

ACTIVITY REPORT 2023



emmaus

EUROPE

ACTIVISTS FOR CHANGE

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A YEAR OF DARKNESS AND LIGHT

BY CARINA AALTONEN

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair.”

This quote from Charles Dickens in 1859 describes well the year we have laid behind us. Instead of seeing the end of the war in Ukraine, we could follow the Israeli occupation of Gaza that escalated with the killing of at least 15.000 children in a few months. The genocide of the Palestinians is taking place right in front of our eyes. And it is more than a genocide. Israel is destroying libraries, universities and schools, churches, archaeological sites and everything that is a part of the Palestinian culture. The Portuguese professor Boaventura de Sousa Santos calls this the epistemicide of Palestine, the systematic destruction of any indigenous knowledge base. It is nothing new; the Europeans also used this method during the colonisation of Africa.

Another “worst of times” is the uprising of the nationalists and far-right political parties and how they make their way into the governments in Europe. We cannot sit quietly and wait for the worst. Emmaus Europe will focus more on advocacy work and help you in your groups stand up for diversity, human rights, and the values of our movement. We stand stronger together.

Cover photo credit: Emmaus Europe, Emmaus members from Europe gathered from 24 – 27 October 2023 for the 7th General Assembly of Emmaus Europe in Iași, Romania. Inside page photo credits: Carina Aaltonen (p. 5), Emmaus Europe (pp. 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 19, 33, 37, 39, 40), RREUSE (pp. 15, 17), Emmaus Oselya, Ukraine (pp. 21, 23, 24), Emmaus Brat Albert, Poland (p.27), Emmaus Cologne, Germany (p. 30), Emmaus Catanzaro, Italy (p. 33), IFS-Emmaus, Bosnia-Herzegovina (pp. 35, 36, 37), Manon Gaham (p. 41) / Design: Emmaus Europe

Personally, “the best of times” for me were the inaugurations of the Center for Homeless People in Lviv, Ukraine, and, of course, the Regional Assembly in Iasi, Romania. When we work together, we can accomplish substantial changes and miracles for many people. We are better together.

During my fifth year as a Chair of Emmaus Europe, I have met surprisingly many people on my travels who know about Emmaus Åland and the place where I live, the Islands of Peace, in the middle of the Baltic Sea between Finland and Sweden. Many of them have been to or have sent participants to the summer camps we (as many other Emmaus groups) used to organise. Approximately three hundred different people participated in the camps for twenty years. Many of the participants are still with the Emmaus movement and for many, this is more than a trip abroad. It is a life changing experience.

A few months ago, one of the interpreters in Paris told me that her daughter Sara had had a great summer at our camp just before the pandemic. When I visited Ukraine - for the inauguration of the Center for Homeless People, I met Kristina again. The first time we met was in my home with the other camp participants. (I always invited the participants to my house for dinner and a get-together).

Kristina told me how her two daughters, had learnt the difference between the sound of Russian and Ukrainian missiles. She also told me how, since the Russian occupation, she has longed for a safe and peaceful place for herself and her young daughters - a place like Åland.

Everyone dreams of living in a safe place where they are free to think and feel secure regardless of where they were born or what ethnic background, belief or sexual orientation they have. Right now, the Europe I know is changing. Even in an international movement like Emmaus, it is becoming increasingly difficult for people outside Europe to get tourist visas to attend meetings, summer camps and exchanges.

Building peace is about meeting, getting together and listening to and learning from each other. It is about becoming good friends. Sometimes, it is as simple as gathering around a long table, having dinner with people from different backgrounds, and having a good time while the discussions flow.

Sustainable peace, based on respect for human rights and sustainable development, is more critical in the long term than increasing the war and defense budget. The climate crisis affects people’s everyday lives, increasing the number of conflicts. Democracy and human rights are under serious

threat in several places worldwide. Emmaus once served as a meeting place for humanity, solidarity, and practical peace work. We must continue to work in this spirit. The children in Gaza and Ukraine are our children, too. No child should grow up in fear of being killed by a missile.

In Emmaus, we bring hope and joy, friendship, trust and kindness to people. Let’s continue together.

In peace,

Carina Aaltonen,
Chair of Emmaus Europe



2023: GATHERING TOGETHER FOR AN ASSEMBLY YEAR!



Emmaus Europe members gathered from 24 – 27 October 2023 for the 7th General Assembly of Emmaus Europe in Iași, Romania.

Every four years, the Europe region celebrates its General Assembly, gathering all the Emmaus Europe groups together to define the guidelines for our work and elect new board members for the region for the years to come.

GO EAST

For our 7th European General Assembly, we were delighted to be hosted by the Emmaus Iași group in Romania. For the first time, one of our assemblies was held in an Eastern European country! From 24 – 27 October 2023, the European groups all met together and enjoyed the warm and friendly atmosphere.

Iași is the first Romanian city to have set up an Emmaus community. We had the pleasure of finding out about the challenges and realities of the country during our visit, gaining a better understanding of the history of Eastern European countries and how they are viewed within Europe. Together we were able to take stock of the last four years and learn from each other, hold discussions, debates and build the future of Emmaus in Europe.

During our workshops and round tables, we focussed specifically on the issues of the war in Europe and the importance for our movement of building a peaceful Europe for the future. Romania shares a border with Ukraine and we were able to hear from our Ukrainian colleagues about how they are dealing with a war that still has no end in sight. Across the whole of Europe, preserving democracy and upholding human rights is an issue. Our discussions strengthened our resolve to act and reinforced our strategic plan.

KEY FIGURES

240 participants from **17** countries!

- 123 member groups present
- 68 member groups represented
- 5 trial member groups present
- 12 volunteer interpreters
- 29 workshops
- 3 talks/first-hand accounts
- 3 round tables
 - “Pacifism, non-violence, and resistance: what action can we continue to take to bring about a peaceful Europe in times of war?”
 - “What are the new environmental challenges for Emmaus? Zero waste, post-growth economy”
 - “Who is suffering most nowadays? How is Emmaus’ provision being tailored to the people who need it most?”



Find the 2023 General Assembly minutes in the member’s area, accessible to all on our website: emmaus-europe.org

IN PICTURES



Our Chair, Carina Aaltonen, opens the General Assembly.



Speeches in French, English and Romanian during a round table discussion on the challenges of adapting to companions’ needs and to new members of the public.



