



Dear members of Emmaus Europe,
The time has come for those of you who have made last-minute registration into an Olympic sport (could this be you?) to register for the Emmaus Europe Elective Assembly (our joint gold medal!)
The Elective Assembly will be held on the first day of the World Assembly in the Netherlands and you can register here.
This newsletter includes a first brief introduction to the three candidates for the post of EE president, should you need any further motivation to register.
We also hope to inspire you to attend and chat with our Spanish colleagues after reading about their recent success in getting undocumented migrants regularised.
Don't forget to register and enjoy the newsletter!
The Emmaus Europe team

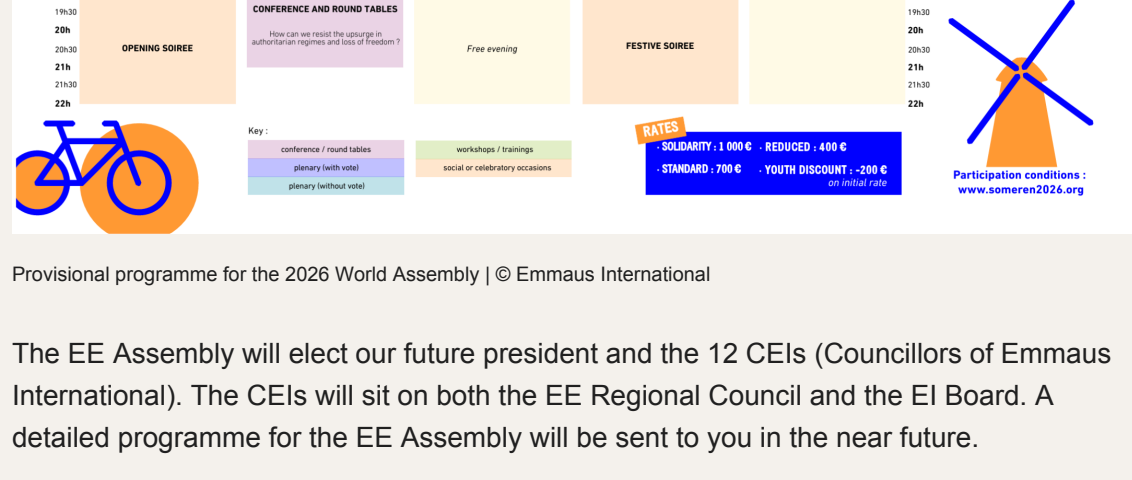
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Top story

Last chance to register for the 2026 World Assembly

As you know, Emmaus International is holding the World Assembly (WA) on 13-17 April 2026 in Someren in the Netherlands.

Emmaus Europe is also holding its Elective General Assembly on the morning of 13 April (10:00 – 12:30) before the official start of the WA. Both meetings will be held at the same venue: if you register for the WA, you will be automatically registered for the EE Elective Assembly.



The EE Assembly will elect our future president and the 12 CEIs (Councillors of Emmaus International). The CEIs will sit on both the EE Regional Council and the EI Board. A detailed programme for the EE Assembly will be sent to you in the near future.

Each group is entitled to send a two-person delegation to Someren to represent the group and vote on its behalf. All the event information is available on the dedicated website: https://www.someren2026.org/

Don't delay registering!

REGISTER HERE

If you are unable to attend, you can grant a proxy vote to another group (or a blank proxy vote) to represent you and make your voice heard.

GRANT A PROXY VOTE

Election for the post of president of Emmaus Europe: Democracy in action!



This year, we are fortunate enough to have three candidates standing for election for the post of regional president. This is a first in our history and we are delighted to see that the regional dynamics have encouraged so many candidates to stand for election.

Apart from standing for the post of president, these three candidates have also put themselves forward to be Councillors of Emmaus International (CEIs), and we are delighted about this news. Their expertise and engagement are an asset for our region. Next month you will be able to read their CVs and cover letters in detail, but in the meantime, we have asked them to answer three questions.

How do you view Emmaus Europe's role and its place in the overall movement?

Jean-Philippe Légaud, Romania: Emmaus Europe is the decentralised Emmaus movement organisation in Europe. As such, it needs to stay close to the groups and grassroots situations. Given that EE has limited resources and a small secretariat, its role is to coordinate regional life, working with the national organisations in this area. The idea is to create forums for the groups to meet and help each other (solidarity), and to adopt the movement's international policy directions in Europe, as well as feeding back the groups' aspirations.

Duncan Lewis, United Kingdom: Emmaus Europe should be a unifier and enabler for all the work that is done by us to have three candidates standing for election for the post of regional president. This is a first in our history and we are delighted to see that the regional dynamics have encouraged so many candidates to stand for election. It should amplify our collective voice and ensure that we are heard by those in power, speaking with authority on subjects where we have real expertise.

