



# MINUTES OF THE EMMAÜS EUROPE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

## 13 September 2024 – Montreuil

emmaüs

EUROPE

### **ATTENDEES:**

Carina Aaltonen (Chair), Vincent Chapuis, Herbert Bitter, Yvette Gumbs, Jean-Philippe Legaut, Duncan Lewis.

### **EUROPE REGIONAL SECRETARIAT:**

Eve Poulteau (Chief Executive), Manon Gaham (Head of Advocacy and Campaigning), Emmanuel Rabourdin (Head of Solidarity), Marie Tixier (Head of Events), Véronica Acevedo Caro (Admin and Finance Assistant)

### **APOLOGIES:**

Aurore Querel

<b>PREAMBLE</b>
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AGENDA ITEMS	DISCUSSIONS   DEBATES	CONCLUSIONS   DECISIONS
<p><b>1. Welcome remarks and approval of the minutes from the last meeting</b></p>	<p>Welcome to you all.            After the second series of revelations of the abuse committed by Abbé Pierre, this is a difficult time for the movement and the people who are part of it.            Moments of denial, sadness...we will see next week when we meet in Poitiers. It's an opportunity to work on these issues, to ensure that this never happens again, to put an end to this culture of silence.            The movement should be a safe space for everyone.</p>	<p>The minutes of the previous executive meeting are unanimously approved</p>
<p><b>2. Follow-up to the Egaé report on Abbé Pierre and issues for the movement</b></p>	<p>Duncan and Vincent were not able to participate at the last global online meeting on Friday 6 September. They have read the report, there is no need to give them a summary.</p> <p>Eve: in France, we've noticed a change in the French communities, particularly for some groups that were in some form of denial or experiencing grief. The issue of AP's image is now being addressed and some pictures have been removed. Some groups are waiting for clear instructions from EI, which has told them that each group can work out its own approach to the matter.            French cities, towns and villages also need to do this work: many streets, squares, schools, etc., are named after him. Awareness is growing, some have removed his name.</p> <p>The trend in France has shifted towards finding out who knew at Emmaus. A report by Radio France is due to be released on Saturday 14 September.</p> <p>Emmaus International has proposed setting up a committee of historians who will have access to the archives opened up by the Church of France.</p> <p>The other issue that arises is compensation for victims. This is promoted by the individual who led CIASE, who believes that we should consider compensation. This matter has not yet been addressed by the EI decision-making bodies.</p> <p>How can Emmaus Europe be involved in all these aspects? Time will be allotted to focus on this matter at the next Emmaus Europe regional board meeting.</p> <p><b><u>In Switzerland:</u></b>            Vincent: in Switzerland, there are many questions, people are shaken, there's a sense of denial. And interesting questions have arisen: why was it not spoken about, why was there a lack of transparency? If Emmaus aims to be a movement that gives a voice to the most disadvantaged, do we really know everything? Are there other forms of violence (conflicts, the environment, etc.)?</p>	

Partners: Vincent is confident, many have expressed their support, understanding. The transparency of the work is appreciated by our partners.

→ This crisis is an opportunity for greater transparency, and to bring calm to the movement, and not just on these issues of sexual abuse.

### **Netherlands:**

Herbert: a lot of emotions in the Netherlands since 17 July. A lot of anger in the groups, and some incomprehension about this press conference in July. They feel that they are Emmaus, and they have done nothing wrong.

Some are also trying to minimise Abbé Pierre's actions, and this resonates within the groups.

Yvette: there is a difference in reactions from one generation to the next. Young people are happy with this reaction, older people are struggling with the situation (he is dead, he can't defend himself, etc.)

There's a real clash between the generations and that is making discussions very tricky.

The older generations are also struggling with making space for young people.

### **United Kingdom**

Duncan: a few articles in the Guardian and the BBC, but few reactions in the press. In the communities there's a lot of sadness, disappointment and questions about who knew. Was it covered up?

The Emmaus UK federation has done a great job at communicating with groups. We've set up a small group to provide information and discuss it.

People support the movement and not Abbé Pierre. The Emmaus UK general assembly will be held in October. It won't be a big topic there, but it will be addressed, nonetheless.

We are trying to appeal to young people, so this process of separating/distancing ourselves from AP will continue.