A reunion of Emmaus members.



Participant discussions in workshops on one of the 29 topics offered.



The General Assembly thanks the team of volunteer interpreters.



The General Assembly thanks the Emmaus Iași team.

LUCIE COUTAZ PRIZE

■ The Lucie Coutaz Prize was created in 2015 to reward a woman who keeps Emmaus running on a daily basis through her commitment, putting good ideas into practice and promoting the movement's message and values. The statue depicts Lucie, created by a Dutch craftsman, and awarded to a different person at each assembly. On this occasion, Maria Luisa Testori, the former prize-winner, presented the prize to Rosa Gil Elorduy from Emmaus Bilbao in Spain.



Rosa Gil Elorduy, of Emmaus Bilbao, receives the Lucie Coutaz prize.



The General Assembly votes in favour.

A NEW STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2023-2026

One of the main highlights of a European assembly is voting on the guidelines that will steer the work of the Emmaus Europe elected and staff members until the following assembly. The new strategic plan tailors the Emmaus International guidelines to a European context and links them to those implemented at country-level. For each objective, we have defined what we can promote in terms of advocacy and European alliances, whilst also identifying the way we can work together to further improve and harmonise our practices.

For example, “Call for and take action to protect the poorest people from climate change”, while “limiting our energy consumption and waste production».

4 MAJOR CHALLENGES

- **Act for peace**
- **Act for an eco-revolution**
- **Act for a solidarity-based society**
- **Make new from old:** by renewing our activities and seeking out tomorrow's activists (companions, managers and volunteers)!

■ **Find the 2023-2026 strategic plan** in the member's area, accessible to all on our website: emmaus-europe.org



The Regional Board met with the salaried team in April 2024 in Paris, France.

A NEW TEAM OF COMMITTED ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES

The assembly re-elected our Chair, **Carina Aaltonen**, who will continue her role for a second term with great enthusiasm. Twelve Emmaus International Board members, from nine countries, were also elected to represent the European groups both at regional and international level. Indeed, the latter are members of both the Regional Council (Europe Regional Board) and the Emmaus International Board. At a regional level, National Delegates (ND) will also sit on the Regional Board. Emmaus Europe can count on a new passionate and motivated team to successfully carry out the tasks ahead!

The first Regional Board meeting took place at the end of the General Assembly. The aim of this meeting was to constitute a new Regional Executive.

NEW MEMBERS OF THE REGIONAL EXECUTIVE

Carina Aaltonen (EIC - Finland)
 Herbert Bitter (EIC - Netherlands)
 Aurore Querel (EIC - France)
 Jean-Philippe Legaut (ND - Romania)
 Vincent Chapuis (EIC - Switzerland)
 Duncan Lewis (EIC - United Kingdom)
 Yvette Gumbs (ND - Netherlands)



The new members of the Emmaus Europe Executive.

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE REGIONAL BOARD

Sabina Arnaut-Jahic (EIC - Bosnia and Herzegovina)
 Sonia Hurcet (EIC - France)
 Thierry Klatovsky (EIC - France)
 Cédric Marrec (EIC - Poland)
 Nina Nyman (EIC - Finland)
 Xavier Renard (EIC - France)
 Nika Siprak Wendling (EIC - Croatia)
 Tony Ferrier (ND - United Kingdom)
 Joël Isselé (ND - France)
 Elli Kreul (ND - Germany)
 Paco Lopez (ND - Spain)
 François Malaise (Representative - Belgium)
 Anouk Mevillot (ND - Switzerland)
 Robert Opoka (ND - Poland)
 Grigory Semenchuk (ND - Ukraine)
 Maria Luisa Testori (ND - Italy)
 Mazdak Pilevar (ND - Finland)

STATUTORY AMENDMENTS FOR GREATER ALIGNMENT

An Extraordinary General Assembly was convened to discuss the amendments to the Emmaus Europe Statutes and Internal Rules. The principal aim was to align them with the Emmaus International Statutes and Internal Rules following amendments voted on at the last World Assembly in 2022.

This Extraordinary Assembly also provided an opportunity to include the fight against gender-based discrimination in the list of the forms of discrimination combatted by Emmaus Europe and introduce obligations to strengthen relationships between the different structural levels of the movement.

Find the new statutes and internal rules in the "Introduction" section on our website: emmaus-europe.org

EUROPEAN ADVOCACY: STANDING UP FOR WHAT WE BELIEVE IN



CIRCULAR ECONOMY: SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS FOR TEXTILES AND RECOGNITION OF SOCIAL AND SOLIDARITY ECONOMY ACTORS

■ A YEAR OF ACTIVISM FOR A SUSTAINABLE TEXTILE SECTOR WITH RREUSE

With the separate collection of textiles set to become compulsory in the European Union (EU) by 2025, this year saw the European institutions focus their attention on this sector. Two key texts were developed: the strategy for sustainable textiles and revision of the waste framework directive. Emmaus Europe, together with RREUSE, made important recommendations on these texts and participated at the European Social Economy Conference in San Sebastian, Spain, organised by the EU presidency, in addition to attending RREUSE's general assembly.

Group visit to Emaús Fundación Social during the European Social Economy Conference in San Sebastian, Spain.

■ Emmaus Europe is a member of RREUSE, the European reuse network: <https://rreuse.org>

European textile strategy

In relation to the European Union's strategy for sustainable textiles, we called for far-reaching eco-design requirements in particular, combatting global overproduction and calling for responsible purchasing practices. We also underscored the need to combat fast fashion, putting a stop to “green and social washing” and bolstering local reuse of textiles. A European Commission text was adopted. Although it is not binding, it includes several positive points on this subject:

- recognition of active social enterprises in the field of reuse;
- recognition of waste hierarchy;
- introduction of reuse and reparability criteria in design requirements;
- potential ban on the destruction of unsold new goods;
- planned allocation of a significant share of EPR (Extended Producer Responsibility) fees to waste prevention measures and reuse preparation activities.

This sustainable textile strategy has begun to be rolled out in other European legislation, particularly through the revision of the Waste Framework Directive. This text is crucial for the reuse sector as it defines the fundamental principles of preventing and managing waste. This revision focused on incorporating a textile sector into the legislation by implementing EPR schemes for European textiles. With RREUSE, we joined forces to adopt a position on this text to ensure that priority is given to reuse and that distinct and far-reaching quantitative targets are set for separate collection to promote reuse. Work on this text will continue over the course of 2024 and even into 2025.

