



JRS Europe  
Annual Report  
October 2003 – December 2004

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Letter from Fr. Jan Stuyt SJ, Regional Director of JRS Europe

Dear Friends,

You have before you the Annual Report of JRS-Europe, covering 15 months from October 2003 to December 2004. From next year our report will correspond with the 12-month calendar year.

In October 2004 many of you received the “Strategic Plans 2004 – 2007” of the JRS offices in Europe. As these plans were published quite recently, this 2004 Annual Report is limited in size and ambition. It has also been produced by relatively new additions to the Brussels office- myself, regional director since September 2004, and Ciara Mc Kenna, media officer since October 2004. However, during this period, most of the work undertaken by the Brussels office was under the guidance of the former Regional Director Fr. John Dardis SJ and we are extremely grateful for his contribution to, and leadership of, JRS in Europe.

### **Developments in Europe**

In Western Europe xenophobia and resentment against immigrants, asylum seekers and Muslims are on the rise. The church agencies that strive for harmony, integration and understanding are fighting an uphill battle. These issues have gradually come to the fore of policy making in the European Union. In May 2004 the EU expanded from fifteen to twenty-five member states, thus increasing the workload for the European Institutions in Brussels. As a result, the European Commission has explicitly asked for the assistance of NGOs in monitoring the implementation of EU legislation and regulations concerning migration.

This places JRS in a good position since it is one of the few agencies specialized in working with refugees and migrants that already has offices and contact persons in several of the ten countries that recently joined the EU club. These include Malta, Slovenia, Poland, Slovakia, Czech Republic and Hungary. We also have offices in two candidate countries: Croatia and Romania.

### **Refugees, Asylum Seekers, Migrants and Illegals**

The lines are becoming increasingly blurred between the different groups of “people on the move”- forced migrants, refugees and the internally displaced. The main focus of our work remains the care of refugees and asylum seekers, but invariably others knock at our door in great numbers. For this reason, in the last few years, JRS-Europe has turned its attention to the many people traveling without the correct documents and to those migrants placed in detention without having committed a criminal offense. While the number of new arrivals has decreased in Northern Europe, generally this has failed to lead to more receptive attitudes towards those fleeing distress, or a regularization or improvement of conditions in collective centres. In contrast to the North, Southern Europe saw the arrival of ships full of migrants from Africa during the summer, however no workable solution has been proposed so far to deal with this great influx.

“Migratory management” is one of the most pressing issues facing the world today, and it is often refugees that become the victims, once again, in the modern tug of war between the pull of globalization and the “guarding” of nation states post-September 11<sup>th</sup>. JRS in Europe would like to once again give a voice to refugees, and we hope that we can count on your continuous support in the years ahead.

With best wishes,

**Fr Jan Stuyt SJ,  
Regional Director of the Jesuit Refugee Service Europe**

## 1.2 JRS Europe Campaign: Detention in Europe

### **Detention in Europe – The administrative detention of asylum seekers and irregular immigrants**

“Detention”, the prison-like deprivation of the liberty of movement of asylum seekers and irregular immigrants, has been a central focus of JRS-Europe over the last year and will continue to be a priority in the future.

Both irregular immigrants and increasingly asylum applicants are detained. However, the general public in Europe, decision-makers and the media know hardly anything about these “new camps in Europe”.

JRS personnel in Europe accompany and serve *inter alia* detainees and former detainees. Based on their experience of this work and on JRS-Europe’s research, JRS-Europe developed an “Observation and Position Document” on detention. Published in October 2004, it is a comprehensive document of around 180 pages. The purpose of this document is to inform and to alert, but also to advocate the rights of detainees.

JRS-Europe points out that in Europe there is neither a common definition of “detention” nor of “detention centres”. Therefore “detention centres” can also be called “reception centres” and thus mislead the public. JRS-Europe presents a preliminary inventory of more than 200 “detention centres” in 24 European countries<sup>1</sup>. It examines the underlying EU policies of detention, EU legislation as well as national legislation of 14 European States<sup>2</sup>, the European Convention on Human Rights and Public International Law. JRS-Europe concludes that there is an alarming legislative deficit as well as worrisome discrepancies between, on one hand, law and, on the other hand, the application of law. This legal and political research is complemented by ethical considerations and theological, pastoral and spiritual reflections. JRS-Europe stresses the need for more action in order to make the EU a genuine “area of freedom, security and justice” (EU Amsterdam Treaty) and to make the “wider Europe” a world region firmly rooted in a shared commitment to freedom based on human rights, democratic institutions and the rule of law.

JRS-Europe has developed positions and recommendations, among which:

- It urges European countries to avoid the use of detention, or at least to
  - Provide for a time limit of detention and
  - Ensure a minimum of rights of people being detained, concerning, for example,
    - § The right to be visited,
    - § The right to health care and
    - § The protection of minors and families.
- It asks the EU Commission to set up a EU body, which monitors and periodically reports on the development of national legislation on detention and detention practices in the EU Member States as well as in the EU Candidate Countries and their non-EU neighbouring countries.

This “Observation and Position Document on Detention” will be updated from time to time. Updates as well as further information will be available at [“www.detention-in-europe.org”](http://www.detention-in-europe.org), a website of JRS-Europe dedicated to detainees in Europe.

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<sup>1</sup> Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxemburg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Spain, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine, and United Kingdom

<sup>2</sup> Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine, and United Kingdom

## 2. The work of JRS' Brussels Office

The work of the JRS-Europe office can be divided into four areas:

- Coordinating of the work of JRS in Europe
- EU Policy and JRS-Europe Advocacy
- Training and Seminars
- Media and Communications
- Project Development

### 2.1 Coordination

A key event in the JRS Europe calendar is the Annual General Meeting in October, when staffs from each of the country offices and contact persons get together. This is usually a group of around 50 people. We take time to exchange experiences, share stories and celebrate both in and outside the chapel. Every year it is a reunion of friends and an occasion to welcome new faces. We discuss matters of common interest, such as, policy planning, the implementation of the Code of Conduct, and plans to visit the offices. We also choose our work priorities for the coming year. We have recently chosen to focus our attention on lobbying for, and servicing, those held in detention. For the last two years we have also been busy with three-year planning.

The visits made by the regional director to the country offices are another aspect of JRS Europe coordination. During the last fifteen months most of the offices were visited, this usually included a meeting with the Jesuit Provincial, local authorities and NGO's. Three different groups of Jesuits and their lay collaborators met in 2004 to discuss migration: the Jesuit Refugee Service, *Jésuites en Monde Populaire* and Eurojes (the social scientists among the European Jesuits). The meeting took place in Celje (Slovenia) and was prepared by the Brussels' office, in collaboration with the Secretariat for Social Justice of the Jesuit Curia in Rome.

There remains a problem in securing funding for the coordination and research work undertaken in the Brussels office- this type of activity is not as attractive to funding agencies as running direct projects for the underprivileged.

#### **Staff Responsibilities**

The Regional Director undertakes the coordination of the European Country Offices, with the support of Isabelle de Sazilly (administration) and Joseph Poncin (documentation). The previous Regional Director Fr. John Dardis began his new assignment as Provincial of the Jesuits in Ireland in Summer 2004. He was replaced by Fr. Jan Stuyt, who previously worked for JRS in Asia and Croatia ten years ago, and who was also on the Director's Council for two years prior to his appointment, while a parish priest in Amsterdam. Br. Michael Schöpf SJ from Germany will begin working as Assistant Regional Director in March 2005.

Carola Jimenz Asenjo is the JRS funding officer, and coordinates the design and implementation of Europe-wide projects like the Pedro Arrupe Award. Lukas Kratochvil from the Czech Republic will assist her in this during 2005.

Sr. Cornelia Bührle RSCJ is policy and advocacy officer in the JRS Europe office. Renaud de Villaine, a legal intern, assists her. Contacts with the media, the production of the newsletter, maintenance of the website and internal communications are in the hands of Ciara Mc Kenna, who succeeded Dušan Bezák SJ. Fr. Rik de Gendt SJ gives valuable assistance in this field.

When JRS Europe moves to its new premises in April we will miss the great relationship that we have had with our former neighbours, the Belgian Jesuits. Our office started out under the leadership of Fr. Eddy Jadot in a building of the French speaking Jesuits, and for the last three years we were in the old provincialate of the Dutch speaking Jesuits. Both groups have been very hospitable and helpful neighbours.

JS

## 2.2 EU Policy and JRS-Europe Advocacy

### **Personnel and internal networking**

Sr. Cornelia Bührle, the Policy Officer and Mr. Renaud de Villaine, her Legal Assistant who joined JRS in April 2004, administer Policy and Advocacy at JRS-Europe. JRS staff in the European and International Offices provided general support over the last year, notably in the form of the JRS-Europe "Policy Group", and the subsequent "Advocacy and Policy Group".

During this period, JRS-Europe became a member of the JRS International Advocacy Network, and joined three of its working groups on the following inter-continental issues: "Detention", "Irregular Immigration", and "Democratic Republic of Congo". It also joined the "Task Force" of the President of the Conference of the Jesuit Provincials in Europe.

### **Membership and external networking**

JRS-Europe is a paying member of the European Council for Refugees and Exiles [ECRE], a member of the so-called "Christian Group" in Brussels [consisting of Caritas Europa, Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME), Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community (COMECE), International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) and Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA)], a member of the "EU NGO Platform" hosted by the EU Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], and a member of a specific group of Human Rights NGOs in Brussels [*inter alia* Amnesty International (AI), Human Rights Watch (HRW), the Fédération Internationale des Ligues des Droits de l'Homme (FIDH)]. It also co-operates with other organizations, namely the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants [PICUM].

Sr. Cornelia Bührle is a councilor to the Governing Committee of the International Catholic Migration Commission [ICMC], and a member of the Catholic Head Office for Development in Germany [MISEREOR, Renovabis et. al].

### **EU Policy and JRS-Europe Advocacy Project**

In 2004 JRS-Europe elaborated a detailed "Strategic Plan 2004 – 2007" concerning EU Policy and JRS-Europe advocacy, focusing on EU Asylum and Immigration Policy. Particularly emphasizing the issues of "irregular immigration" and on the problem of "detention of asylum-seekers and irregular immigrants".

### **EU Asylum and Immigration Policy**

During this period, the EU had three presidencies: Italy, Ireland, and The Netherlands. Major events included: the accession of ten new EU Member States, the election of a new EU Parliament and the nomination of a new EU Commission. The former EU Commission Directorate-General "Freedom, Security and Justice" (Amsterdam Treaty) was renamed "Justice, Liberty and Security" and the new EU Commissioner to the DG is former Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Franco Frattini.

The EU fulfilled *grosso modo* the tasks it was to complete by 1 May 2004, as set out by the 1999 Amsterdam Treaty and the Tampere Programme, and continued the on-going process of harmonizing policies and legislation. The 10 new EU Member States fulfilled, and the current four Candidate Countries are in the process of fulfilling, the provisions for EU accession with regard to external border control.

According to UNHCR, the number of asylum claims in the EU, which had remained stable in 2002 (-2%), fell significantly in 2003 (-22%) to 288.100 applications, its lowest level since 1997. This downward trend continued in 2004. Within the EU, the old EU Member States received fewer applications, whereas the new EU Member States received more applications (March-June 2004: increase by 26 % in some of the new EU Member States). On the other hand, the number of irregular immigrants seems to have dramatically increased in the old as well as in the new EU Member States.

The EU Commission issued a number of "Communications" and documents in the fields of "Asylum" and "Immigration". It explicitly or implicitly concentrated its policy-making on three thematic issues: "combating illegal immigration", "integration" and "security". The European Council shared these policy priorities, with a

special focus on “terrorism” in the context of “security”. The EU Parliament remained a critical actor as far as respect for human rights is concerned.

The general EU policy trend with regard to access to EU territory as well as the granting of rights remained restrictive. The policy-making process was dominated by the changing roles of the three institutional actors: The EU Commission, charges with guarding the EU treaties, attempted to speed up harmonization; the EU Council [EU Member States] slowed the process down when it seemed to have negative effects on interests of national sovereignty; and the EU Parliament tried to further its political influence.

As far as the EU Commission’s “Amended Proposal on minimum standards on procedures in Member States for granting and withdrawing refugee status” is concerned, the Justice and Home Affairs Council decided on a general approach and also to re-consult with the European Parliament on this.

Much press attention was given to the German Minister of Interior Affairs, Mr Otto Schily’s idea of creating “centres” in Northern Africa for people who are trying to reach EU territory via the Mediterranean Sea. Hundreds, even thousands, die per year in their attempts. EU Commission President Manuel Barroso stated in a speech to the EU Parliament that he stands “against the setting up of ‘camps’ outside the Union.”

