MINUTES OF THE REGIONAL EXECUTIVE OF EMMAUS EUROPE
11-12 July 2024 - Montreuil

PRESENT
Carina Aaltonen (president), Aurore Querel (secretary), Vincent Chapuis, Herbert Bitter, Yvette Gumbs, Jean-Philippe Légaut, and Duncan Lewis.

EUROPE REGIONAL SECRETARIAT
Eve Poulteau (CEO), Manon Gaham (advocacy and awareness raising officer), Emmanuel Rabourdin (solidarity coordinator), Marie Tixier (events coordinator), and Véronica Acevedo Caro (admin-finance assistant).

APOLOGIES RECEIVED
Aurore Querel (for 11 July 2024).

AGENDA ITEM	DISCUSSION / DEBATE	CONCLUSIONS | DECISIONS
1. Word of welcome and approval of the minutes from the last meeting	**<u>Approval of the January 2024 executive minutes – held in Paris, France</u>** Add Duncan to the list of people who attended the last executive. None of the participants wished to make any remarks or oppose the proposed minutes of the last EE Regional Executive.	The minutes of the last executive were unanimously approved. As Aurore was unable to attend the first day, the executive appointed Yvette Gumbs as the temporary secretary.
2. Meeting with national organisations – Visit to Italy	**The first national organisation meeting** enabled participants to discuss how national organisations can manage crises that may occur in their countries and ensure that each Emmaus group continues to deliver proper provision. This is not easy in any country and there are many shared issues. Proposals recorded at the end of the national organisation meeting: - Share documents with the other countries, particularly the Emmaus UK documents (ready in July) and the French statutory work. - Create a common basis document for an internal group charter aimed at employees and volunteers and check with EI for the statutes. - An annual national organisation meeting (online or in-person) with a specific subject prepared in advance. Common basis charter: work on a joint document with the national organisations, potentially with the document ultimately being approved by the RCEE. JP and Eve are working on a first proposal. A common basis document with examples of good practice from different countries could also be useful. Check with the national organisations how they want to work in their countries on these common basis documents that would be customised in each country. Most of the national organisations do not have national employees and it is difficult for them to monitor and support groups or share resources and practices. Ask the national organisations what they expect of EE. EI is nowadays potentially more open to working with and taking into consideration the national organisations. There is a need to work with them with an overview of the countries rather than have a group-to-group focus. It is uncertain whether EE can do all that we want because our resources are not limitless, but we can support the national organisations that want to get involved, foster interaction, and work on common basis documents.	The executive approved the three proposals from the national organisation meeting. JP: OK to work with Eve on identifying common bases. Vincent is looking into how to better organise the documents online. The issue of national organisation resources needs to be examined if they want to fully play their role. Link up with EI with regards to what can be done from a statutory perspective.

Follow-up VISIT TO ITALY

There is currently a governance problem at Emmaus Italy, with major tension between the Board members, and a nationwide issue with regard to handing over the groups to new leaders.
It is important to link up the people who want to change things in Italy. We can do this work. We can also connect them to other partners in Italy, such as *Insieme*, a member of RREUSE with whom we have planned to arrange a meeting in the autumn to plan ahead for separate textile collection in Italy.

Several years ago, the Italian groups started this work and helped found Emmaus-ISF (Franco Bettoli, Renzo etc). There are connections between the two countries that could be activated in the other direction today to help the Italian groups to reinvent themselves.
Italy is also very keen to welcome volunteers and young people, and this is one of the issues for which they can be in touch with other countries.

Maintain links with the national organisation, meet them, enable them to meet up, and pay particular attention to the new leaders. The football tournament could be an opportunity to motivate them and enable them to meet up and link up with other potential partner organisations.

EE has started to get documents translated into Italian when the topics are important for Italy.
A new national delegate may finally be appointed in Italy: Henk from Aselogna.

Attracting younger people to join the movement

In Switzerland and the Netherlands, the issue of recruiting younger people to work as leaders and Board members is pivotal. We need to work on adapting to the younger generations and give younger people the tools to join the movement.