Green Friday

For the second year running, Emmaus Europe was involved in the Green Friday campaign to put a stop to environmental and social costs, along with overproduction and overconsumption, by challenging the idea of Black Friday. Every year, the textile industry throws away four million tonnes of clothing and sells five million tonnes in Europe. Together with RREUSE, and with the support of all the Emmaus groups involved, we took part in sharing posters on social media to raise awareness about overconsumption. The aim was to encourage citizens to make mindful choices that take into account the environmental and social issues associated with consumerism, without making them feel guilty.

Green Friday poster campaign.



MOVING TOWARDS GREATER INCLUSION OF SOCIAL CRITERIA IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

In 2023, we also became involved in issues of access to public procurement. We worked with RREUSE to implement the social economy policy priorities of the 2021 action plan and the Directive on Public Procurement. This directive allows public authorities to include social and environmental considerations in calls for tenders. **Although the directive has not been revised**, we worked with RREUSE so that in some key sectors of the green transition, such as waste management, social criteria are given greater consideration, and even become compulsory.

DUE DILIGENCE

Emmaus Europe joined partners in the European coalition 'Justice is everybody's business' to campaign to improve the proposed European directive on due diligence. This directive is a step forward, but it does not go far enough in forcing companies to respect human rights, the environment and the climate.

More information on
<https://justice-business.org>

MIGRATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS: CONTINUING THE FIGHT FOR A WELCOMING AND PROTECTIVE EUROPE

■ EU PACT ON MIGRATION AND ASYLUM: EMMAUS EUROPE COMMITS TO COMBATING THE THREAT TO EXILES' RIGHTS

This year, all the texts of the EU Pact on Migration were finalised. This pact contains eight texts, all focused on tightening external borders and undermining freedom of movement and of settlement. Emmaus Europe advocated for a Europe which offers a dignified welcome, together with local authorities and many organisations. In June 2023, we went to Strasbourg to meet MEPs and EU commissioners to submit a manifesto signed by one hundred organisations and local authorities that take action on a daily basis to offer exiles a dignified welcome.

■ TAKING ACTION WITH MIGREUROP

In parallel with these political discussions, the situation for exiles coming to Europe has continued to worsen. Following the arrival of a record number of exiles in Lampedusa, civil society, including Emmaus Europe, expressed its deep concerns in a press release regarding the security response of European countries and the reception crisis. Emmaus Europe reiterated its solidarity with people arriving in Europe. In addition, during the first quarter of 2023, 14,963 people were intercepted at sea and forcibly sent back to Tunisia on behalf of the European Union (EU). Repression of political opponents, civil society and minorities in Tunisia has intensified. Together, Emmaus Europe and Migreurop have spoken out against agreements between the EU and Tunisia, by denouncing human rights violations. In a press release, we asked the EU to stop considering Tunisia a “safe country” for asylum seekers and to amend its cooperation agreements with this country.

Our partner, Migreurop, also held its General Assembly in 2023. Over the course of two days, we worked with other members of this Euro-African network, including members of academia and organisations, to continue our efforts to protect the rights of exiles. At the meeting, we examined the many achievements the network has made over the last two years and worked with others to bolster the Migreurop's strategic and policy guidelines. We also discovered the 4th edition of the Migrants Atlas in Europe dedicated on this occasion to freedom of movement.

■ More information on
<https://migreurop.org>



2023 General Assembly of the Migreurop network in Marseille.

EUROPEAN ELECTIONS 2024: OUR ACTION BEGINS!

For Emmaus Europe, these elections are crucial as European legislation has a direct impact on our movement, our work and can be an important way of promoting our values. This is why we started working on our proposals to candidates in the autumn.

We also drew up a proposal to involve Emmaus groups in raising customer awareness of the risks posed by the rise of the far right in Europe.

Lastly, we urged our MEP contacts to launch a campaign at the European Parliament to mark the anniversary of 1st February 1954.

EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY: SHARING TO IMPROVE PEOPLE'S LIVES



Emmaus Oselya's new social support centre and the whole team in February 2023. Construction work began in July 2022 and was completed in January 2023. Credit: Emmaus Oselya.

UKRAINE FUND: SUPPORT IN TIMES OF HARDSHIP

■ IN 2023, FINANCIAL SUPPORT BECAME MORE LONG-TERM

War has taken hold in Europe, and other headlines have taken centre stage as tragedies and significant events have unfolded. The resistance of the Ukrainian people is no longer highlighted and this may seem normal, after all we end up getting used to everything. But at Emmaus we are not giving up!

The Emmaus Oselya group continues to provide assistance to any vulnerable people in the Lviv region, whether they are displaced, homeless, or living in poverty or distress. Other groups in Europe - in Croatia, Georgia, Romania or Poland - also continue to support refugees by distributing hot meals, hygiene kits and by providing psychological support.

This support was still possible in 2023 thanks to the Emmaus groups around the world. Thanks to everyone's efforts in 2022, which slowed down but still continued in 2023, Emmaus Europe was able to continue funding initiatives carried out by Oselya and other groups in Eastern Europe to help displaced people.

