



Dear friends from Emmaus Europe,

In this last newsletter before the summer season, we are offering you the chance to find out about the initiatives run by Emmaus Caneças with international volunteers who stay at the community. As for advocacy, following the adoption by the European Parliament of the Regulation on the return of failed asylum seekers, we call for collective action. And finally, on a lighter note, there is news from Lithuania and about our office team!

The next newsletter will be published in September, so enjoy the holiday season in the meantime!

Enjoy reading the newsletter!

The Emmaus Europe team

Table of contents

- [Combining community, volunteering and cultural activities, a success story for Emmaus Caneças!](#)
- [Migration – Taking joint action in the face of human rights violations](#)
- [Your funding can save lives in Lithuania](#)
- [Lily joins the team!](#)
- [The summer camp season is underway!](#)

Emmaus stories

Combining community, volunteering and cultural activities: a success story for Emmaus Caneças!

Emmaus Caneças has become a leading light in the sociocultural life of the Arroios neighbourhood in Lisbon (Portugal), in particular by hosting international volunteers. Working with the volunteers, the community now arranges one cultural evening a week throughout the year. We talked to Ophélie, the community co-leader, who gave us their recipe for success.

Bom dia Ophélie! How did the idea of the community hosting volunteers come about?

When the community resumed work in 2023, Humberto really wanted to restart hosting international volunteers and make it a key component part of our identity. At the same time, we were offered the chance to occupy a house with a courtyard in the centre of Lisbon for a few weeks: the property is owned by a religious congregation with whom we have an excellent relationship, and they needed to weigh up a project and quickly take over the lease. We turned the property into a shop. And as it had a flat, we hosted foreign volunteers there too! Subsequently, the lease of a few weeks turned into several years. Since 2023, we have hosted over 200 volunteers, as well as roughly 15 students on work placements, community service volunteers, and six Scout troops.

So, the community is spread across Caneças, 15km from Lisbon, and Arroios, a neighbourhood in Lisbon. How do the two locations interact?

Emmaus Caneças is a classic residential Emmaus community. It is home to around 15 companions mostly from Portuguese-speaking countries and Eastern Europe. Sale of collected, repaired and upcycled second-hand goods fully funds the community. The companions are actively involved in the income-generating activity and community life.

In Arroios (Lisbon), the house has been converted into a shop on the ground floor, a flat for the team on the first floor, and a social and meeting space in the inner courtyard. We call it the Pop-Up Emaús Arroios.

In Caneças, the volunteers stay in the community buildings, and take part in all the activities, just like the companions. They stay in the first-floor flat in Arroios.

The companions bring the goods to be sold, but do not work in Lisbon: Eva, supported by the local or international volunteers, runs the premises.

So, you have gradually turned Arroios into a place to meet and socialise?

Yes, that's exactly it! Since 2023, we have successfully managed to establish ourselves as a leading light in neighbourhood life. [Read more...](#)



The community's hosting of international volunteers has made it possible to launch new initiatives that revitalise and benefit the whole neighbourhood | Emaús Caneças

European action

Migration - Taking joint action in the face of human rights violations



The EU Pact on Migration and Asylum became applicable in all the European countries on 12 June 2026. And the European Parliament adopted the Return Regulation on 17 June. These new European laws, passed by a right and far-right majority, ride roughshod over what remained of the right of asylum and the Geneva Convention.

It is now important for us to join forces to prevent these laws from destroying too many lives, including those of people living in our groups. Information about the content of these laws can be found in three previous articles from our [May 2025](#), [September 2025](#) and [March 2026](#) newsletters.

Regarding the Return Regulation, only some of the law will be applicable in the autumn, specifically the return hubs for the countries that decide to set them up. As for the rest of the law, we will have a year to try to influence the implementation in the different countries and to organise local solidarity. This is particularly the case for one of the proposals in this regulation. The proposal is of direct concern to us: States would be allowed to authorise the police to enter private property to arrest people who have received an order to leave the country, **and therefore potentially arrest people on our organisations' premises.**

So that we can take collective action, we are suggesting that you run information webinars at the national level or local meetings to gain a better understanding of these laws and their implications.

Emmaus Europe can speak at these meetings if you request it.

We are also going to work with our European partners to take legal action for annulment by referencing primary legislation. **Please send us any examples from your groups over the coming months, as they will be invaluable.**

We will also be liaising with your national organisations to monitor application in each country and the implications of these laws on Emmaus' work.

Finally, we feel that it is vital that the European Emmaus groups can join local networks with all the people and voluntary organisations working to defend human rights: local councils and other regional authorities, third-sector associations, legal practitioners, etc.

Do get in touch with us, we will be supporting you. These laws are riding roughshod over our lives. We must not let our courage and solidarity be trampled on too!

[Contact us](#)

Solidarity

Your funding can save lives in Lithuania

In the Baltic states, the MPFSC (Missing Persons' Family Support Centre), an Emmaus group located in Vilnius in Lithuania, works to protect victims of trafficking and violence, particularly children. Since the organisation was founded, it has rescued many victims, mainly women exploited by trafficking networks.

The MPFSC wants to open a volunteer-run second-hand shop in order to improve provision for victims. All the profits from the shop will be used to rent flats in the city and house the victims, thus protecting them from their abusers. And your Emmaus group can help fund this shop opening project!

Emmaus Europe has approved support of €22,600 for MPFSC to undertake the shop refurbishment work and launch this new income-generating activity. We are therefore appealing to your solidarity to fund this project.

If you wish to donate, you can send a cheque or bank transfer **made out to Emmaus Europe** with the reference **"MPFSC – Shop"**, or contact [Emmanuel](#) for any additional information.

Please also contact Emmanuel if your group wants to **send second-hand goods** to give the shop launch a helping hand! Practical solidarity is also vital to the launch of this group's income-generating activity.

All the information is available in the European solidarity appeal booklet, available to download below.



[Download the 2026 booklet](#)

Lily joins the team!

We welcomed Lily Manrique to the Emmaus Europe team this month! She is taking over the post of advocacy officer. Lily's role is to help us convey the association's views and values to the European institutions.

She graduated in 2025, and has specialised in representing the interests of environmental protection and human rights associations since her university days.

She then worked in the advocacy department of HOP (Stop Planned Obsolescence). One of her noteworthy achievements during her time with HOP was to found the IAD (International Alliance on Durability) last July. The IAD is an international network of organisations and people committed to product durability. Lily also volunteered at a Danish association that fosters access to cultural events for vulnerable people.



If you have any questions, please get in touch with her: lily.manrique@emmaus-europe.org

Agenda

The summer camp season is underway!

Summer is approaching and the camps are being arranged. Once again, we are inviting young people over the age of 18 to get to know our groups across Europe. Find out about the initiatives being run in countries such as Portugal, Lithuania, Belgium and Italy on our website, and share the information with others!

[More information here](#)

