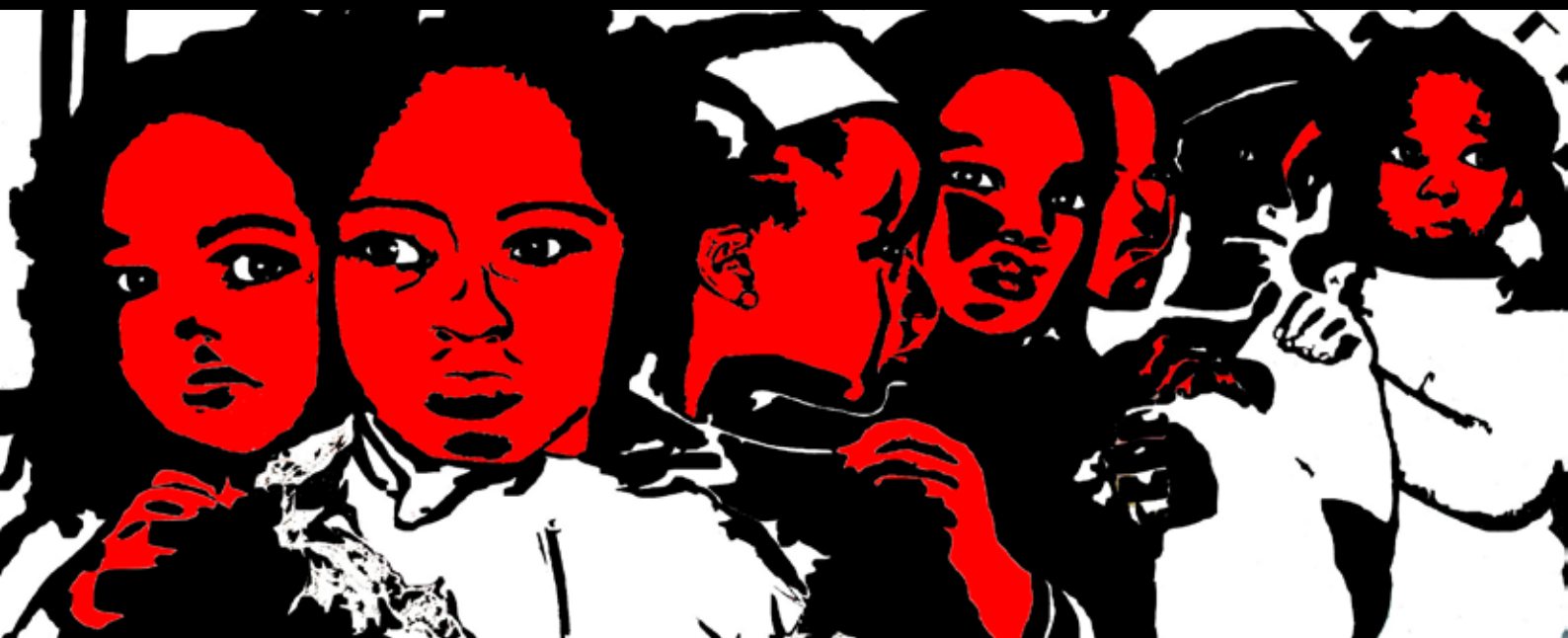


**JESUIT REFUGEE SERVICE EUROPE**  
**Annual Report 2008**



**to accompany - to serve - to advocate**



# **Annual Report 2008**

## **JESUIT REFUGEE SERVICE EUROPE**



Set up by Pedro Arrupe SJ in 1980, JRS is an international Catholic organisation with a mission to accompany, serve and plead the cause of refugees and forcibly displaced people.

An electronic version of the 2008 Report is available at [www.jrseurope.org](http://www.jrseurope.org).

**Cover Art:** Refugee children in Morocco. Photo by Michael Donohoe.

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### Regular publications from the JRS Europe Office

***The Refuge***, published six times a year, is a 4-page colour newsletter providing news and updates on JRS projects and activities throughout Europe. The Refuge is available free-of-charge via email.