In Croatia

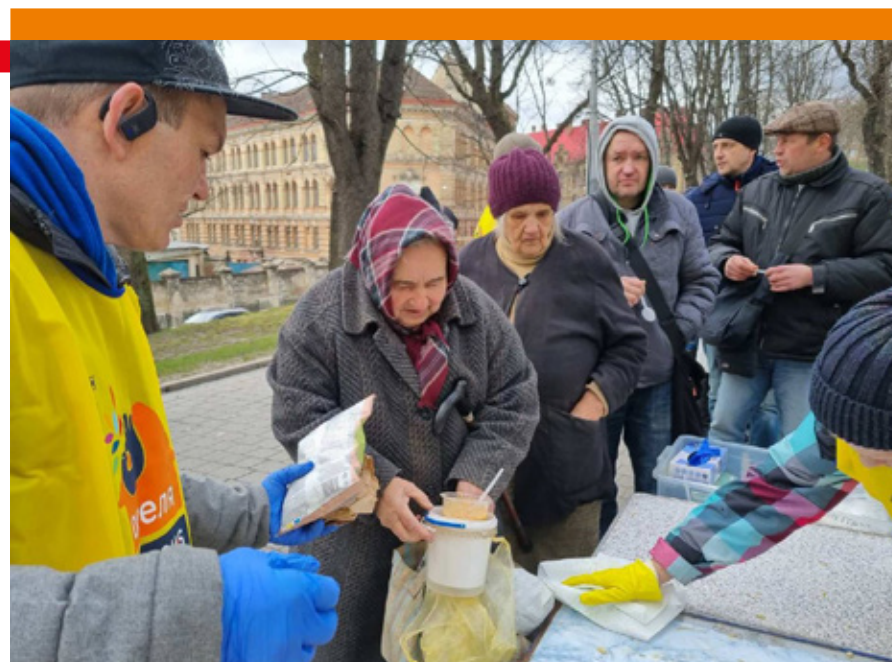
CNZD set up a mobile team comprising a social assistant, interpreter and psychologist, to help Ukrainian people located on the outskirts of the city of Osijek. Emmaus Europe contributed €15,000 to the project, which was used to purchase a 7-seater vehicle.

In Romania

The Iași group provided assistance in a refugee centre and implemented a support programme for 300 people over three months, from March to May 2023, thanks to €22,590 of support from the Ukraine Fund. They distributed hot meals and basic, good quality produce (fruit, vegetables, dairy products, eggs, meat, etc.); clothes, mattresses, covers, furniture; provided basic social services (help with job hunting, emotional support, etc.). The organisation also used its ties with medical services to assist Ukrainian people. It also provided financial support to families to purchase medication not covered by health insurance.

In Poland

The Ukraine Fund made it possible to keep supporting the three groups in the country, amounting to a total of €49,396.25 in 2023. At the end of the year, only the Brat Albert group (Krakow and Nowy Sącz) still hosted a dozen refugees.



Emmaus Oselya continues to distribute hot meals and essential items to vulnerable people in Lviv four times a month. Lviv, Ukraine, March 2023.

In Ukraine

2023 saw a number of major support initiatives:

1) The completion of the construction of a new social centre

We announced it in a “sneak preview” in the 2022 activity report, but the centre has been active since February 2023!

And in 2023, this centre welcomed over 2,159 people (including 986 displaced people), and provided a number of services, including:

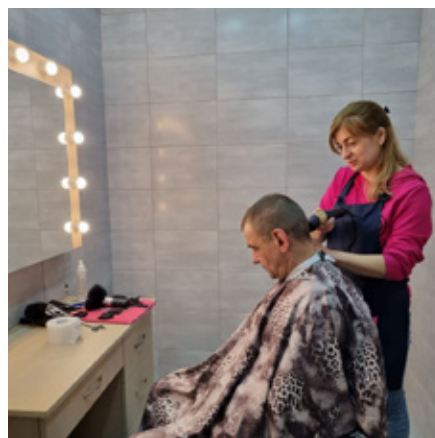
- 11,102 meals
- 845 medical certificates and 488 appointments with health professionals
- 1,308 haircuts
- 2,647 showers
- 9,822 items of clothing

As a reminder, this centre was built in five months by the Oselya group, particularly thanks to exceptional support of €240,000 from Emmaus Europe via the Ukraine Fund, and a contribution of €45,000 from Emmaus France, thanks to a donation from the Maisons du Monde company.

The new social centre's services are partly financed by approximately €5,000 in monthly support through the Ukraine Fund. This support also makes it possible to distribute hot meals four times a month on the streets of Lviv.



Natalia (Director of Oselya) and Oleg (Chair of Oselya) at the first Easter celebration organised with vulnerable people in the new social centre in April 2023.



Hairdressing salon in Oselya's new social centre in February 2023. Over 1,300 people have been to this salon in just 10 months.

2) Renovation of the Oselya community home

Between 2020 and 2023, the number of people welcomed by the Oselya group doubled due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the war initiated by Russia. The number of companions increased from 15 to 29. The group accommodated the extra people through sacrifices made by each community member, and by transforming certain communal areas into bedrooms.

Thanks to joint funding by Emmaus Europe (€33,993 via the Ukraine Fund), the Housing Programme (Abbé Pierre Foundation: €36,006), and their own funds, the group began renovating an old workshop in September 2023 to convert it into a second community home. This project led to the creation of six new rooms, and nine additional accommodation places, offering companions a more dignified welcome, and freeing up communal areas that had previously been used as bedrooms.

This renovation project will be completed at the start of spring 2024.

■ SPECIFIC NEEDS

2023 saw the continuation of support for all of the Eastern European groups involved in welcoming displaced persons and refugees from Ukraine. However, funding focused more on development projects this year, with a reduction in monthly «emergency» support. Gradually, needs have become less urgent, and some funding has been reduced.

In Poland

- The Rzeszów group which supported an accommodation centre in the region, informed us that a new financial partner had been found. Funding for this from the Ukraine Fund came to an end in May 2023.

- The Lublin group continued to welcome refugees, and support people welcomed by families in Poland for as long as necessary. However, during the year, demands for financing from the Ukraine Fund were lower and stopped in June 2023. Smaller projects, to meet timely needs, were approved by the Emmaus Europe Executive and financed using the Ukraine Fund.

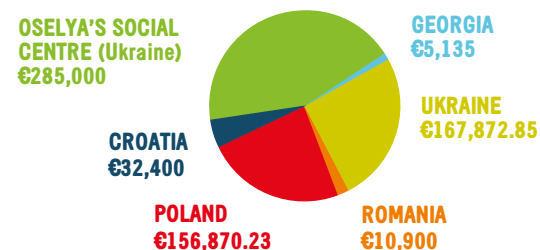
In Ukraine

The trial member group, Nasha Khata, reduced its requests for monthly financial support, particularly following an Emmaus Europe Board decision to terminate their trial period without further action. This decision became effective in November 2023. Their trial period ended primarily due to the fact that the group's governance is too dependent on the Church for the group to be able to make its own decisions independently and be part of Emmaus. Despite this decision, the group will continue to be financially supported until March 2024. A six-month reduction plan has been put in place to enable the group to find other sources of future funding.