### **EU Asylum and Immigration Legislation**

The EU Council passed, *inter alia*, a “Directive on minimum standards for the qualification and status of third country nationals or stateless persons as refugees or as persons who otherwise need international protection and the content of the protection granted”.

### **JRS-Europe Advocacy activities**

In line with the “Strategic Plan 2004 – 2007”, JRS-Europe monitored the EU harmonization process, especially external border control, and commented alone and with others on legislative developments.

- JRS-Europe published a research article on the “Consequences of the Tampere Programme for the new EU Member States and Candidate Countries regarding a Common EU Asylum and Migration Policy”.
- JRS-Europe published the following comments with advocacy partners in Brussels:
  - Comments on the Communication from the European Commission to the Council and the European Parliament “On the development of a common policy on illegal immigration, smuggling and trafficking of human beings, external borders and the return of illegal residents, COM (2003) 323 final;
  - Comments on the Communication from the European Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on “Immigration, Integration and Employment”, COM (2003) 336 final;
  - Comments on the Communication from the European Commission to the Council and the European Parliament “Creating an Area of Freedom, Security and Justice: Assessment of the Tampere programme and future orientations”, COM (2004) 401 final;
  - Comments on the Communication from the European Commission “Study on the Links between legal and illegal Migration”, (COM (2004) 412 final;
  - Comments on the Communication from the European Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the managed entry in the EU of persons in need of international protection and the enhancement of the protection capacity of the regions of origin “Improving Access to Durable Solutions”, COM (2004) 410 final;
  - Essential Elements for EU Migration Policy “Integrating Migrants – Integrating Society”.
- 12 Recommendations “Towards a Balanced Approach in EU Migration and Asylum Policy” produced by JRS in partnership with the Christian Group in Brussels, was presented by COMECE to the Dutch Presidency of the European Union and received much attention by policy makers.
- JRS-Europe co-signed a letter to the Irish EU Presidency on the EU Directive on “Minimum Standards for Member States’ Procedures for Granting and Withdrawing Refugee Status”, COM 2002/326 final/2, a letter with key recommendations to the Dutch Presidency, and a letter on asylum and migration issues to the new EU Commissioner Franco Frattini.
- JRS-Europe committed itself to a “JRS Position on Proposals to Create Transit Camps in North Africa for Migrants/Asylum-Seekers”, which was issued by the International Office of JRS.
- JRS-Europe sent out Press Releases on the above-mentioned issues and co-signed others.

Sr. Bührle participated in panel discussions and delivered speeches in Antwerp/Belgium, Bad Honnef/Germany, Berlin/Germany, Brussels/Belgium, Celje/Slovenia, Düsseldorf/Germany, Hamburg/Germany, and Tilburg/The Netherlands.

In line with the "Strategic Plan 2004 – 2007", JRS-Europe focused on "detention". It published a document "Detention in Europe – Administrative Detention of Asylum Seekers and Irregular Immigrants" (ca. 180 pages), edited a brochure about this document as well as a further text "How to use this document as an advocacy tool", and established & maintained a website [www.detention-in-europe.org](http://www.detention-in-europe.org). Together with JRS in Slovenia, JRS-Europe organized and held a seminar on "detention" for police and other staff at the detention centre in Postojna/Slovenia. Concerning its secondary focus, "irregular immigration", JRS-Europe helped establish the "Catholic Forum on 'Illegality'" of the German Catholic Bishops' Conference, of which Jörg Alt SJ of JRS-Germany is Secretary General. JRS-Europe also assisted in preparing and organizing a 3-day conference on irregular immigration, which will take place in Berlin in March 2005 and will include a number of key political speakers.

The policy team attended regular meetings of groups in Brussels and elsewhere. It also established personal contacts with Members of the EU Parliament, with a number of Permanent Representations or Missions to the EU, and with representatives of the EU Commission. JRS-Europe had a personal meeting with former EU Justice Commissioner, António Vitorino and Irish Minister of Justice, Mr. Michael McDowell.

The JRS National Offices undertook further policy and advocacy work in their own countries, especially in relation to detention. In addition to this, JRS UK and JRS Spain were active in the International Campaign on Child Soldiers. Former JRS Europe Regional Director Eddy Jadot SJ has undertaken to lobby the European Union Institutions on JRS South East Asia's behalf in relation to Sri Lanka and the situation of Bhutanese refugees in Nepal, and Michael Schöpf SJ will arrive in March 2005 to assist the JRS-Europe office in lobbying the EU institutions on the protracted Refugee situation in the Grand Lacs region, Africa.

CB & RV

## 2.3 Training and Seminars

JRS Europe uses the Annual General Meeting as an opportunity for two days of staff training. In previous years the topics covered were: advocacy (2000), contacts with the media (2001), and management & planning (2002). The last two AGMs explored the issues of Islam (2003), and policy & advocacy (2004).

### **Islam (Aix-en-Provence, 2003)**

The seminar on Islam took place in Aix-en-Provence in the South of France, where there is a large number of Muslim immigrants. The meeting was prepared in collaboration with the Secretary for Inter-religious Dialogue of the Jesuit Headquarters in Rome, and with the Institute for the Study of Religions and Cultures of the Pontifical Gregorian University, also in Rome. The participants chose this topic as the majority of refugees in the world are Muslim and thus constitute a large proportion of migrants coming to Europe. As a church organization, our partners in refugee work- governments as well as NGO's- expect that we at JRS have expertise in the field of inter-religious dialogue. Through our work we meet many Muslims in detention and accompany them through the asylum process. Therefore, when we do pastoral work among refugees and detainees we are inevitably requested to provide, or to refer others, for pastoral care. The seminar gave an insight into the history of dialogue with Muslims dating back centuries, gave practical advice on whom to approach in the Muslim world, and do's and don'ts regarding inter-religious prayer services.

### **Advocacy Seminar Practicum (Brussels, 2004)**

The Advocacy Seminar Practicum took place in Brussels, 10<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> October 2004. 49 people from 22 European countries participated to the Seminar. The first day of the Seminar, focused on the theoretical aspects of advocacy work at the EU level. The participants attended lectures given by Sr. C. Bührle (JRS-Europe), Mr. F. Roscam-Abbing (EU Commission, DG Justice, Freedom and Security), Mr. J. Bakker (EU Dutch Presidency), Ms. D. Bouteillet-Paquet (Amnesty International), Ms. D. Peschke (Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe) and Ms. A. Roig (UNHCR). On the second day of the Seminar, the participants personally met with key people working in their national permanent representations to the EU, in the EU Commission, in NGOs, as well as MEPs. The last day was devoted to evaluating the lessons



learned and planning the follow-up to the Seminar. With regard to the individual evaluations, the participants generally considered the contributions from the first day helped them to understand EU policy and advocacy in a better way. They considered the advocacy visits of the second day a good opportunity to experience what they had learned the first day. Most felt they had made good contacts with the key people they met and hoped that they would continue to keep in contact with them, as well as with each other. JRS-Europe promoted this event through different media (the website, brochures, newsletters, press, and mailings).

JS & RV



*-Advocacy Practicum-Seminar in Brussels-*

## 2.4 Media and Communications

With the departure of Fr. John Dardis as Regional Director and Dušan Bezák as Media Officer- our hitherto media experts- in the summer of 2004, JRS-Europe spent the last few months of the year reviewing its internal communication and external media strategy. One of the first initiatives taken by the new media team – Fr. Jan Stuyt, Fr. Rik de Gendt (Journalist) and Ciara Mc Kenna (Media Officer)- was to re-launch the JRS-Europe website as an up-to-date source of information. The European website will eventually adopt the template of the JRS International website in early 2005. It is hoped this unifying of imagery will send a clear message to the public of what JRS stands for globally.

The quarterly JRS-Europe Newsletter gives friends and donors an overview of JRS' news and activities in Brussels and its offices across the continent, as well as a closer look at the pressing issues facing refugees and irregular migrants in Europe. To supplement the 4-page Newsletter an internal electronic monthly "Bulletin from Brussels" called *Progrès* was launched in December 2004 for JRS Europe & International staff, Country offices and Contact persons. This e-letter seeks to facilitate the exchange of information and the sharing of best practice between the offices, allowing JRS staff throughout Europe to communicate developments and progress made in their work.

The launch of JRS-Europe's Detention Campaign in September 2004, with the release of the working document "Detention in Europe: Administrative Detention of Asylum-seekers and Irregular Migrants", met with much press attention, especially among the German media. A half-hour special on the main editor of the document, JRS-Europe Policy Officer Sr. Cornelia Bührle, entitled "Schwester Courage" was produced by *ADR*, German National Television. This highlighted her work in the refugee community. A feature on Cornelia "Eine Nonne in Brüssel", and the struggle for the rights of irregular migrants, appeared in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung* on Christmas Day. The document also received attention from *Tertio*, a Belgian Catholic paper.

Fr. Jan Stuyt was interviewed in his new capacity as Regional Director in several Catholic publications including the Belgian-Flemish *Kerk en Leven* and *Tertio*, and the French *La Croix*. The former Regional Director Fr. John Dardis was involved in the creation of a film on mine victims in Macedonia, an important global campaign for JRS, which was aired on Irish television. JRS Malta also featured in the nation's newspapers and television broadcasts several times. Given the surge in asylum applicants in the new EU Member State they were an important voice in the national debate, speaking out against the deplorable conditions in which refugees and irregular migrants are held.

CMK

## 2.5 Project Development

### **Pedro Arrupe Award**

This project aims to promote understanding and tolerance of the refugee issue among young people, and to encourage their creative engagement with the issue.

- The project will involve more than 75 Jesuit schools in 12 European countries (Albania, Belgium, Ireland, Italy, Hungary, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain and Great Britain). The award is opened to students up to 19 years of age.
- Educational material has been developed and has been accessible online since October 2004 at [www.pedroarrupe-award.net](http://www.pedroarrupe-award.net). The participating pupils will follow 8 modules relating to different aspects of refugee and asylum seeker issues (Conflicts and wars, Human rights, Refugee rights...). The material and activities provided are adapted to the curricula and the ages of the students.
- Participating pupils will be asked to produce a team project, and the best projects will be selected, first at regional and then at European level. A prize-giving ceremony will be organized by JRS-Europe in June 2005. The winning teams will then get to visit refugee camps in Macedonia and Slovenia.

### **Training Seminar for Visitors and Workers in Detention and Reception Centres**

JRS-Europe has received confirmation of funding for one European wide project under the EU European Refugee Fund. This is the "Training Seminar for Visitors and Workers in Detention and Reception Centres" project. The aim of this project is to train and educate people attending to the needs of asylum seekers and refugees in both reception and detention centres. The training concentrates on international, regional and national refugee/human rights law and standards, intercultural and religious issues, as well as the identifying and actively responding to the psychological concerns of this vulnerable population.

- JRS-Europe will develop a training program that will be implemented in Slovenia, Poland, Malta, UK, Belgium, Italy and Romania.
- A team of three experts on the above issues, will conduct a two-day training of JRS & other NGO staff, volunteers and legal counsellors, as well as government personnel who deal directly with detained asylum seekers and migrants; primarily in countries where JRS and other NGOs have developed a relationship with such personnel (i.e. Slovenia, Malta, Poland).
- During the training sessions, JRS-Europe will gather information regarding the situation of refugees in detention and reception centres in the respective country and produce a final report on best practices.

### **Recognition of Qualifications: Promoting better integration of migrants in the labour market of the host societies**

The aim of this project is to establish how NGOs and other organisations are dealing with the issue of recognition of qualifications in reality, in contrast to the guidelines so contained in the Bologna Process and Lisbon Convention. We are currently waiting to hear confirmation of co-funding for this project, since its implementation will depend on this.

- JRS-Europe will organise a two-day seminar in Brussels on 17<sup>th</sup> –18<sup>th</sup> February 2006, during which NGOs and organisations actively working in the field of qualification recognition will share their experiences and meet other relevant key actors in the process of qualification recognition.
- The seminar will include four lectures intended to inform the participants on the present situation in Europe and its relations with third world countries, as well as 3 workshops during which NGOs will be put in contact with key actors such as the NARIC network and governmental staff. These workshops will allow the participants to share their experiences and to evaluate the issue.
- The project also includes a 6-month research programme on the recognition of qualifications in the different member states of the EU, in order to create a database that will provide useful information for other organisations interested in starting projects in the area.