Fatima Parret-Bezi, France: Emmaus Europe is a regional body that coordinates, links up and supports the member groups. It facilitates experience sharing, strengthens solidarity between countries, and ensures that our grassroots initiatives are coherent and are publicised. EE helps ensure a shared vision based on proper shelter and support and combating poverty, and conveys a strong, independent and demanding collective voice to the European institutions.

What challenges have you identified for EE for the upcoming four-year period of offices?

Duncan Lewis, United Kingdom: We will be working in an environment where conflict and inequality are daily realities. We must be united, fighting the rise of populism and the cult of self, demonstrating that there is a different, better way to live. We must stop being defined by the life of one individual, working collectively to fiercely protect and champion a set of common values. We must focus finite resource where we can make most difference and be more relevant to a younger generation.

Fatima Parret-Bezi, France: I think that the main issue is to increase the movement's cohesion against a regional backdrop of unprecedented social, economic and migration crises, support struggling groups, and foster local dynamics between groups and with our partners. Another challenge is being a credible counterweight, capable of influencing European debates in response to the watering down of rights – a direct threat to our values – and also about environmental issues, by shouting from the rooftops about the social and solidarity economy in these institutions.

Jean-Philippe Légaud, Romania: Combating the temptation to isolate oneself by facilitating regional life and solidarity between the groups. We also need to continue ensuring that our practices are consistent with our values to demonstrate that we embody a real alternative (social and environmental justice, shelter and support etc.). And working at the European level on a political and regulatory framework that enables us to continue making a living from our work, and, simultaneously, live freely according to our values.

What could we put in place or further develop in order to rise to these challenges?

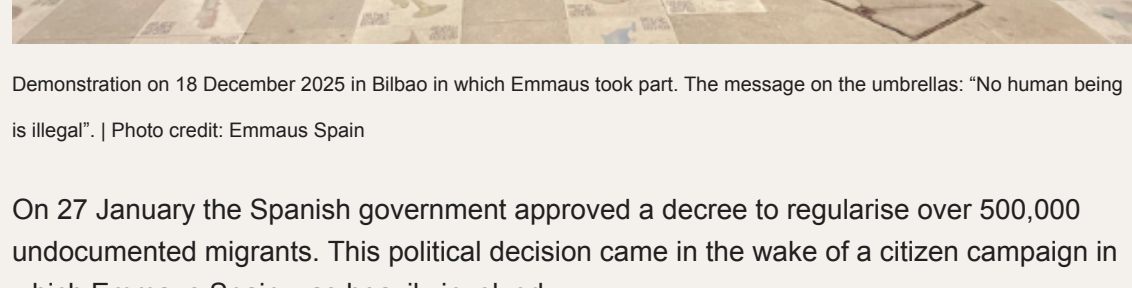
Fatima Parret-Bezi, France: We need to further develop interaction between the groups, the sharing of good practice and practical cooperation, enhance our support, training and communication tools, listen to needs, and leverage and strengthen everyone's involvement. We must also develop offensive European advocacy linked to our grassroots initiatives. This would take the form of having shared stances, developing alliances with our partners and social movements, and by an increased presence in the public and institutional arenas.

Jean-Philippe Légaud, Romania: My idea is to supplement traditional forms of solidarity (trucks and funding) with a focus on empowering the most fragile groups. I want to continue with the group working forums (collectives, exchanges of practices, and so on) by encouraging companion participation (e.g. football and training, like in Strebrnica and Digni), continue with the female leadership programme and work on recruiting younger people. At the European level, we need to continue our advocacy with other European organisations, such as RREUSE (circular economy) and EAPN (combating poverty).

Duncan Lewis, United Kingdom: Strong, well-run, local groups which are financially and politically independent are our bedrock. More and stronger national organisations can unite and support them, helped by an understanding of local circumstances. A better resourced, clearly focussed secretariat which is a centre of excellence and expertise, should proactively meet your needs and articulate your collective voice with clarity and consistency throughout the region. If we enable ourselves to unite and focus then our breadth and diversity become a real strength.

European action

Regularisation of undocumented migrants in Spain: 500,000 reasons for Emmaus to celebrate!



Demonstration on 18 December 2025 in Bilbao in which Emmaus took part. The message on the umbrella: 'No human being is illegal'. Photo credit: Emmaus Spain

On 27 January the Spanish government approved a decree to regularise over 500,000 undocumented migrants. This political decision came in the wake of a citizen campaign in which Emmaus Spain was heavily involved.

The account provided by Rosa Gil, the leader of Emmaus Bilbao, gives us all hope: The Emmaus groups in Spain are celebrating. A civic legislative proposal calling for the exceptional regularisation of hundreds of thousands of migrants has been adopted. We can draw a key lesson from this collective campaign, in which we played an active part: local community organisations are capable of transforming reality and opening up gaps in systems that had previously seemed unbreachable.

