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Emmaus in Europe

June 2024

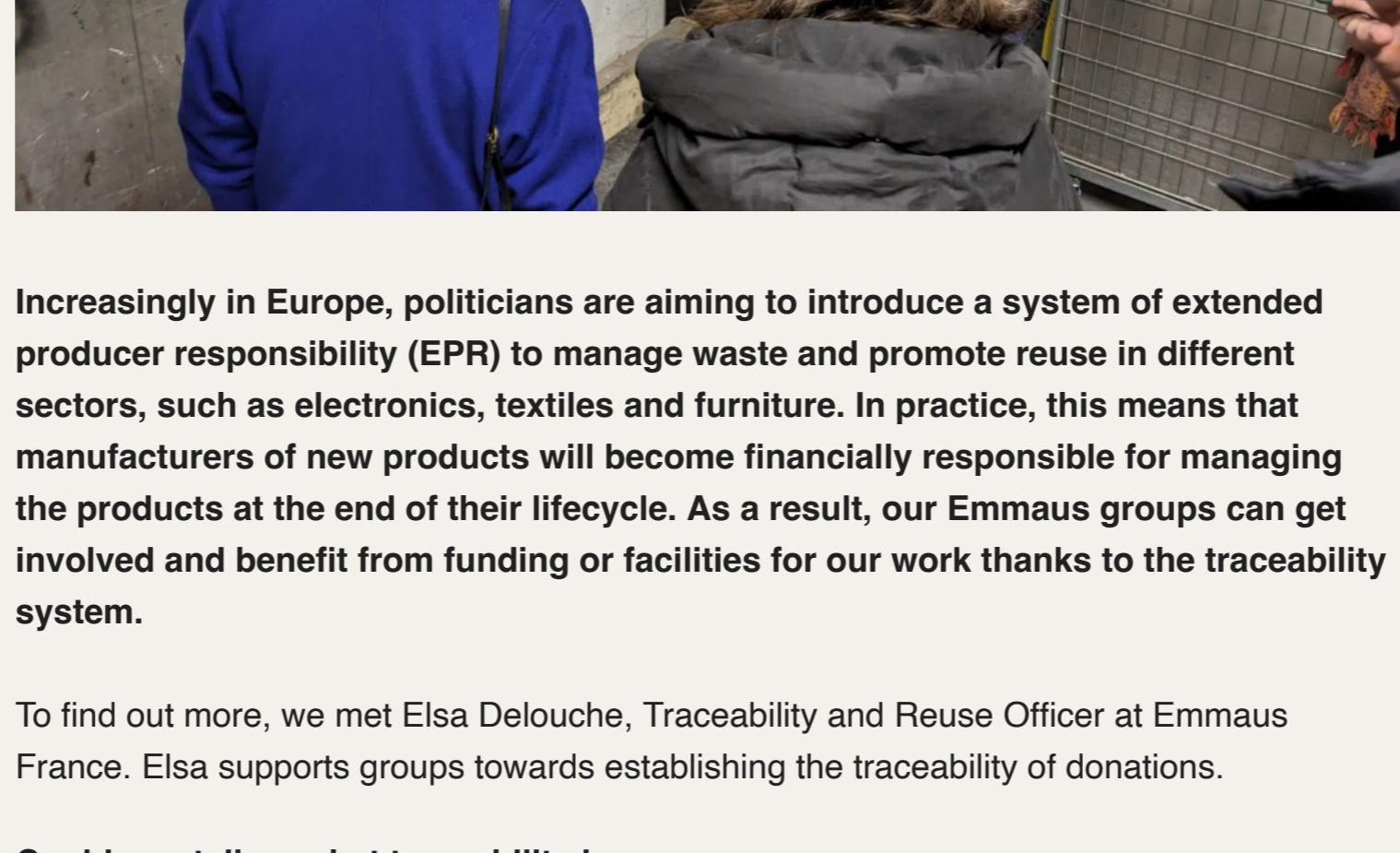


Dear all,

We are delighted to bring you this last newsletter before the summer break! This month, we take a look back at the European elections after the shock of the elections. We must all remain active in advocating Europe's values of peace, solidarity and equality! We also examine the issue of traceability within Emmaus groups. Setting it up may seem a challenge, but you will learn more about how it works and see that it offers access to a host of benefits. You will also find information about the European projects supported by the annual solidarity programme and an update on the situation at Emmaus lasi. The movement is standing by them as they face the temporary closure of their community home. We wish you a great summer of solidarity and action! We hope you enjoy reading it, The Emmaus Europe team

Emmaus stories

Traceability: a strategic asset for Emmaus initiatives?



