



## Minutes of the Regional Executive of Emmaüs Europe 9/1/24 – Montreuil – France

emmaüs

EUROPE

### **PRESENT**

Carina Aaltonen (President), Jean-Philippe Légaut (Treasurer), Aurore Querel (Secretary), Eduardo Sanchez, Leila Thouret, Vincent Chapuis, Duncan Lewis, Herbert Bitter, and Yvette Gumbs.

### **EUROPE REGIONAL SECRETARIAT**

Eve Poulteau (CEO), Manon Gaham (advocacy and awareness raising officer), Véronica Acevedo Caro (administration assistant) and Emmanuel Raboutin (solidarity coordinator).

<b>Preamble</b>	Carina wished the Executive members a happy new year.
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<b>AGENDA ITEM</b>	<b>DISCUSSION / DEBATE</b>	<b>CONCLUSIONS   DECISIONS</b>
<b>1. Approval of the minutes from the last meeting</b>		The minutes of the last Executive were unanimously approved.
<b>2. GA review</b>	<p>The exec members highlighted the success of the General Assembly (GA) held in Iasi. The peaceful atmosphere was a reflection of the work done over the past four years, and should enable the movement's energy to be used positively in order to move forward.</p> <p>There is a need to find a way to maintain the connection between the participants, and facilitate passing on the participants' contact details, as well as finding a way of building on the outcomes of the workshops and keynote lectures, so that we take action in the direction called for by the RAEE.</p> <p>The GBV (gender-based violence) initiative should be maintained in the future, but alcohol being available at the evening event arranged by EE required careful attention to be paid to everyone, notably participants who are not necessarily used to socialising in this way.</p> <p>The next GA: a first regional elective assembly needs to be arranged on the eve of the World Assembly (WA), scheduled to take place in the first half of 2026. We need to reach an agreement with EI in order to plan our assembly and the arrangements.</p> <p>The next regional assembly will be held at the earliest in the first half of 2027, and will be "freed" from holding votes to elect people to sit on the Regional Council and to serve as president, as they will have taken place in 2026.</p>	<p>Send to the exec and build on the workshop outcomes.</p> <p>Make arrangements with EI to allocate an entire day before the WA to the European GA for our elections and time to discuss European topics before the WA starts.</p>
<b>3. European advocacy: how does it work? Key events in 2024: 1 Feb</b>	<p>Reminder of how the EU bodies work and European areas of responsibility. (See the PowerPoint).</p> <p><u>Reminder of the partners that we work with at the European level</u> <u>EAPN</u></p>	The application to join the ECRE was unanimously approved by the Exec members, despite the significant membership fee

## event and EU elections

A source of lots of national initiatives, but does not keep us sufficiently in the loop at the European level. We took part in the launch of the intergroup on poverty with ATD Quart Monde (ATD Fourth World) and EAPN at the start of the previous term of office, but COVID and a change of team at EAPN stalled this dynamic.

FEANTSA is a network of which FAP (Fondation Abbé Pierre) is a member, and is very relevant for homelessness. Like us, FEANTSA is a member of EAPN but is often more strategic for advocacy issues. It would be worthwhile looking into FEANTSA and maybe joining it. This could also be of interest to Emmaus UK.

### RREUSE

This European reuse network champions the issue of recognition for the social economy as part of circular economy issues in the countries of Europe, and advocates reuse rather than recycling. RREUSE is a major partner for Emmaus, and our role is often to highlight social issues, as they are not always stressed by the other members.

### MIGREUROP

A network that shares our stance on freedom of movement, brings together researchers, provides information, and facilitates exchanges, which is important. However, it does not undertake advocacy work at the European level, which can sometimes prove frustrating.

### ECRE

The previous executive took the decision to join the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE), an alliance specialising in asylum issues and more active in terms of lobbying about European legislation. Membership costs €4,000 a year, which seems a little expensive: we pay between €500 and €1,000 for membership of the other networks. The executive felt that it was nevertheless worthwhile joining the ECRE because their presence and advocacy in Brussels would enable EE to raise its profile in this area. Moreover, three MEPs advised us to join the network at a 2022 event at the European Parliament.

This raised the issue of sharing out the work, so a roundtable discussion ensued about the members' interests.

## Calendar and partnerships

of roughly €4,000 per annum.

Emmaus Europe will forge closer links with FEANTSA, as the network is more aligned with the movement's values with regard to homelessness.

Yvette and Vincent will monitor RREUSE's work.

Herbert will monitor the EAPN's work.

Duncan volunteered to cover FEANSTA.