We need to look at how to deal with all AP images: frescoes, website, paintings, etc.

Future studies must also focus on the future: how can we avoid it, how can we move forward, how can we rebuild by tackling it?

We can learn from similar organisations that have been through the same thing.

### **Romania:**

In Satu Mare, it didn't create a big stir, as AP was not at all known. We didn't discuss it, as these subjects are too sensitive for our young people, it's impossible to talk about it collectively, it opens up too many wounds.

In Iasi, there was real emotion as AP went there to inaugurate the community. In Romania as a whole, there was no communication on it because the general public does not know who he was. For example, there were no articles in the press.

The impression is that EI has done a very good job. The setting up of a committee is seen in a very positive light.

**Finland:**

Nobody really knows who AP was, the groups don't have any photos of him. He is not a hero in our country. Of course, there were questions about why nobody talked about it.

The victims tried to forget, it's a mechanism that men can use to continue what they're doing. What shall we do in the future?

Each country has its own history with AP, reactions are different, each country will need its own strategy to deal with this, but there needs to be an overall vision at movement level.

For the EE regional board

Shift the focus to safety/security when welcoming people (in connection with the meeting with NOs).

How can we make progress on preventing gender-based and sexual violence, and on training, etc.

- We need to consider the movement as a whole. We are an international movement. This creates tension within the movement, with regard to this approach. We need to ensure we remain cohesive.
- Important: Europe is often considered to be the region that wants to take the lead.
- Tools already exist, we need to make them accessible to groups.
- Governance: more transparency should make it possible to avoid it.
- This raises power struggles within the movement. How can we deal with people who do not want to move forward?
- What do we want for companions? What can be done from a legal point of view?

We cannot do everything at EE level, but we can provide the impetus, at national level and within the groups.

For example: Emmaus UK quality standards: a huge amount of work carried out to ensure that everyone's rights are respected. Translation underway.

List of the main chapters that we want to cover as a core base at European level. + Best practice/examples from other countries.

We need to look at the whole picture, not just sexual abuse, otherwise other important issues will be overlooked. In the UK, charities are subject to many laws, regulations and oversight, etc.

	<p>All these standards should be the same, everywhere.</p> <p>→ Offer training to groups who recruit volunteers through us.</p>	
<p><b>3. Feedback on the trips to Ukraine and the Baltic countries</b></p>	<p>Visit to Oselya and to Poland in July: The question of peace was raised, but it was difficult. It's horrible to see young people and potentially their children go to war, but our Emmaus colleagues struggle to talk about it as they see too clearly what peace without victory would amount to for them. There are no other organisations comparable to Emmaus, but there are other social economy actors in the Lviv region that might be worth meeting. However, many projects are being developed by Oselya.</p> <p>In Poland, as in other countries, the matter of renewing groups arises.</p> <p>Visit to the Baltic States: The visit started in Latvia at a group with many women. There is a real strength and a lot of energy and activity. The problem is that they depend on French groups for goods to sell in the shop and some groups no longer support them. They need to find other local solutions so that they are not dependent on transported goods. There is work to be done and they would also need a new vehicle. There is real potential but a lot of work, likewise in terms of governance. For the time being, discussions have focussed mainly on self-sufficiency.</p> <p>In Lithuania, the group is very energetic and enthusiastic, but this group depends too much on subsidies from the European Union and other organisations. There is a real vulnerability, particularly in terms of covering operating costs. This group has real expertise on the subject of sexual violence and could perhaps organise training sessions. There is also an issue regarding governance, as they only have three members on the board.</p> <p>This issue is common to many countries, not just those in Eastern Europe. These criteria do not guarantee good governance; they are formal and inadequate, and there are many counter-examples that work. This matter needs to be explored in greater depth, depending on the culture of each country. To be discussed at the EE regional board and with EI.</p> <p>This group could be involved in the Southeast Europe Collective. They were unable to take part in the last meeting, however the topics align and this could be interesting for their development.</p> <p>Duncan: during the visits, we revealed the information about Abbé Pierre and in both groups people were shocked, which could have an impact. There is a real opportunity to support communities with a special solidarity mechanism by contributing our expertise, particularly with regard to the UK, rather than transporting goods.</p>	

