

Emmaus in Europe



Dear Friends,

I am thinking of you and wishing you all the best for the year ahead.

We have just come through a tumultuous year filled with revelations that shocked the entire world. In Finland, we have a saying: "If someone opens the window, you may feel chilly and cold, but if you open that same window yourself, fresh air will flow into the room."

I want to express my gratitude to Emmaus International, Emmaus France, and Foundation Abbé Pierre for opening that window to the world. I am truly thankful and moved to be part of a movement that chooses to listen to and believe the victims. Rather than remaining silent, they have shed light on the darker sides of our founder. This fresh air inspires us to find the courage to defend the most vulnerable victims of violence, especially those affected by gender-based violence, and to speak out when things are wrong, and power is misused.

I hope you have a wonderful year ahead. Dream boldly and outrageously; create something that didn't exist before you made it. May you be loved and liked, and may you have people to love and enjoy in return. Most importantly, I hope you will be wise whenever you need to be, as there is a great need for more kindness and wisdom in the world right now.

Warm regards,

Carina Aaltonen
Chair of Emmaus Europe

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Ukraine

A meeting to mark 3 years of war

24 February 2025, 3pm-5pm (time in France)

Emmaus Europe is organising an online meeting on 24 February from 3pm - 5pm (local time in France) with Natalya, president of Emmaus Oselya (Ukraine) and Grigory (Emmaus Ukraine national delegate). This discussion will give us a better understanding of the situation on the ground, three years to the day since Russia's large-scale invasion of Ukraine.



You will have the chance to ask Natalya and Grigory your questions and hear about the everyday life of the group and its plans for the next few years. We will also provide an update on the initiatives financed by the Ukraine Fund since the start of the conflict.

The meeting link will be sent to you in the next newsletter. If you would like to have this link sent to another email address, please click here.

For more information, please contact Emmanuel, Emmaus Oselya.

Emmaus stories

Emmaus Terre: solidarity building and DIY!



Credit: Emmaus Terre.

With the launch of a brickworks and a building materials recycling centre in Brittany, in the west of France, Emmaus Terre is innovating, while remaining faithful to the Emmaus tradition of welcoming and building! We spoke to Clarisse, the group's administrative, accounting and community officer, to find out more about it.

How did Emmaus Terre and the idea of focussing on construction come about?

The idea emerged because one of its co-founders, Orane, wanted to create a reception centre supported by local business activity. For the past 10 years, she has been working with migrants and involved in organisations providing support and assistance.

Trained in earth masonry, she is a member of Collectif des Terreux Armoricains [Armorican earth workers' collective], a group of earth construction professionals from the north-west of France, mainly craftspeople and project managers, who are generally quite socially committed. One day, she asked them what kind of economic activity could support her project, and the answer was unanimous: set up an unfired clay brickworks!

It was an obvious choice! Her training had given her the skills, and this type of business had not yet been developed. There was a real demand for production in the area, which traditionally has many unfired clay buildings, to save

professionals from having to make their own bricks.

What led you to join the Emmaus Movement?

Once the business had been approved, all that remained was to find a legal structure. It was important to be able to welcome everyone without restrictions. That wasn't easy as the majority of structures don't allow undocumented migrants, for example.

After a great deal of thought, the solution was found in a bookshop! One day, Orane stumbled across a book on the Emmaus Movement. This seemed like the perfect fit - it's the only model that offers unconditional welcome in France and which is in line with our values.

The initial links with the Movement were forged, and the business activity was launched in 2021. The group became a trial member in 2022, then a full member in 2024. Today, nine companions live in the community, which carries out several activities in parallel, with a team of five staff members.

Read more...

European Action

Webinar on the European textile sector: only a few days left to sign up!

5 February 2025, 2pm-3:30pm (French time)

Topics discussed: mandatory separate collection of textiles, creation of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes for textiles throughout the European Union, textile reuse and recycling crisis.