RV



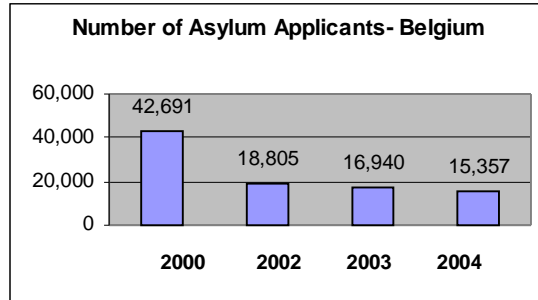
Map of Europe, 25 EU Member States in Yellow

# JRS Europe Country Reports

## Country Offices & Contact Persons

### 3. Country Offices

#### 3.1 Belgium



- § The main countries of origin of Asylum Seekers are the Democratic Republic of Congo, Russia (among them Chechens), Iran, Kosovo, Turkey, Serbia-Montenegro and Cameroon.
- § In 2003, 1201 people were granted refugee status, with 2374 in 2004. This growth is primarily due to a decision of the General Commissioner for Refugees to unfreeze applications placed by Chechens and Rwandans, which have been frozen since the late 90's.

#### A. Political developments

- § 2003 was marked by a number of hunger strikes by rejected asylum seekers (Afghans and Iranians), protesting against the way their application was dealt with. They particularly questioned the transparency of the information used by the Belgian authorities to assess the security and human rights situations in their countries of origin. The unjustified length of the procedure was also targeted. The strikes ended when the Interior Minister promised to give residence permits to asylum seekers who had not received a definitive answer on their applications after 3 or 4 years (that is around 12.000 people). However, by the end of 2004 this promise had yet to be fulfilled.
- § Very worrying is the legal vacuum in which people who are not granted refugee status and who cannot be forcibly deported by the State, find themselves. Hopefully this vacuum will be filled by a modification to the Asylum Law, which the government intends to pass by mid 2005 in compliance with the European Directive providing for a subsidiary protection status (this does not yet exist in Belgium).
- § Through its agency Fedasil, the Belgian government is also preparing a law that transposes the EU Council Directive on Minimum Standards for the Reception of Asylum Seekers for early 2005.
- § In 2003, 1768 unaccompanied minors were registered; among them 589 requested asylum. In 2004, there were 2592 and 599 applied for asylum. Since 1<sup>st</sup> May 2004 a legal system of guardianship has been implemented. The guardian's mission is to assist the minor in all procedures and to look for a durable solution in his/her interest. This system is theoretically an important progress in the minors' protection, but the government has been quite reluctant in funding it properly; due to lack of tutors, the system risks failure. Some minors continue to be accommodated in detention centres with adults (at the airport), although the government declared its will to stop such practice in July 2003.
- § At Elections in May 2003 and June 2004, extreme right and xenophobic political parties grew; in some parts of the country, they represent 30% of the votes.

#### B. JRS Activities and plans

JRS-Belgium is composed of a four-person team based in Brussels and a network of "associated members". By late 2004, a religious from the Holy Spirit Congregation began doing volunteer work with

JRS-Belgium, visiting persons in detention centres. In 2005 it is planned to develop JRS-Belgium volunteer base.

### **Detention**

Accompaniment of asylum seekers and migrants detained in closed centres and advocacy for their rights remains JRS Belgium's first priority. In 2003 and 2004, 4 people were involved in regular visits to detainees in 5 detention centres. Their main tasks include: listening, giving moral support, legal counselling and providing contact with the "outside" (lawyers, family, etc.). This regular presence makes it possible to monitor the global situation and to advocate for these detainees at various levels, including that of political decision makers. This work is done in close partnership with other NGOs under a platform called the "Transit Group".

From June 2003, Christophe Renders SJ was denied access to detention centres. The administration in charge of the detention policy said that his visits were causing problems, as he was giving "too much hope" to the detainees. With the support of other NGOs, a solution was sought through dialogue with the administration, but unfortunately without success.

Although the legal length of detention should never exceed 5 months, some people are held for much longer (sometimes more than 12 months). Detainees are reluctant to use the legal remedy against their detention because when the tribunal orders their liberation, they are not freed but instead placed in the airport transit zone (without specific accommodation and food). This was the case for several Congolese citizens who spent more than 4 months in Brussels airport transit zone in early 2004. On that occasion, JRS-Belgium joined other NGOs in a press conference denouncing such a degrading practice.

In December 2003, 5 policemen were condemned in the Semira Adamu case (a young Nigerian Woman who died of suffocation in 1998 while being forcibly deported). On that occasion, JRS-Belgium published a statement with other Christian NGOs, in which it called for a more humane immigration and asylum policy. The use of physical or psychological violence remains quite frequent during deportations attempts. In 2004, JRS-Belgium tried to get some of police violence cases investigated by public bodies.

In 2005, JRS-Belgium plans:

- To improve and increase its commitment to accompany detainees, namely by involving volunteers in individual visits, and by encouraging more regular JRS visitors;
- To better collect and analyse information in relation to advocacy and awareness raising;
- To develop advocacy work in the framework the JRS-Europe Detention Campaign.

### **Unaccompanied Minors**

Until June 2004 Ilse Roels was seconded (1 day a week) to "Mentor-Escale", an NGO that aims to make unaccompanied refugee minors more self confident and more responsible. She organised studies, follow-up and community activities. In October 2004 Christophe Renders was appointed guardian to three unaccompanied minors.

JRS-Belgium is a member of the NGO platform "*Mineurs en Exil*" that works as a watchdog and a think-tank about all policies and practices relating to unaccompanied minors. In 2004, three distinct topics were high on the agenda: the guardianship implementation, the minors reception system and the detention of minors.

In 2005, JRS-Belgium plans:

- To closely follow the development of the guardianship system;
- To publish an awareness tool based on interviews with unaccompanied minors

### **Advocacy**

In 2003-2004, JRS-Belgium was actively involved in *Forum Asile et Migrations* ([www.f-a-m.be](http://www.f-a-m.be)) a national platform gathering more than 120 NGOs. JRS-Belgium members took part in public actions aiming at the regularisation of long-term asylum seekers, and also in producing a paper in view of a new law related to subsidiary protection.



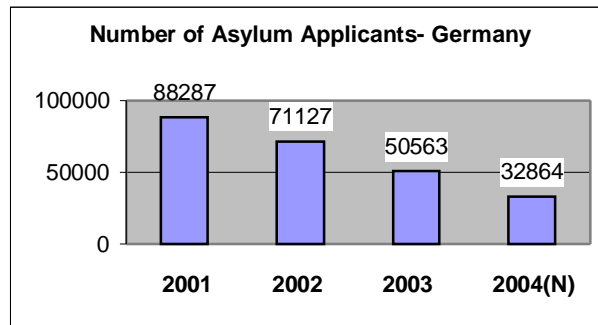
On 20 June 2004, on the occasion of World Refugee Day, JRS-Belgium joined other NGOs in organizing a festival to highlight refugees' cultural richness and their courage. It is foreseen that there will be another festival on 19 June 2005 at a Jesuit school in Brussels.

In October 2003, JRS-Belgium helped the CLC (Christian Life Community) to organise and facilitate a 2-day retreat (prayer, sharing in small groups, celebrations) on the theme "Welcoming the foreigner". A new retreat will take place in May 2005.

***-Pictures from "La Fête au Village" World Refugee Day 2004-***



## 3.2 Germany



2004 Figure for Jan - Nov Only

- § The main countries of origin of Asylum Seekers are Turkey, Serbia/Montenegro, Russian Federation, Vietnam, Azerbaijan, Iran, Iraq, China, India, and Pakistan.

### A. Political developments

- § In summer 2004 lengthy discussion over a new Immigration Act met with a final compromise between the governing coalition (Social Democrats and Greens) and the oppositional, conservative Christian Democrats. Most parts of the new Act will come into force as of Jan. 1, 2005. Being a compromise, the text of the Act has become more restrictive. Only a few human rights and refugee issues have been included: now victims of persecution by non-state actors and of gender related persecution may qualify for refugee status; and Committees on Hardship Cases may be established at *Länder* level. On the other hand, security measures and provisions designed to combat terrorism dominate. The problems of „sans papiers“ and detainees are not addressed at all.
- § The German Minister of the Interior, Mr Otto Schily, announced the idea of establishing EU reception centres in Northern Africa. He received some support from colleagues in other EU member states, but his idea met with a lot of criticism from his coalition partner, the Green party, as well as NGOs at home. So far Mr Schily has not issued any detailed project plans.

### B. JRS Activities and Plans

#### Undocumented migration

In June 2004, the Catholic Forum *Life in Illegality* was officially founded. This is a big success for Jörg Alt SJ, personally, and for JRS. Founding members are, *inter alia*, the Chairman of the German Bishops Conference Migration Committee (the Münster Auxiliary Bishop Dr. Voss), Caritas Germany, The German Maltese Knights, the Commissariat of the Catholic Bishops - Catholic Office in Berlin, and JRS Germany. Jörg Alt became Executive Secretary of this Forum, which is headed by Bishop Dr. Voss.

The aims of the Forum are “to urge political decision makers to take the phenomenon of illegality into adequate consideration and to develop effective concepts of avoiding illegality. We will be active for an effective realization of fundamental rights, for the improvement of means to legalize the residence of undocumented aliens, and for the de-criminalization of humanitarian assistance.”

In Summer 2005, Jörg Alt will leave JRS for his tertianship, and be replaced within the Forum by someone from outside JRS. JRS then will remain an active member of the Catholic Forum *Life in Illegality*, but it will no longer be the lead agency.

In 2005, JRS-Germany plans:

- To raise awareness of the topic via a publication, a series of high-level conferences and a manifesto signed by senior politicians, actors, university professors etc., which will be launched at the beginning of the conference series on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2005.

### **Detention**

- § Due to the intense lobbying of JRS a 16 years old boy from Afghanistan avoided being swiftly deported to his country of origin. He is one of the many detainees JRS-Germany supports. JRS lawyer, Stefan Keßler, gave legal assistance to a number of detainees; furthermore we co-operated closely with, and paid for, lawyers in a further 30-40 cases.
- § In Brandenburg JRS had its first talks with the Home Office, in order to organize a regular free legal advice service for the detainees in Eisenhüttenstadt.
- § In Berlin JRS came to an agreement with the Office for Social Affairs to buy clothes on its account and to distribute them to the detainees. However this new task creates an additional workload.
- § The debate on detention has become more vivid as JRS persuaded political parties in the *Länder* to make the question of detention an issue for parliamentary enquiries and discussions. The debates resulted in follow-up discussions between JRS and the relevant ministries e.g. in Bavaria.
- § Additionally, some articles published in journals fuelled debate: one was written by Stefan Keßler and published in the newsletter of the Central Committee of Catholics (the German lay organization); and another more comprehensive one by a Swiss scholar, Dr. Babo of University of Lucerne, was published in the most prominent law journal in Germany. JRS provided Dr. Babo with information for this article.
- § Finally, in September a nation-wide conference on detention took place at the Jesuit School of Philosophy in Munich. Michael Hainz SJ organized this, together with the Bavarian coalition of NGOs, and there were approximately 130 participants.

In 2005, JRS-Germany plans:

- To continue to fuel discussion at federal and *Länder* level with regard to laws and decrees providing for better detention conditions.
- The foundation of a legal fund for detainees in Berlin shall be pushed by a position paper in spring 2005.
- To involve the German Bishop's Conference more on the issue of detention.

### **Persons without Social Assistance**

JRS set up a network of organizations dealing with aliens in Berlin, who are denied social assistance. These lobbying activities had some success, as the media and the decision makers responsible discussed the issue. We are still confronted with cases of persons who are simply left on the street without any help by the authorities. Unfortunately a room with two beds for these people within the JRS office had to be closed due to protests from our neighbours.

In 2005, JRS-Germany plans:

- To intensify its efforts to get the basic social assistance for all "tolerated" persons (*Duldung*). Additionally our lobbying will aim to get better access for them into the labour market.

### **JRS Volunteers**

The involvement of volunteers is on the increase: presently a former detainee from Russia is co-working with us as a translator and buyer for the office; a media specialist is assisting us in writing our press releases (the "case of the month"); a sociologist has started to work with Jörg Alt on lobbying for the undocumented migrants; and another volunteer joined us in order to develop our funding activities.

Sr. Barbara Müller rscj, who has been visiting detainees in Eisenhüttenstadt (close to Berlin), on behalf of JRS since October 2001, will move to Munich in January 2005 and replace Zoltán Rigo SJ in visiting detainees there. Ms. Lecheler will continue visiting Eisenhüttenstadt on her own, temporarily supported by a novice of the SJ.