We could arrange a "leadership" programme to train future leaders. It would be a way of getting together and discussing matters. Women would be the priority because we have more female than male volunteers, but they are finding it hard to access positions of responsibility. Provide good examples of female leadership.
There are two questions: how to retain the female leaders we already have, and how to help them to take their place and move Emmaus forward. And there is also the question of attracting others.

	We also need to make progress on the issue of the space given to young people, and chauvinistic attitudes in meetings, for instance. We could already move forward by sharing posters, such as the *confédération paysanne* (French agricultural union) poster, and codes of conduct, such as the Dutch one. Finally, it is important to work on how to enable leaders who have been in post for a long time to be replaced and prepare to leave Emmaus in order to make way for others.	
3. Advocacy and awareness-raising: review and next steps following the European elections	A review of the European elections was delivered to the executive. We are concerned by the large number of seats won by the far right and right in the European Parliament. General elections have taken place in the UK and also in France, after the French Parliament was dissolved. Emmaus France instigated a press release, co-signed with EI/EE, and launched an awareness-raising campaign against the far right and championing our values. An appeal was also made to vote against the far right. In France, some groups expressed a wish to remain neutral and not take a stance on this issue. This issue remains topical and important because we are also aware that some Emmaus activists have voted for the far right. • Issue of knowing how to support the groups in order to champion our values. UK: Emmaus UK published a manifesto to share its proposals on homelessness with the candidates standing for election. <u>At European level</u> The next plenary session of the newly elected parliament takes place on 16 July 2024. The parties are currently forming committees. A new far-right party, Patriots for Europe (PfE), has replaced ID, and is now the third largest grouping in Europe. It becomes the second most powerful group if it coordinates with other far-right parties. They want to lead committees such as LIBE, which is notably tasked with migration issues, with this being a concern for us. The Patriots are pro-Russian, unlike the other far-right party (ECR), to which Georgia Meloni belongs. However, it is unlikely that they will obtain key posts because of opposition from the other parties. <u>Risks following the European Parliament elections</u> The following may be called into question and made worse: Asylum and Migration Pact, Green Pact, the CAP, and support for Ukraine. The presidents of the European Commission, European Council, and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs have already been nominated and must now be confirmed. Next event: plenary session on 16 July (election of the Parliament's president, vice-presidents, and financial officers, number of MEPs per committee, etc). Before September, the Parliament will elect the European Commission president, who will then approve the nomination of commissioners, before the final vote in December.	

	Legislative work is on standby during this period. It is planned that new proposals will be made around January 2025. Several MEPs who are supportive of Emmaus have been re-elected. It is important that we maintain our links with them and that we forge new relationships too.	
4. Young people Overview	Anaïs Moutier from Emmaus France is working on the issue of youth. Her main remit is to raise young people's awareness about Emmaus' values and struggles, and to foster their involvement in the movement. <u>Several initiatives are in place</u> - National community service accreditation, with State funding: relatively few participants (65 in 2023, of whom 40% are at Emmaus Connect). - Summer camps: long-standing scheme (decreased since COVID). - Partnerships with training institutions, notably ESSEC (business school) since last year. - *Jeunesse et Education Populaire* (young people and popular education) accreditation to develop awareness-raising tools (games, intend to develop a teaching pack in 2024). Intention to develop other youth engagement programmes in European countries using other mechanisms: - International community service (but little funding is available, notably for travel). - European Solidarity Corps (formerly European Voluntary Civic Service): more funding via the EU through Erasmus+. This would also enable work camps to be funded, potentially partly in France and partly in another European country. Emmaus France provides the groups with documents and has a platform that could be shared for young people to register and enable monitoring. Emmaus France is a member of the Cotravaux network bringing together youth volunteering stakeholders to work together on developing these initiatives, notably engaging with values and struggles. Observations and questions about EE's role in monitoring youth engagement: - Difficult to get more involved in the work camps (time factor). - Little information about the work camps (follow-up and impact): we link up people but do not monitor what happens next. → How should EE be involved? Should we devote more time to it? → What role for the national organisations/groups? → How do we maintain a link with the volunteers, and truly monitor?	Develop the following points for a future executive or RCEE: Main ideas put forward: - Combine shared France/Europe programmes via French community service accreditations, and sending young people abroad. - Train young people before they leave to teach them about Emmaus. - Mobilise the groups about welcoming community service volunteers. - Continue working with the groups that host young people on addressing gender-based and sexual violence. Identify our aim: recruit volunteers or attract young people who may not necessarily be fully available in the longer term? Where should we concentrate our energies? Should we focus on enabling the largest possible number of young people to discover Emmaus, or training young people in our movement so that they stay and find their place (mentoring, young leadership programme?)?