The struggle got underway in 2020 when over 120 civil society organisations sent a letter to the Spanish government calling for an urgent and exceptional regularisation. At the time, it was estimated that close to 800,000 people were surviving in Spain without fundamental rights, and were trapped by their irregular administrative status. Hundreds of people picketed outside the Spanish Parliament to call for a debate. However, the proposal was rejected in September of that year. Even the Socialist Party, which was already in power, made use of the European Pact on Migration and Asylum to vote against the proposal.

Far from giving up, the Regularización Ya (Regularise Now!) platform launched to the European Parliament; it confirmed that there were no legal barriers to such a measure being implemented. The next step was to arrange meetings in 2021 to launch a civic legislative proposal. This wasn't an easy process: the proposal was rejected on several occasions until December 2021, when the official collection of signatures began. A national campaign was launched in January 2022. The campaign mobilised hundreds of collectives and volunteers. At the same time, over 80 millions of support were endorsed by local councils and the Basque Parliament.

Over 700,000 signatures were handed to the Spanish Parliament in December 2022, well over the minimum required level of 500,000. Finally, in April 2024, the civic legislative proposal was placed on the parliamentary agenda, with 310 votes for, and 33 against, the latter being cast by the far right. Following months of political deadlock, the initiative finally came to fruition thanks to pressure from Podemos, a small yet highly combative political party.

It is true that there was political will once we reached the home straight, including from the incumbent socialist government, but none of this would have been possible without social pressure. At a historic time when fascism, racism and indifference to human suffering are all gaining ground, the grassroots community movement demonstrated its transforming power.

We are celebrating today, but we are also making a new commitment: informing, supporting and making all of our resources available to this regularisation process so that nobody is left on the sidelines. Solidarity and the defence of human rights are upheld through collective effort. Only together can we counteract the discourse that is trying to make us forget that at some point in time, we were all migrants.

Solidarity

Emergency European solidarity appeal - two very difficult financial situations in Poland

Two Emmaus communities in Poland are contending with financial difficulties that are jeopardising their social and income-generating initiatives. Emmaus Europe is making a solidarity appeal to the European groups to help these two Polish groups get through this difficult time.

If your group wants to support Brat Albert or Rzeszów, please send your donation to Emmaus Europe, marked Southern Pologne, or contact Emmaus for more information. Thank you for your solidarity!

- Breakdown
• In Nowi Sącz, the entrance to Brat Albert's shop and community has been obstructed for over a year and a half by railway line construction work. This work has had a big financial impact, with a 60%+ drop in turnover over the past year. The group is being supported by a lawyer to obtain financial compensation from the Polish State, but their financial situation remains very unstable.
• Rzeszów has been repaying over €30,000 a year until 2030 following massive investment by the previous leadership. The interest rate on this loan is very high, and these repayments are placing constant financial pressure on the community, meaning that every year the community runs the risk of having to close down. Financial support would enable the community to face the coming months with greater peace of mind.



Our Eastern European representatives out at the square outside Emmaus Gato March's shop. Credit: Emmaus Europe

Emmaus Europe cross-collective meeting - registration is open

Date: 6-8 June 2026
Location: Paris, Espace Adèle Pivrot

Why register for this meeting? To get updates from the Emmaus groups in Poland, Ukraine, Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania and Romania, and to search for answers to the following questions, which are a particular issue in these countries: How can groups continue their social initiatives despite an increasingly unstable economic situation? How can we learn from each other to improve everyone's skills? How do we create a regional dynamic in Eastern Europe?

Target group Anyone involved in European solidarity, or wanting to find out about the work of our groups in Eastern Europe.

Register here

We are currently developing Emmaus Europe's geographical collectives. Traditionally, the Romanian groups and their partner groups used to meet up (the Romania Collective), and the Polish, Ukrainian, Georgian, Latvian and Lithuanian groups and their partner groups also used to meet (the Poland-Ukraine Collective). This "cross-collective" meeting will enable us to tackle the above issues.

Δ Places at this meeting are limited to 60 people, 51 of whom will stay on-site. We are asking the groups only to register one participant, and to place a second participant on the waiting list. We are also asking participants who live in Paris or the wider Paris region to not register to stay on-site, if at all possible. The meeting will start on the morning of 2 June, and will finish on 3 June in the late afternoon. Accommodation will be provided on-site for participants from 1 June to 4 June (morning departure).

More information will be available soon...

Schedule



Participants at the second football game in Digni, France.

A date for your diaries! Third Emmaus Europe football tournament for peace and human rights

Date: 6-8 July 2026
Location: Strebrnica, Bosnia-Herzegovina

Why register for this event? The tournament offers the opportunity to gain a different view of the movement in Europe, with workshops, training and personal testimonies, and sports and creative sessions (including football, volleyball, drawing and painting workshops), plus the chance to explore Strebrnica, the Bosnia-Herzegovina War place of remembrance.

Target group Companions, employees on employment access schemes, volunteers and paid staff from the Emmaus Movement who prefer the beauty of the mountains and sunny fields to meeting rooms ☺

Here and there, feedback from the first two tournaments.

More information will be available soon about the programme and registration arrangements.