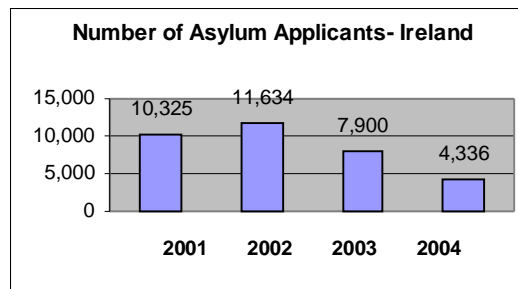
### **Berlin Committee on Hardship Cases**

As Klaus Mertes SJ, the director of the Canisius School, became member of the Berlin Committee on Hardship Cases, JRS in collaboration with the Refugee Council will set up an information center for the people concerned, on the Jesuits' premises in Witzlebenstrasse.

*-“Illegals” in Germany, Photo by Nina Ruecker-*



### 3.3 Ireland



#### A. Political developments

During 2004 the number of asylum-seekers who came to Ireland decreased to an average of 355 per month (from approx. 1000 in 2002). Two events help to explain this major decrease in the number of applications for asylum: the Supreme Court decision of early 2003 which allowed the state to deport the parent of an Irish born child and the outcome of a Constitutional Referendum in May/June 2004 which changed the basis on which citizenship is granted. A child born in Ireland no longer has an automatic right to Irish citizenship. As a result, a large number of immigrants (estimated at 17,000) have been left in an uncertain situation regarding their right to remain in Ireland. However, in late 2004 the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform announced that it would regularize the situation (subject to certain conditions) of those families who had an Irish born child prior to January 2005. JRS is one of fifteen NGO's who formed an alliance called CADIC (Campaign Against the Deportation of Irish born Children). This group has voiced its concern over the plight of a large group of immigrants who have been caught in a limbo-type situation as a result of the changes brought about by the Supreme Court decision and the Constitutional Referendum.

Immigration into the Republic of Ireland continues to be a significant social trend. Historically a country of emigration, Ireland has had to learn rapidly about the implications of immigration. Estimates indicate that the Republic of Ireland will need 50,000 immigrant workers per year over the next five years if a high level of economic growth is to be maintained. In the coming months Government policy will be guided by a migration report commissioned by the National Economic and Social Council and being prepared by the International Organization on Migration (IOM). Another report of interest is that of Compas (a Research Group based at Oxford University) evaluating developments taking place in the field of immigration – with a special focus on the contribution made by the NGO sector.

The setting up of more than 50 holding centres throughout the country means that asylum-applicants are normally housed under a system of direct provision and receive a very small allowance each week (Some centers are quite small, the largest being Mosney, County Meath, which houses more than seven hundred and fifty asylum-seekers). This policy has led to a situation whereby those coming to Ireland seeking protection as asylum-seekers are treated in a way that is contrary to best practice in the field of integration. Those under the direct provision system may develop into a social welfare dependent poor in the long term.

#### B. JRS Activities and Plans

##### **Community Links Integration Project**

JRS is one of about fifteen Irish organizations, which received co-funding for projects under the EU European Refugee Fund. During its first year (1 November 2002 – 31 October 2003) the Community Links Integration Project set up a number of activities through local primary schools, community groups and faith communities in the North East of Dublin where the Irish Jesuits have had a strong presence - via a Jesuit parish (St. Francis Xavier Parish), Jesuit School (Belvedere College), Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice, and more recently, a Jesuit Young Adult Ministry (Sli Eile – Another Way).

During the second year of the project, JRS participated in several events organized by the Reception and Integration Agency of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. By working with other organizations JRS has helped to shape thinking on how integration can best be promoted in an Irish context. Sr. Ann Horgan RSC directed the Community Links project for the year. She has a wealth of experience of working with refugees in the UK.

In November 2004 JRS began the third year of the project with Megan Browne as Project Administrator. Earlier in the year Megan - then working at University Hall - helped organize a training event in Dublin for JRS personnel from various parts of Europe participating in an APSO (Agency for Personnel Services Overseas) training course.

At present JRS is preparing to make a further application for multi-annual funding from the ERF funds. Like many groups we have found that adherence to the details of the ERF funding rules takes a lot of administrative time and energy!

The main developments from the second year of the project included:

- Setting up a steering committee for the Community Links project
- Continuing to run a Summer project, mainly for families
- Circulating a Newsletter
- Developing a Website
- Strengthening the JRS Volunteer base
- Developing a Women's group
- Planning a fundraising drive through a Jesuit past-pupils legal network (thanks to the energy and enthusiasm of Declan Cunningham), and through a grant from State Street - a finance group based in Dublin's International Financial Services Centre.

One learning experience was the realization that getting local people to participate in an Integration Project is quite a difficult task.

### **Other Projects**

Spirituality is becoming an important area, which JRS intends to work more on in the coming year, namely building on a research-based project, which was recently undertaken by University College Dublin's Social Science Research Centre. The JRS Annual seminar in Rome in October 2005 will be an opportunity to develop JRS-Ireland's resources in this sphere.

JRS continued to work closely with the Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice (it spent some of the year in the building of the Community Action Network while the CFJ building was being re-furbished). JRS is planning to run a short training course for women from some of the ethnic communities as well as some women from the local area, with the Community Action Network in 2005.

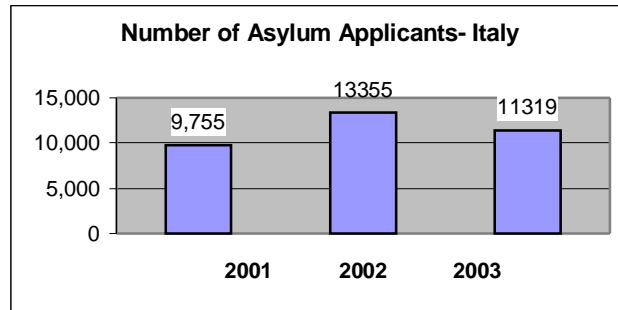
### **Lobbying and Advocacy Work**

Networking with other groups continues to be an important aspect of JRS-Ireland's activities: It continues to have good links with the Irish Refugee Council, Integrating Ireland, and the Church Asylum Network (it has an excellent bi-monthly newsletter, Sanctuary).

By reporting on its experience in the Irish Jesuit Province's monthly newsletter, Update, and through a series in the Messenger (with a circulation of more than 100,000) - later published as Welcoming the Stranger (Dublin: Messenger Publications, 2004) - it has helped educate public opinion about the lives of refugees and asylum-seekers coming to Ireland.

JRS-Ireland's participation at the JRS Europe annual meeting and the advocacy seminar-practicum has helped it build links with the groups and structures of the European Union. In 2005 it will continue to build on this work with the help of Anna Marie Gallagher, Consultant to JRS Europe. Anna Marie previously worked on an evaluation of the Community Links project.

### 3.4 Italy



#### A. Political developments

- § Italy has fewer recognized refugees and asylum applications, in comparison with other EU countries (11,319 applications were submitted in 2003). There are currently 23,000 refugees in Italy, of these 13,000 are refugees as defined by the Geneva Convention and more than 10,000 have been granted “humanitarian protection”, a one year temporary status allowing them to work, study and receive health care. Refugees come from 40 different countries (notably the Horn of Africa, the Balkans and the Near East), and continue to arrive on the southern Italian shores.
- § As Central institutions do not plan and implement integration policies, therefore local institutions have to bear the burden of migrants on their territory and are responding to them in different ways. Integration obviously involves several steps: the chance to live with your own family, a house, a job, knowledge of Italian, respect for rights and duties, integration of minors into schools, the chance of having representatives in the public governmental bodies etc.
- § The Immigration Law Implementation Act (the so-called *Bossi Fini law*) came into effect in late December 2004 and will affect refugee recognition procedures, however it does not sufficiently protect asylum seekers' rights. Even the UNHCR has expressed concern that the act does not sufficiently protect asylum seekers' rights.
- § The institutional attempts to discourage migrants coming to Italy have resulted in some uncertain, discretionary procedures. Often public debate concentrates exclusively on the amount of expulsions, repatriations and the struggle against illegal immigration. The authorities are surprising vague when questioned about how many refugees there are in Italy, where they are and what they do.

#### B. JRS Activities and Plans

JRS National Director Giovanni La Manna SJ succeeded former Director Francesco De Luccia SJ in October 2004. Currently there are 28 social workers with JRS Italy. Of these, 1/3 are refugees and four are Jesuits. 159 volunteers assist the projects in Rome and 220 in Catania. Between 8,000 and 10,000 asylum seekers and refugees benefit from JRS activities each year. JRS-Italy is also known as “Centro Astalli”.

### **Emergency Assistance**

Around 300 meals are served six days a week at the soup kitchen in Rome, and the opportunity is given to people to have a shower at the facilities. 180 asylum seekers and refugees receive accommodation in the three reception centres (one for men, one for women & unaccompanied minors, and one for families).

### **Legal and social assistance**

An outreach programme provides legal and social counseling to around 2,000 people. Approximately 130 students attend the JRS Italian language course.

### **Information/public awareness**

The “*Finestre - Refugee stories*” project has spread to 20 different cities. During 2004 an inter-religious dialogue project was developed and disseminated in the form of a guide on the most common religions. JRS-Italy also has a documentation centre, where all the material received from the International Office is gathered along with relevant books, papers and magazines.

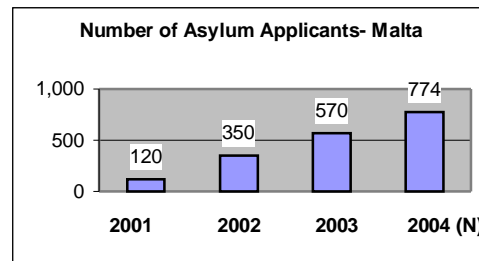
### **2004 Projects**

- § “*Europe: Land of Asylum Project*”: evaluated reception and integration conditions of asylum seekers and refugees in three European cities (Rome, London and Berlin); it was funded by the European Refugee Fund. An Observatory on asylum seekers’ reception and integration conditions was also set up. This managed to publish data of the Rome Municipality for the first time. The work of the Observatory will continue throughout the coming year.
- § “*No Exile for Reading*”: This project was set up in partnership with the Ministry of Cultural Goods in order to allow writers who have experienced exile, to share their experience with high school students and to sensitize them to the issue of exile. The project runs in 50 different schools in Milan, Padua, Naples, Rome, Brindisi and Palermo. The students meet other students, refugees, and writers, and will produce a written publication at the end of the project.
- § “*Job Orientation Course*”: Nearly 100 refugees and immigrants participated in this course on understanding how the Italian job market works. This course represents JRS’ first step into a new area: training courses for immigrants and refugees. The aim is to aid their integration by providing a qualification that would help them to find employment.

***-Photos from Centro Astalli-***



### 3.5 Malta



2004 Figure for Jan - Nov Only

#### A. Political developments

- § Between April-October 2004 approximately 1400 undocumented migrants traveling by boat arrived in Malta. Most of these immigrants were on their way to Italy from Libya and applied for refugee status as soon as they arrived in Malta. Throughout this period, the government continued to implement a policy of mandatory, long-term and indiscriminate detention of all asylum seekers arriving in an irregular manner. The detention lasts as long as it takes for an asylum application to be determined, either until some form of protection is granted, or until repatriation - in the case of rejected asylum seekers. No formal attempts were made to facilitate the integration of refugees and people granted protection that were released from detention into the local community. Moreover, JRS perceived an emergence in hostility and mistrust of immigrants by the Maltese, at times made worse by the portrayal of immigrants as a burden and threat to health and security.
- § From December 2003 the government began releasing groups of asylum seekers who had been in detention for more than 18 months. Some of them were still awaiting the final outcome of the determination of their application for refugee status and others had been rejected at appeal stage. This 18-month time limit was established totally arbitrarily by the authorities concerned and has no basis in law. Moreover it was applied extremely loosely; some asylum seekers were released after 17 months in detention, others after 20 months, and yet others after more than 24 months. There were no improvements noted in the conditions in detention centers however. The facilities used are in a state of disrepair and are totally unsuitable for the long-term detention of people – in one facility detainees have been housed in tents since July 2004. All the centres are characterized by overcrowding, lack of privacy and insufficient access to basic services. Detainees are not provided with any opportunity to engage in gainful activities.
- § Provisions for the reception of asylum seekers into the community remained practically non-existent. Asylum seekers who are released from detention after 18 months were provided with basic hostel accommodation in one of two government-run open centres, but those who arrived in Malta legally, and were never detained, were only provided with free access to state primary and secondary schools and free medical treatment. As they were not permitted to work legally they had to depend on charity to survive or resort to working illegally.
- § The procedures for the determination of refugee status can take months. During this time period, people waited for up to 6 months after their arrival for their initial interview with the Refugee Commissioner. There was also a significant backlog at appeal stage. The delay was largely due to a lack of resources in the structures set up to determine applications. In addition, asylum seekers found it practically impossible to obtain legal aid, although they are legally entitled to such assistance. In 2004 a number of amendments to the Refugees Act were introduced. We believe that some of these amendments, such as those declaring applications from asylum seekers from 'safe countries of origin' 'inadmissible' and applications made two months after the date of arrival in Malta 'invalid', undermine the quality of protection provided to asylum seekers in Malta. The only significant improvement is a provision, which allows asylum seekers to challenge their detention if they believe that it is 'unreasonable'. The criterion to be used to determine what constitutes a 'reasonable' period of detention was not specified, and this provision was not in force until December 2003.