	At Emmaus Lisbon, Humberto's plan to create an international pathway for young people who want to learn about Emmaus, was also mentioned, and could be submitted to EI.	

5. Solidarity: collectives, trial membership visits, funding solidarity	Emmanuel provided a quick overview of developments to the European and international solidarity programmes over the past two years.
	- 2023: No European project was funded by European or international solidarity (one project via the Ukraine Fund).
	- 2024: Harmonisation of templates, new project rating system, and record year for the number of projects supported by EI.
	  ○ Two European projects:
	  ▪ Satu Mare €50,000
	  ▪ Iasi €29,105
	Amount remaining to be financed: €20,000 (Piadena, Italy)
	
	The EE Secretariat has produced a booklet showing which projects and programmes can be funded and what has been funded by international solidarity.
	During discussions with Emmaus International, the idea was to include all the international projects already funded or for funding, but this was set aside.
	
	Key feedback from the elected representatives about the new rating system.
	- The table will need to be developed over time. Some information is missing.
	- It remains a discussion tool, which enables projects to be discussed. It is not a gold standard.
	- It enables us to ask questions and get to know the groups.
	- Be mindful not to give a project a low rating because of the way that it is described.
	- Questions about the legitimacy of rating a group/project.
	
	→ Should videos be added to the supporting documents in order to present the project and provide a more tangible overview?
	→ Work on improving presentations to the Regional Council and better define its role: is the RCEE being informed (the elected representatives), or are they being asked to really get involved in each project?
	
	Trial membership/monitoring visits
	- <u>September</u> Baltic countries (Amis3 and MPFSC).
	- <u>October</u> Otaharin (Bosnia-Herzegovina), trial membership
	- <u>Beginning of 2025</u> Targu Jiu (Romania) for a joint monitoring visit with EI and the Eastern France region.
	Visit made
		The hybrid version of the booklet is interesting and was approved by the exec members for the coming year.
		
		The Eastern European groups could also benefit from further funding from the Green Transition Fund.
		
		We need to start a discussion about the future of the collectives: their aims and how to achieve them.

	- June Nova Generacija (NG), ready to join at the November 2024 Board. **Collectives: Initiate a process of discussion about the aims of the collectives** The collectives are no longer solely solidarity-focused. They address fundamental issues (economic and political issues, future difficulties, etc). Nevertheless, solidarity is important for forging bonds between the groups. South-East Europe Collective The groups in this region can meet up without EE being involved. The collectives could become a forum for exchanging practices. External speakers could be invited and the groups could learn from their expertise. Poland-Ukraine Collective This collective brings together people who speak three languages and who do not necessarily understand each other. Interpreting is a makeshift affair but it sometimes becomes a bit of a handicap, given the number of participants (around 40). The football tournament can address the need to meet up and make friends with people from other countries, while discussing key issues. This is also the case for the exchanges of practices. We need to continue developing this type of meeting on different topics.	
6. Awareness raising: donations/overproduction campaign	Potential campaign aims: - Address the issues of overproduction and overconsumption, notably clothing. - Raise awareness about the quality of items donated to Emmaus so that we can implement our social and solidarity initiatives. 2025: mandatory separate collection of textiles in Europe. Main issue: Emmaus must not be forgotten. Hence the idea of a twin-pronged campaign on overproduction and quality donations for our groups. - Raise the profile of our solidarity, social and environmental work. - Promote the campaign against overconsumption and overproduction. - Promote quality donations. 1) Exec feedback about ambitions, targets, resources. 2) What is the most important message at the present time out of the three topics? Do we want a wide-ranging campaign, or a more targeted campaign on a single issue? Keep this in mind when looking at feedback. In Switzerland, in the Jura group, the strategy is to say to people that we are a solution to:	Work on a campaign concentrating on quality donations for Emmaus and that would start in late 2024.

