In the run-up to the European elections, Emmaus representatives from four continents (Africa, the Americas, Asia, and Europe) are calling on citizens to reconsider Europe’s place in the world and ensure its Charter of Fundamental Rights is respected, for all citizens.

Sixty years after Abbé Pierre’s appeal to help the homeless, elected members of Emmaus from all over the world, who met in Tohouè, Benin for their board meeting, have noticed a worrying shift in the problem of exclusion. Whole sections of the European population, particularly migrants, are victims of marginalisation, and have no rights. The poorest people do not have any guaranteed access to basic amenities – food, health, education, accommodation and work. This is not only because of their lack of financial means, but also because these services are increasingly being turned into commodities.

Acts of violence, intimidation and stigmatisation that target the poor go hand-in-hand with a system in which there is increasing inequality between the rich, who are getting richer and the poor, who are getting poorer. The crazy logic behind a financialised economy, in which the strongest survive, is unrelenting for those who lose out.

Given the self-interest being shown in the face of the crisis and even the destruction of the idea of solidarity, the priority is to develop solidarity-based, economic activities to give all citizens access to their fundamental rights and to protect commonly held property.

Emmaus will continue to take forceful action on these five fronts, and will be mindful of joining campaigns that civil society is leading in these areas throughout the world. A different Europe is possible! Let’s build it together.