## B. JRS Activities and Plans

### Detention

During 2004 JRS-Malta significantly expanded its staff base - by the end of December 2004 it employed four full-time members of staff and one part-timer. As in previous years, JRS-Malta focused on the needs of asylum seekers in detention. Through the services of one employed lawyer and five volunteer lawyers, it continued to offer legal assistance to detained asylum seekers with regard to the proceedings for the determination of their application for refugee status. Moreover, from July 2004, the JRS social worker concentrated on setting up a social work service for asylum seekers in detention. JRS volunteers continued to visit the detention centres and offered moral and social support to the detainees.

### Awareness Raising

As of November 2004 JRS Malta launched a new project, a national awareness raising campaign aimed at combating discrimination on the grounds of race and disability. This project is being organized in collaboration with the National Commission of Persons with Disability, and is funded by the EU Community Action Programme to Combat Discrimination. JRS Malta has employed two full-time members of staff to implement this project. As part of this programme, JRS will be organizing outreach activities in local secondary schools, a seminar on the implementation of the race directive and an 'immigrants' parliament. This project has assumed great relevance in view of the increase in prejudice and hostility towards refugees and immigrants in Malta.

### Lobbying

During this period, JRS continued to lobby for a change in the government policy of mandatory and long-term detention of asylum seekers. It gave priority to recording and documenting government policy and practice in this area. JRS prepared reports for submission to various national authorities and international institutions and started to challenge the legality of detention in individual cases, by instituting legal proceedings before the local courts. JRS also organized a number of formal and informal training initiatives targeting law students, members of the legal profession as well as volunteers on the various JRS projects.

### Plans for the Coming Year

During the coming year JRS Malta will seek to strengthen existing projects. Financial support is currently being sought for the legal assistance project as, in the current circumstances, JRS lacks the resources to function effectively and consistently. As of January 2005, the social work service will be provided within the context of a project funded by Baxter International Foundation, aimed at providing detained immigrants with social work support to enable them to access good quality medical care. Priority will be given to vulnerable asylum seekers to ensure that they receive the treatment, assistance and protection they need. JRS will be recruiting another part-time member of staff to work within this project. The chosen candidate is herself a refugee. She is a nursing student and she will be employed as an outreach worker in detention centres, with a particular focus on the health needs of detainees.

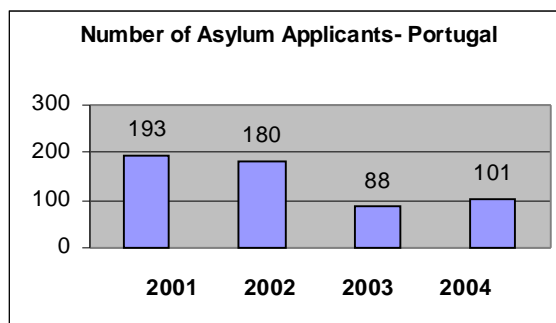
**-Mr. Bashir Yousif Haij, Former Detainee-**



**- Fr. Pierre Grech SJ, JRS-Malta Director-**



## 3.6 Portugal



### A. Political developments

- § The growth in the number of economic migrants in Portugal received much media attention in 2004. The challenges facing Portugal with regard to immigration – the inclusion of immigrants in the labour market; their integration into the national health, education, social security services, etc.; homelessness; conviviality between people from different cultures – were addressed in several academic studies, conferences and media reports, but debate at the political level has not been sufficient nor conclusive.
- § In March 2004 a decree was passed regulating the Immigration Act of February 2003, which greatly restricted immigration channels to Portugal. So far only three people have been granted a work visa under this Act. The Immigration Act also made provisions for an extraordinary registration process of undocumented migrants living in Portugal, which took place from May to June 2004. Around 53,000 migrants registered, of which only around 8,000 were found to have met all the requirements (i.e. legal entrance into Portugal before March 2003, taxes paid in 2002, contributions to Social Security, currently employed). These are currently being called on to submit all the necessary documents, but the process is advancing at a very slow pace.
- § The extraordinary legalization process for Brazilian undocumented immigrants only, launched following Brazilian President Lula's visit to Portugal in July 2003, has so far made legalization possible for around 3,500 people (out of the 53,000 that applied).

### B. JRS Activities and Plans

As in 2003, the majority of the JRS' beneficiaries were from Eastern European countries, mainly Ukraine, Moldova, Bulgaria, Romania, Belarus etc. The remaining beneficiaries were from Brazil, Africa (especially from Angola, Rwanda, São Tomé e Príncipe, Senegal and Mozambique), and Asia (mainly from Pakistan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, India, and Timor Lorosae).

#### Integration Projects

JRS-Portugal ran several programmes aimed at contributing to the smooth and happy integration of immigrants and refugees living in Portugal. In February 2004, 36 students finished the Portuguese as a Foreign Language course, which they began in October 2003. Between March and July, another 70 immigrants attended four courses, 50 of which took the final exam. In October, four other courses began, with 60 people currently attending these; one of the courses is aimed specifically at nurses. In 2005, another seven courses will be organized.



## **Social Work**

Our social aid office dealt mainly with homeless immigrants or those at risk of becoming homeless (many cases were referred to the St. João de Deus Temporary Shelter). JRS's social worker has also provided some support in other areas, for instance voluntary repatriations; translation work at court trials; visits to imprisoned and hospitalized immigrants; the search for missing immigrants at the request of their families; cooperation with the police authorities in locating immigrants who have either committed or witnessed a crime; cooperation with the police in the protection of witnesses; detection of children at risk and referral of these children to the relevant authorities. 178 cases were accompanied, but many more were in need of assistance. JRS could not respond to all of their needs due to lack of personnel. In 2005, it plans to expand this office with the aid of another social worker.

The food aid programme continued in partnership with "Banco Alimentar contra a Fome" (Food Bank Against Hunger). This food distribution programme gave assistance to 150 poor families. Staple foods were distributed (milk and dairy products, pasta, rice, flour, edible oil, canned fish, etc). Clothes, usually donated by private donors, were also distributed to immigrants in need.

JRS tried to find accommodation (apartments, rooms in boarding houses for temporary stays, or in shelters for the homeless) for immigrants in need.

Medical aid: Two volunteer doctors consulted patients. Whenever necessary, volunteers accompanied refugees and immigrants to health centres or hospitals, for consultations with general practitioners, gynecologists, pediatricians, psychiatrists etc. JRS also supplied medication to those in need. 50 people were consulted under this programme, which will continue in 2005. In addition to this, a volunteer psychologist regularly saw six people.

## **Employment Support**

One of JRS's main concerns was to find jobs for people who requested help. In the job-finding department, volunteers served as intermediaries between employers (who either contacted JRS or were contacted by JRS) and immigrants in search of a workplace. They conducted around 3200 interviews. This department will continue its work in 2005.

## **Legal Aid**

Another concern was the provision of legal advice for immigrants. Two lawyers made around 500 consultations. Assistance comprised of organising personal consultations with the lawyers, and helping with the processes of legalization, visas, permits, the risk of expulsion, labour conflicts, etc. The Legal Office will continue its work in 2005. Immigrants could also seek advice on legal and practical matters at CLAI – the Local Centre for Immigrant Support – formed as a result of a partnership between Immigrant Associations, NGOs, Parishes, and other non-profits serving the migrant community, in cooperation with the Portuguese High Commissariat for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities. At CLAI, a worker gives information and advice on questions relating to legalization, work permits, immigration law and specific decrees, as well as on practical questions on life in Portugal. In 2004, CLAI gave assistance to 1030 people.

## **Recognition of Qualifications**

The pioneering project for the recognition of qualifications of immigrant doctors is the result of a partnership between the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and the Jesuit Refugee Service. Its main purpose is to support immigrant doctors (non-EU citizens, whose academic qualifications do not match those of professionals in Portugal) in the process of obtaining recognition of their academic/professional qualifications; and in turn reduces the shortage of doctors in Portugal. The project comprises of 120 doctors. By the end of 2004, 73 were already officially practicing medicine, 29 were in training at a hospital or awaiting training or equivalence requests, and 18 had failed the equivalence exams.

A similar project was launched in September 2004 for immigrant nurses. Ten nurses are currently in training in a hospital/ health post. Another 174 applied for the programme; their applications will be assessed in January 2005. An estimated 60 nurses will benefit from the next stage of the programme.

### **Awareness Raising**

In 2004 JRS also tried to promote awareness of migrant issues by participating in several debates and conferences, and occasionally in events promoted by the radio, television, and press media. A quarterly newsletter was distributed to about 1700 people. JRS aims to reach a further 300 in 2005.

An awareness-raising project on migrant issues in schools – Project *Footsteps of All Colours* - was launched in October 2004, and so far 459 pupils (from 23 classes) and 37 teachers participated in the sessions. An estimated 70 classes (1600 students) will benefit from the programme in 2005.

Finally, JRS also promoted the celebration of important dates (Refugee World Day; Migrants World Day; Orthodox and Catholic Christmas). It will continue to do so in 2005.

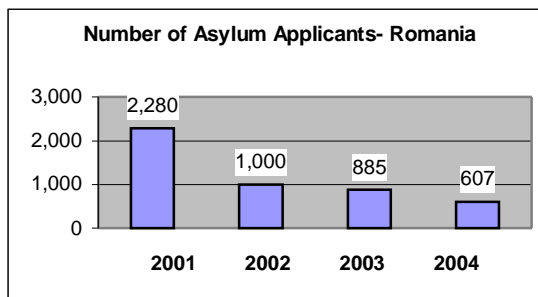


***-JRS Portugal's Job Finding Department-***



***-Recognition of Qualifications for Immigrant Doctors-***

## 3.7 Romania



### A. Political developments

In anticipation of its entry into the EU in 2007, the Romanian Government is making moves towards becoming a destination for migrants rather than a country of transit. As a result, the following legislative changes have taken place over the past twelve months.

- Since March 2004 asylum seekers have seen their monthly food contribution increase from 16 US Dollars a month to 24 Euros a month.
- The capacity and quality of conditions at the reception centers has improved.
- An improved and accelerated procedure for acquiring Government protection under Romanian law is in place.
- It is foreseen that there will eventually be free access to lawyers.
- In May 2004, a new law was passed for the better integration of refugees and people with humanitarian protection officially granting them the same social, economic, educational and health rights as Romanian citizens. However, there has not been vigorous implementation of this law as yet but JRS-Romania is involved in encouraging its application.
- While refugees can now gain free access to High School and University studies, in practice it is difficult for many beneficiaries to profit by this law due to a lack of formal education and diplomas, language deficiency and cultural difficulties.
- Theoretically, medical care is available to refugees and people with humanitarian protection but in practice this is still not always accessible.
- 'Tolerated people' still have no social or economic rights in Romania.
- The UNHCR has withdrawn its funding from NGOs working with refugees and asylum seekers, in anticipation of this funding being replaced by Government aid. This has not yet come to fruition, making JRS's role all the more necessary.

### B. JRS Activities and Plans

The number of refugees and asylum seekers in Romania has decreased over the past three years. The average number of beneficiaries of JRS activities is 300, but due to high turnover this number could be as much as 800 in one year.

#### **Detention Centres**

Since November 2003 JRS has been granted access to detention centers in Romania. The JRS team has since been accompanying and counseling people under public custody, and trying to meet their needs. A support program of food, clothing, medicine and emergency financial aid continues to be available to all beneficiaries.

## **Social Projects**

The Social Accommodation Project, begun in 2002, has a dormitory for single men and two apartments for families and women. It is still the only possibility for rejected asylum seekers in Romania, known as 'tolerated people' as well as Romanian returnees, to avoid living on the street.

