiles of the people taken in by Oselya changed since the start of the conflict?

Grigory: The overall situation has stabilised. Some people are still arriving in Lviv, fleeing the fighting, but the numbers are lower than in 2022. Victims prefer to

seek shelter near their homes, around Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk.

Natalia: However, cities like Kyiv, Lviv and the western part of Ukraine have not been spared by the bombings. The most recent bombings in Lviv were at the start of January; the situation is still very difficult. Last week, for example, (*editor's note: in mid-January*), Kharkiv was bombed every day, forcing people to flee westwards.

Grigory: At the start of the war, a lot of emergency housing was set up to accommodate everyone. Quickly these temporary shelters were closed, forcing people to find accommodation and get back to work, if possible.

Natalia: This placed significant pressure on the rental market, and rents went up dramatically. A new status has appeared: "poor workers". These people have very little income and can no longer pay their rent and bills. The war has pushed a whole section of society into precarious situations. Many displaced people are now sleeping in shacks, without electricity or water, or in plastic huts, in Lviv or on the outskirts. These people are therefore also welcomed at the new social centre, and during food distributions, alongside homeless and internally displaced people. Oselya and civil society are replacing the work of government social services and trying to find solutions, with the state concentrating primarily on the war effort

[Read more...](#)

European Elections

Emmaus at the European Parliament!



Emmaus representatives at the European Parliament in Brussels. Credit: Emmaus Europe

On 31st January, Emmaus Europe organised a commemoration of the 70th anniversary of Abbé Pierre's radio appeal. To mark the occasion, we took a piece of Emmaus straight to the heart of the European Parliament in Brussels, by recreating an Emmaus salon and setting up an exhibition on Abbé Pierre and an IndignAction video recording zone.

The event was a real success! Throughout the day, we met and talked to some twenty MEPs, as well as numerous parliamentary advisors from all political backgrounds. We discussed all the issues close to Emmaus' heart, including the fight against poverty, the social and solidarity economy, unconditional and dignified welcome and the rights of migrants and refugees. It was also an opportunity to put forward our overall demands for the European elections in June to the various members of political parties and candidates. This document can be found on our dedicated '[2024 European Elections](#)' page in the member's area and can be distributed to candidates in your country.

At 2pm, a moving ceremony was held to pay tribute to Abbé Pierre and Emmaus' struggles. The MEP David Cormand lent his support to the event and spoke alongside our Chair, Carina Aaltonen, Vice-Chair Herbert Bitter and regional board member Thierry Klatovsky. We also had the privilege of listening to a speech by the Vice-President of the European Parliament, Heidi Hautala. Many thanks to them for spreading Emmaus' message to the whole assembly.

AND THERE'S MORE!

Last week, the MEP David Cormand organised a debate during the plenary session of the European Parliament in Strasbourg called "**Commemoration of the 70th anniversary of Abbé Pierre's appeal to combat homelessness, against a backdrop of persistent poverty and social exclusion**". This debate was approved by the vast majority of parliament, with the exception of the far-right political groups who opposed it. It took place on Wednesday 7th February 2024 and gave all the political groups the opportunity to express their views on the subject.

[Read more...](#)

WATCH THE DEBATE

2024 EUROPEAN ELECTIONS: OUR PROPOSALS

Over the coming weeks, we will detail these proposals by topic. Please get in touch with us if you would like to make a specific proposal or speak out as part of this campaign. You can also take a look at the '[2024 European Elections](#)' dedicated page in our member's area by clicking [here](#).

For more information, please contact [Marian](#) or [Eve](#).