Increasingly in Europe, politicians are aiming to introduce a system of extended producer responsibility (EPR) to manage waste and promote reuse in different sectors, such as electronics, textiles and furniture. In practice, this means that manufacturers of new products will become financially responsible for managing the products at the end of their lifecycle. As a result, our Emmaus groups can get involved and benefit from funding or facilities for our work thanks to the traceability system.

To find out more, we met Elsa Delouche, Traceability and Reuse Officer at Emmaus France. Elsa supports groups towards establishing the traceability of donations.

- Could you tell us what traceability is and what types of "products" it applies to?
- Definitions are varied, but the one I use, on which there seems to be a consensus, is as follows: an organisation system and tools that allow us to obtain data on activities, an efficient process (simple, accessible and stable).
- It encourages us to improve working conditions by questioning the tools used, workstation safety and ergonomics.
 - It allows people to diversify their tasks (for example, using weighing equipment).
 - It encourages people to develop their skills (e.g. mastering software).
 - It contributes to steering the business and decision-making by providing objective, reliable data.
 - It enables us to promote our activities in the field to external stakeholders and partners, and to ensure that they are aware of the volume of donations received and processed.
 - It confirms Emmaus' position in the reuse sector through reliable, quantitative data, fuelling the advocacy work carried out by Emmaus France and Emmaus Europe.

[Read more...](#)

* In France (under the "polluter pays" principle) this is the name given to organisations that are financed by manufacturers to take care of managing the end-of-life of the equipment they put on the market.

What is the Spanish viewpoint?

First-hand account by Eduardo Sanchez, director of Emaús Gipuzkoa within the group Emaús Fundación Social

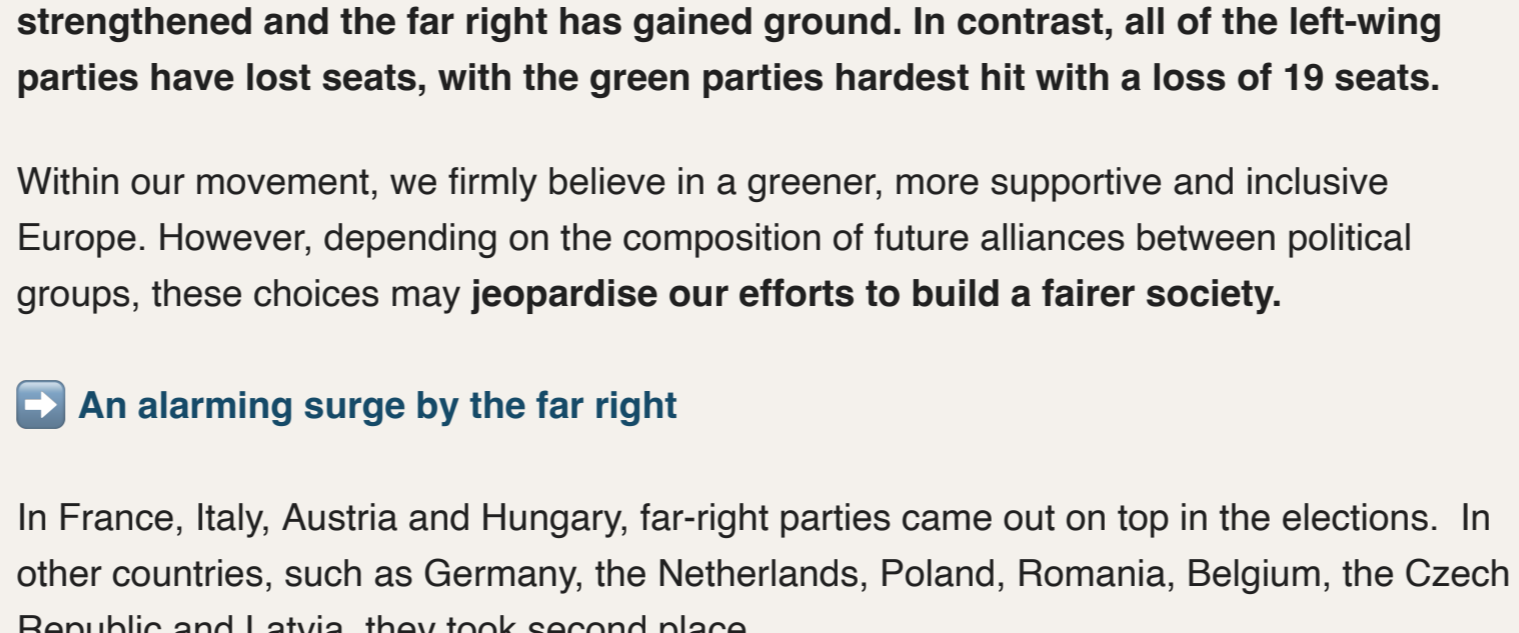
In our group, we have always believed that it was very important to be able to provide reliable data about what we do with the waste we manage. We see this as an obligation to the public and to the public and private entities that place their trust in us to collect and manage waste. There are an increasing number of obligations to ensure the traceability of the waste we manage. For calls for tender launched by public authorities for the collection of textiles this is compulsory, and current legislation is increasing the obligations of waste managers.