Language courses and computer operating classes continue and are very much appreciated. A special program for refugee women includes vocational counseling, opportunities for professional development and job research. Cultural activities in the Pedro Arrupe Centre and reception centers, as well as visits to museums and trips to places of historical interest outside Bucharest are also part of the Educational Program. University scholarships are also available.

## **Future Plans for JRS-Romania**

JRS plans include:

1. Continuing to improve and adapt its services towards migrants of all categories, especially the more vulnerable whose needs are not taken care of by other organizations.
2. Lobbying the Government so that existing laws in favor of migrants are enforced and new legal provisions are created.
3. Ensuring continued funding for present and future projects, with eventual access to EU funds and local company sponsorship.
4. Promoting the involvement of volunteers in JRS-Romania.
5. Promoting the ongoing awareness of the reality of migrants of all kinds in our midst.



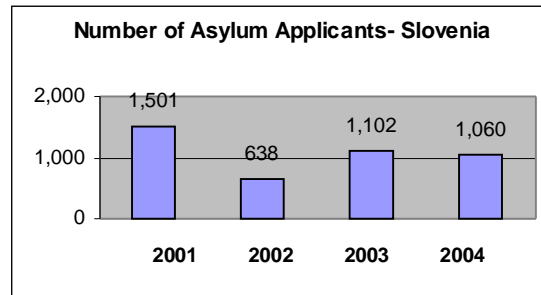
*-Congolese Refugee Girl-*



*-JRS Romania "Piknik to Sinaia"-*



## 3.8 Slovenia



### A. Political developments

Slovenia, formerly part of Yugoslavia, recently acceded to the EU (May 2004). Slovenia avoided the Balkan wars, it is peaceful, and therefore not in the media spotlight. This, however, makes the needs of refugees and asylum seekers in Slovenia, who are mainly from the former Yugoslavia, very real. The country is still on its way towards full democracy and a market economy and while some Slovenes are very prosperous, others struggle financially. There is a residue of fear as a result of the wars, which marked the break-up of Yugoslavia and this has resulted in some significant intolerance towards certain ethnic and religious groups. Culturally Slovenia is very homogeneous although there are small ethnic groups within the country. Given its geographical position- it shares borders with Austria and Italy- Slovenia has primarily been a country of transit for refugees and migrants until recently. However this is now changing and more refugees are claiming asylum in Slovenia. Since the Dublin agreement came into effect, asylum has to be requested in the first EU country of entry- it is therefore expected that Slovenia will receive more asylum claims.

### B. JRS Activities and Plans

#### Volunteer Work

##### § Training of the Volunteers:

Duration of the program: October 2003 to June 2004. In this period 13 volunteers completed the program and a further 16 joined the project. In 2003 - 2004 we organized four seminars for the volunteers who after the short training began to work in asylum housing in Ljubljana and the Aliens Centre in Postojna.

##### § Volunteer work in Aliens Centre, Postojna:

In 2004 JRS-Slovenia volunteers visited the Aliens Centre twice a week, from October to June. Approximately 20 detainees are in the centre at any one time. In February 2004 we organized a *Concert of Life*: a short cultural program and a picnic for 25 detainees and members of Staff (police, social and medical workers) in the Aliens Centre. At Christmas time we organized a concert and gifts giving for the detainees. In addition to these special events, JRS Slovenia undertook regular activities, such as socializing, playing with children, and talking to detainees.

##### § Asylum Home:

Activities in the Asylum home in 2004 included: a computer course - 11 persons; vacations for families - two families, three unaccompanied minors; creative workshops for women and girls (minors) - ten persons; learning assistance - seven persons; sharing groups - 20 persons; preparing a room for prayer; St. Nicolas gifts giving - 22 children; Christmas concert, gifts giving, theatre play - approx. 35 persons.

- § Summer Camp and Pilgrimage:  
Ten Bosnians participated in the 11-day pilgrimage. The JRS social worker managed to provide them with accommodation at Slovenian family houses. For the first three days JRS organized social activities (picnic, swimming, sharing, making relations), which were followed by a 110 km long pilgrimage (seven days).

### **Awareness Raising**

- § National Poster Competition on the Integration of Bosnian Refugees in Slovenia:  
Five schools (aprox. 1000 children) participated in the project. Children produced posters based on a short theatre play. The best poster plus three runner-ups were selected. A prize giving ceremony and an exhibition of the posters was then held in the Cultural Centre Janez Trdina Novo Mesto. The project was from January to April 2004.
- § Building a more Open Society:  
JRS has been broadcasting a radio program since February 2003, every 2nd and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month. It is the only radio show on refugee and migrant issues in Slovenia.
- § Internet:  
In March 2003 JRS-Slovenia established a new Internet site: <http://www.rkc.si/jrs>.

### **Education**

- § Seminars for the Staff of Aliens Centre Postojna (Police, Medical and Social Workers):  
For staff we organized three seminars with approx. 40 participants for each seminar:  
1. Communication in the Aliens Centre  
2. How to protect ourselves from "burnout"  
3. EU legislation and selected national legislation of EU Member States: Observations and experience of JRS in Europe.
- § Computer Courses:  
In 2004, JRS-Slovenia set-up a computer room in the St. Joseph Jesuit spiritual centre in Ljubljana. The eight new computers with license software and eight Windows XP with Windows Office 2003 software, ten computer tables and ECDL (European Computer Driving license) will be used to give computer courses to asylum seekers and refugees. Funds for the training of two JRS personnel were donated to JRS Slovenia. The first computer course is planned for February 2005.

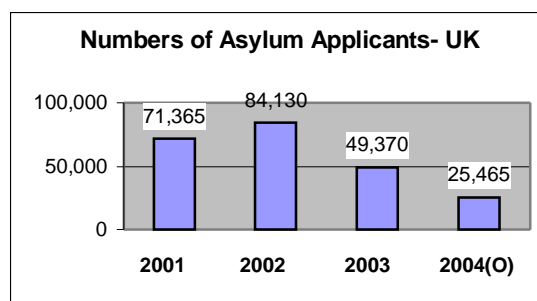


***-Bosnian Youth Summer Camp and Pilgrimage 2003-***



***-Bosnian Boy Asylum Seekers-***

## 3.9 United Kingdom



2004 Figure for Jan - Oct Only

### A. Political developments

#### New Legislation

The **Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc.) Act 2004** received Royal Assent on 22<sup>nd</sup> July. Most of the Act will not come into force immediately, but will be implemented by ministerial order, known as a commencement order. So what is in force so far?

**New Criminal Offences-** Sections 2 and 35 of the Act create new offences for not having documents demonstrating identity without good reason and for failure to co-operate with the removal process. Both offences will carry a maximum of two years' imprisonment. Both these sections came into force on 22<sup>nd</sup> September.

**Electronic monitoring -** Section 36 of the Act, which came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> October, allows for electronic monitoring of individuals who would otherwise be subject to detention or reporting restrictions. Starting this month the Immigration and Nationality Department are running a pilot project to test three types of technology:

**Voice recognition -** 200 people will have to phone in regularly from a specified landline

**Tagging -** 50 people will have to wear a tagging bracelet and will have to be near a receiver at specified times (e.g. in accommodation every night at 9p.m.)

**Global satellite positioning software –** 50 people can be located wherever they are, at any time. These numbers are approximate and the IND is unsure for how long the pilot project will run.

**Safe countries of origin:** Sections 27 and 33 came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> October. They give the Secretary of State the power to decide that asylum claims from particular areas of countries, or from particular groups of people from a country, are unfounded. Although these claims will be examined on an individual basis, it is likely they will be refused, as the presumption is that they are unfounded. No appeal will be allowed from within the UK. In addition the Secretary of State can decide that certain areas of a country are safe, or are safe for specific groups of people. The Secretary of State may then remove people to these designated safe areas, even if the country as a whole is not deemed safe for removal purposes. At present the only countries to which this applies to are the European Economic Area countries. However, the Secretary of State has reserved the right to add to these.

It is likely that there will be one more Commencement Order this year. It is thought that this will include several of the sections, which affect entitlement to asylum support, including Section 9 (withdrawal of families with children under 18 who have exhausted their appeal rights).

#### Policy

In addition to legislative changes there have been a number of policy changes during 2004 reflecting a hardening of attitudes towards asylum-seekers in the UK. The most significant of these are:

- § The withdrawal of free healthcare in hospitals for asylum seekers whose claims have failed; there is also the likelihood that free treatment for these individuals will be removed at primary care level (local family doctors)
- § Limitations on the amount of public funding available to pay for a lawyer to pursue the asylum case (four hours funding is available for the first instance level and five hours for appeals) making it very difficult for legal advice in asylum cases to be found
- § Tough talking on asylum by politicians is prevalent

## B. JRS Activities and Plans

### Detainees

JRS's outreach to asylum seekers in detention has increased over the last year. It has a new lay outreach worker, Shana Mongwanga, who visits detainees and is also building up a small team of volunteer detention visitors to befriend detainees. Another recent addition to the team, Harry Elias SJ, is seconded as a volunteer assistant chaplain at Colnbrook and at Harmondsworth detention centres.

### Disbenefitted

Increasing, a number of asylum seekers who have received final refusals in their claims, come to JRS's new office in central London for support and help. They are often completely destitute and some are rough sleepers. All JRS is able to offer is a little dignity and friendship, a safe and warm place for them to meet, and weekly bus passes so that they are able to attend medical appointments, drop in centers to have hot meals and to report at immigration offices. Many are left in this situation for months and years, without being removed and without being allowed to work or receive benefits.

### Outreach work

The JRS UK staff continues to give talks and lead workshops for church and secular groups in order to raise awareness about the treatment of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK.

### Publications

In the past year JRS UK has made formal submissions to the following government consultations:

- § Proposals to Exclude Overseas Visitors from Eligibility to Free NHS Primary Medical Services
- § Integration Matters: A National Strategy for Refugee Integration
- § Consultation on the Implementation of Council Directive 2003/9/EC of 27 January 2003 laying down minimum standards for the reception of asylum seekers
- § Linking Section 4 support with Community Activities: Draft Regulations (The Immigration and Asylum (Provision of Accommodation to Failed Asylum Seekers) Regulations 2005.
- § JRS UK has also (in coalition with other Catholic Agencies) produced a prayer card for World Migration Day.



*-JRS UK Outreach workers at their office in London Bridge-*



## 4. Contact Persons conducting Activities in other Countries

### 4.1 France

Fr Bernard Chandon-Moët SJ, is the JRS Contact Person in Paris. Primarily involved with the Mission office there he aims to:

- Be aware of the situation of asylum seekers and migrants without papers, and follow relevant legislation and political developments
- Dispatch information, mostly through the magazine "Jésuites en mission" which comes out every three months, in which there is a page dedicated to the activities of JRS as well as information on, and events about, migrants and asylum seekers
- Explain to young people what the aims of JRS are and how it works
- Propose to benefactors the best means of sending funds to JRS, especially in Africa and Asia

JRS-France carried out an extraordinarily successful fundraising appeal on behalf of JRS Asia Pacific for the victims of the December 2004 Tsunami there.

### 4.2 Lebanon

#### A. Political developments

In Lebanon the primary countries of origin of refugees are Sudan and Iraq. The Sudanese refugees are mostly Christians from South Sudan and Nubian Muslims, who are being persecuted by the Khartoum government. As citizens of an Arab country, they can go to Syria without a visa. However, as the Syrian secret police works closely with its Sudanese counterpart, many refugees do not feel safe there; by paying \$200 to a Syrian officer, they can then enter Lebanon illegally. There they usually present themselves to the UNHCR, requesting asylum. The Lebanese Security General gives them three months to present themselves and obtain the protection of the UNHCR. There are no official numbers, but those liaising between the UNHCR and the Middle East Council of Churches estimate that about 2,200 Sudanese are now living in Lebanon, of which about 600 are recognized as refugees. The rest have either been termed economic migrants by the UNHCR and are not entitled to protection, or their interviews with the UNHCR are still pending.

#### B. JRS Activities and Plans

If the police catch a Sudanese man without status, he is usually sentenced to three months in jail. However the Security General usually leaves them in prison indefinitely, until such time that they can find a sponsor who will pay the fees necessary to make them legal; this rarely happens. JRS Lebanon works in a quasi-parish of migrant workers and refugees. From the collections donated, it tries to help the families of the imprisoned men pay their rent. Iraqi refugees who flee to Lebanon are helped by JRS' partner organization-Caritas, which receives money from the U.S. fund and administers this through the Chaldean Church.

In the Middle East, JRS-Europe also has a contact person liaising on refugee issues in Cairo, Egypt.