■ KEY FIGURES

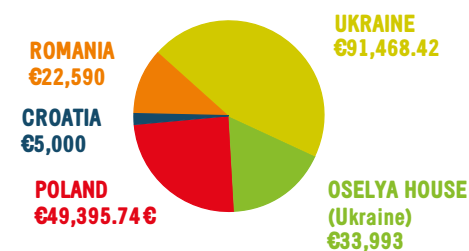
BREAKDOWN OF UKRAINE FUND FINANCIAL SUPPORT IN 2022

- Total expenditure: €658,178.08
- Available funds at 31/12/2022: €377,531.64



BREAKDOWN OF UKRAINE FUND FINANCIAL SUPPORT IN 2023

- Total expenditure: €202,447.16
- Available funds at 31/12/2023 : €246,368.52



MONTHLY SUPPORT PROVIDED TO POLISH AND UKRAINIAN GROUPS IN 2023

Country	UKRAINE		POLAND			
	OSELYA	NASHA KHATA	LUBLIN	BRAT ALBERT	RZESZÓW	
Jan	€5,186.93	€1,327.84	€791.49	€5,100.00	€4,153.83	€16,560.09
Feb	€13,481.00	€2,456.92	€714.89	€3,360.00	€5,553.96	€25,566.77
March	€680.00	€2,853.87	€791.49	€3,456.00		€7,781.36
April	€5,563.00	€3,332.45	€765.96	€2,520.00	€1,821.16	€14,002.57
May	€3,902.49	€3,249.98	€640.00	€1,710.00		€9,502.47
June	€4,216.49	€2,830.95		€2,432.43		€9,479.87
July	€3,916.80	€2,404.38		€2,513.00		€8,834.18
August	€5,028.79	€1,839.19		€2,426.00		€9,293.98
Sept	€4,144.98	€2,677.72		€2,347.83		€9,170.53
Oct	€4,884.68	€2,043.69	€987.84	€2,244.34		€10,160.55
Nov	€4,026.14	€1,931.25		€2,500.00		€8,457.39
Dec	€4,411.41	€1,010.47		€2,565.52		€7,987.40
Total	€59,442.71	€27,958.71	€4,691.67	€33,175.12	€11,528.95	€136,797.16

This table takes into account the amounts pledged for 2023, some of which only appear in the 2024 accounts, which explains the discrepancies with the financial report presented on page 42.

GREEN TRANSITION FUND: A YEAR OF ADJUSTMENTS

The Green Transition Fund (GTF), created in April 2022 with an initial budget of €200,000, was set up to meet a major demand from groups in the East: within seven months of its creation, it had already enabled five groups to carry out renovation and insulation work and install solar panels (see our 2022 annual report).

In 2023, only the Târgu Jiu group in Romania submitted a request to the GTF to install photovoltaic panels on its sales room roof with the aim of reducing its energy dependency (€20,000 paid in April 2023).

In September 2023, after their regional salon, the French region of Bourgogne-Franche-Comté gave Emmaus Europe €22,000 to top up the GTF and fund future green transition projects.

To date, three groups have not yet applied for the GTF support of €20,000 per group (Emmaus Iași, Romania; TOMS, Croatia; and Emmaus Geo, Georgia).

At Emmaus Europe's General Assembly, we discussed the fund together and examined the application of new criteria, such as the need for all projects to improve the living and working conditions of the people they serve.

Groups that have already benefited will be able to reapply for support for smaller-scale projects in the years to come, in order to reduce their climate impact and develop greater energy autonomy.

If you would like to contribute to this fund and help Eastern European groups with their green transition, please contact Emmanuel!

Emmaus Brat Albert project supported in 2022



INITIATIVES SUPPORTED BY THE GREEN TRANSITION FUND IN 2022 AND 2023

YEAR	GROUP	INITIATIVE	IMPACT	TOTAL AMOUNT	CONTRIBUTION AMOUNT
2022	SATU MARE Romania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation of photovoltaic panels (shop) • Insulation (shop and community home) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shop: energy independence (8000kW/year in savings) • Reduction of the community's overall consumption 	€22,022.00	€20,000.00
2022	BRAT ALBERT Poland	Installation of photovoltaic panels (community home in Krakow)	Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions	€26,000.00	€20,000.00
2022	LUBLIN Poland	Complete insulation (community home)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40% reduction in gas consumption • Reduction in greenhouse gas emissions 	€22,715.00	€20,000.00
2022	IFS-EMMAUS Bonia and Herzegovina	Installation of photovoltaic panels (Centre for people with disabilities)	Production of 25,751kW of electricity per year	€22,168.54	€19,799.30
2022	CNZD Croatia	Installation of photovoltaic panels (residential home for young adults)	20% reduction in electricity costs	€22,000.00	€20,000.00
2023	TÂRGU JIU Romania	Installation of photovoltaic panels (shop)	Covers 100% of the group's needs	€25,000.00	€20,000.00
Total					€119,799.30
Remainder					€102,200.70

CRITERIA FOR USE OF THE GREEN TRANSITION FUND

- Restricted to groups from Eastern Europe.
- Maximum amount of 20,000 euros/group (i.e., 10% of the initial budget) for the "first round" of financial support for groups.
- A local contribution from the group of at least 10% of the total amount of the project.
- A requirement to provide awareness-raising workshops to back up these investments.
- The possibility of using this fund alongside other requests for support from Emmaus bodies.
- Option of submitting a project throughout the year, presented to the Regional Board for approval.



TRANSPORT PROGRAMME: A STRUCTURAL OR SHORT-TERM REDUCTION?

Was 2022 an exception in the face of a continuing trend towards fewer solidarity lorries transporting goods to Eastern Europe?

In 2023, the transport programme fell back to «Covid levels», with 92 lorries transporting goods to our groups in Poland, Romania, Latvia and Georgia. This was 27 fewer lorries than in 2022, a year marked by an exceptional recovery (119 lorries sent).

This reduction may be explained by several factors:

- In Romania, it was particularly difficult to cross the border in 2023, due to the overzealousness of Romanian customs officials, who consider second-hand goods to be waste and have tightened border controls with the Schengen area (Romania is not part of the Schengen area).
- In Poland and Romania, transport costs were increasingly high.
- Less urgent humanitarian needs, linked to the war in Ukraine (14 humanitarian lorries sent in 2022).

