

EUROPEAN ELECTIONS 2024

FOR A EUROPE THAT REGAINS HOPE



EMMAUS

EUROPE

ACTIVISTS FOR CHANGE

Founded in 1949 in France, Emmaus is an international movement present in 20 European countries that provides an unconditional welcome to all those who need a roof over their heads, shelter or a place to rebuild their lives. The Emmaus movement is also a pioneer in the circular economy. Historically involved in rag-picking to self-finance its work, it has become a key player in Europe's reuse and recycling schemes.
We believe in a Europe that pulls humanity upwards.

A EUROPE OF SOLIDARITY AND PROTECTION FOR THE MOST VULNERABLE

The Emmaus groups in Europe have seen a deterioration in the situation of the people they take in and the families they support as a result of inflation in recent years. Moreover, despite increasing needs caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and growing tensions on our continent, public health service budget cuts, particularly mental health budgets, are worsening the lack of access to mental healthcare in several countries. This hinders care for people made vulnerable by precarious circumstances or difficult migration journeys.

The action plan for the European pillar of social rights has led to significant progress, notably with the creation of the homelessness platform, but there is still work to be done.

■ **Priority to the most vulnerable:** we call for priority to be given to the most vulnerable in the construction of all policies, guaranteeing greater protection for these people and equitable opportunities.

■ **For a more ambitious social agenda:** we call for an ambitious social agenda, ensuring that everyone has access to accessible, affordable and quality essential services, such as education, healthcare, housing, transport, energy, quality food, water, social services and digital tools.

- **For social justice interconnected with ecological justice:** we advocate a fair transition, enabling the most modest households to make energy and transport savings, and the strengthening of the polluter-pays principle. The e86 billion allocated to the social fund for the climate (2026-2032) must be topped up to meet future needs.
- **For access to social protection, a minimum income and a decent wage:** we support access for all to social protection, a minimum income that represents at least 60% of the median standard of living in each EU country, from the age of majority and to a decent wage. At the same time, it is necessary, throughout Europe, to combat long-term unemployment and offer quality pathways to integration. We suggest that Europe is the driving force for developing a green transition income enabling the shock caused by the change of economic model to a post-growth model to be absorbed in order to interlink these issues with the Green Deal issues.
- **For a stronger development aid policy** that tackle the spillover effects of climate change. We also ask this aid to not be linked to migrations policies.
- **Better care for children in care and support towards autonomy after the age of 18:** a majority of children placed in care end up on the streets after the age of 18, a number of them with addiction problems. We would like Europe to take up this issue to enable these children to leave public institutions able to live their adult lives.
- **For gender equality and against all forms of discrimination:** we demand that all European policies include criteria to combat gender inequality and all forms of discrimination and promote fair treatment and equal representation for all.
- **For the construction of a Europe of peace:** Europe should continue its support to Ukraine in defence of the Russian invasion but to prepare the future Europe must limit the arms race in which it has once again engaged in recent years and support peace networks.



AN ECONOMIC EUROPE THAT SAFEGUARDS OUR COMMON FUTURE

Since the 1940s, the Emmaus movement in Europe, a forerunner of circular economy, has been generating income mainly by reusing donated, collected and sometimes repaired items in order to resell or redistribute them.

While concentrating our efforts on this activity, we are fully aware of the global environmental challenges, in particular the impact of climate change on the most vulnerable, the displacement of populations and the associated crises. We aspire to a Europe committed to raising awareness of these issues, with the seriousness needed to inspire hope. While the first steps of the Green Deal are encouraging, we call for more to be done.

■ **For priority to be given to re-use:** we are calling for EPR (Extended Producer Responsibility) schemes to fully support the waste hierarchy in all sectors and throughout the EU. This would mean prioritising reuse, repair and preparation for reuse activities. Reuse is more energy efficient and creates more jobs than recycling.

■ **Ensure a special place for the Social Solidarity Economy (SSE) in the waste collection, management and reuse sector in Europe.** Ragpickers' associations and, more broadly, players in the social solidarity economy were the pioneers of the circular economy. The social impact of their actions, in addition to their ecological expertise in the field of reuse, justifies the important place that should be given to them in waste management channels. A specific percentage of access to waste should be dedicated to them.

■ **Regulate the manufacture of goods.** Reuse and recycling schemes should not be the solutions to constant overproduction, with little regard for social rights and the environment in producer countries. It is important that industry-specific production reduction objectives are set and effective monitoring is undertaken. At the same time, it is vital that work continues on product eco-design, in this way fostering product reuse.

■ **To strengthen environmental and social criteria in public procurement:** we support stricter guidelines and greater leadership in green and social procurement, encouraging the increased inclusion of social clauses, set-aside contracts and environmental criteria in all tendering procedures.



A EUROPE OF HUMAN RIGHTS, FOR ALL HUMAN BEINGS

Europe has gradually moved away from human rights in its migration policy. The Emmaus groups can testify to this through their work in welcoming the victims of push back on the Balkan route and in the Mediterranean, and their reception of rough sleepers in the rest of Europe.

We call for a Europe that returns to the simple principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and remembers that it stood up and said "Never again": the Geneva Convention must retain its full meaning today.

The directives adopted in the new migration and asylum pact do not respect the spirit of these texts, so we recommend that the negotiated version of the pact is rejected, and this work be resumed with the following objectives:

■ **To respect article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, we call for a return to a visa policy. Article 13 of the UDHR states: "Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each State. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country." Today, however, it is virtually impossible to obtain a visa to come to Europe from Africa or certain Asian countries. Obtaining asylum at the risk of one's life has become the only way to get to Europe. This policy is untenable in human rights terms.

■ **Instead of financing authoritarian regimes and the militarisation of borders**, we call for an end to the outsourcing of borders, the restructuring of Frontex and the reallocation of most of its budget to reception. We demand an end to the outsourcing of European borders and to readmission agreements that compromise the security and rights of people expelled. In line with the Geneva Convention Europe must put an end to push backs and put an end to the militarisation of borders embodied by Frontex. Frontex's budget has risen from €6 to 845 million in 14 years; we demand that most of this budget be reallocated to policies of rescue at sea, dignified reception and integration of migrants.

■ **Right of asylum: to ensure that asylum seekers are given a dignified reception, and that families and children are not left on the streets**, we call for the principle of country of first entry to be reviewed, and we call for resources to implement the Reception Conditions Directive. The Dublin Regulation has created too much misery by preventing exiles from applying for asylum in the country where they had ties and forcing them to return to their country of first entry. This principle is not called into question by the Pact. Waiting 18 months to be able to ask for asylum after being "dublined" without rights or support has left families on the streets and in such unstable conditions that it is migration policies themselves that have sometimes created the most serious problems. Asylum seekers must be able to choose the country where they will rebuild their lives. Their access to accommodation, healthcare and the job market, as provided for in the 2013 reception directive, must be improved.

■ **To promote integration**: we call for policies to promote the social and economic integration of exiles, ensuring their access to work, housing, a dignified reception and sustainable inclusion. There must be a firm commitment to diversity and inclusion, recognising the richness of different cultures and identities within the European Union.



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