



# “MIGRATION” ANALYSIS WITHIN THE MOVEMENT

## MEMO FOR THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

In December 2020, the Board outlined its wish to compile an overview of our political campaigning on two key topics in the run up to the world assembly and our future work camp events:

- **Environment**, or more specifically, all initiatives run by the groups linked to the environment, climate change, environmental justice, etc.
- **Migration**

This document presents the results of **an analysis of the migration initiatives within our movement** and puts forward **proposals** on this topic. Migration is currently tied into our struggle for ‘peace and freedom of movement and of residence for universal citizenship’.

Our movement’s historical involvement in matters of migration is mainly due to one of our founding values: **unconditional welcome**. Furthermore, the Emmaus movement has always defended the idea of a universal citizenship which would guarantee equal rights and opportunities for all. The Emmaus groups regularly meet the most excluded and are, therefore, directly involved in issues related to migration. From the 1990s onwards the Emmaus groups in various countries started to welcome more and more migrant peoples, no matter their immigration status, into their communities. In addition to offering welcome to these people, the groups started to organise on the local, national, and international levels to defend the rights of migrant persons.

Since the turn of the century Emmaus International has been more formally involved in political campaigning work. The different initiatives have covered various topics but they have all been linked to the rights of migrant persons:

- **2003–2007**: a campaign to support Emmaus groups hosting victims of human trafficking
- **2007**: commitment to fight the “crime of solidarity”
- **2007**: a campaign to put pressure on France to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families

**At the 2007 World Assembly, the movement voted in favour of the rights of migrant persons becoming one of Emmaus International’s priority areas.**

- **2008**: involvement in the ‘Des ponts pas des murs’ (Bridges, Not Walls) network, contributing to civil society’s response to agreements between France and various African countries on the topic of migration flows
- **2009**: launch of the ‘A Visa for the World’ campaign. The aim of this campaign was to highlight the need for a change of course on migration and to explain Emmaus’ demand for true and effective freedom of movement
- **2011-2013**: involvement in various social forum events across the globe leading to strong conclusions on the idea of a passport for universal citizenship and on organising an international conference on the topic of freedom of movement

- **Since 2013**: creating the **Organisation for Universal Citizenship** in order to promote freedom of movement and of residence and to build a network of local authorities that are committed to providing dignified welcome to exiled persons
- **2014**: the Emmaus movement, the OUC and several other associations co-organised a demonstration against the “wall of shame” in Calais

**At the 2016 World Assembly, the movement voted to focus on the struggle for “peace and freedom of movement and of residence for universal citizenship”.**

From 2017 onwards, Emmaus International noted that, following the outbreak of conflict in Syria, a wide range of citizen-led groups had been created in France and elsewhere in Europe. These new stakeholders were not really in touch with the long-established organisations addressing this issue, making it difficult to create unity. Emmaus International thus launched two initiatives in order to bring the various stakeholders together with a view to speaking in one voice when lobbying for change:

- **2017**: launch of the ‘Citizens’ Outburst’ initiative in France. The objective of this initiative was to create a map of all the local initiatives welcoming migrants. We hoped to then replicate this in other European countries but in the end, we were unable to do so.
- **2018**: launch, again in France, of the “General Assembly on Migration” following a severe tightening of French migration policy led by the President and the Minister of the Interior.

We have been regularly involved in international debates (an interactive consultation with civil society at UN HQ in 2013, a side event at the Human Rights Council in 2014, World Social Forum events, etc.) but the majority of our campaigning initiatives have been led in Europe (“No to the Wall of Shame”, the demonstration to denounce the death of migrant peoples at sea, support for foreign companions in the Emmaus groups, etc.) and for the most part in France and Italy.

**In 2019, the Board approved our involvement in the “Migration Alliance” campaign**, an international alliance between civil society and local authorities in order to promote an alternative way of managing migration, one which respects human rights and guarantees dignity.

**Furthermore, our global report has outlined a demand which is linked to this topic: “welcoming the most vulnerable with dignity, no matter how much they are suffering”.** This demand ties into the founding values of our movement as well as the Migration Alliance campaign (which is aiming to promote dignified welcome practices across the globe and to show that a more humane, fraternal alternative to current migration policy is possible).