Furthermore, Polish and Romanian groups are working at a local level to develop a culture of donating items. They aim to reduce their dependence on European solidarity by increasing the percentage of goods collected locally.

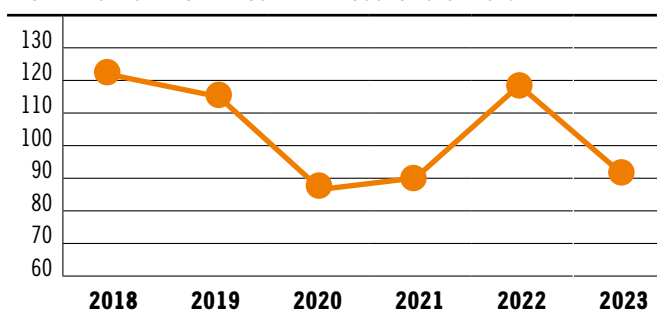
However, solidarity goods still play a key role in the smooth running of these groups. If this drop in the number of lorries sent to Eastern Europe continues, some groups could find themselves in difficulty and may have to scale down their activities. This would reduce their impact on vulnerable population groups.

As a reminder, Emmaus Europe has published a transport guide, making it very easy to get started on this solidarity adventure.



Loading a lorry to transport solidarity goods to a group in Eastern Europe is always a fun experience! Material solidarity between groups really helps us to feel useful, to strengthen bonds within groups.

NUMBER OF LORRIES WITH SOLIDARITY GOODS 2018 - 2023



Country	Group	Transports received
GEORGIA	Geo	1
LATVIA	Amis3	6
POLAND	Brat Albert	8
	Lublin	22
	Rzeszów	10
ROMANIA	Iași	15
	Satu Mare	13
	Târgu Jiu	17
Total		92



■ **Find the transport guide** in the member's area, accessible to all on our website: emmaus-europe.org

EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY PROGRAMME: A TRANSITION YEAR

As an exception, the projects submitted as part of the European Solidarity Programme for 2023 were not selected by the Emmaus Europe Board because they did not meet the expected criteria.

Of the three projects submitted, one was funded by the Ukraine Fund. As mentioned in the Ukraine Fund section, this €15,000 grant enabled the purchase of a 7-seater car and the setting up of a mobile team to assist Ukrainian refugees in the suburbs of Osijek (CNZD, Croatia).

A transition year

In 2023, Emmaus Europe and Emmaus International embarked on work to harmonise certain criteria for submitting and approving projects supported by the movement's solidarity programmes. This work will continue in 2024, with the idea that the Europe region would complement international solidarity and fund interesting European projects that Emmaus International is unable to support due to a lack of available funds.

Housing Programme - a new dimension?

Jointly run by Emmaus International and the Abbé Pierre Foundation (FAP), this programme enables Emmaus groups outside of France to benefit from funding for the construction or renovation of housing for the people welcomed by the groups. The Emmaus Europe secretariat supports projects submitted by European groups and accompanies them in developing their project and its analysis by the Emmaus International Board members.

In 2023, three European projects were financed by the Housing Programme, totalling €88,408 (of a budget of around €250,000 made available by FAP).

- **Emmaus Oxford (United Kingdom):** €20,000 to create 10 bathrooms as part of a larger renovation project of a house used by companions who are ready to leave the community;
- **IFS-Emmaus (Bosnia and Herzegovina):** €32,402 to construct two apartments (a house) as a shelter for single-parent families who have been victims of domestic violence;
- **Emmaus Oselya (Ukraine):** €36,006 for the conversion of a workshop into a community house, and the creation of 9 additional accommodation places (6 new bedrooms). As a reminder, this project was co-financed by Emmaus Europe, to the tune of €33,993 via the Ukraine Fund.

SUMMER CAMPS: NOW IS THE TIME TO PASS ON INFORMATION!

In general, Emmaus Europe plays a role in passing on information about the summer camps organised by the European groups. The initiatives are listed on the website, including all the necessary details to enable interested parties to sign up. Many of them were able to take part in the eight summer camps organised by groups in Italy (six groups involved), Belgium (one group) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (one group).

In 2023, Emmaus Europe developed a partnership with a French school of economics (ESSEC Business School, which already worked in partnership with Emmaus France) to join their programme that sends students on work placements abroad.

For this year, 22 ESSEC students left for trips of at least one month in 12 European groups (in six European countries). The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive! The length of their stay enabled the students to forge strong bonds of friendship with the people welcomed by the groups!

In 2024, we are expecting even more candidates to come and share in the daily lives of our companions across Europe. We want to pass on the torch to the next generation!

"Thank you for everything" - a letter sent by a French volunteer from ESSEC welcomed by the Nova Generacija group in Bosnia and Herzegovina.



Volunteers taking part in a summer camp in Catanzaro (Italy) take part in the day-to-day life of the community's companions.



LIFE OF THE MOVEMENT AT THE EUROPEAN LEVEL



PEACE AND FOOTBALL! THE FIRST EMMAUS EUROPE FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

In July, Emmaus Europe and IFS-Emmaus organised the first Emmaus Europe Football Championship for Peace and Human Rights in Srebrenica (Bosnia and Herzegovina). The event brought together more than 70 people, including 30 companions from 18 groups and 12 different countries, and featured moving personal stories, unforgettable encounters and lasting friendships. It was the Europe of Emmaus!

30 companions

30 volunteers

11 managers

“We liked it there”, recalls Gusti, a companion at Emmaus Cabries (France) for the past four years. He went to play football and discover the Emmaus movement in Europe, but he had no idea that he would experience such strong emotions sitting in a chair listening to people talk about their experiences and at a talk on non-violence: “It’s the first time I’ve been to a meeting like this, with interesting content, and I learned a lot... I almost cried when I heard Dzile’s story, and Abdul telling us about his experience. It will always stay with me.”

Zizou, a companion who has become a manager at Cabries, adds: “I followed the war in Yugoslavia on the television, and over 20 years later, meeting in Srebrenica... was emotional”. He is at a loss for words and overcome with emotion when he tries to talk about Dzile and Abdul’s experiences. What he wants to remember are the people he met and the football. “We all became friends in a day! It was all down to football. There were people of all ages, a mix of cultures, languages...a meeting like this is amazing!”