### 4.3 Luxembourg

Fr. Pierre Meyers SJ is the contact person for JRS in Luxembourg. JRS Luxembourg acts within the framework of the « Collectif Réfugiés », in advocating and defending the rights of asylum seekers. The « Collectif Réfugiés » consists of 10 NGOs.

#### JRS Activities and Plans

As the number of asylum seekers failed to drop at the beginning of 2004, the government was at pains to accommodate 2320 persons in 61 different reception places (among them many family boarding houses) located all over the country.

JRS Luxembourg's actions consisted of:

- § Demanding better conditions for the reception of asylum seekers (with educational and psychological care, information, and language teaching); submitting precise proposals to the government with regard to first reception.
- § Demanding asylum seekers right to work six months after the submission of their asylum application. However there is yet to be progress on this.
- § Criticizing the frequent recourse to forced repatriation (done without any clearly defined procedure) and the confinement of people in a detention centre, situated separately on the grounds of a penitentiary centre.

Since August 2004 a new political coalition has been in power. In addition to their regular national political agenda, the new government has had to prepare for the presidency of the Council of the European Union (January to June 2005). For this reason we readily submitted some proposals concerning asylum seekers. In particular JRS has addressed to the government:

- § A detailed appraisal of a new « *Project on the law concerning the right to asylum and to complementary forms of protection* »
- § An appraisal of the *detention centre* which the government plans to built; this is based on the JRS-Europe document: "Detention in Europe" (2004)

## 4.4 Slovakia

### A. Political developments

- § In 2004, Slovakia experienced a slight increase in asylum applications from 10,358 in 2003 to 10,736 in 2004 (Note: all 2004 numbers for January-November 2004). Of this number, only seven individuals were granted refugee status. This extremely low figure was widely criticised, especially by UNHCR. Refugee status was refused in 1234 cases (as compared to 421 cases in 2003); 10,967 left the procedure (as compared to 9,788 in 2003) and 3,182 cases are still in procedure (transferred from 2003). In 2004 the main countries of origin of asylum seekers were India, Russia (Chechnya), Georgia, China and Pakistan.
- § In December 2004 the Slovak president signed an amendment to the law on asylum; this will come into force in 2005. It will introduce the issuing of identification cards to asylum seekers and will enable the Immigration Office to determine the age of an asylum seeker based on a medical examination (the court will appoint guardians to underage asylum applicants). The amendment also includes a provision that states asylum seekers are permitted to work in Slovakia if the Ministry of Interior does not decide on their asylum request within one year. Those living in integration centres have an obligation to attend Slovak language courses.
- § Two camps for minors are under construction- the first one is in Eastern Slovakia, close to Ukrainian border; the second one is in Western Slovakia.

### B. JRS Activities and Plans

The JRS Contact Person for Slovakia, Dusan Bezak SJ, completed his Regency in JRS-Europe in July 2004 and soon after began his theological studies in Bratislava. From October - December 2004 he made presentations about JRS to High School and University students in Bratislava, Trnava and Piestany. He liaises with the Head of the Department of Social work for Refugees (Trnava University) and with related NGOs in Bratislava. In December he assisted with a radio broadcast on the refugee issue in Slovakia (this has an estimated audience of 100,000).

For the first half of 2005 he plans to conduct JRS presentations in Jesuit pastoral centres; to prepare a common project with the students of M. Alexia High School in Bratislava (this involves a video documentary of the refugee camp and interviews with refugees in Slovakia), and to visit the refugee camp in Brezova.

Slovak scholastic, Peter Girasek SJ, currently doing his Regency in JRS Slovenia, will finish there in Summer 2005 to continue his theological studies.

## 4.5 Spain

### A. Political developments

Stories of irregular migrants arriving at the southern coast of Spain, the Canary Islands, and the autonomous city of Ceuta, were constantly in the Spanish news headlines in 2003.

At the end of 2003, Spain hosted about 230 refugees in need of protection. During the year, 5,900 asylum seekers filed applications in Spain, a five percent decrease from 2002. The largest numbers came from Nigeria (1,700), Colombia (520), Algeria (350), Congo-Kinshasa (270), Côte d'Ivoire (240), and Liberia (190).

The Spanish authorities issued decisions on 2,800 asylum applications in 2003, granting about 230 persons asylum (8 percent), 72 humanitarian protection (3 percent), and 70 temporary protections. Authorities rejected around 2,400 asylum claims (86 percent), and found over 4,200 applications inadmissible; this includes claims deemed manifestly unfounded.

### B. JRS Activities and Plans

In 2004 JRS-Spain activities have been devoted to putting into practice the initial phase of the agreement signed on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2004. This agreement formalizes the relationships between JRS international and the NGOs of the Society of Jesus in Spain.

According to the agreement, ALBOAN, Entreculturas and IntermonOxfam will represent JRS in Spain, with responsibility for:

- Fundraising to support JRS programs in developing countries.
- Promoting the JRS branch and image within Spanish public opinion.
- Executing advocacy initiatives in Spain on behalf of the JRS international advocacy officer in line with JRS advocacy priorities.

A member of each of the organisations named above has been integrated into the JRS-Spain committee. This is chaired by ALBOAN.

#### **Fundraising**

JRS projects in up to 14 countries have received funding with the help of the three organizations mentioned. Funds transferred came from both public agencies and private donors, totalling around €1,9 million. Special mention must be given to the support that ALBOAN and Entreculturas have devoted to the start up of JRS activities in Chad. This new JRS initiative was an immediate response to the needs of refugees from Darfur, who fled Sudan in the early part of 2004.

#### **Public awareness**

JRS' activities are outlined on the websites and magazines of the three NGOs. In April and October, the first two issues of the four-page JRS newsletter were distributed by ALBOAN to recipients of its magazine (production of 12,000 copies).

The presentation of the "Navarra" international prize for solidarity to Lluís Magriñá of JRS International was a great opportunity to raise public awareness of JRS's activities. The Local Government of Navarra and Caja Laboral gave it to JRS international, in recognition of its historical and extraordinary work. By this, JRS gained an extraordinary presence in the local and regional media of Navarra, one of the most developed areas of northern Spain.

JRS took this opportunity to design and set up an exhibition (12 explanatory boards and 32 photographs), which showed the countries and activity sectors in which JRS works today. This exhibition was exposed for two weeks in the auditorium of Pamplona and in the main building of the University of Deusto.

On November 14<sup>th</sup>, the biggest newspaper of Euskadi published an article on the situation of Côte d'Ivoire, written by Gonzalo Sánchez Terán, Information Officer of JRS West Africa.

## **Advocacy**

The JRS-Spain committee selected from the advocacy priorities of the international office based on the following criteria: firstly, the advocacy activities must have a public awareness impact and secondly, they must be compatible with the ALBOAN, Entreculturas and IntermonOxfam agendas. The Child Soldiers coalition and Democratic Republic of Congo were therefore selected from the seven international office priorities.

### **§ Child Soldiers**

Amnesty International and Save the Children (co-founders of the international coalition) began the activities of the Spanish coalition in late 2003. JRS-Spain maintained contact with them and was finally incorporated into the group on the 20<sup>th</sup> December.

### **§ Democratic República of Congo**

All countries in the Great Lakes region in central África are geographic priorities for the three NGOs that coordinate JRS in Spain. In 2003 JRS was in touch with JRS Great Lakes regional director and advocacy officer, along with the international advocacy officer, in order to identify the opportunities for future work in this field.

## **4.6 Ukraine**

### **Political developments**

JRS has established an Office in the Ukraine and its activities will begin there in 2005. At the moment labour migration is a huge problem for Ukraine and the statistics are staggering. 7,000,000 people of a population of 48 million have left the country to look for work. Since most have left illegally, estimates creep up as high as 10 million - no one can calculate the number accurately. In some villages, every household has a member working in Italy, Portugal, Israel, Germany or elsewhere.

As in most countries that experience displaced populations, there are several internal factors that need to be addressed. JRS-Ukraine works at the political level, with the government and NGOs- analyzing the problem (a difficult task in post-soviet society), making public the degree of the problem, underscoring the root causes and caring for those seeking reintegration. This is one of few issues in which government, NGOs, embassies, and churches can collaborate effectively on. Hence, Ukraine can boast perhaps the best legislation in Europe with regard to the trafficking in peoples. However, the legislation is rarely put into force; there usually is a lack of resources.

JRS-Ukraine seeks to be the voice of the church in this arena and after meeting with government officials, JRS has been assured of their active support. With the collaboration of foreign embassies, who showed their commitment during the elections at the end of 2004, JRS expects effective advancement on the issues of migrant labour, the rapid return of illegal emigrants, and the reintegration, with state support, of those caught up in the people trade.

What remains untested, though hopeful, is collaboration between the politicians and the people. The former politicians actively discouraged social involvement in the affairs of the nation. The new government received its mandate from a social movement following the Orange Revolution; this makes the start-up of JRS-Ukraine even more timely and promising. The government has also made a strong public statement against two European countries, which suggested that detention camps should be built within the country, without consultation with Ukraine. In no uncertain terms, the government rejected such a notion, a dramatic thing for this government to do.

## **4. 7 Other JRS Contacts in Europe**

JRS has activities in Austria as well as contact persons in the Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Greece, Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland and Sweden.

## 5. JRS South East Europe Region

### Political developments

JRS Southeast Europe, a separate region in the JRS framework, covers the territory of the former Yugoslavia less Slovenia. During the last few years there have been notable developments in the territory of the former Yugoslavia: stability has been restored to the region, the security situation has improved, democratically-elected Governments are now in place throughout the region, there has been a massive reconstruction effort, economic sustainable growth, increased commercial trade, and inflation is now also under control. Importantly some progress has been made in assisting the return of refugees and displaced persons, and there are signs of enhanced regional co-operation.

However, there is still much room for improvement, such as: existing weaknesses in the functioning of democratic institutions and institutional capacity building, the lack of rule of law and full respect of human and minorities rights, the fight against organized crime and corruption, required judicial reform, a stall in the sustainable return of refugees and displaced persons, inequality in income distribution, widespread poverty and high unemployment, the necessary structural reforms towards fully functioning market economies, and a heavy dependence on foreign financing.

The failure of international and domestic efforts to promote the return of refugees and displaced persons has seen the entrenchment of wartime displacement of ethnic minorities in the region. The Balkan experience offers an important lesson for other post-conflict situations: unless displacement and “ethnic cleansing” are to be accepted as a permanent and acceptable outcome of war, comprehensive and multi-faceted return strategies - with firm implementation and enforcement mechanism - must be an early priority for peace-building efforts.

It has taken years for the security situation to become conducive to minority return. Some areas, notably Kosovo, remain unsafe. Those who wish to return frequently find their homes occupied, yet administrative bodies and courts often failed to evict temporary occupants, or have been slow to do so. The limited government funds available for the reconstruction of damaged and destroyed properties have mainly benefited members of the majority ethnic group. Discrimination has also played a role in discouraging returns and local public enterprises have failed to employ returning minorities. Experience shows that when leaders engage in efforts to facilitate return, the situation on the ground improves. For example, the largest number of returns to mixed communities in Kosovo has been in the Gnjilane municipality, where ethnic Albanian officials have distinguished themselves by unequivocally condemning anti-Serb violence and encouraging dialogue between local Albanians and the prospective Serb returnees.

JRS Southeast Europe will continue to operate in the region in 2005, although expensive projects such as Land mine victim's assistance and the return of refugees and displaced as well as the rehabilitation project had to be closed in Bosnia and Serbia. However JRS Southeast Europe will remain in Kosovo. In line with its strategic plan, JRS Southeast Europe has created two NGOs in Croatia, which will take over the administration of its projects there. Strategic planning also began to merge the two European JRS Regions into one. This should happen in July 2006.

**Fr. Stjepan Kusan SJ, Regional Director JRS South East Europe**



***-South-East Europe Land Mine Victim's Assistance Project-***

## 6. Appendices

### 6.1 Appendix I – JRS contacts

#### In Europe

##### § JRS Europe

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##### § JRS Greece

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- 

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## In the Middle-East

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[lebanon@jrs.net](mailto:lebanon@jrs.net)

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## 6.2 Appendix II – Structure of JRS-Europe

JRS-Europe was established in March 1992 as an incorporated "International Association" under Belgian law (AISBL # 452165993, it is exempt from paying VAT), with a Constitution, General Assembly and Governing Council. It is recognized as a refugee-assisting NGO by the EU institutions and by several states both within Europe and beyond (namely Angola and Ethiopia).