***Progrès***, a monthly internal update on JRS activities in Europe, assisting JRS staff on staying up-to-date with asylum news in Europe. Contact the JRS Europe office to see if you are eligible to receive Progrès.

For more information on other JRS publications, visit [www.jrseurope.org](http://www.jrseurope.org)



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Asylum seekers in the UK. Sarah Booker/JRS

# JRS Europe Mission Statement

Millions of refugees and migrants flee persecution, armed conflict, poverty or natural disasters in their homeland where they can no longer find safety and security. Tens of thousands find their way to Europe each year seeking protection and assistance.

Jesuit Refugee Service Europe shares the mission of JRS International, which is to accompany forcibly displaced persons, to serve them, and to advocate their cause.

JRS takes its inspiration from the Gospel values of justice and steadfast love for those most marginalised. It is guided by the social teachings of the Catholic Church.

JRS Europe aims to provide effective assistance to forced migrants in Europe, to advocate respectful and fair treatment of all migrants affected by European policy, and to defend access to procedures that guarantee the realization of basic human rights in full accord with international treaties. It carries out this work in collaboration with JRS offices around the world, with other churches and faiths, and with civil organizations committed to the cause of refugees and forcibly displaced people.

JRS Europe has particular solicitude for those whose needs are most urgent and for those who are simply forgotten.

Signed by the JRS Europe National  
Regional Directors

*Zagreb, October 2007*

# Introduction by the Regional Director

## *Dear Reader,*

Among the most astonishing statistics published in 2008 were the figures recently made available by the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR): "About 75 percent of those who arrived [in 2008] in Italy by sea applied for asylum, and around 50 percent of them were granted refugee status or protection on other humanitarian grounds. Nearly all people who arrived irregularly by sea in Malta applied for asylum and some 60 percent were recognized as being in need of international protection."

These statistics clearly show that in mixed migration flows there are a significant number of persons who flee violence and

Our work corresponds to the three regional priorities that we have set out for ourselves: an effort to react to the clear and identifiable needs of forced migrants on the borders of the European Union (arising as a result of the externalisation of asylum); assistance of the forcibly displaced, who were made destitute through policies and practices that excluded minimum access to social services; and advocacy against the widespread and frequent use of administrative detention contained in asylum and return policies, in order to ensure proper recognition of the dignity of each person in detention.

On an EU level, three important policy de-

"The JRS network in Europe has now grown to fourteen country offices, running projects and programmes that all start with the accompaniment of those who seek our help."

persecution, who warrant protection in EU Member States where even the harshest asylum standards are applied, and regardless of what a number of policy makers would like their constituencies to believe regarding migrants. Those who reach our shores often cannot access protection or even the very basic standards of living conditions.

The recent images from Lampedusa, where people were deliberately held by the Italian government on cramped sites, speak for themselves. In this case, the detainees attempted to break the fences, and were supported in their protest by the local population - they returned peacefully to their prisons shortly afterwards. Detention, such as this, continues here despite the fact alternatives are available on the Italian mainland.

In 2008, The Jesuit Refugee Service Europe worked to ensure that persons in need of protection can still reach our territories; that a minimum of fair procedures and basic services are available to them; and that those who are obliged to leave Europe can find a truly supportive hand in such difficult moments.

velopments marked our work: the vote on the Return Directive that concerns many persons in detention; the work on the procedure for transferring persons back to the EU member state responsible for their asylum claim ('Dublin II regulation'); and the European Pact on Immigration and Asylum proposed by the French EU presidency.

In their own way, each of these policies are rather overt in their meaning, with the primary political occupation for the coming years easily identifiable - the desired migrant is one that is highly qualified, while the fight will continue against irregular migration. JRS Europe's activities operate within such a context, in that, we strive to ensure access to protection and care for those who have no choice but to migrate, these both long-term issues which must remain on the agenda.