<p><b>4. Proposal to acquire a stake in Foncière Emmaüs, Emmaus France's property company</b></p>	<p>Presentation of Foncière Emmaüs in the executive committee documents.  This property company helps French groups to purchase and/or renovate buildings, using outside investments to invest in the SSE.  There is no interest or dividends, EE's participation is largely symbolic. This stake in the property company is above all a way of supporting this good initiative by EF.  As we are supporting the property company and its initiatives in France, we also need to discuss this type of support for other national organisations, if it exists, in the same way we have long supported Banca Etica in Italy via Emmaus Italy.</p> <p>This also raises the question of investing our savings: we had started to find out more information, but we were waiting to hear more about what the investments finance. We will chase the bank on this matter. We deposited €100,000 into a type of savings account regulated by French law (Livret A).  Carina: we will talk about the 2025 budget in December. We can have this discussion then and in October.</p> <p>Vincent: we don't share enough within the movement. The condition would be that we could benefit from returns and set up a partnership with EF and the property company based on what they do.  Investing in our own groups is also possible.  E.g.: electricity production by financing solar panels for our groups.</p> <p>Eve: EI's Ethical Fund also makes this possible: investing with low rates.</p>	<p>Agreement to acquiring a 10,000-euro share in Foncière Emmaüs.</p>
<p><b>5. Preparations for the next regional board meeting</b></p>	<p>Perhaps we could discuss participation and absences of members of the EE regional board, as there are many absentees and some who are often unable to attend.  What should we do regarding attendance when so many people don't come? Is it a question of distance, should we organise one in-person meeting and one online every year? Or a hybrid meeting, but this is complicated in terms of interpretation and participation. Or shall we open up the option of a one-off replacement?  Nika also sent a resignation letter following the revelations about Abbé Pierre. We're in touch with her to see if she wants to continue with it.</p> <p>Other points for the EE regional board:  We're missing the subject of the European football championship being held in July 2025 in France.  Regarding youth, we need to discuss the challenges and objectives for youth with the EE board members to look at what type of initiative we could offer.  At the previous Executive meeting, we discussed launching a leadership programme for women and further developing what we're already doing. Are you happy to continue working on a leadership programme aimed at women? Yes.</p>	<p>We will contact Nika again after she has spoken to Tomislav.  We will speak to the national delegates about absences and report back at the December meeting.</p>
<p><b>Solidarity</b></p>	<p>Does the executive committee approve the monthly requests from Oselya for July and August?  Yes, the executive committee gives its unanimous approval.</p>	<p>The executive committee unanimously approves the requests for support from</p>

	<p>More details on this support:  July: €4,902.62  August: €4,194.50  Total amount: €9,097.12</p>	<p>Oselya, via the Ukraine Fund, for July and August.</p>
<p><b>6. Miscellaneous items and agenda (exchange of practices, RREUSE)</b></p>	<p>Yvette, Eve and Manon will attend the RREUSE meetings in the Netherlands at the end of October: presentation on the challenges of reuse up to 2050 + at the RREUSE AGM. Vincent will look at the programme and see if he can come.</p> <p>An exchange of practices on more environmentally-friendly food in groups will take place in November.</p>	
<p><b>7. Changes to the pay scale</b></p>	<p>The executive committee approves the new pay scale allowing a wider salary range than previously, depending on the position and the development of each person's tasks and responsibilities, with it not being linked to seniority in the position.</p> <p>It also approves the creation of an index point worth 25 euros on 1 October 2024.</p> <p>In addition, it approves the principle of an annual bonus plan moving towards an average 13th month, as is the case at Emmaus International, for the purpose of ensuring greater fairness between the pay scales.</p> <p>However, as Emmaus Europe's budget is limited, the executive committee reserves the right to suspend the increase in this annual bonus each year if the budget in December does not allow for such an increase.</p> <p>The proposed plan is as follows:</p> <p>This bonus will be 1000 euros in 2025 (500 euros in January and 500 euros in July)</p> <p>It could be 2000 euros in 2026, and then 3000 euros in 2027 if the increase in subscriptions is approved at the 2026 EE General Assembly.</p>	<p>See opposite</p>

As there are no further items on the agenda, the Chair adjourns the meeting.

**Carina Aaltonen**  
Chair of Emmaus Europe