Yvette committed to focusing on migration issues with the ECRE once we are members (Migreurop too, but they very often communicate in French).

The exec approved the main thrusts of the EU elections campaign.

Regarding the vote on the European Pact on Migration and Asylum, we need to take action and demonstrate to the MEPs that EE opposes the Pact, asking them to vote against it.

Regarding the revision of the EU Framework Waste Directive, we are working on a position paper with Emmaus France and TESS GEIE (Textiles with Ethical Sustainability and Solidarity – European Economic Interest Grouping). Once the paper has been completed, we want to arrange Zoom meetings for our European groups to explain the issues and encourage them to contact their local authorities and governments to ensure that they can access some of the textiles. We must keep in mind that although a reuse and recycling percentage has been approved, the States have not yet endorsed the 25% figure. This will be a big issue at the EU elections.

The EU elections will take place on 6-9 June 2024. Once elected, the new European Commission will present its priorities for 2024 in September/October. We will gain an overview of the work over the next five years, which will guide our own advocacy work.

#### Update on the relationship between Emmaus and ATD Quart Monde

There is no longer any relationship in Switzerland, but in the Jura region ties have been strengthened to put pressure on the government about migration, and political education. In France, Emmaus and ATD have gone their separate ways because of the presence of two strong personalities among the founders. ATD is more radical in its struggle. Emmaus has a very good relationship with ATD in the Netherlands, they play a very important role. At the European level we had good links prior to COVID and were taking part in the poverty intergroup founded by ATD. We need to resume contact.

#### 1 February event at the European Parliament

Two aims:

- Showcase our work to the MEPs.
- Attract a maximum number of prospective MEPs, and share our assertions and position paper with them.

Participants: Carina (Finland), Herbert, Yvette (NL), Thierry (RCEE), Umberto (Portugal), Jean-Philippe (Romania) and Julio (Belgium).

We also invited RREUSE.

The MEP David Cormand's team, co-head of the French Greens' list for the European Parliament elections, is supporting us in arranging the event, and this is very positive.

Our assertions and stance for the 2024-2029 period of office have been endorsed by the RCEE, so we are planning to share them for the first time on 31 January during the Appeal event.

#### Group mobilisation and support

We are going to invite prospective MEPs to visit the Emmaus groups.

An “EU elections” insert will be included in our newsletter each month until 9 June. We will focus on the role of the EU and how it affects our groups and their work.

An EU elections page has been created on the intranet, and will contain all the information and resources that we are developing for the elections. At the present time, it contains a template prospective MEP invitation that the groups can use. The groups will be sent several communications resources so that they can lobby the prospective MEPs.

→ The Exec members approved all the above proposals.

#### The 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1954 appeal in Europe

- Netherlands: some groups are going to make videos. The Abbé Pierre film is being released on 1 February. Media articles.
- UK: an advertising campaign is being developed, not so much focusing on outrage, but on kindness and goodness, with personal testimonies about homelessness and the impact of kindness on homeless people. The idea is for the campaign to be championed by all the UK groups, featured in the press etc. Efforts are underway to involve the Royal Family.
- France: being organised on a regional basis. In Esteville for Alençon.
- Spain: individual campaign, no nationwide initiative.
- Switzerland: Fribourg and Jura have planned an event with the media and radio. Fribourg is holding an exhibition. However, there is a timing and awareness-raising issue about making our voice heard; the groups are very focused on shelter and support. FES (Emmaus Switzerland Federation) has launched a nationwide poster campaign to coincide with 1 February in the major Swiss towns where Emmaus has a presence.
- Finland: very little homelessness because of the Housing First policy. 1 February is an opportunity for the groups to raise customer awareness about poverty.

**Show what is done in the next newsletter.**

**4. Solidarity: how does it work? What are the challenges involved? (Programmes and collectives)**

Emmanuel Cochon and Marie Lucas (Emmaus International) joined the discussion for this agenda item to provide clarification and act as a link with EI.

**The annual solidarity programme**

Emmanuel R went back over the different forms of solidarity in the Emmaus movement in Europe, notably in conjunction with EI, and emphasized the involvement of the exec members and EE elected representatives in the decision-making processes. The issues for the coming years were mentioned briefly.

The issue of trial member groups, who are not allowed to submit projects to the Annual Solidarity Programme (ASP), was raised. At the present time, trial members are allowed to apply for a maximum funding amount of €5,000 from the Group Economic Strengthening Programme (GSP). This seems adequate for now.

The executive members reiterated that it is important for the European groups to know “where the companions’ and the movement’s money is going”, and what projects are supported by international and European solidarity.