In November 2008, JRS Europe started a new research project analysing the detention conditions for vulnerable persons in 23 EU Member States, employing a research methodology that gives a stronger voice to the detainees. The research will provide us with data that should ultimately contribute to improving the situation in this area.



In areas where the forcibly displaced are actively made destitute, JRS Europe engaged a number of national offices in a second long-term project, which will establish a wider network of assistance for destitute asylum seekers and migrants. A lack of access to basic social and civil rights for migrants has become an issue in many European states, and it must become an issue for policy makers. The project foresees a European Destitution Conference and several events on a national level. It will extend JRS Europe's advocacy base to health specialists and other actors outside the migration field. The project will challenge the organisation to become more active in awareness raising.

The year 2008 saw the opening of a new office in both Morocco and Ukraine. It is significant step that we should accompany those in places where they have been obliged to stay, with little or no choice.

In Morocco, JRS started a crèche for migrant children and activities for their mothers, who live for months and years in a situation of transit in a country that will never be a home to them.

In Ukraine, JRS opened an accommodation centre for asylum seekers with legal and social services. Our work here ensures that existing legislation is applied in practice to persons in need of protection.

While a number of new activities could be developed, JRS Europe continued to build on its already solid base of communication and educational activities. The JRS prize for aspiring journalists was awarded to a student journalist who subsequently went on a research trip to Malawi. A new edition of the Pedro Arrupe Award was launched, and will once again engage school children across Europe on refugee and forced migration issues.

The second edition of the Detention Visitors Support Group offered training and mutual support to staff and volunteers from all over Europe who accompany detainees for JRS. Furthermore, the Annual General Meeting proposed training on the threefold mission of JRS for some current staff and a considerable number of new staff members.

The biggest internal challenge in 2008 turned out to be a prolonged period of staff

shortages. The position of Senior Policy and Advocacy Officer remained vacant throughout the year, and the position of Assistant Director became vacant in October. This meant a real set-back to our work in terms of capacity in 2008, particularly with the organisation of events. A new team member was eventually recruited for the advocacy position, with a start date of February 2009.

The biggest internal achievement of 2008 was a much improved system of networking between the JRS offices in Europe in our main areas of concern. This was a direct result of the first common action plan, something that will be continued into 2009. It made it possible to actively promote legal safeguards against arbitrary detention, and to follow detainees from Sweden to Greece, or from Belgium to Poland, who were transferred for the assessment of their asylum claims. The new links also extended to a number of migration organisations in Spain, including the migration network of the Spanish Jesuits (Servicio Jesuitas Migraciones).

The JRS network in Europe has now grown to fourteen country offices, running projects and programmes that all start with the accompaniment of those who seek our help. We are proud that we can present you with an overview of selected activities on the coming pages.

I would like to thank all organisations and individuals who have supported our work in so many ways over the last twelve months, volunteers have generously donated their time and their talents all over Europe, partners shared their expertise with us, and funders who increase the capacities of our project and advocacy work. In particular, I would like to mention the Conference of European Provincials, the European Commission, the Network of European Foundations, and others who prefer not to be named here.

Thank you for your continued help and interest.

**Michael Schöpf**  
**Regional Director**

# The Work of the JRS Regional Office

The work of the JRS office in Brussels can be divided into four main areas:

- Coordination
- EU policy and JRS advocacy
- Project Development
- Media and Communications

## Staff

The past year saw substantial change in the Regional Office. Fr Jan Stuyt SJ left the Brussels office after four years as Regional Director and was replaced by Br Michael Schöpf SJ, who vacated the position of Assistant Regional Director. Isabelle de Sazilly, Administrator, Carola Jimenez-Asenjo, Project Officer, and Philip Amaral, Policy and Advocacy Officer, all continued in their respective positions. Julian Halbeisen SJ, joined the office for his two year internship in September. He assumed the position of Project Assistant.

The position of Media Officer was filled by Michael Donohoe taking over from Elizabeth Underhill in February.