Subsequent to a decision of the General Assembly of JRS-Europe, as of October 2003, the members of JRS-Europe Governing Council are: John Dardis SJ, Tommaso Guadagno SJ, Lluís Magriña SJ, President of JRS-Europe and International Director of the JRS, and Jan Stuyt SJ who succeeded John Dardis SJ as Secretary and "Administrateur Délégué" of JRS-Europe on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2004.

JRS-Europe has country offices and/or active coordinators or contact persons in Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine and the United Kingdom. It also has close links with JRS South-Eastern Europe, a distinct region in its own right, with projects in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia.

JRS-Europe is also an integral part of the Jesuit Refugee Service worldwide and is one of the JRS Regions dependent on and directly responsible to the JRS International Director. It is a project of the Conference of the Jesuit Provincials in Europe and forms an integral part of the inter-provincial apostolic work of the Society in Europe. It currently covers around twenty Jesuit Provinces, which in turn belong to four European Assistancies. National coordinators are responsible to their respective Provincials and, for certain matters, directly to the European Regional Director.

The European Regional Director has a Council of three members: Robin Schweiger SJ, Michael Schöpf SJ and Ms. Louise Zanré, which meet up every four months.

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## 6.3 Appendix III- Financial Report

The following charts outline

- § The JRS-Europe Office's Sources of Funding and Total Income
- § The JRS-Europe Office's Total Expenditure
- § The Sources of Funding and the Distribution of Expenditure between the JRS Offices in Europe

## Appendix III – Financial report

### JRS OFFICES IN EUROPE

Some brief notes of explanation

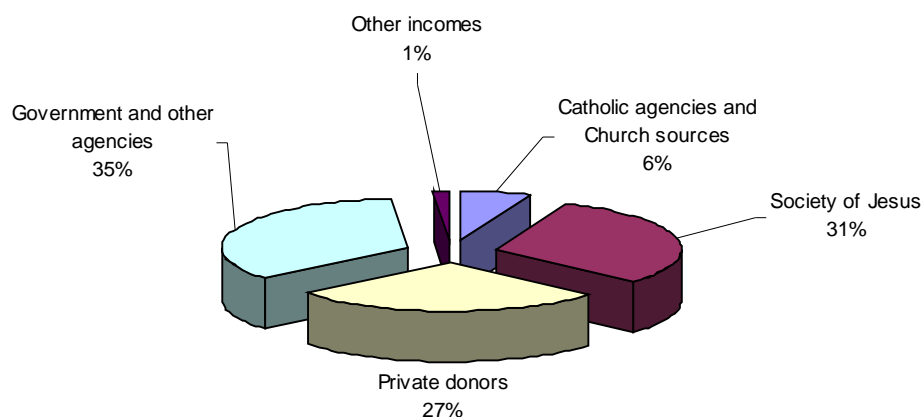
#### Sources of funding:

- Information extracted from financial reports (income & expenditures) received from country and regional office;
- *Catholic agencies & Church sources* include donation received from Catholic agencies;
- *Society of Jesus* refers to donations received from individual Jesuits, from the Jesuit Provinces, foundations and funding agencies of Jesuit inspiration;
- *Private donors* include individuals and private foundations;
- *Other income* is mainly bank and investment interest;
- *In-Kind donations* are not included in these figures though they play an important role in support of JRS.

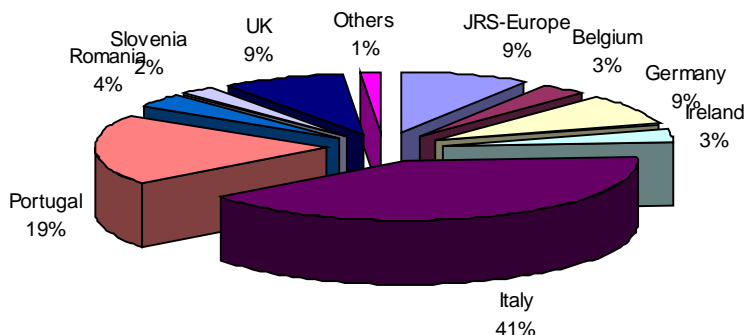
#### SOURCES OF FUNDING JRS in EUROPE (EUROS)

Catholic agencies and Church sources	125 241 636
Society of Jesus	617 564
Private donors	075
Government and other	

#### SOURCES OF FUNDING BY PERCENTAGE



#### PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF EXPENDITURE BY COUNTRY



# JRS EUROPE OFFICE

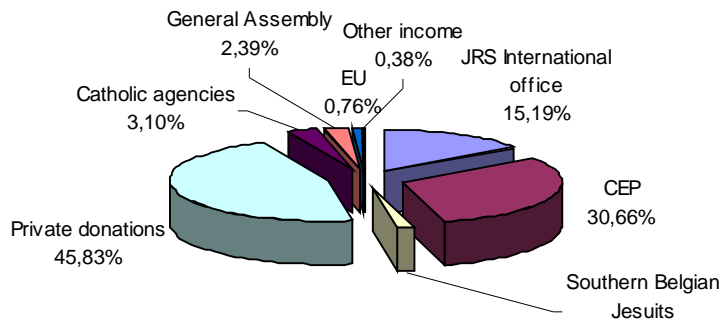
## Income 2003/2004

### SOURCES OF FUNDING (EUROS)

INCOME	2003	2004
JRS International office	44 580,79	46 765,63
Other JRS offices	-	3 000,00
CEP-Jesuit Provincials in Europe	90 000,00	80 250,00
South Belgian Jesuits	5 000,00	-
Private donations	134 549,81	48 234,61
Catholic agencies	9 106,50	53 993,95
General Assembly	7 003,53	10 653,80
EU	2 219,99	16 880,63
Other income	1 122,63	2 365,89
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>293 583,25</b>	<b>232 144,51</b>

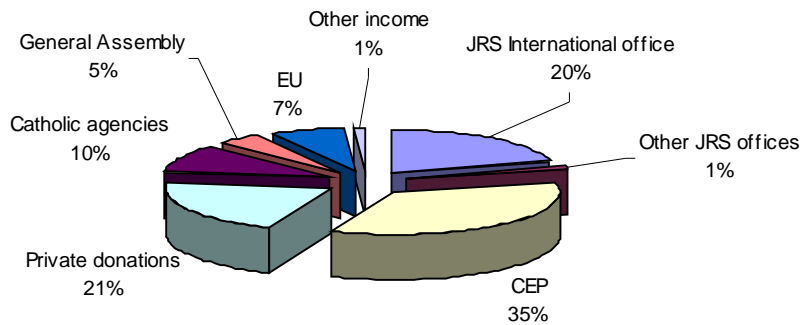
2003

Income for year ending  
30th September, 2003 (12 months)

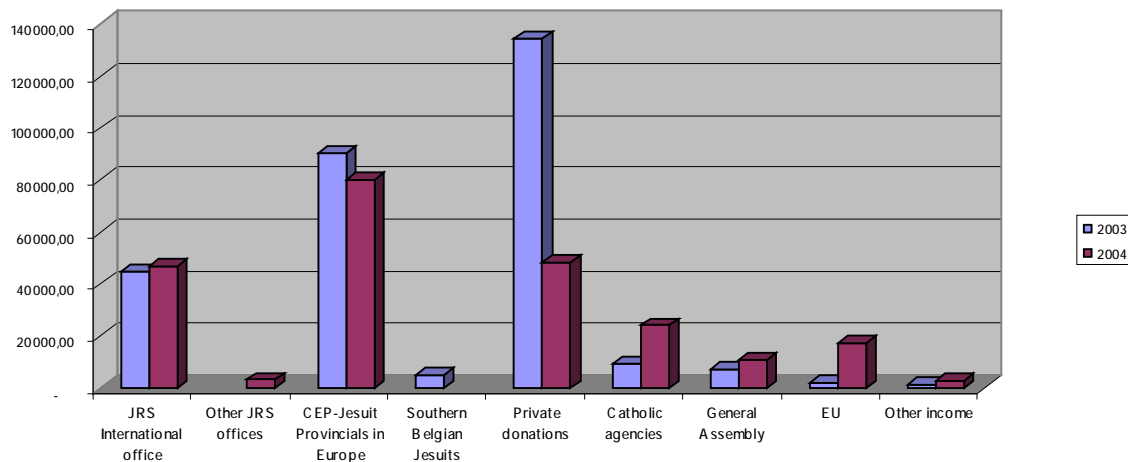


2004

Income for year ending 31st December, 2004 (15 months)



Income 2003-2004



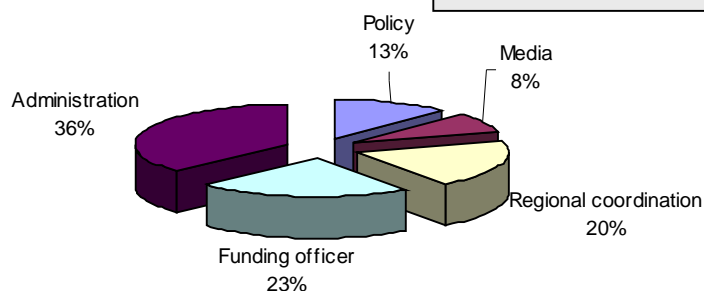
# JRS EUROPE OFFICE

Expenditure 2003/2004

## EXPENDITURE JRS EUROPE OFFICE (EUROS)

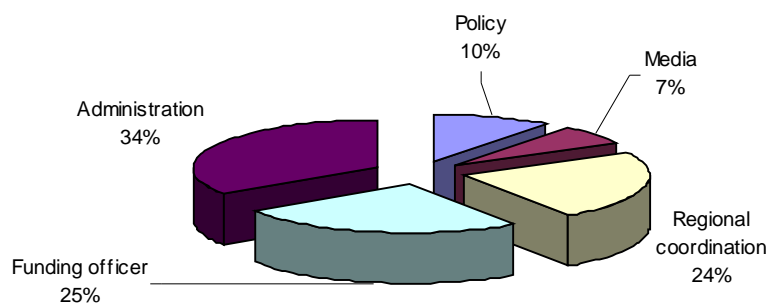
EXPENDITURE	2003	2004
Policy	22 906,28	19 125,30
Media	13 991,34	12 345,57
Regional coordination	36 226,26	43 482,89
Funding officer	42 355,66	46 765,63
Administration	67 626,46	63 162,33
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>183 106,00</b>	<b>184 881,72</b>

**2003**  
**Expenditure for year ending**  
**September 30th, 2003 (12 months)**

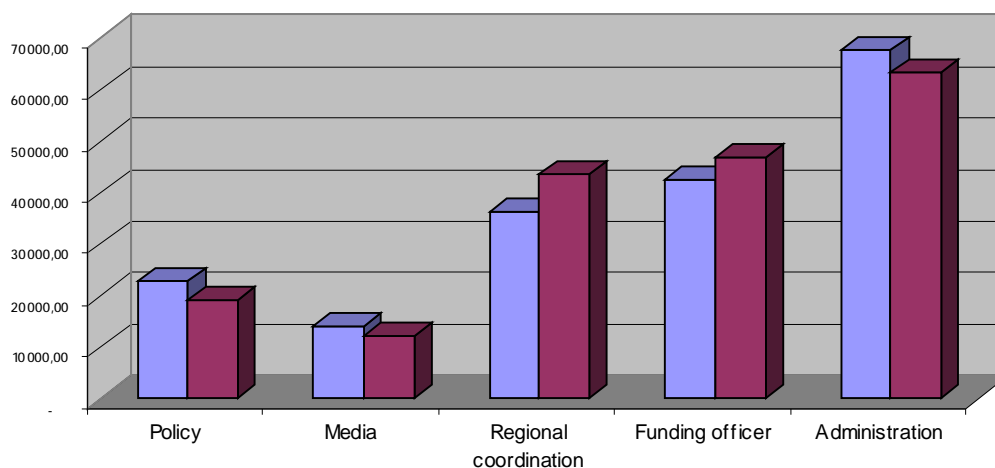


**2004**

**Expenditure for year ending**  
**December 31st, 2004 (15 months)**



**Expenditure 2003/2004**



## 6.4 Appendix IV- Acknowledgements

JRS-Europe extends its warm gratitude to its many friends and benefactors for their assistance. In particular, we would like to thank:

- § *The Conference of the Jesuit Provincials of Europe (CEP)*
- § *European Commission (Directorate-General for Education and Culture)*
- § *European Commission (Youth Program)*
- § *Renovabis*
- § *Porticus*
- § *Klooster Zusters van Maria, Pittem*
- § *Jesuit Province of Ireland*
- § *Jesuit Province of France*
- § *Gonzaga College (Dublin) and community, Ireland*
- § *St. Benedict Community, Brussels*
- § *And several donors who prefer to remain anonymous.*

