

Emmaus in Europe



Dear members of Emmaus Europe,

This month we will be telling you about examples of openness within Emmaus, with games launched in France for children. We will also be providing you with information about the increasingly strict measures implemented on Europe's borders. We were delighted to have brought together the Emmaus groups from Eastern Europe recently. From war-ravaged Ukraine to Poland where the people were still waiting for the results of a crucial election, the Emmaus groups truly embodied our movement's values and the values of a Europe of peace and human rights.

The Emmaus Europe team

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The Voices of Emmaus

Ways of raising awareness about Emmaus' values of solidarity and preserving the environment

Education within the Emmaus movement was one of the three topics put forward by the World Forum of Alternatives organised by Emmaus International last September. The participants of the forum, who came from over 250 groups from all across the globe, came up with several proposals for local, national and international initiatives that the movement could implement. Emmaus Europe then decided to pool together the practices of the European groups who are raising awareness in schools about our values of solidarity and preserving the environment.

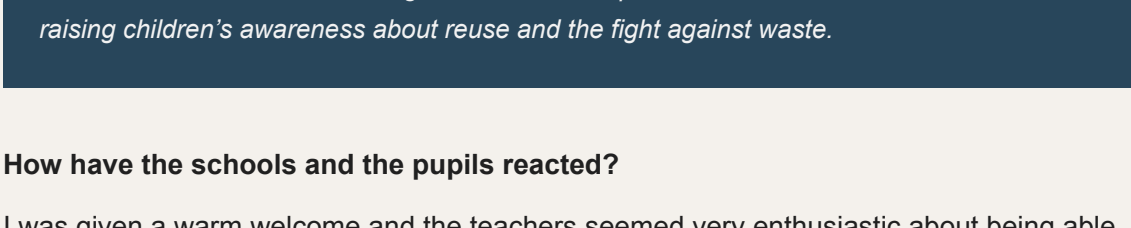
We decided that a good starting point would be to meet with Marion, the Communication and Awareness Officer for Emmaus Mundo who has been working with school children since 2021. Marion has worked with Emmaus France to create the materials she uses for her activities in schools.

What do you do in schools?

I go into local primary schools and I spend two hours with the children. The topics we talk about vary: wasting resources and the alternative represented by the world of second-hand goods, awareness raising about discrimination, etc.

What materials do you take with you into the schools?

When I started out I was using board games that I had made myself. But then Emmaus France heard about what I was doing and they made a more professional version of my board games for me. Emmaus France has since made these board games available to anyone who is interested in getting a copy.



How have the schools and the pupils reacted?

I was given a warm welcome and the teachers seemed very enthusiastic about being able to talk about these topics in the classroom. As regards the pupils, the message seems to sink in, to such an extent that when I see them again years later they still remember the games!

My visits are aimed at primary schools, for children aged 6-11. They last for around 2 hours and can be easily adjusted to better meet the pupils' needs.