1 February 1954 - 2024

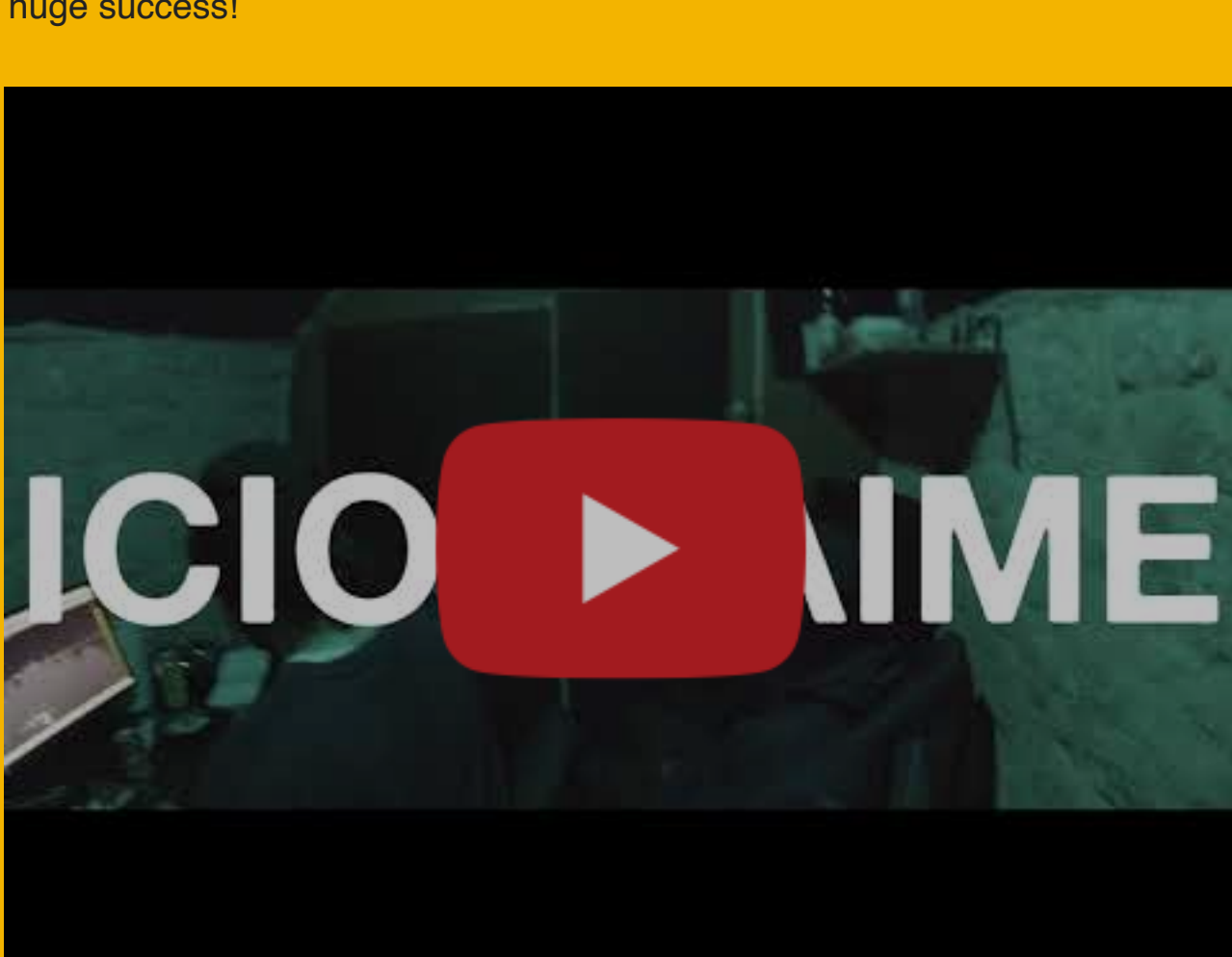
70th anniversary of the appeal across Europe !

What a commemoration! There were an impressive number of events organised all over the world.

Abbé Pierre's voice was heard across Europe from Romania, with a screening of the "Hiver 54" film at the French institute in Iasi, to Switzerland, where an exhibition was set up on the life of a community, and on to Portugal where a demonstration calling for access to housing took place.

The spotlight was on solidarity, with food and clothing collections and distribution in Poland and Georgia. In Switzerland, several soup and coffee kitchens were set up, including in front of the parliament to raise awareness among MPs. Some national organisations launched major public campaigns to rally support, such as the IndignAction campaign in France which called for people to record their own appeals in 2024. In the United Kingdom, the Be More Kind campaign was launched to highlight the uprising of kindness that symbolised the 1954 appeal, spreading the word about acts of kindness that have changed the lives of companions, volunteers and the wider community!

It is impossible to cover all the events organised, but everyone helped to voice Abbé Pierre's message. Well done to all of you for this magnificent effort! To conclude, we would like to share this incredible video from Emmaus Synergie. Initiated by Malo, one of the group's educators, this project was carried out with two young people who are always keen to help others. Congratulations on their first conscious rap song - it is a huge success!



European action

Digital challenges in the Social and Solidarity Economy

As an associated member, Emmaus Europe is taking part in the DigiSocCirc programme at RREUSE. This programme aims to study the use of digital tools within the sector of the Social and Solidarity Economy. In other words, what are the needs, the new obligations (especially regarding traceability) and what impact does this have on re-use operations. The next workshop will focus on digital and social trends in customer-facing services. The aim will be to discuss trends and share best practices in the digitisation of customer-facing services for social enterprises.

If you are interested in our digital challenges and would like to get involved, please contact us for more information. We would be delighted to hear your views on the challenges of using digital tools in your groups.

For more information, please contact [Marian](#) or [Eve](#).

Emmaus Movement Solidarity

Housing Programme: call for projects!

This is an internal programme for the Emmaus movement run by the Abbé Pierre Foundation and Emmaus International. It aims to promote access to decent housing or accommodation and improve the living conditions of Emmaus group members. The projects funded must be for the renovation, construction or extension of a **living space** (housing or accommodation).

All Emmaus groups outside of France (Europe, Asia, Africa, the Americas) have the opportunity to submit a project **by 2 March**. If your group is interested, you can contact [Emmanuel](#) for more information.

Projects must be sent to both the regional and international secretariats, i.e. for Europe to [Emmanuel](#) and [Lise](#) respectively. Here are some templates you can use to submit a project:

- [Call for projects](#)
- [Application form](#)
- [Budget forecast template](#)
- [Explanatory note](#)

Geographical Collectives - request the programme !

As a reminder, two geographical collectives will take place in March:

- **11 - 13 March 2024: Poland-Ukraine (Latvia/Lithuania/Georgia) collective** held in Annemasse, France. Click [here](#) to download the draft agenda!
- **25 - 27 March 2024: Romanian collective** held in Satu Mare, Romania. Click [here](#) to download the draft agenda!

Remember to sign up quickly, stating the name of your group, the number of participants and the collective you're interested in.

We look forward to seeing many of you there to discuss the future of Emmaus with regard to the issues facing these countries.

For more information, please contact [Emmanuel](#).