For the past four years, we have been processing environmental documents electronically with public authorities. Today, a waste treatment contract must be signed with the entity generating the waste in order to collect it with our lorries, and we must have an identification document in the collection vehicle. In addition, in the case of hazardous waste, we have to prepare a consignment note for each type of waste to be transported (each code requires a different consignment note). This notification enables us to draw up the documents to be carried by the lorry transporting the hazardous waste. The requirements of European regulations and the presence of SCRAP (Scrap metal) mean that this issue will be essential in meeting the needs of public administrations and community systems, as well as public demand for information.

For more information, contact [Mariano](#).

European Elections

A worrying shift to the right for the future of Europe and Emmaus



Source: Provided by Verian for the European Parliament. Credit: European Parliament.

On 9 June 2024, Europeans headed to the ballot boxes to elect their MEPs for the next five years. The results are clear: the conservative right has been significantly strengthened and the far right has gained ground. In contrast, all of the left-wing parties have lost seats, with the green parties hardest hit with a loss of 19 seats.

Within our movement, we firmly believe in a greener, more supportive and inclusive Europe. However, depending on the composition of future alliances between political groups, these choices may jeopardise our efforts to build a fairer society.

An alarming surge by the far right

In France, Italy, Austria and Hungary, far-right parties came out on top in the elections. In other countries, such as Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Belgium, the Czech Republic and Latvia, they took second place.

At the European level, there are two far-right parties (ID and ECR), which obtained a total of 141 out of 720 seats. Although they have not yet formed an alliance, this option cannot be ruled out. These two parties are now the third and fifth most represented in the European Parliament. However, together they would constitute the second largest political force. In addition, around 90 elected MEPs have not yet joined political parties. Although these MEPs are currently unaffiliated, they broadly identify with far-right ideas.

The far right's agenda is clearly the opposite of ours when it comes to Emmaus' issues: putting the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum back on the table to make it even more restrictive for potential migrants, challenging the Green Pact and reducing pressure on Vladimir Putin.

A major strengthening of the European right

The major winners of these elections are without a doubt the members of the political group of the European conservative right (EPP). With a minimum of 190 out of 720 seats, they now form the largest political group in the European Parliament. The message sent to Europe is clear in terms of this party's priorities: putting growth and a competitive economy first, focusing on insecurity, less attention on the environment and little focus on social issues.

A glimmer of hope?

In the Netherlands, although the far right won the general election at the start of the year, the alliance of social democrat and green groups came out on top at the European elections. In Finland, the far right only won a single seat and were ranked sixth, despite their presence in government. In Portugal, the social democrats dominated the elections, with the far right only winning two seats out of twenty-one. In Sweden, the social democrats took first place, relegating the far right to fourth position, with only three seats out of twenty-one. In Denmark, the social democrats and greens came top, while the far right finished in fifth place with a single seat.

Awaiting the formation of alliances and nominations for top jobs

MEPs must now form political groups before the next plenary session of the European Parliament which will be held on 16 July. On this occasion, they will choose the theme-based committees on which they will sit.