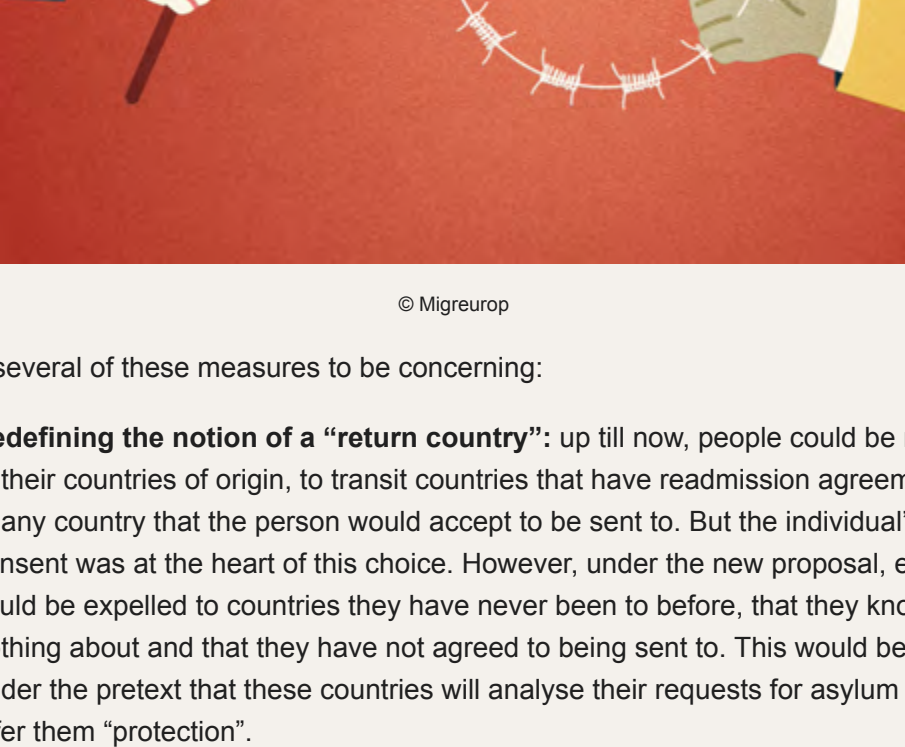
→Do you lead awareness raising initiatives in schools or universities? If so, please let Lisa know, she is our Support Officer for the European groups  
([L.ladenburger@emmaus-europe.org](mailto:L.ladenburger@emmaus-europe.org)).

Mobilisation across Europe

Policy of non-welcome: fortress Europe continues to put up more walls

In recent months the EU and its member states have been trying to accelerate the implementation of the Pact on Migration and Asylum (see the newsletter from March 2024 for more details) and to make the EU's legislation on this topic more restrictive. Their objective is doing so is clear: to welcome fewer people and to move them on to other countries.

Recently, the European Commission has proposed several alarming new measures: modifying the rules surrounding the asylum procedure, revising the directive on "return" - a text that outlines how and when people in irregular situations or refused asylum seekers can be expelled from a country - and applying certain key measures of the new Pact in advance.



We find several of these measures to be concerning:

- **Redefining the notion of a "return country"**: up till now, people could be returned to their countries of origin, to transit countries that have readmission agreements or to any country that the person would accept to be sent to. But the individual's consent was at the heart of this choice. However, under the new proposal, exiles could be expelled to countries they have never been to before, that they know nothing about and that they have not agreed to being sent to. This would be done under the pretext that these countries will analyse their requests for asylum and will offer them "protection".
- **The creation of a European list of "safe third countries" where requests for asylum can be analysed**: this concept allows countries to transfer asylum seekers to third countries that have been deemed "safe" instead of processing their requests in the countries where they asked for asylum. The EU intends to create a unique list of countries where people who are seeking asylum can be sent whilst their requests are being processed.
- **Harmonising the lists of "safe countries of origin"**: in the past each Member State had their own national lists so that they could quickly process requests by saying that people from certain countries do not need international protection. Of course, it was questionable whether people's safety would really be guaranteed in some of the countries on these lists. Now a single, legally-binding list will be imposed on all Member States, supposedly for the sake of harmonising things all throughout the EU.

Currently this list includes: Kosovo, Bangladesh, Colombia, Egypt, India, Morocco, Tunisia and the EU's candidate countries: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Georgia, North Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine. However, several of these countries are often criticised for serious human rights violations - meaning that asylum seekers from these countries may require international protection. Several associations have already sounded the alarm bell regarding such an arbitrary list: it will prevent a large number of vulnerable people from getting the protection they deserve.

- **The early entry into force of key measures of the new Pact**: now Member States can implement accelerated procedures for people who come from countries where the average rate of protection granted within the EU is less than or equal to 20%. An accelerated procedure means a superficial analysis of the request for asylum which will, most often, lead to a rejection and the person being deported.

These legal developments may seem, at first glance, like mere technical changes, but they actually mark a serious change in EU migration policy: the gradual destruction of the very spirit of the right of asylum here in Europe. Just a reminder that the Geneva Convention states that all individuals have the right to request asylum if they are being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. The signatories of the convention must protect refugees and not return them to countries where their lives or freedoms would be threatened.