Emmanuel Cochon announced that the projects that could benefit from a “subsidiary” or extra appeal for donations, once the funding granted under the ASP has been approved, could be chosen by the EI Board. This raised a lot of issues that the EE and EI Secretariats will tackle over the coming weeks.

**EE Green Transition Fund**

Presentation of the workings and issues involved.

The issue of “revolving credit” was raised, enabling the groups to gradually reimburse the costs incurred by EE, thanks to energy savings made. This idea could be studied in greater depth and implemented for the next projects to receive support.

2024 work areas

- Fine-tune the project submission criteria.
- Examine the option of groups making a voluntary contribution based on the “carbon tax” model.

**Container programme**

The executive unanimously voted to approve the option for the groups to simultaneously submit a project to the GSP and a project to the ASP. The two-year exclusion period does not apply in these circumstances.

The executive maintained EE’s restrictive criteria for FAP projects and unanimously voted to convey EI’s call for projects made at the start of the year.

**Green Transition Fund**

The executive unanimously voted to open up the Green Transition Fund to all the European groups, while ensuring that €40,000 is kept back for Iasi and Geo.

The EE Secretariat will work on the new criteria for applying and obtaining funding from the Green Transition Fund.

**Regional emergency fund**

The executive voted unanimously to send €2,000 to Emmaus Satu Mare in

The collective meetings will be an opportunity to take an in-depth look at how the Eastern European groups can gradually become less dependent on solidarity container loads. A review of the programme's strengths and weaknesses could be made. This process should be a medium-term undertaking. The container programme is a reflection of group interdependence: countries in the "West and North" need the programme to ship goods that do not sell and would be sent to landfill, while the Eastern European groups still need these goods to run their communities. Replacing the goods with funding is not the answer: this support should enable the groups to undertake an economic transition, and not finance the operating costs of the beneficiary groups.

This discussion process should also be undertaken at the international level with the container and group independence programmes.

The collectives will enable the EE elected representatives to clearly convey the message about the gradual winding-down of the container programme in Europe, and the need to develop new economic models.

We need to find a solution that does not jeopardise the links between the groups.

### **Regional emergency fund**

The fund, credited with €12,000 when it was set up in 2019, has now been used up.

### **Ukraine Fund**

The secretariat and the exec will review funding support provided by the Ukraine Fund over the next few months. Several ideas were put forward, specifically:

- Help create a new Emmaus group, with Oselya's support, or with the support of female refugees hosted by Brat Albert.
- Support for Ukrainian pacifist organisations.
- A more long-term initiative for the displaced people who are maybe going to make new lives for themselves in the towns where they thought they would just be staying temporarily.

Herbert will travel to Ukraine in April to discuss these matters with Natalia and Grigory. The secretariat will talk to the groups about the continuation of monthly financial support, particularly with Brat Albert.

response to the disaster that occurred in late August 2023, resulting in the shop roof needing to be repaired.

### **Ukraine Fund**

The executive approved all the decisions taken by email in 2023.

The executive voted unanimously to approve the following funding support:

- Oselya: €4,411.41
- Nasha Khata €1,010.47
- Brat Albert: €2,565.52

### **Support for Oselya within the framework of the workshop renovation project**

The executive unanimously voted to approve payment of the second tranche of funding (€3,993).

<p><b>5. Work on the action plan</b></p>	<p>The strategic plan needs to be converted into a yearly action plan. Flip chart work – a summary will be made for the next RCEE.</p> <p><u>Decisions so that we can start moving forward in 2024</u></p> <p><b>2024 exchanges of practices</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Green transition – Zoom meeting: textile – waste news</li> <li>○ Proper shelter and support and living conditions in Emmaus: meeting between the national organisations about this issue in the springtime.</li> </ul> <p><b>Group survey</b> The April Regional Council will give final approval to the questions and format. The elected representatives could support the secretariat by collecting information from the national organisations. The figures will be used in our advocacy campaigns, notably with regard to textile sorting.</p> <p><b>Advocacy</b> <u>Textiles</u> Launch a poster campaign in late 2024 about donating to Emmaus in Europe, looking forward to 2025 when the separate collection of textile waste throughout Europe will commence, and highlight that we are important players at the European level. <u>Rise of the extreme right</u> Raise public awareness and “denormalize” the extreme right. Work for the World Forum for Alternatives.</p> <p><b>Solidarity</b> <u>Green transition fund 2024</u> → new criteria, group support, carbon tax <u>Container programme independence 2024 and 2025</u> <u>Peace</u> Plan something in Italy with the groups. Support the involvement of the European groups in the March for Peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Act as Emmaus-ISF’s partner for this event.</p>	
<p><b>6. Solidarity: examination of projects for 2024</b></p>	<p>Four projects have been submitted for Annual Solidarity Programme (ASP) funding.</p> <p><b>Satu Mare: renovate the roof and flooring in the warehouse/shop, bring into line with safety standards</b></p>	<p><b>Satu Mare</b> The executive unanimously approved submission of the</p>