Long term/part-time volunteers included Rik De Gendt SJ, Joseph Poncin, and Gianluigi Campogrande.

As of the year's end the position of Assistant Regional Director still remained vacant, with the position of Senior Policy Officer to be filled by Stefan Kessler as of February 2, 2009.

## Coordination

Coordination within JRS Europe is enhanced by strategic planning with national offices, meetings and country visits by the Directors. The Annual General Meeting in October took place in Berlin, where more than 65 participants from 19 countries attended.

The national Directors used the opportunity to spend two days strategically planning for JRS Europe as a region. The planning process was concluded towards the end of 2008. The new strategic plan includes strategic goals and priorities for the JRS Europe region, endorsed by all national offices. The remainder of the two days in Germany were used for seminars and discussions on different aspects of refugee work, organised by the Assistant International Director.

In 2008, new directors of JRS offices in Morocco, Malta and Portugal were welcomed at the regional coordination meeting.

Included in the strategic plan are concrete steps for enhanced cooperation in the areas of (1) administrative detention and (2) destitution. There is a roadmap for policy and advocacy work on (3) externalisation of asylum and border management by the EU. Other areas in the strategic plan deal with more internal issues: the (4) development of the Regional Office for both advocacy and project management, and a method to improve the (5) regional collaboration and decision-making.

# Policy and Advocacy Activities

Throughout the year, JRS Europe focused its policy and advocacy work on four issues of priority:

- Administrative detention of asylum seekers and irregular migrants
- Destitution of forced migrants
- Externalisation of EU asylum
- Migration and development

## EU Policy and Legislation on Asylum and Migration

### Asylum and Irregular Migration

Since the Tampere European Council in 1999, the EU has embarked on a path towards the creation of a Common European Asylum System. The process began with the establishment of the first phase of legal harmonisation of European asylum law. This resulted in the adoption of EU laws that govern – through minimum standards – the way Member States receive asylum seekers, proceed with their applications and choose which applications can be granted refugee status. In 2008, the EU continued this process with the second phase of EU legal harmonisation on asylum that aims to establish higher common standards. As a consequence of establishing common laws on asylum, the EU determined that a stricter common law governing the return of illegally staying immigrants – especially persons with rejected asylum applications – was also needed. Thus the trend of EU reasoning on immigration and asylum is that if there are channels to enter Europe for people who qualify for international protection, there must also exist channels to leave Europe for those who do not qualify for such protection.

The biggest EU legislative development on migration in 2008 was the adoption of the Return Directive<sup>1</sup>. Its adoption ended three years of political negotiation between all three EU institutions, beginning with the Commission's original proposal in 2005. Negotiations centred on the most controversial legislative elements within the directive: maximum duration of detention, the treatment of children, an EU-wide entry ban and free legal aid for detained immigrants. The directive was adopted by the Parliament and the Council despite a wave of strong public protests from NGOs in

France and intense lobbying from Brussels-based NGOs. Member States are required to transpose its provisions into their national legislation within two years.

In December the Commission released its proposed amendments for the Dublin Regulation<sup>2</sup> and Reception Conditions Directive<sup>3</sup>. The most innovative aspect is the Commission's proposal to mainstream detention policy in the latter, by introducing a necessity and proportionality test for Member States to adhere to should they need to detain an asylum seeker. Among the proposals for the Dublin Regulation is a mechanism that allows Member States and the Commission to temporarily suspend transfers of asylum seekers to other Member States that have inadequate asylum reception conditions.

The release of these legislative amendments followed the publication of The European Pact on Immigration and Asylum. Formally adopted during the French Presidency (July-December) of the Council of Europe in October, the Pact contains five political commitments for Member States' adherence: to organise legal migration; to control illegal immigration; to make border controls more effective; to construct a Europe of asylum, and to encourage migration and development with third countries. The Pact is not a legally binding instrument, but its principles will likely be incorporated into future EU asylum policy and legislation.

