

Emmaus in Europe



Dear friends,

This month we are pursuing our efforts in the run-up to the European Parliament elections with a focus on the fight against poverty. These elections will take place from 6th-9th June 2024 and will have a significant impact on the political future of the European Union. It is vital that we get involved and make our voices heard at this time! You can still sign up for the webinar on the European New Pact on Migration and Asylum and the European elections with Damien Carême! It will take place on 30th April at 11am (local time in France) and will be available in both French and English.

As well as the latest news on solidarity and commitment in our region, and even internationally with the World Forum of Alternatives, we would also like to invite you to discover an Emmaus highlight: the meetings of the geographical collectives. If you have not yet taken part, you are in for a treat!

Enjoy the newsletter,

The Emmaus Europe team

Emmaus stories

Geographical collectives: a key event in the Emmaus year



Here in Romania during the last collective meeting. Credit: Emmaus Europe.

In March 2024, two important events were held for Emmaus Europe groups: the Poland-Ukraine Collective and Romania Collective. These meetings offered a chance to tackle the thorny issue of business models for groups in these regions, in light of the challenges they face, whether political, economic or legal. We asked Emmanuel Rabourdin, Head of Solidarity, to tell us more.

Why was the issue of economic autonomy for Emmaus groups in Eastern Europe discussed?

Several factors prompted us to address this issue collectively with the groups. Firstly, Russia's large-scale invasion of Ukraine has caused widespread economic upheaval in the region: inflation, sharp rise in fuel and energy prices, growing inequalities, among other effects.

These consequences have had a direct impact on Eastern European groups, most of which have based their business model, to some extent, on solidarity, in the form of goods transported by Western European groups. One of the challenges for these collectives was to start looking at how to avoid becoming "dependent" on solidarity, while maintaining strong ties with the Emmaus groups that transport goods.

Finally, and this is especially true in Romania, transporting solidarity goods has really been put to the test in recent months by overzealous Romanian customs officials. Romanian customs sent back several Emmaus lorries without any legal basis (and therefore without permitting the decision to be challenged on a reasoned basis), on the grounds that the country does not wish to receive Western Europe's "waste". The reasons cited: cobwebs on the furniture, blankets (protecting the furniture) that had not

been disinfected, among others. This situation, which is in the process of being resolved, highlighted the fragility of business models based largely on the transport of goods, and the need for groups to develop new economic activities built on local opportunities.

Are you saying that we should stop transporting goods to Eastern Europe?

No, transported goods are still essential for these groups, we are simply saying that it is not enough. Moreover, it means we avoid destroying good quality furniture that is not sold in Western Europe but is very popular in Eastern Europe. It is also a great opportunity for exchanges between groups. I encourage anyone who has never sent goods to get started by contacting me and/or reading our transporting guide!

Were the collectives able to discuss future prospects for the groups?

Absolutely! Solutions exist, and groups are already seizing them. In Poland, the collection of donations is expanding and becoming increasingly important in the groups' business activity. Some have already begun to diversify their business model, for example by opening a pizzeria in Lublin, or developing specialised skills in restoring antique furniture, such as in Brat Albert.

Read more...

What is a "geographical collective"?

Each year, the collectives bring together groups from one region of Europe to discuss issues relating to that region and to promote European solidarity. Three collectives exist:

- The Poland-Ukraine Collective, which has gradually expanded and now includes Emmaus groups present in Poland, Ukraine, Georgia, Latvia and Lithuania.
- The Romania Collective, with the three Romanian groups
- The South-East Europe Collective, which comprises groups from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia.

These three collectives focus on these European regions, but they are also open to all members of the movement who wish to take part. These meetings are an opportunity to learn about other ways of putting the Emmaus model into practice and are a great way to understand more about issues in other European countries.

For more information on the collectives, go to the specific page in the member's area and/or contact Emmanuel.

European Elections

The European Union and combating poverty



Place of reception for homeless people by the Emmaus community of Iasi in Romania. Credit: Emmaus Iasi.

Between 6th and 9th June 2024, European Union citizens will vote to elect future members of the European Parliament.

These elections are very important for Emmaus groups across the European Union (EU). This month we are taking a closer look at the growing impact of European laws on many aspects of the fight against poverty and its causes.

Although the European Union cannot act directly on social policies, over the last few years European legislation has tended to provide a more comprehensive framework for guaranteeing social rights.

- The EU has allocated almost 99.3 billion euros over the period 2021-2027 under the European Social Fund to support European social policy goals in all Member States.
- The European Pillar of Social Rights was also voted on, broken down into an action plan with ambitious goals, including housing and assistance for the homeless, active support to employment, minimum wage, minimum income, social protection.
- The EU launched the European Platform on Combating Homelessness to promote dialogue, improve data collection and bolster cooperation between stakeholders involved in combating homelessness.

Emmaus Europe is actively working on these issues as a member of the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN). In particular, we are pressing for everyone to have access to social protection and a minimum income equivalent to at least 60% of the average standard of living in each EU country as soon as they reach legal age.