	<p>Jean-Philippe Légaut left the meeting.  General presentation of the group  Aim: Bring the shop into line with minimum watertightness, health and safety standards.  Total budget: €69,694  Funding requested: €50,000  The amount of funding requested is significant. Available partnerships need to be examined. The amount is due to EE's restrictive criteria (groups are not allowed to submit several projects in a row) and the economies of scale generated by closing the shop/warehouse just once, and not several times.  Emmanuel Cochon raised the possibility of utilising the EI emergency fund, as bringing the premises into line with fire safety standards is an emergency.  Jean-Philippe has researched all the public funding options at the national level.</p> <p><b>Iasi: purchase of a refrigerated truck and cooking equipment</b>  Group presentation.  Aim: equip the association with tools that will enable it to secure the long-term future of the outreach programmes in Iasi. Ensure the sustainability of the outreach programme and obtain licences linked to the outreach work, which will enable grants to be obtained and good-quality saleable/unsold food products to be collected. In the long term, local council grants should cover the whole cost of the outreach programme.  Total budget: €43,365  Funding requested: €21,500</p> <p><b>Targu Jiu: construct a building for the manual workshops</b>  Aim: Improve labour market access prospects for young people from the Gorj region of Romania.  Total budget: €70,000  Funding requested: €50,000  Group presentation.  Targu Jiu is not up to date with its EI membership dues/solidarity sales, and is up to date with EE until 2022. They calculate their membership dues using the income from one of their income-generating activities, and not the income from the three activities that make up the association.  The plot belongs to the Emmaus business and not the Emmaus association on the premises, which could be an issue if they ceased trading.  This initiative only has five beneficiaries.</p>	<p>project to the Regional Council.</p> <p><b>Iasi</b>  The executive approved submission of the project to the RCEE.</p> <p><b>Targu Jiu</b>  The Regional Executive decided not to submit this project to the RCEE.</p> <p><b>Piadena</b>  The Executive decided to continue discussions with the group with an eye to submitting the project to the RCEE.</p>
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	<p><b>Piadena: renovate two buildings belonging to Emmaus Italy</b>  Aim: Make the workplace safe, increase sales capacity and energy independence, and foster the circular economy. Multiyear project.  Total budget: €336,197  Funding requested: €50,000  Group presentation.  The group could also benefit from funding from the Green Transition Fund.</p>	
<p><b>7. European elections: proposals and calendar</b></p>	<p><b>Position paper for the 2024 European elections</b></p> <p>The first version of our assertions for the European elections has been submitted to the RCEE.</p> <p>The exec is generally satisfied with the proposed document and approved the idea of putting forward a subsequent version in which each section would be developed in greater detail and separately. The following proposals were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- We need to mention degrowth or post-growth.</li> <li>- Mention the need to plan mechanisms to avoid the negative repercussions of the green transition on the most deprived communities.</li> <li>- We need to emphasize our expertise more to justify our assertions.</li> <li>- The text is sometimes overly specific in certain areas, notably the reuse section.</li> <li>- We need to look into existing social transition funds at the European level, and using the findings as a basis, either propose one or suggest how to improve the existing system.</li> </ul> <p>Regarding requests to include a European malus for textile overproduction and a ban on vouchers in exchange for donations, the executive decided to remove these ideas from the document and include them in a more detailed subsequent document.</p> <p>Regarding the section on peace in Europe and “common European defence”, the executive decided to only keep the first sentence and talk about “limiting the arms race in which once again is involved...”</p> <p>The executive decided to remove the section calling for an end to boosting each country’s individual defence capability and instead opt for common defence. It is unclear whether all of our groups would agree with this point. Our aim is to build a Europe that talks in order to</p>	

