Emmaus in Europe March 2026

Dear friends,

We are excited to be writing to you in the March edition of the newsletter, as we will be meeting up with you in a fortnight in Someren (Netherlands) for the World Assembly.

Regarding the World Assembly (WA), we have shared the preparatory documents for our upcoming Elective Assembly. If you have not yet read them, now is the time to do so!

March is also marked by the vote in the European Parliament on 26 March on the "Returns" regulation; this legislation is a major backwards step for migrant rights and protection. As for our solidarity work, the war is still raging in Ukraine, but Oselya is showing us how to resist and remain united. Finally, we are offering you the chance to take a trip to Spain with our mini-series of videos highlighting the work done by the Spanish groups to raise young people's awareness!

Enjoy reading the newsletter!

The Emmaus Europe team

Sommaire

- Elective General Assembly – The documents are now available!
- Returns regulation - a backwards step for human rights
- Oselya's resistance in the face of war in Ukraine
- Investment is needed for Oselya's economic survival
- The Ukraine Fund under the microscope
- Emmaus Europe 'Transcollective' meeting – registration is open
- Third football Cup for peace and human rights ⚽

Top story

Elective General Assembly – The documents are now available!

As you know, Emmaus Europe will hold its Elective General Assembly on **Monday 13 April 2026 from 10:00 to 12:30** in Someren, immediately before the Emmaus International World Assembly.

You will be electing **Emmaus Europe's next president,** and the Europe Region's next **Councillors of Emmaus International (CEI) Board members** at the assembly. The assembly will also be the opportunity to take a decision on a **change to the membership dues**, an important way of maintaining the quality of our collective work at regional level.

To prepare for the meeting, please read the **Emmaus Europe Elective Assembly Booklet**. It contains presentations of all the candidates, as well as an explanatory memo about the proposed change to the membership dues. A must-read before the big day!

Emmaus Europe Elective Assembly booklet

Emmaus stories

From primary schools to universities via visits, videos and board games…Many Emmaus groups across Europe are opening their doors to schoolchildren and students to share the reasons underpinning our work with the most excluded people in our solidarity and environmental initiatives.

We have chosen to make a video series to document these practices and share the European groups' initiatives with people of all ages.

This month, we are off to Spain, where many groups are involved in raising awareness about waste prevention and addressing overconsumption. While the activities may vary from San Sebastian to Pamplona and Bilbao, the desire to raise the profile of the movement and its values remains the same.

Are you looking for inspiration so as to develop this type of initiative in your group? We invite you to find out about the Spanish groups' practices and top tips in our new mini-series!

Click here or on the image below to access the video playlist (automatic subtitles in French, English and Spanish)

European action

Returns regulation - a backwards step for human rights

In our May 2025 newsletter, we were already telling you about this draft regulation put forward by the European Commission. The regulation paves the way for returning people whose asylum applications have been rejected to so-called "safe" countries, without these countries necessarily being their country of origin (see the article Policy of non-welcome: fortress Europe continues to put up more walls).

From mid-March, the pace stepped up when the right and far right joined forces on the European Parliament's LIBE Committee (Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs) to swiftly get adopted the draft legislation amended by the right (EPP).

The following points particularly shocked us:

- Failed asylum seekers and their children could be detained for up to 24 months if they do not agree to voluntarily return to their countries of origin, or if they are a flight risk.
- Member States are allowed to open detention centres/ returns hubs in third countries, without any guarantee of respect for the human rights of migrants who have been ordered to leave the country, and where they will be detained before being returned to their countries of origin. Italy has started to set up such facilities in Albania, going against the opinion of the European Court of Human Rights.
- Europe re-entry bans could be extended to up to 10 years, regardless of changes in the person's circumstances, or those of their country.
- Mutual recognition of decisions between Member States is also planned: for instance, a decision taken in Belgium will also be applicable in France, and vice-versa.

The LIBE Committee deleted the article on "detection", which had aroused great concern in Emmaus, as it forced Member States to implement all the necessary measures to "detect" third-country nationals illegally living in their countries.

However, there is a risk of similar measures being adopted when the trilogue takes place with the Council, Parliament and Commission. These measures include police raids of premises (including shelters) and the seizure of property. For the Emmaus groups and communities, this is a direct return to the darkest hours of European history. The police could enter our communities to arrest companions and their families.

The ECRE (European Council on Refugees and Exiles), the European refugee rights advocacy network, of which EE is a member, immediately lobbied MEPs to not vote for this regulation in the form adopted by the LIBE Committee.

The Emmaus national delegates in Europe were also asked to contact their countries on the European Council and right-wing MEPs; with green and left-wing MEPs already convinced about voting against this draft legislation.

The vote will take place on 26 March and the trilogue will be held in its wake. We will keep you updated about developments.

Solidarity

Lviv military cemetery, located in the centre of the city, is the burial place for over 3,000 soldiers who have died at the front since February 2022. Nazar and Oleksii, two Oselya companions, are buried there. 29 Oselya companions are currently on the frontlines of the war. Lviv, January 2026 | © Emmanuel Rabourdin

Oselya's resistance in the face of war in Ukraine

The full-scale war began four years ago, with Russia relentlessly bombing the Ukrainian population.

Our friends at Emmaus Oselya have been standing firm for four years, and are continuing to help the most vulnerable people. Yes, they are tired because their friends and family are on the frontline, in the mud and cold in the trenches, just like during World War I, because their nights are broken up by air raid sirens, just like during World War II, because they are woken by drones, which make a tractor-like noise on approach, a new act of cruelty in this particular war.