Emmaus Europe would like to invite you to a webinar on 5 February 2025, from 2pm - 3:30pm to review the latest European legislation on textiles and exchange views on the subject. Experts will be with us to share key information, discuss the best strategies to adopt when EPR comes into play and answer all of your questions. This will be a great opportunity to talk about textile recycling issues downstream of our groups' reuse practices. Make sure you sign up by 2 February 2025.

WEBINAR REGISTRATION

More information about this webinar can be found in December's newsletter.

European textile crisis: On 30 January, Emmaus Europe is taking action in Brussels!

We have been talking about it for several months: the European textile recycling sector is facing an unprecedented crisis. The entire second-hand textile distribution network has reached saturation point. The main cause is the constant mass influx of new, low-quality clothing.

To get our European leaders to take action, at a time when separate collection of textiles has been mandatory throughout Europe since 1 January, Emmaus Europe is jointly organising a demonstration during the winter sales on 30 January at Place du Luxembourg in front of the European Parliament in Brussels.

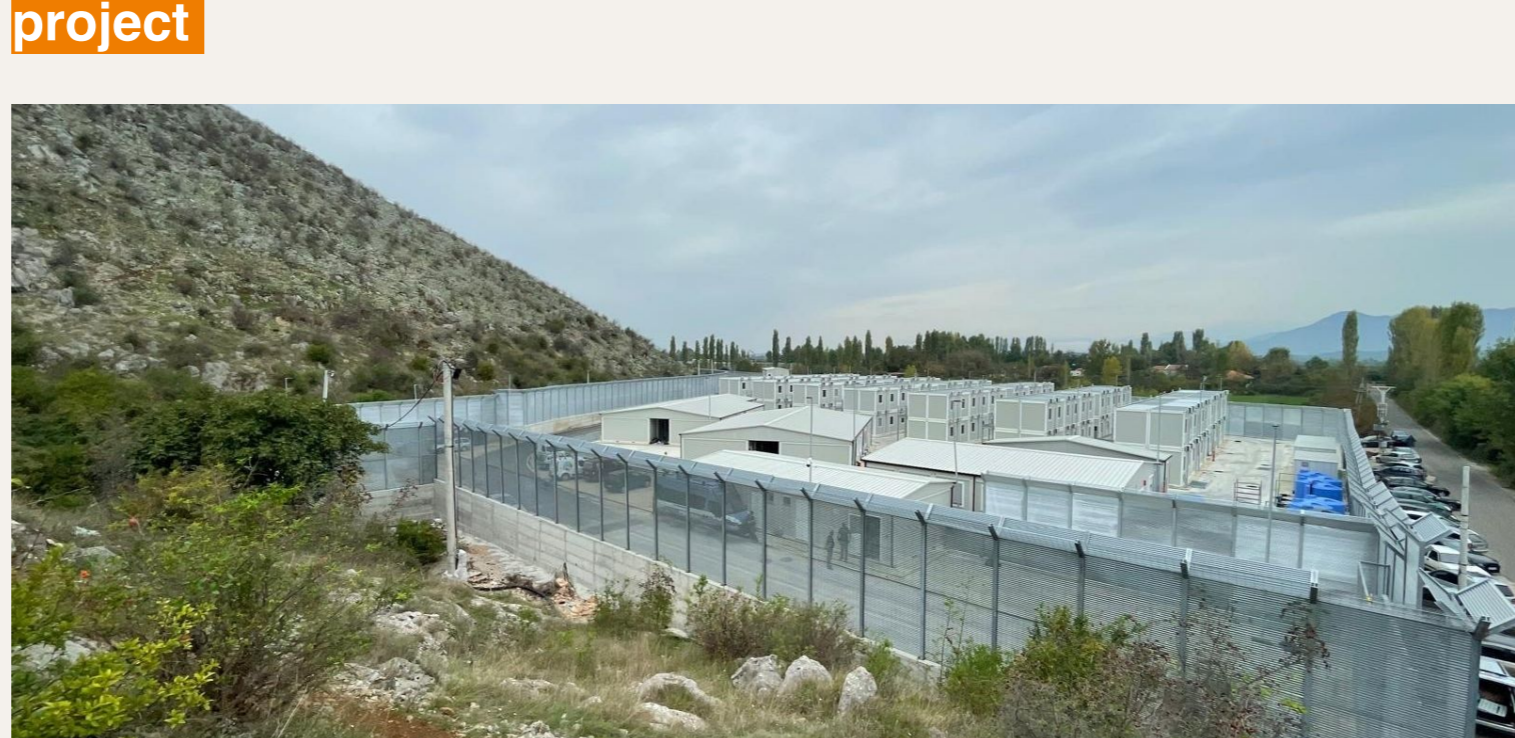
Together with Ressource (the Belgian federation of social and circular companies), RREUSE (the European reuse network) and TESS GEIE (the European group of social enterprises specialising in textile reuse), we are calling for an end to overproduction and fast fashion. We are also calling for greater support for social economy organisations involved in collecting, sorting, reusing and recycling textiles. These demands will be at the heart of our exchanges with Members of the European Parliament and the European Commission throughout the day.