	<p>maintain peace. However, we know that our Ukrainian groups do not agree with this point either.</p> <p>The executive decided to allocate time during the RC to the issue of peace and defence in the current geopolitical context.</p> <p><u>To be rediscussed</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Involvement with RREUSE at the European level on eco-design, item repairability etc.</li> <li>- Proposals about peace.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>8. New groups: presentations and 2024 calendar</b></p>	<p>There are no new groups to be submitted for membership and approval. In countries with no national organisation, EE is responsible for approving and the process of moving towards membership.</p> <p>Three visits need to be scheduled this year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Amis 3, Latvia: The group is reliant on solidarity container loads, but has started developing other activities.</li> <li>- MPFSC, Lithuania: Group working to address human trafficking, undertakes sex education, gender issues, etc.</li> <li>- Nova Generacija, Bosnia-Herzegovina: Group working with child victims of violence.</li> <li>➔ Vlore, Albania: Group supported by Italy, bilateral relationship with the Italian group. Visited in 2022 by Eve, Carina and Maria-Luisa. It seems that they are not necessarily interested in joining Emmaus. Suggest to the RCEE that the group's trial membership is terminated, giving them a final chance to get back to us, before we end the trial membership with no further action to be taken.</li> </ul> <p>Duncan volunteered to join the group visiting Lithuania and Latvia. Carina and Aurore will visit Nova Generacija, immediately after the South-East Europe Collective. Visit arranged for 5-7 June 2024.</p>	<p>The visit to NG will take place on 5-7 June and will be made by Carina and Aurore.</p>
<p><b>9. 2024 - Forum for Alternatives</b></p>	<p>The forum will take place on 17-20 September 2024 in Poitiers.</p> <p>Emmaus Europe is ready to support EI with regard to organising and getting the region's groups to participate in the event's content.</p> <p>A consultation will be sent to the groups in late February, and a draft programme is planned for March.</p> <p>We need to think about the messages that we want to convey at our level and discuss with the world's other regions with a view to presenting them to the UN.</p>	

<p><b>10. Financial situation and 2024 budget</b></p>	<p>Presentation of the 2024 projected budget to the exec members.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Keep an eye on staff costs with the recruitment of a new team member in 2023.</li> <li>- Plan a bigger budget for 2024 for the RCEE because there will be two in 2024 as opposed to one in 2023.</li> </ul> <p>Some groups are yet to pay their fees for the 2023 assembly, but the budget will be balanced, notably due to the €40,000 provision included in the budget.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Start budgeting a provision for the next assembly: at least €10,000.</li> <li>- Remember to suggest increasing membership dues at the next RA.</li> </ul> <p>2023 was a record year for membership dues, which is very positive and is also due to it being an assembly year. The target of €400,000 for 2024 therefore remains ambitious without an assembly.</p> <p>The plan is to take back €14,000 from unallocated solidarity to fund the collectives, and accept the whole €50,000 EI contribution this year.</p> <p>We also need to check with EI if EE needs to contribute to the costs of arranging the elective assembly to be held on the eve of the WA, earmark a small budget if we want to arrange this day (speakers, communication etc).</p>	<p>The exec approved the budget submitted with the change of making a provision for the next assembly.</p> <p><b>For the next exec in February:</b> Include the previous year's balance sheet appended to the projected budget to provide an overview of our accounts.</p>
<p><b>11. Inflation increase</b></p>	<p>The executive suggested adding a 3% rise to the salaries that were increased by 2% in October. This will make for a pay increase slightly above the rate of actual inflation starting from January's payroll.</p> <p>Last year a bonus compensated for the fact that actual inflation was not fully covered by the pay rise, so the executive is not suggesting a bonus in addition to this increase, also taking into account the GA bonus awarded in the autumn.</p> <p>A working group made up of Vincent, Aurore and JP will work on changes to the pay scale to bring it into line with EI's scale, while stating that EE does not have the same budget as EI. Moreover, EI is looking into overall working conditions at the organisation, so a joint discussion process will be started, notably via Aurore, who is part of the EI working group on these issues.</p> <p>The working group will submit its proposal at the latest at the in-person exec in July.</p>	<p>The executive endorsed in a vote a 3% pay rise starting from the January 2024 payroll in order to cover the 5% inflation rate in 2023.</p>

## 12. Organising the exec's work

Reminder of the EE governing body 2024 calendar.

Partnerships/Topics:

RREUSE/reuse: Yvette / Vincent

Migreurop/migration: Yvette

EAPN/poverty: Herbert

Aurore will liaise with EI in her role as VP.

Duncan will take part in the trial member visits.

Every Thursday morning: a weekly meeting between Carina, Herbert and Eve.

For the next executives and regional councils: mention which agenda items are for discussion and which need a decision.

As there were no further items on the agenda, the president closed the meeting.

**Carina Aaltonen**

President of Emmaus Europe

**Aurore Querel**

Secretary of Emmaus Europe