- Overconsumption.
- Environmental issues.
- We add social value to products.

They no longer use the term "donations" but instead talk about "solutions" for society (consumers etc).

It would be worthwhile drawing inspiration from this approach: emphasize what a donation costs when we receive it and the fact that it helps us to help when it is sold, and raise awareness about the fact that it represents a cost for the group if it cannot be sold. We help out by accepting a donation, and this continues until we manage to sell it.

It would be worthwhile highlighting "the solution that Emmaus provides" and the cost for us. If we need to prioritize a topic, we should work on what the groups have the most difficulties publicising: the need for quality donations. It is hard for a group to ask customers for quality items.

However, we need to remember that the general public does not always know about Emmaus' social and solidarity work.

In Finland, the groups have worked on an ***All you need is less*** campaign. It could be challenging for the groups to roll out this campaign at the local level, but we could suggest conveying it to coincide with Black Friday.

It is difficult to address overconsumption if we work alone. We need to question what we are looking to achieve, what we want people to think/how we want them to react? Focus on the benefits of shopping at Emmaus: helping people and the planet, and combating overconsumption. We are not just a second-hand store.

<u>Decision following discussion</u>
Do not attempt to cover everything in this campaign. Do not directly focus on overconsumption/overproduction because we are not specialists. It is better to focus on "what we do with your donations".

Idea of utilising the concept of QUALITY: quality donations, quality of life, etc.

Suggested resources
- Posters

	- Create an Emmaus pop-up shop at the European Parliament. - Undertake a customer opinion survey. We need to consider producing resources that are reusable and adaptable in the groups. Put a great deal of effort into graphic design, and being able to adapt the design to local circumstances. We must continue adapting posters in the different languages. The team invited the elected representatives to continue providing feedback by email.	

7. Advocacy & awareness-raising– work areas and partnerships	**Reuse, social and solidarity economy**
	RREUSE
	We are now members of the RREUSE Board.
	Meeting schedule
	- DigiSocCirc project final conference in Brussels, Belgium – 12 September (Manon)
	- Conference, meeting, and general assembly in The Hague, Netherlands, 15-17 October (Yvette, Manon, Eve).
	
	Work topics this year
	- Textiles
	- WEEE
	- Potentially others in the future.
	
	Textiles
	Separate textile collection should become mandatory in 2025, but it may be postponed until 2026.
	
	Waste framework directive
	- The European Parliament and Council have rubberstamped their position. Next phase: Trilogues.
	- Positive point: Both recognise the important role played by social enterprises in the reuse sector.
	- Concerns
	  - The Council is allowing Member States to impose Extended Producer Responsibility charges on social economy stakeholders.
	  - Lack of commitment to setting reuse targets and the social economy's presence in EPR system governance has not been made mandatory.
	How are groups preparing for this change at the national level?
	- **Finland:** Two of the country's three groups are in a grouping of social economy associations to work on this topic. Westervik is already doing this type of sorting (contract with the council to collect all sorts of textiles). Åland has recently decided to join this textile waste management scheme because they are worried that others will take their market share without it.
	- **Sweden:** The groups are also getting ready (notably Stockholm).
	- **Netherlands:** Pending, there is an excessive amount of textile waste, and nobody knows what to do about it. The groups are awaiting solutions, and there is a need to talk directly to the authorities to sort it out. The new July 2023 law enables used clothing to be returned to its producers, but only the HEMA department stores have installed textile collection containers.	