If you are available and would like to join us for this demonstration, please contact Manon. To follow this event, stay tuned to Emmaus Europe's social media channels.

In the meantime, you can read the letter that we sent to the European Commission to raise the alarm about the situation and call for action.

READ THE LETTER

Outsourcing asylum: An ever more threatening European project



October 2024, Gjadër camp, Albania - Credit: Maso Notarianni.

Over the past several years, the European Union (EU) has been trying to outsource the processing of asylum applications to non-member countries. The aim is to prevent these women, men and children from entering European territory. In the last few years, there have been several attempts to implement this type of project (United Kingdom with Rwanda, Italy with Albania). Fortunately, so far, each of these projects has been blocked by the courts.

However, there has never been a greater threat of seeing these projects come to fruition, trampling on the rights of refugees and migrants and the principles of the Geneva Convention. The outspoken rhetoric of European leaders and the encouragement to experiment with this type of practice in the new European Pact on Asylum and Migration give us good reason to fear that it will be implemented imminently.

The Migreurop network, which includes Emmaus Europe, has conducted extensive research on this subject and recently published a detailed report. If you are interested, please read this report called Externalisation de l'asile : une coopération au mépris de la protection internationale et de l'Etat de droit (only available in French for the time being).

READ THE NOTE

Protest rally in Calais to denounce deadly migration policies

On 11 January, a rally of several non-profit organisations, trade unions, elected members, members of parliament and solidarity citizens took place in Calais in tribute to the 89 people who died in 2024 on the French-British border and to denounce the deadly migration policies in place. For over 30 years, agreements such as those signed at Le Touquet have militarised the northern coastline, effectively turning France into a police arm of the United Kingdom.



These policies exacerbate the insecurity of refugees and migrants, exposing them to inhumane living conditions and increased risks during crossings, with complete disregard for basic human rights. Those present called for the end to these practices, a review of the agreements and implementation of policies that respect human rights and dignity for all.

We encourage you to read the joint open letter published to mark this occasion, signed by Emmaus Europe through Migreurop. (only available in French)

READ THE OPEN LETTER

To find out more information about European advocacy and awareness-raising, please contact Manon.

Following the revelations of abuse committed by Abbé Pierre

Motion of the Emmaus Europe Regional Council

The Emmaus Europe regional board meeting in Srebrenica adopted the following motion, which we are sharing with you today.

The Emmaus Europe Regional Council fully supports the process for truth and transparency undertaken by Emmaus International regarding the sexual abuses committed by abbé Pierre. The EERC is committed to working with EI to reappropriate our history whilst acknowledging this part of it. As of now, in solidarity with all victims of gender-based and sexual violence, Emmaus Europe will cease to use images of or quotations from abbé Pierre in its communications.

The EERC will continue to promote the core values of the movement, carried by the hundreds of individuals who have made Emmaus, past, present and future.

The EERC reaffirms its commitment to the struggle against all forms of discrimination and inequality including gender inequality and against sexual violence and the patriarchal domination that generates them.

Statement by the Emmaus Europe Regional Council, Srebrenica, 11 October 2024