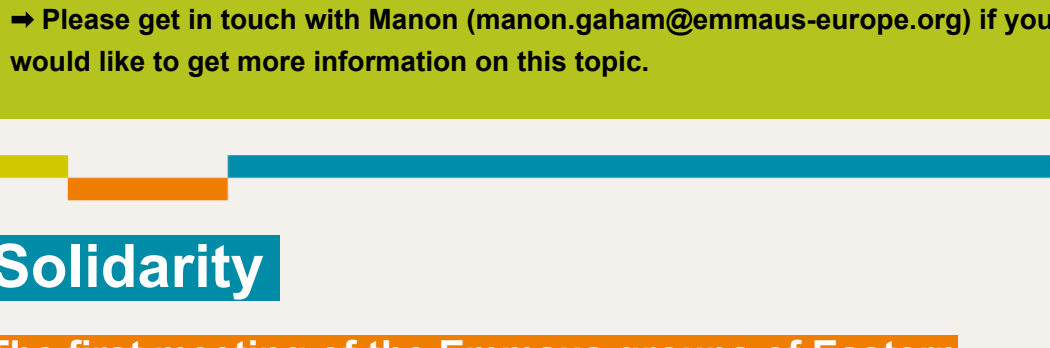
The aforementioned reforms are still being worked on, but it remains highly likely that the European Parliament and the European Council will soon approve these changes.

Emmaus Europe has been closely monitoring this situation alongside our partners, Migreurop and the ECRE. We will be attending the ECRE's Annual General Conference in June to discuss these topics and we are currently working with them on the ECRE's advocacy plan for the next four years.

We will keep you informed of future developments on this topic.

→ If you would like more information about this please get in touch with Manon ([manon.gaham@emmaus-europe.org](mailto:manon.gaham@emmaus-europe.org)).

Reusing clothes: Extended Producer Responsibility - what does the new directive say?



Just to remind you that this agreement will lead to the creation of a system of Extended Producer Responsibility for textiles all throughout the EU. This system, which is already in place in France, is something you may already have in your countries for electrical and electronic waste.

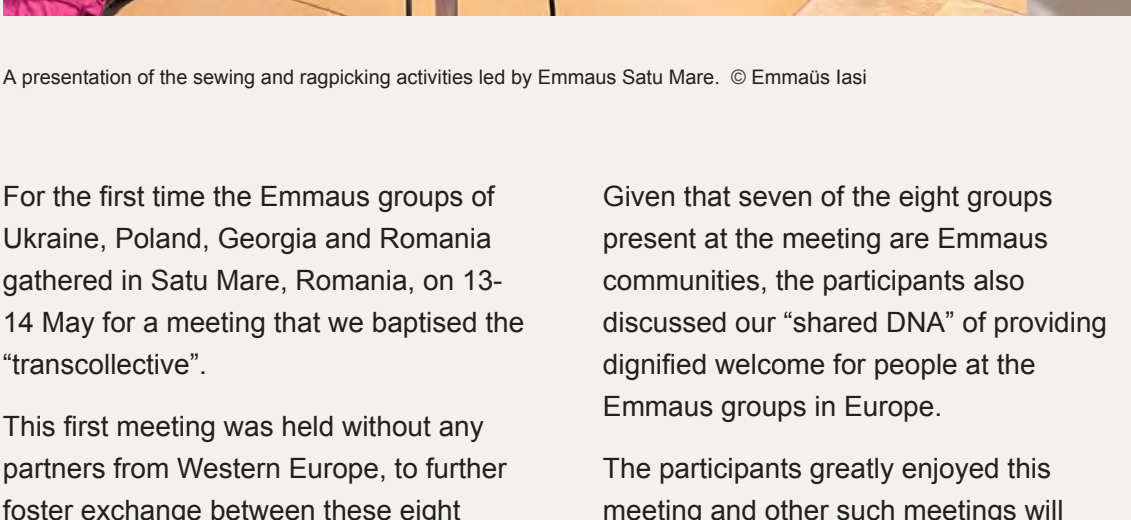
To find out more about what this amendment will entail when it enters into force, we encourage you to read the document drafted by our partner RREUSE on this matter.