The EU is also active in other areas related to the causes of poverty, such as access to energy, health, decent housing and digital technology. For example, the European Green Pact supports policies to renovate buildings to make them more energy-efficient, and we are working to ensure that the poorest people benefit first. For instance, thanks to the Abbé Pierre Foundation's efforts, electricity disconnections are now banned in all EU Member States.

WE MUST JOIN FORCES TO KEEP UP OUR ADVOCACY WORK!

All these new actions and laws are the result of essential daily work by civil society with European decision-makers to ensure adequate protection for the most vulnerable. These decision-makers include the Members of the European Parliament who will be elected at the next elections. This is why taking action at European level is so vital for Emmaus. We need to continue our dialogue with policymakers to ensure that they understand our values, listen to us and defend our commitments and work.

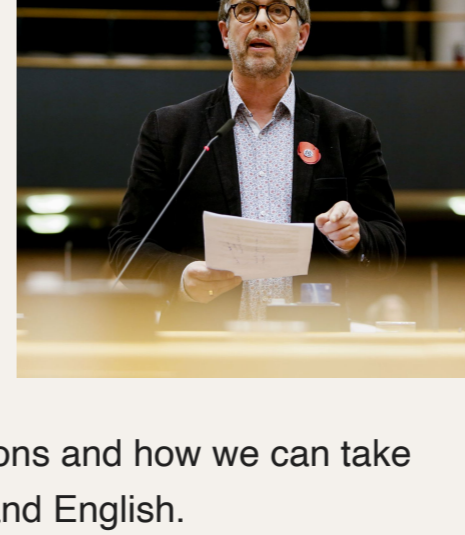
Please check out our specific pages for more information on Emmaus Europe's stance on the European Parliament elections and how to get involved and/or contact Emmanuel.

European action

Webinar - Pact on Migration and Asylum

On 10th April, the European Parliament voted in favour of the Pact on Migration and Asylum, despite objections from organisations that defend human rights and migrants and refugees, including Emmaus. We would like to thank all the Emmaus groups that supported the #NotThisPact campaign on social media. Unfortunately, despite this campaign, it was not enough to block the vote.

But the fight to protect the rights of migrants and refugees does not stop there! Please join us on 30th April at 11am for a webinar with MEP Damien Carême, the former mayor of the French city of Grande-Syrie, involved in welcoming migrants. He will present the implications of this pact, which he worked on. You will have the chance to ask him your questions and discuss the best way to keep opposing this shameful pact.



We will also be talking about the forthcoming European elections and how we can take action at European level. The webinar is available in French and English.

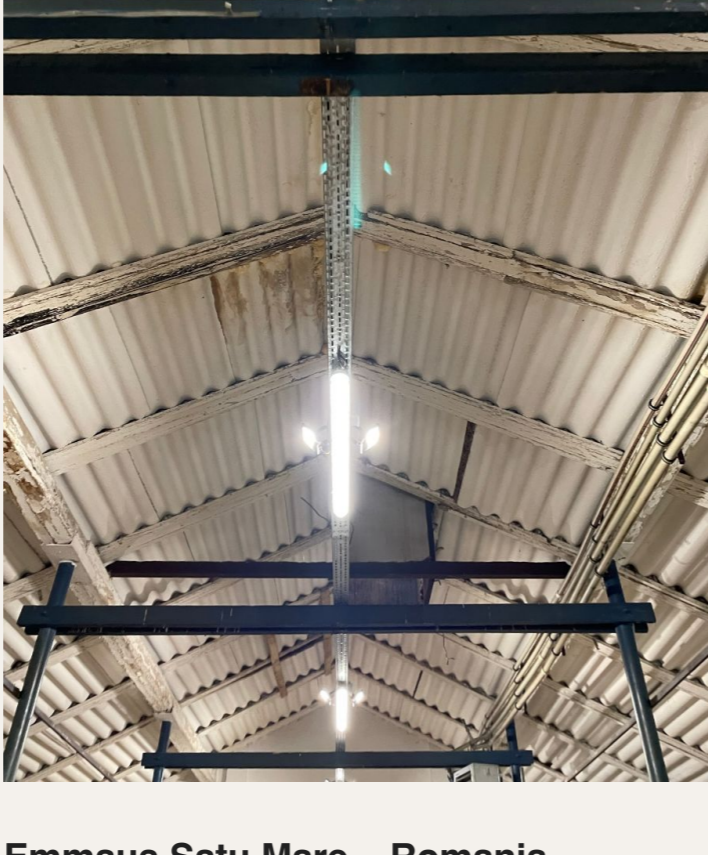
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For more information on the content of the Pact on Migration and Asylum, please read our article and/or contact Marion.

Emmaus Movement Solidarity

International and European solidarity in action in Europe!

Following an Emmaus International Board decision, two European projects will be supported as part of international solidarity. These projects are financed by Emmaus International, thanks to the annual solidarity sales held in 2023!