- **Switzerland:** Vincent has tried to alert colleagues at the Federation, but there is little response as Switzerland is not in the EU, and the Emmaus groups believe that this will not affect them. However, there will be an impact.
    - Geneva: Caritas and the Protestant Social Centre have decided to take the initiative and have formed an alliance.
    - Jura Canton: alliance between Emmaus Jura and Caritas and other private sector companies to contend with a local law seeking to get rid of social economy stakeholders in the Canton because recycling is becoming financially worthwhile. The groups have converted the social economy into the citizen economy so that it remains within the law: the citizen economy works with local authorities and has social value.
- **UK:** More people are buying second-hand goods in the country, and local councils are looking to reduce waste, so there is a lot of reuse. The groups are looking how to become more effective/efficient.
- **Romania:** In Romania, second-hand goods/waste are challenging issues, and this includes textiles. A very complicated process and permits are required to use (donate or sell) second-hand items. Only large private-sector companies can do it. There are three different cumulative processes for cleaning, disinfection and insect extermination. It is highly likely that large companies use false certificates, so it is impossible to compete with them. So, textiles are bought from them.

EE wants to arrange exchanges/webinars in Spain, Netherlands and Italy to discuss this topic with other organisations involved in the issue in order to move forward and support the groups. We still need to think about the best way to do it: a single webinar with all the European countries (although it would be quite general) or a webinar per country with the countries engaged in the issue (this would take a lot of work).
Carina suggested having a webinar for all the groups.

Question: will we still be able to send container loads of textiles to other Emmaus groups in Europe and outside Europe? Yes, it will remain legal, but a lot more stringent in terms of checks and information to be provided.
In Europe: it's legal, but there may be a need to contribute to the EPR system.

WEEE directive
This directive has not been revised over the past 10 years. Over the past 10 years, we have seen new market conditions and new legislation come into force (including ESPR – Eco-design for sustainable products regulation, R2R – Right to Repair, and CRMA – Critical Raw Materials Act). It is likely that this directive will be revised over the next few years. In that case, our priority will be to ensure that the revision focuses on compliance with the waste hierarchy. There are positive signs in this regard because the European Commission's recent recommendation on small domestic appliances emphasizes:

- Social enterprise involvement.
- Setting reuse targets.

Potential schedule for the likely revision:
•2022-2025: Impact analysis.
•2025-2026: Revision proposal and European Parliament and Council express their view.
•2026-2027: Trilogues, agreements and voting.
•2027-2028: Entry into force and deadline for Member States to transpose the directive.

	Migration Will the pact be called into question? - It may be looked at again following the elections, as the far right has called for this. Moreover, 15 Member States have called for a fully outsourced asylum application system to be put in place and the EU's borders to be closed. The pact is already controversial and very limiting, but a new pact could be worse. Migreurop - Instigation of monthly political meetings (themed and geographical). We will take part in the themed meetings. - The network is going to produce a memo on the outsourcing of asylum in September. ECRE - We are planning to get in touch before the summer is over. **Combating poverty** EAPN - We will get back in touch over the summer/early September. - Advocate for the intergroup on combating poverty to be restarted (?) FEANTSA - Get in touch in early September.	
8. Financial situation	**Financial situation as of 30 June 2024** The budget as of 30 June 2024 is balanced. Jean-Philippe Légaut, the EE treasurer, read out the budget and observed that membership dues income for the year was satisfactory, with this demonstrating the groups' motivation. There is a plan to create an institutional information pack about EE, but this could take time, and there is also the idea of running a campaign on advocacy. The EE Executive preferred to prioritise the advocacy campaign, in the knowledge that the information pack could be produced next year. Furthermore, the secretariat is still in the process of collecting the 2023 RAEE registration fees, as some groups are yet to pay them. €9,000 remains to be collected from a total of €40,200 to be received.	
9. Proposed pay scale	A first proposal made by the working group was discussed with the executive, which approved it in principle, but asked for an estimation to be provided by our chartered accountant about the impact on the organisation's finances.	
10. Ukraine Fund and planned visit	Emmanuel presented an update on the Ukraine Fund, and reminded the meeting about the issues raised in late 2023. 2024 issues 1. End of monthly funding for NK: approved	The executive approved increased funding support for Oselya. The executive approved all the requests for monthly support from the Brat Albert