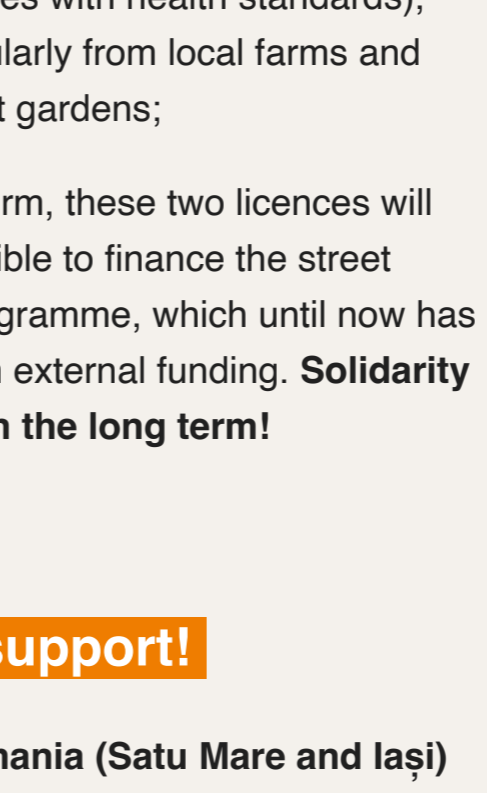
The European heads of state are expected to present their candidate for the presidency of the European Commission at the plenary on 28 July. It will be up to Members of Parliament to decide whether or not to validate this choice.

Once elected, the president will have the task of composing the College of Commissioners, made up of 27 commissioners appointed by the Member States, one from each country. The European Parliament will have the opportunity to hold hearings with its future commissioners and is expected to vote on whether or not to approve this choice in October.

The outgoing commission president, Ursula Von der Leyen, is in the running to be re-elected. Although she comes from the ranks of the EPP conservative right, she supported the Green Pact at a time when parties supporting environmental issues were a more significant political force. Will she turn her back on these issues given the new composition of Parliament?

General Election: Emmaus is taking action!

On the eve of important parliamentary general elections in France and the United Kingdom, we would like to applaud the initiatives taken by the national organisations in these two countries, who are strongly advocating Emmaus' values.



In the United Kingdom, an Emmaus [action on homelessness](#) manifesto has been drawn up and widely distributed to election candidates. In France, with the risk of the far right getting into power, [posters have been made to display in groups and communicate on social media](#) and a [joint appeal to voters has been signed by Emmaus Europe and Emmaus International](#).

For more information, contact [Mariano](#).