→ Please get in touch with Manon ([manon.gaham@emmaus-europe.org](mailto:manon.gaham@emmaus-europe.org)) if you would like to get more information on this topic.

Solidarity

The first meeting of the Emmaus groups of Eastern Europe in Romania - a resounding success!

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This first meeting was held without any partners from Western Europe, to further foster exchange between these eight groups on the challenges they are facing: how to ensure their economic and political independence and how the community model can evolve. The Presidential elections in Poland (1st round on 18 May) and Romania (2nd round on 18 May) also triggered debate as the participants discussed the challenge of the rise of the far right, an issue that is affecting all of us here in Europe. The results of these elections have since helped to ease our concerns.

After each group introduced their work and the political and social contexts they are working in, the debate turned to their economic models and the impact of European regulation on the groups in Poland and Romania.

Given that seven of the eight groups present at the meeting are Emmaus communities, the participants also discussed our "shared DNA" of providing dignified welcome for people at the Emmaus groups in Europe.

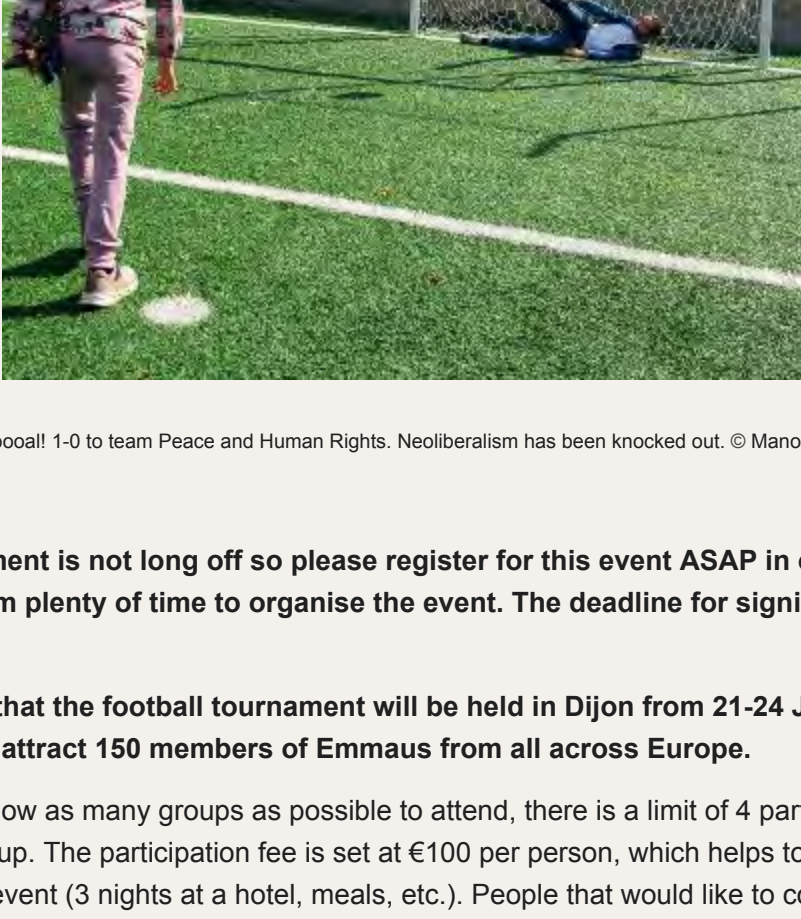
The participants greatly enjoyed this meeting and other such meetings will likely be planned in the future, potentially including groups from Western Europe if it is logistically feasible for them to attend.

In the meanwhile, we look forward to seeing you online at the meetings of the geographical collectives in the autumn (the Poland-Ukraine collective and the Romania collective).

Thank you to the following groups for participating: the Brat Albert, Roessow and Lublin groups from Poland; the Oselya group from Ukraine; Emmaus GEO from Georgia and the Iasi, Targu Jiu and Satu Mare groups from Romania. And thank you to Emmaus Satu Mare for having us!