This event was organised based on a simple plan: in the morning there were sessions to listen to people recounting their experiences, along with workshops and talks, followed by sports in the afternoon. In between the events, there was some quiet time, with artistic activities, to allow everyone to express themselves in their own way or to take some time for themselves. And nothing was compulsory: “We felt like we were on holiday, but at the same time we had a packed and very interesting programme of talks,” recalls Leila, manager at Emmaus Iași (Romania), who came along with seven companions. “This event was a unique opportunity to bring together companions who do not necessarily speak a foreign language and introduce them to the Emmaus movement in Europe.” Aurélie, a manager at Cabriès, agrees: “This meeting spoke to the companions. **In my 15 years in the Emmaus movement,** this is the first time I’ve seen so many of them taking part in an event and attending talks. In a community, you live in a bubble, and the movement...well, it remains theoretical: it’s good to take the time to really discover it, you become aware of its depth.”

The workshop/talks programme included a visit to the museum and memorial dedicated to the genocide in Srebrenica, followed by an intense personal account from Dzile, a survivor of the massacre who chose to return to his battered region to build peace. The following day, Daniele Taurino, philosopher and member of the non-violence movement, invited participants to better understand the concepts of non-violence in a Europe at war. On the last day, Afghan photographer Abdul Saboor told his story about being in exile, and his discovery of photography, with disarming simplicity and gentleness. An exhibition of 16 of his photographs was set up in an adjoining room, and Abdul spent some time telling the stories behind each one.

These were emotionally-charged mornings, and participants sometimes left with a heavy heart. “You’ve placed a stone in our hearts, Abdul”, said Maria-Luisa, National Delegate for Italy, after listening to his story. The afternoon football matches and relaxation allowed them to shed this burden and reach out to others. How many friendships were made on the pitch, cheering on the players or hugging them after a goal was scored?

Sport as a tool for integration and learning

François, President of Emmaus Federation Switzerland, has been involved in the movement for nearly eight years and used to be a professional goalkeeper in Switzerland! He stated, “We don’t often get the opportunity to spend time with our companions. [At Emmaus meetings] we talk more about concepts, priorities, statutes...here, everyone was welcome, everyone was equal. Sport puts everyone on a level playing field. You can sense that something has happened (...).”

During the afternoon football, nobody had a label. There was no longer a sense of participants on one side, speakers, organisers, interpreters, sound engineers on the other: everyone became a football player. “We let everyone be themselves”, François continues. “The “Emmaus family” vibe really came through at this event.” “The energy the participants brought with them, their interest in the activities offered, everything was easy to organise”, recalled Sabina, National Delegate of Emmaus Bosnia and member of the Emmaus Europe Executive. She also mentioned the special atmosphere at the event.

As a co-organiser of the meeting for IFS-Emmaus, her expectations were high: a desire to reconnect with groups in Western Europe, and to send a message of hope to our Ukrainian friends. Yes, it is possible to reconstruct, to build peace from the ashes, despite the atrocities committed, just like in Srebrenica.

A special award ceremony was organised to round off this exceptional experience. Everyone took home a souvenir, and each group literally “brought home” the trophy”. François added: “When we were handing out certificates, one of my companions said to me, ‘I’ve never been hugged like that before’. It makes you cry to hear that! They are gifts, it is a real success when you hear something like that.”

As the time to leave drew near, Joanna, from Emmaus Lublin, who acted as an interpreter for the nine Poles and four Ukrainians present at the tournament, rounded off this truly unique event in a wonderful way, “These have been the most wonderful five days of my life!”



Aurélie (Cabriès, France) and Viktor (Oselya, Ukraine) during the first match of the tournament. We take the game seriously but remember to have fun!



“The Problem Is Borders” - Alexandre (Primelin, France) views the photos taken by photographer Abdul Saboor on his migration journey in the Balkans.



Workshops on peace and non-violence have provided a better understanding of how to take action.



Harma (Netherlands) and Abdul Saboor (Afghanistan) when it was time to say goodbye, after 3 days of football, sharing of personal experiences and discussions about peace.

SHARING OUR SKILLS BY EXCHANGING BEST PRACTICES!

ADDING VALUE TO WOODEN FURNITURE: AN EXCHANGE IN KRAKOW

In September 2023, Emmaus Europe and Emmaus Brat Albert organised a one-day exchange of best practices on woodworking in Krakow, Poland. This meeting of several European groups focused on the following topics: renovation, reuse, sanding and sandblasting techniques, among others. The 15 participants from all over Europe, hosted by the Brat Albert group, left with new ideas and joint projects for the future.

Brat Albert, which means “Brother Albert” in Polish, has two sites: Nowi Sącz and Krakow. Like many groups in Eastern Europe, Brat Albert receives transported solidarity goods that supply the group’s second-hand shops on both sites, topping up local collections. These lorries often contain Emmaus furniture, in varying states of conservation.

Over the years, the group has specialised in the renovation of wooden furniture: renovating old furniture, repairing furniture when parts are missing, upcycling of furniture that is too old and unsuitable for renovation. The group launched a project to customise furniture using the work of an artist who combines furniture and collected items to produce original pieces.

Through this experience, companions have developed specialised skills, particularly in preparing varnish and French polish. Knowledge of the types of wood and furniture has helped them to develop their skills and a new income-generating activity: renovating furniture brought in by customers.

Each group contributed to enriching this exchange of best practices. The Rzeszów group in Poland provided a sandblasting machine to enable participants to try their hand at sandblasting. The Firminy group (Saint-Etienne, France), who are experts in this practice, gave a demonstration and presented the workshop that they fitted out in their own group, while also discussing safety-related issues, such as the importance of wearing masks, protective overalls, using a protective booth and maintaining a safe distance from the furniture.

WHAT WE NOTED DURING THESE EXCHANGES

Woodworking offers an opportunity to:

- Upgrade furniture in poor condition and sell it at a higher price
- Offer a furniture renovation service to customers (sandblasting, French polishing, painting, customisation, etc.)
- Enable companions to develop new skills
- Unleash artistic talents (painting, customisation, etc.)