On 24 February 2022, a few hours after the invasion began, Grigory, the Emmaus national delegate in Ukraine warned us: *"It's a tragic day for Europe and the world. We need to stay united in the struggle against the madness of this dictator in power in the Kremlin."*

And we have definitely stayed united. This was reflected by over 40 communities and 50 people attending Emmaus Europe's online Ukraine conference on 24 February 2026. And it is also borne out by the unprecedented contribution made by the Emmaus groups in Europe and around the world to our Ukraine Support Fund (see below "The Ukraine Fund under the microscope").

Read more...

Investment is needed for Oselya's economic survival

Emmaus Oselya needs to expand its textile sorting centre to increase its sorting capacity and meet the council's requirements. The council wants the group to compete with the private-sector textile companies that have come from Eastern Ukraine and set up in Lviv. The aim is therefore to move from 40 clothing collection containers to around 70 containers by the end of the year, i.e., a 75% increase. This requirement is having a major impact on the association, and Emmaus Europe has undertaken to fund some of the sorting centre extension work to the tune of €75,000 via the Ukraine Fund. The total amount needed is €290,000, so any additional support from the Ukraine Fund would enable Oselya to fund this project.

We will tell you about the group's other dreams for the future over the coming months. In the meantime, please make the Ukrainian resistance possible!

The Ukraine Fund under the microscope

Emmaus Europe set up the Ukraine Fund on 24 February 2022 in the first hours of the war. Over the course of six months (February to July 2022), the Emmaus groups donated over €900,000 in a global solidarity movement: over 180 European groups donated, alongside Emmaus Africa (€1,000) and Emmaus International (€29,000), with donations for Ukraine also being made to the international body.

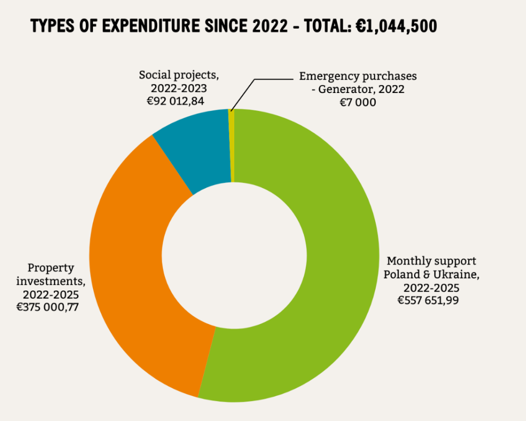
In total, the Emmaus groups have donated €1.19 million to the Ukraine Fund over the course of the four-year war. The funds were immediately used for humanitarian aid and to ensure the survival of our groups in Ukraine in the first instance, and then for monthly support payments to our groups in Ukraine and Poland that were hosting displaced people and refugees.

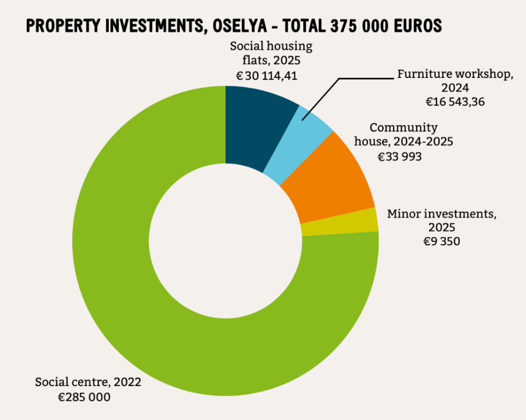
The funding has also enabled Emmaus Oselya's work to be developed and future-proofed. Over €375,000 has been invested in building renovation, and in the construction of a new shelter for vulnerable people. The aims remain the same: improve companion living and working conditions, and make proper provision a key component part of Oselya.

The above figures and the below graphs are an attempt to depict the sheer scale of the donations received by the Ukraine Fund and their impact.

On the other hand, they do not provide an accurate picture of the resilience, courage and sheer tenacity displayed by Emmaus Oselya as it continues to support the most vulnerable people, sets up new projects, continues to live and to dream. Dreaming of peace coming soon, a fair peace, dreaming of seeing their friends and family who are fighting on the frontlines, dreaming of hugging their children who they have not seen for far too long.

Building the movement means supporting each other, trusting each other, and believing in a better future. Emmaus is building the movement, both in Ukraine and for Ukraine.





Schedule

Emmaus Europe 'Transcollective' meeting – registration is open

Our Eastern European representatives cut a fine figure outside Emmaus Satu Mare's shop | © Emmaus Europe

Date: 2-3 June 2026
Location: Paris, Espace Adèle Picot

Why register for this event? 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.

Click here to register

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.

⚠ 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…

Third football Cup for peace and human rights ⚽

Participants at the second tournament in Dijon, France. | © Emmaus Europe

While FIFA is holding its 2026 World Cup on the other side of the Atlantic, Emmaus Europe is organising its own football Cup! And our tournament has a lot more to offer than just a trophy. Come to Srebrenica (Bosnia-Herzegovina) on 5-8 July 2026 for the **Third Emmaus Europe Football Cup for Peace and Human Rights.**

The tournament is an opportunity to discover a different facet of the Emmaus movement in Europe: the programme includes workshops, training and personal testimonies, sports and creative sessions (football, volleyball, drawing and painting workshops…). You will enjoy a unique group experience in a location that is steeped in history and is also a place of remembrance.

We look forward to seeing many of you to share a lot more than a football.

Register now and join our team of champions!

More information to come about the programme.

Copyright © 2026 Emmaüs Europe. Tous droits réservés.

Emmaüs Europe
47 avenue de la Résistance
93100 Montreuil
contact@emmaus-europe.org
Site internet

Se désinscrire de cette liste.