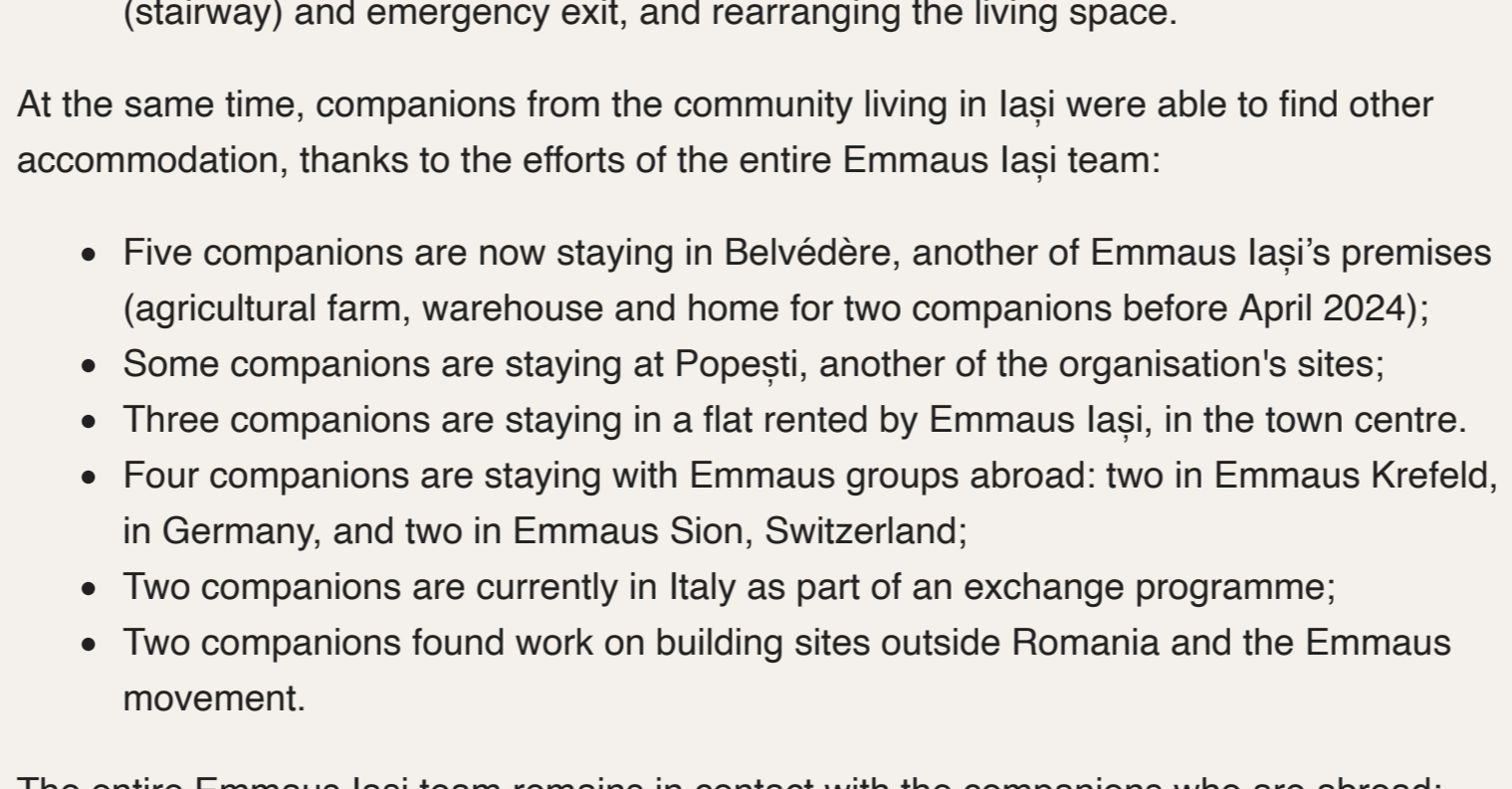
Emmaus Movement Solidarity

Annual Solidarity Programme Two European groups supported by Emmaus International!

Emmaus Satu Mare and Emmaus Iasi, in Romania, submitted a solidarity project to Emmaus Europe in November 2023. The boards of Emmaus Europe and Emmaus International approved both projects in April 2024, amounting to a total of €79,105.

The robustness of the Emmaus movement is underpinned by several pillars, including solidarity between the groups. This solidarity, sometimes from group to group, can be boosted tenfold when implemented at regional (Europe, Asia, Africa, the Americas) or international level!

Thanks to proceeds from annual solidarity sales and salons, two groups in Romania have been able to embark on essential projects to consolidate their business model and start a new social activity.



Left: roof and floor of the warehouse at Emmaus Satu Mare. Right: refrigerated lorry of Emmaus Iasi. Credits: Emmaus Satu Mare and Emmaus Iasi.

- Emmaus Satu Mare**
A newly renovated furniture warehouse and shop
- Emmaus Iasi**
A programme to provide access to good quality food

The building, which was acquired in 2020, needed to become compliant with fire safety standards as quickly as possible to avoid permanent closure. The group also wanted to improve working conditions for companions. These objectives were achieved, not least thanks to €50,000 in funding approved by Emmaus Europe and Emmaus International as part of the Annual Solidarity Programme (ASP).

This funding made it possible to:

- Lay new slab flooring, which was crumbling and making it unsafe to use, not only for companions but also for customers
- Replace the roof, composed in particular of asbestos and damaged by a storm in the summer of 2023;
- Install a fire detection and alarm system.

Work started at the beginning of May 2024, and should be completed by the end of June 2024. The shop reopened to the public at the beginning of June. The group had to empty its entire stock of goods in order to complete the work. Help them relaunch their furniture sales business by sending a solidarity consignment by lorry!

Since its creation, Emmaus Iasi has been working with vulnerable people in the city. Due to its daily presence on the streets, the group is identified as a trustworthy partner by institutions and civil society, along with beneficiaries; outreach street work and food distribution are an integral part of the group's DNA.