Calendar

A reminder to register for the Emmaus Europe Football Tournament for Peace and Human Rights.



The tournament is not long off so please register for this event ASAP in order to give the team plenty of time to organise the event. The deadline for signing up is 15 June 2025.

A reminder that the football tournament will be held in Dijon from 21-24 July and is expected to attract 150 members of Emmaus from all across Europe.

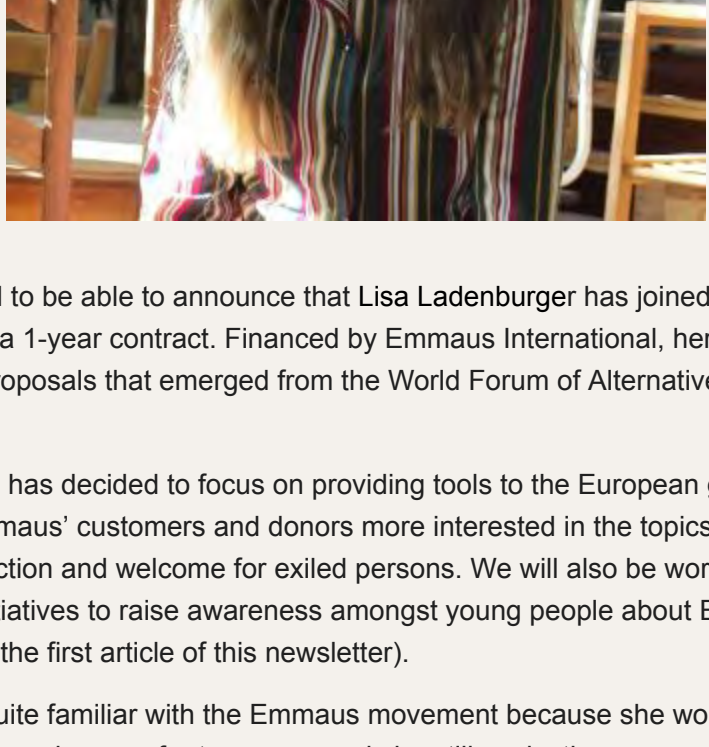
In order to allow as many groups as possible to attend, there is a limit of 4 participants per Emmaus group. The participation fee is set at €100 per person, which helps to cover the costs of the event (3 nights at a hotel, meals, etc.). People that would like to come to the event but not play football will still be seen as participants and will still have to pay the participation fee.

The teams will be put together once everybody has arrived in Dijon and we will try to get a good mix of different age groups, countries of origin and genders in the teams. Getting everybody involved is really important to us, no matter how old you are, your gender or your level of skill on the football pitch. Back in 2023 the oldest participant was 74, but that didn't prevent her from giving it a good go!

As well as playing football and relaxing, Emmaus Europe is also putting together an agenda of workshops and meetings for the participants. These will focus on capacity building for future initiatives focusing on peace and human rights (fighting against fake news, non-violent communication, non-violent action, etc.). The participants will hear from speakers from the Emmaus movement and from outside the movement on these topics. You will be hearing more from us about all of this in the coming weeks!

Register for the Emmaus Europe football tournament

A new addition to the team!



We are delighted to be able to announce that Lisa Ladenburger has joined the Emmaus Europe team on a 1-year contract. Financed by Emmaus International, her role will be to implement the proposals that emerged from the World Forum of Alternatives on the European level.

Emmaus Europe has decided to focus on providing tools to the European groups so that they can get Emmaus' customers and donors more interested in the topics of reuse, excessive production and welcome for exiled persons. We will also be working on pooling together your initiatives to raise awareness amongst young people about Emmaus' values (as discussed in the first article of this newsletter).

Lisa is already quite familiar with the Emmaus movement because she worked as an apprentice in a French group for two years and she still works there on a part-time basis.

Lisa will be getting in touch with some of you in the coming months and you should also feel free to contact her if your group wants to take action on these topics  
([L.ladenburger@emmaus-europe.org](mailto:L.ladenburger@emmaus-europe.org))