Sandblasting

- Fit out a workshop suitable for sandblasting
- Work in a well-ventilated space to avoid the accumulation of dust and potentially harmful fumes
- Clean the furniture before sandblasting to prevent dust from sticking to it
- Repair cracks with wood filler before sandblasting and leave it to dry fully
- Ensure you have all the protective equipment: protective goggles, dust mask, gloves, overalls
- Adapt the type of sand (fine or large grain) used on the furniture depending on the type of wood
- Adapt the number of times the sandblaster is used depending on the desired result

French polish

- Wear gloves to protect skin from solvents and varnishes
- Use a mask to protect against fumes in a well-ventilated space to avoid inhaling alcohol fumes
- Make a pad by wrapping cotton wool with a piece of linen or muslin cloth
- Apply a small amount of polish to the pad. It should be damp but not dripping

- Apply the polish onto the furniture using circular movements, or a figure of eight, applying a light and even pressure
- Keep the pad moving constantly to avoid marks
- Apply even coats of varnish across the piece of furniture
- Apply several fine layers rather than a thick layer
- Leave each layer to dry: dozens of coats may be required to achieve a glossy, long-lasting finish
- Use mineral oil or olive oil to lubricate the pad. This helps to reduce friction and avoid the pad sticking

Sanding wood

- Adapt the type of abrasive paper to hand sanding (sandpaper, abrasive sponge or sanding block)
- Sand in the same direction as the grain to avoid scratches that would be visible after finishing
- Start with coarse-grain paper to remove major imperfections, then use increasingly finer grains to obtain a smooth finish
- Use a cloth or brush to remove dust between the sanding stages to avoid scratches



Participants are renovating a wooden chest in Krakow, Poland, as part of an exchange of best woodworking practices.

OUR MOVEMENT IS GROWING

In 2023, we welcomed four new full members and one trial member. In addition, three groups who were previously trial members joined the movement, and only one trial group did not go on to join the movement. By the end of the year, there were 332 full members and 26 trial member groups from 20 European countries.

■ New full members

- Chantiers Peupins (France)
- CNZD (Croatia)
- TOMS (Croatia)
- Emmaus Géo (Georgia)

■ New trial members

- Refuges Solidaires (France)

■ See the map of Emmaus groups in Europe on the website emmaus-europe.org

MEETINGS OF OUR EUROPEAN BODIES

The General Assembly was the highlight of 2023, however other European bodies also met for statutory meetings:

- **The Regional Council (the Emmaus Europe Regional Board) met on three occasions in 2023.** The first meeting took place in March in Paris. It then met online in August and in person following the General Assembly in Iași, Romania.
- **The Regional Executive, in turn, held four meetings in 2023,** in February, April, June and September.
- **The Chair, Treasurer (or Vice-Chair since the General Assembly) and the Chief Executive also met once a week** online.

■ Find out more information about our decision-making bodies in the “Introduction” section of our website emmaus-europe.org



Members of the Executive during their meeting in June 2023.

OUR NEW HEAD OF ADVOCACY AND CAMPAIGNING

The Emmaus Europe team expanded in August 2023 with the arrival of Manon Gaham as head of advocacy and campaigning. Until then, only the Chief Executive had worked on these issues with elected representatives, and we felt it was important to strengthen our capacity for action.

Manon is not only young and dynamic, but she already has a great deal of experience! Thanks to her internships and previous positions, she has learned about European migration policy from Green MEP Damien Carême and our partners at Migreurop. She also fine-tuned her knowledge of a wide range of issues in the European Youth Forum’s advocacy department. With the European elections in 2024, her arrival is perfect timing!
Contact: manon.gaham@emmaus-europe.org
+33 6 67 22 87 64



■ Find out more information about our staff in the “Introduction” section of our website: emmaus-europe.org

THE NEWS IN OUR REGION

To keep up to date with the news in Europe, see our:

- website emmaus-europe.org
- Our monthly newsletter “Emmaus in Europe” (To sign up, visit the member’s area on our website)
- Social media (Facebook, Instagram, X, LinkedIn) : @emmauseurope

■ To share your news with other European groups, please contact Marie: marie.tixier@emmaus-europe.org

FINANCIAL REPORT

2023 was marked by a number of events:

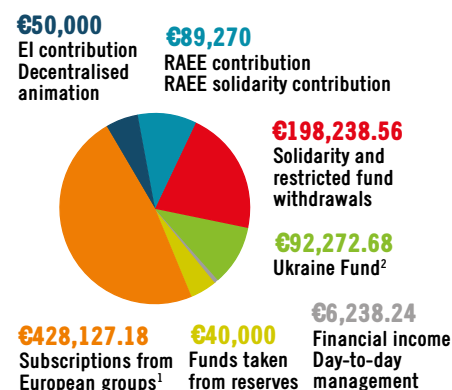
- European groups continued involvement in supporting Emmaus groups in Ukraine.
- Recruitment of a fifth member of staff to work on advocacy within the Emmaus Europe secretariat to boost our impact on European policies.
- Organising of the Emmaus Europe Regional Assembly in Iași, Romania.
- A significant level of subscription payments, partly due to groups wanting to be up-to-date for the assembly, but hopefully also due to a growing interest from groups in supporting Emmaus Europe's work.

Our total expenditure amounted to €857,615.62 and our revenue was €904,146.66, i.e. a surplus of €46,531.04 which was allocated in two parts:

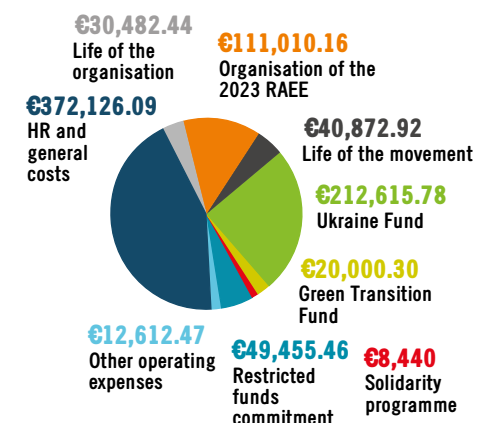
- €40,000 to a specific reserve (expenses for a future Regional Assembly)
- €6,531 assigned to association funds.

The complete financial statement and the Treasurer's and Auditor's reports are available on our website or on request from the Emmaus Europe Secretariat.

INCOME



EXPENDITURE



EXPLANATIONS:

1. Including subscriptions from 2023 and previous years.
2. Includes donations from the groups, from individuals and sponsorships



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EUROPE

ACTIVISTS FOR CHANGE

Emmaus Europe is the decentralised organisation of Emmaus International in Europe.