	2. Changes to the support for Brat Albert: the group continues to submit its monthly costs for information purposes, even though no funding has been sent since March. 3. Development of the Ukraine Fund - three options: 1. Support Oselya with its long-term projects (investment, developing new activities) - Option selected 2. Get in touch with organisations close to the conflict to provide support. 3. Get in touch with civil society structures to promote peace. → Prepare a proposal for the RCEE. We also need to devise an overall strategy for the next steps for the Ukraine Fund, with the aim of creating leverage. The visit planned for this summer could shed light on these issues and enable us to see if Oselya is keen to be supported alongside other trustworthy partner organisations in order to support peace.	and NK groups, and Oselya for the March-June 2024 period. The executive approved the end of monthly funding support for Brat Albert from July 2024, on the proviso that occasional, specific requests for funding may be made.
11. Exchange of practices	Frequency: One in-person and one or two online a year. 2024 - The meeting of national organisations in June is regarded as an exchange of practices. - For the year's second meeting, a potential subject is the green revolution: how about waste management in the groups? Discussion about food practices. Just one before the end of the year if we are being realistic. In view of the news, it might be more relevant to focus on gender-based and sexual violence. <u>Opinions on the topic of the second exchange of practices</u> Vincent: If we want to have an impact, we need to be able to change behaviour (this takes a long time). There is already a lot of information available from other organisations about sorting. Instead, we should focus on the issue of how to change behaviour. The idea of a food-based approach would be a good gateway to changing behaviour. Carina: We could talk about vegetarianism, having better consumption habits, and how to cook so as to use all foodstuffs = sustainable and eco-friendly food. Aurore: OK. Idea of developing beekeeping in the communities. Jean-Philippe: Language problem if we want chefs to take part. Idea of continuing the themed discussions with MEPs: e.g. a webinar with Damien Carême.	Approved the topic of the green revolution with food (contact person: Vincent)

12. RCEE in Bosnia-Herzegovina	<u>Schedule</u> Online executive: Friday 13 September, PM Executive in Montreuil: 17-18 December Online executive: 14 February 2025, PM RCEE, March 2025: 10-21 March period, Paris or Strasbourg (Mundo), or Italy. Second half of 2025 RCEE: Åland (late September or very early October) <u>Thoughts about the football tournament</u> - Link it up with the international work camp? Yes, invite Emmaus members from other regions to take part in this event, play football and share peace and human rights-related experiences. - Venue: Football pitches, a community, and a symbolic place of remembrance – resistance/peace/war. The initial idea (Calais) is not a must. On the other hand, the issue of the location is very important: visiting a memorial or another site has a real impact on the companions. Early September newsletter, appeal to the French groups about the football tournament: - Groups willing to organise it - Groups willing to take part	
13. International World Forum (World Forum of Alternatives)	Théo Robin delivered a presentation about the forum: 330-400 participants Four speakers at the public roundtable on Tuesday evening (Poitiers): how do we work together to build tomorrow's world? How can civil society get involved in the political arena? - Adam Dicko: the role of young people (representing the Africa Region). - Shangli Joshi (Nepal): gender and development - Manuela Royo (Chile): the constitutional process in Chile, access to water. - Julie Paquet: environment. Youth network + co-founder of a collective of artists who use art to highlight environmental issues. *Social and environmental justice:* A Malian small farmer will speak about the issue of land grabbing. *Education:* A Palestinian speaker and a Brazilian speaker on popular education as a means of emancipation.	The executive approved the budget allocated for the World Forum of Alternatives to be exceeded by €800, making for a total budget of €7,800.
Closing words	We need more love, open-mindedness and solidarity in line with the Emmaus model.	

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

Carina Aaltonen
President of Emmaus Europe

Aurore Querel
Secretary of Emmaus Europe

Yvette Gumb
Temporary secretary on the first day