With the aim of constantly improving the services it provides to vulnerable people, the group wanted to develop a new programme for distributing hot meals prepared with good quality produce.

Emmaus International's financial support (€29,105) enabled the group to purchase a refrigerated van and the necessary kitchen equipment (oven, utensils) so they could obtain two licences:

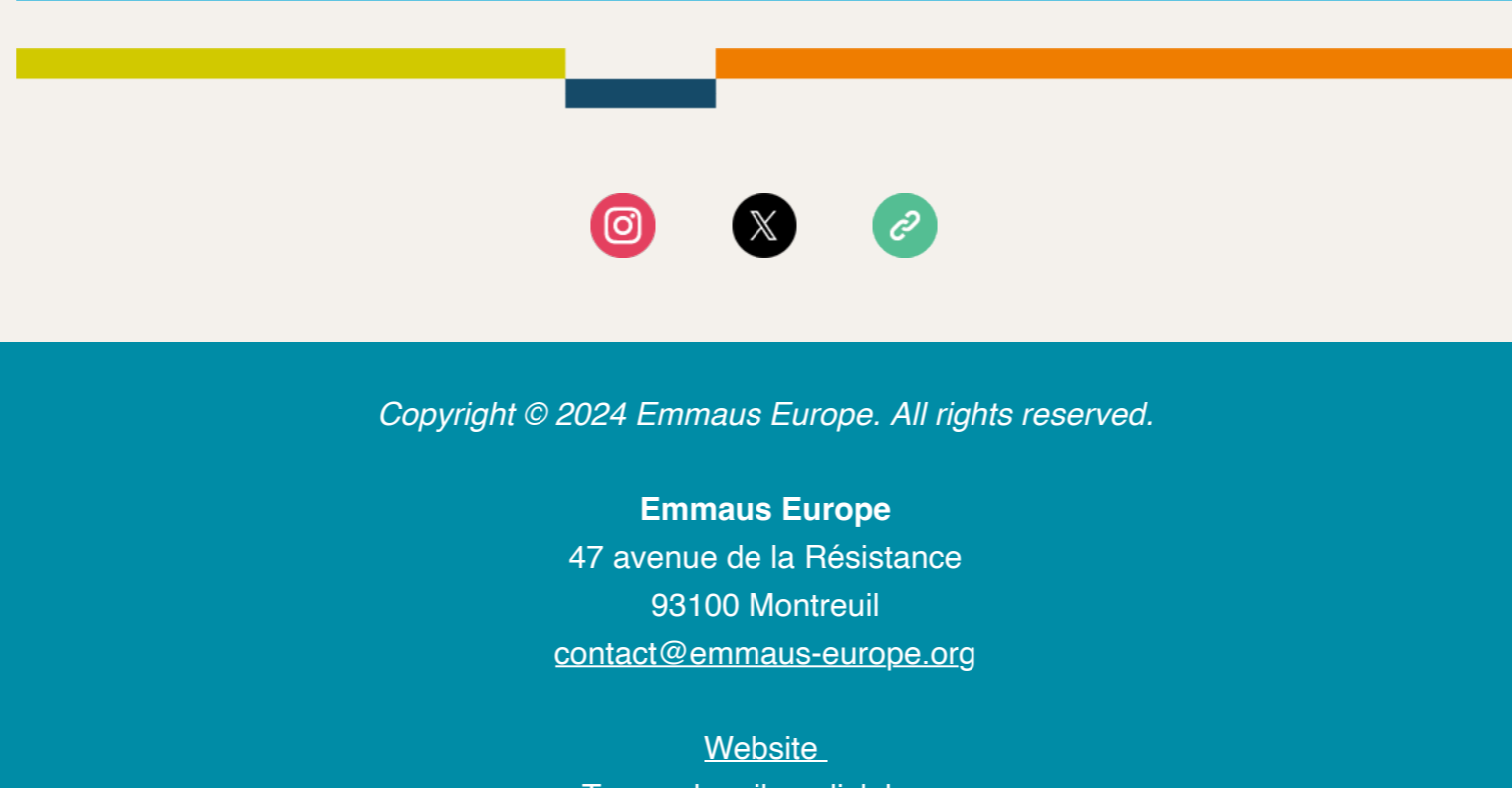
- A licence to obtain funding for the distribution of hot meals to the homeless (thanks to the refrigerated lorry).
- A licence to collect unsold food from the region (thanks to a kitchen that complies with health standards), particularly from local farms and market gardens;

In the long term, these two licences will make it possible to finance the street outreach programme, which until now has depended on external funding. Solidarity bears fruit in the long term!