We have launched various alliances in order to work with our partners on migration campaigns. Via the OUC we are able to look at this matter from a very international perspective and work with organisations from different continents. Our two main allies for this work are:

- ANVITA: The French National Association for Welcoming Towns and Regions
- Espacio sin Fronteras (‘Spaces Without Borders’, Portugal)

Given that Emmaus International is a well-known stakeholder in the struggle for freedom of movement and of residence and that we are based in France, we work alongside other French-based organisations which have an international scope:

- Mouvement Utopia
- France Libertés – Fondation Danielle Mitterrand
- CRID (a group which unites around 50 French-based international solidarity associations)
- CCFD Terre-Solidaire

The initiatives led in each region are quite different and are closely connected to the local situations regarding migration.

Africa	The Americas
<p>The activities led by the groups in Africa are mainly focused on supporting and welcoming migrant persons (mainly people who are migrating within the region), especially young people and children. An example initiative concerns awareness raising on the dangers involved in migration.</p> <p>The region has not adopted a specific stance on this topic.</p>	<p>Migration in the Americas mainly involves people moving within the continent itself, especially young people looking for work in other countries. The main countries involved are Peru (migrants from Haiti or Venezuela), Chile and Colombia (exiled persons).</p> <p>The region has not adopted a specific stance on this topic.</p>

Asia	Europe
<p>The situation regarding migration in this region varies widely from one country to another, given the differences between countries such as India and Lebanon, for example. In India, the main challenges are related to internal migration and a widespread exodus from rural areas. A lot of migrant workers are vulnerable in India because they work in the informal sector.</p> <p>The groups take action whenever they identify a specific unmet need but they do not have a specific political stance on this topic.</p> <p>The region has, however, taken a clear stance on the matter of Rohingya refugees as seen in the political statement “Emmaus Asia condemns the cruelty &amp; human rights violations committed by the Myanmar Government against the Rohingya population”.</p>	<p>The range of activities launched in the Europe region is vast. Many of the groups lead activities in the most popular transit/destination countries for migrant peoples (Croatia, Bosnia, Italy, Germany, UK, Spain, France, etc.).</p> <p>The European groups regularly welcome migrant persons. They also offer support with paperwork and help these people to learn the local language. Such activities can be linked to our lobbying initiatives or to demands being made of political decision makers. Some groups (such as the French and Italian groups during the Article 13 campaign) join up with other associations who are committed to this struggle (Emmaus Italy partnering with SOS Méditerranée) or with the local authorities. Emmaus Europe is a member of a European and African network whose aim is to fight against the detention of migrant persons and the proliferation of camps.</p>

This overview has identified three main areas the Emmaus movement focuses on with regards to migration:

- **Providing dignified welcomed to exiled persons across the globe**
- **Defending freedom of movement, notably thanks to the work done by the Organisation for Universal Citizenship**
- **Fighting to ensure that laws, conventions, and treaties on the topic of migration are respected, thus ensuring that the rights of migrant persons are also respected**

We must accept, however, that despite Emmaus International’s efforts as part of several campaigns the situation for migrant persons across the globe has not improved of late, quite the opposite. More and more states flout the various treaties and conventions on the rights of migrant persons. Their welcome policies are not at all welcoming, they allow people to die trying to cross borders. Freedom of movement and of residence seems like a pipedream when you look at the current policies of detention, deportation and the closing off of migration routes.

The Covid-19 pandemic has made migrant populations even more vulnerable and has led to countries turning increasingly towards online procedures for requesting asylum, which will make it even more difficult for migrant persons to have access to this right (difficulties in accessing digital platforms, difficulties understanding the

procedures, distance being placed between the administration and the people concerned which makes it easier for them to make people wait for long periods for important appointments, etc.).

We should, therefore, think carefully about the movement's future initiatives and campaigns on this topic. What collective strategies can we build in order to truly guarantee freedom of movement and in order to promote universal citizenship? What types of action can we lead to properly tackle the issue of violations of the rights of migrant persons?

#### **Questions for the debate during the Board meeting:**

- ⇒ **How can the groups get more involved in the Migration Alliance (which includes a project of listing local areas which are open to welcoming migrant persons)?** This involves informing the groups about the work done by the alliance to establish which of them would be interested in obtaining this label (they would have to get in touch with the local authorities in their area).
- ⇒ In addition to this alliance, where Emmaus International is just one of many stakeholders involved, **would we like to launch a campaign or send out demands in our own name on the topic of migration?** For such a campaign we would need the groups to get involved, working with them to draft the list of demands and to organise the campaign.