Emmaus Satu Mare – Romania

The group will be able to renovate its furniture shop/warehouse and thereby boost its economic autonomy, while ensuring decent and safe working conditions for the organisation's young people. The project involves renovating the roof of the building, which was greatly damaged by weather and wear and tear, along with renovating the floor. These renovations are very important to enable the group to comply with fire safety standards in force.

Amount received from Emmaus International: €50,000

Emmaus Iasi – Romania

The group will be stepping up its presence among the homeless in the city of Iasi: it will be acquiring a refrigerated lorry and renovating the community's kitchen to bring it up to standard, with the aim of distributing quality hot meals to more than 100 people a day. These investments will enable the group to obtain the necessary credentials and receive subsidies from the government to run their outreach programme.

Amount received from Emmaus International: €29,105

Let us meet in Croatia for the last spring collective!

You are invited to Trogir, Croatia from 3rd – 5th June for the South-East Europe Collective, comprising the Emmaus groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia! This meeting is an excellent opportunity to find out about the work of the Emmaus groups in this region, which specialise in social initiatives such as the fight against human trafficking and domestic violence in all its forms. These groups bring rare expertise to the movement that is worth discovering.

If you are keen to take part in this meeting, please contact Emmanuel.

For more information on the collectives, go to the specific page in the member's area and/or contact Emmanuel.

World Forum of Alternatives

Let us meet in September in Poitiers!



The 2nd World Forum of Alternatives will be taking place, from 17 - 20 September, at the Futuroscope Convention Centre, a few kilometres outside Poitiers.

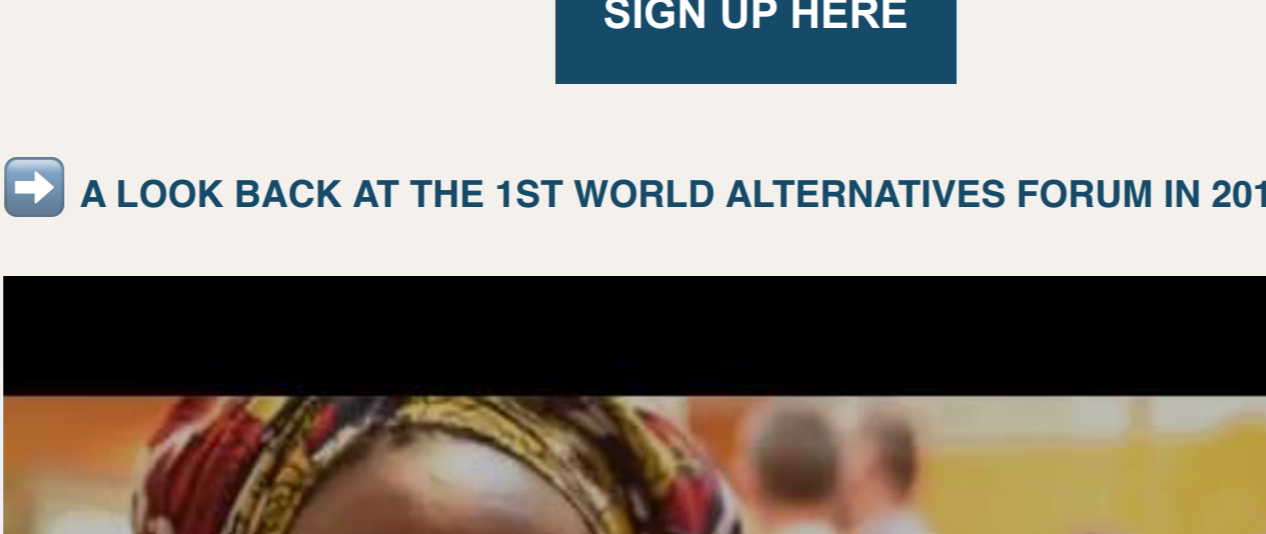
This forum is a unique opportunity to map out, together with our international partners and experts, the concrete action to be taken within our Movement. The discussions and exchanges will then be taken to the international political level and brought before the United Nations Summit of the Future, on 22 and 23 September in New York, where an Emmaus delegation will be present.

Our four days together with Emmaüs from all the other continents will be packed with reflections and discussions in workshops, plenary sessions, and training groups, with partners and experts from across the globe. A wide range of issues regarding climate justice, education and training or migrations will be tackled and concern all of us. Training sessions are also planned to ensure that everyone feels at ease when discussing our political actions and societal issues (such as gender issues, exclusion, youth).

You can register now! Registration opened on 1 April and will run until 30 June. We hope to see many of you in Poitiers for this high point in the life of our movement!

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A LOOK BACK AT THE 1ST WORLD ALTERNATIVES FORUM IN 2018



are fighting GMOs and are there to support us.

If you have any questions, please contact Emmaus International at the following address: usa2024@emmaus-international.org

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