Solidarity transport of goods Three groups are calling for generous support!

Three communities located in Poland (Rzeszów) and Romania (Satu Mare and Iasi) are calling for solidarity from Emmaus Europe, through transporting donated goods. Help them to help others! Transporting unsold furniture and trinkets from other European countries allows them to support their communities and help vulnerable people in their regions. Their business model partly depends on your solidarity. For more information, please contact [Emmanuel](#) and read our [transport guide](#).

Emmaus Iasi The group is getting back on its feet!



Community house of Emmaus Iasi. Credit: Emmaus Iasi.

Following an inspection at the end of March 2024, Emmaus Iasi found out that the community home was no longer compliant with the new fire safety standards, which came into force in... March 2024. This decision meant a temporary closure of the home and companions being "put out on the street".

As misfortune never comes alone, the cost of the work required to bring it up to standard amounted to €75,000.

Thanks to the efforts of Emmaus Europe's national delegates, Emmaus International Board members and a network of groups that are "friends" of the Iasi community, the movement was able to raise around €80,000 to carry out the work.

Currently (in June 2024), the group has performed all the inspections and commissioned the certified experts to determine the work required to comply with standards. Găluț, the community manager, has contacted construction and renovation companies and work should start at the beginning of July and take a maximum of two months. This work includes:

- Design, purchase and installation of fire detection and signalling systems;
- Replacement of doors, windows, fireproofing the attic, changing the internal access (stairway) and emergency exit, and rearranging the living space.

At the same time, companions from the community living in Iasi were able to find other accommodation, thanks to the efforts of the entire Emmaus Iasi team:

- Five companions are now staying in Belvédère, another of Emmaus Iasi's premises (agricultural farm, warehouse and home for two companions from April 2024);
- Some companions are staying at Păpăși, another of the organisation's sites;
- Three companions are staying in a flat rented by Emmaus Iasi, in the town centre.
- Four companions are staying with Emmaus groups abroad: two in Emmaus Krefeld, in Germany, and two in Emmaus Sion, Switzerland;
- Two companions are currently in Italy as part of an exchange programme;
- Two companions found work on building sites outside Romania and the Emmaus movement.

The entire Emmaus Iasi team remains in contact with the companions who are abroad: sending medicines, making daily video calls, monitoring mental health... No one has been left unemployed as a result of this situation. In addition, around ten companions have been given salaried status so that they can continue to work at Belvédère. Everyone will return to the community home once the work has been completed and the authorities have approved its reopening.

Despite the funds raised for the work and the solutions found for the companions, the situation remains difficult.

Only the management team can now work in the shops. The team continues to be involved in the street outreach programme, and its project with the municipality (day centre at Baia Publica). In addition, changes in the regulations governing the care of vulnerable groups in Romania make it very difficult for the organisations to carry out their social work. The Emmaus groups in Romania are working to highlight these difficulties at state and municipal level.

Lastly, the group is currently seeking solidarity in the form of transported goods to keep its two second-hand shops going and secure an income (see previous article).

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

World Forum of Alternatives

Registrations remain open until 15 July!

The 2nd World Forum of Alternatives will be held in France, on 17 - 20 September, at the Palés des Congrès of the Futuroscope, a few kilometres from Poitiers. For latecomers, it is not too late to sign up! You still have until 15 July to register to take part in this major event in the international life of our movement.

This is your chance to learn how to organise advocacy activities and put forward your ideas for action to other groups in the movement at theme-based workshops broad enough to allow each group to contribute its own ideas and voices!

The programme for these four days full of discussions and exchanges is starting to take shape. You can find all the information you need on the website.

- REGISTRATION
- WFA WEBSITE

If you have any questions about the forum, please contact the Emmaus International secretariat by email or at +33 6 82 37 18 13.

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Emmaus Europe
47 avenue de la Résistance
93100 Montreuil
contact@emmaus-europe.org

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