### Destitution of Forced Migrants

JRS offices in Europe continued to accompany people who are unable to provide for themselves due to their lack of a legal status in the Member State they reside in. These

<sup>1</sup> DIRECTIVE 2008/115/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 16 December 2008 on common standards and procedures in member states for returning illegally staying third-country nationals.

<sup>2</sup> COM (2008) 820, A proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an application for international protection lodged in one of the Member States by a third-country national or a stateless person.

<sup>3</sup> COM (2008) 815, A proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down minimum standards for the reception of asylum seekers.

persons include formerly detained migrants who cannot be returned, and those with refused asylum or regularisation applications but cannot be returned. These destitute migrants are unable to access or the labour market and social welfare services. Forced migrant destitution is a phenomenon that occurs throughout Europe, but is not addressed in EU-level policies on migration and integration.

In April the Commission hosted a preparatory meeting for the European Integration Forum, scheduled to occur in 2009. During this meeting the Commission underlined the intended shape of the EU-level integration discourse: that only legal migrants, and not migrants who cannot be returned, would be served by EU policy. The same was true for the French Presidency-led European Ministerial Conference on Integration, held in Vichy in early November. Irregular migrants are excluded from EU policy-making on integration because the nature of their stay is perceived as temporary, as opposed to the situation of legal migrants. Nevertheless, the exclusion of irregular migrants from this discourse, especially those migrants who cannot be returned for valid reasons, i.e. destitute migrants, constitutes a gap in rights protection for a vulnerable population residing within Europe.

### **Externalisation of EU Asylum**

Since 2001 the EU has developed a set of policies that aim to: 1) strengthen asylum processing and reception capacities outside the external borders of the EU Member States, as a measure to: 2) control asylum migration into the EU, and to 3) prevent unwelcome secondary migration into the EU from third countries. These policies include Union-led readmission agreements with third countries<sup>4</sup>, which facilitate the return of not only citizens of the contracting states, but also any third country national. Readmission agreements require contracting states to accept third country nationals in exchange for EU aid and EU-led development schemes, and relaxed visa restrictions. Other instruments that make up the set of 'externalisation of asylum' policies include the use of EU Immigration Liaison Officers in third countries, sanctions against airlines transporting persons that do not have the necessary travel/visa documents and air-

port transit visas<sup>5</sup>.

Frontex continues to be a major tool used by the EU to enforce its policies in the external dimension. Frequently they are called upon to intercept migrants stranded in the Mediterranean Sea. In February the Commission published an evaluation on Frontex's activities and its future development<sup>6</sup>, with a recommendation for Frontex to play an even larger role in the enforcement of Europe's borders. The Commission also recommends for Frontex personnel to undergo training on refugee and asylum issues, as they frequently come into contact with mixed migratory flows and may thus exclude, whether intentionally or not, persons who are in need of international protection.

Civil society organisations have loudly advocated for the rights of migrants who are intercepted at the EU's external borders. These organisations have, in particular, advocated for the rights of migrants to access the asylum procedure in Europe, and for more monitoring of border operations to ensure that Frontex and Member States authorities do not endanger the lives of the migrants they intercept.

### **Migration and Development**

The EU continued to engage in a discussion with third countries on 'migration and development': a set of policies that seeks to leverage migrants' remittances, skills and capacities to benefit the level of development in host countries and in countries of origin. These policies are based on the assumption that focusing development resources towards countries of emigration can reduce people's need to migrate in the first place. The EU has not developed a common policy in this area, and has thus left it to the Member States to conduct bilateral relations with third countries that incorporate migration and development schemes.

The French Presidency of the Council hosted more than 80 delegations in Paris to draft a multi-annual programme of cooperation for migration and development. This second Euro-African Ministerial Conference resulted in a plan based on three points: legal migration, combating illegal migra-

<sup>4</sup> The EU has completed readmission agreements with Albania, Bosnia, Hong Kong, Macao, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Russia, Serbia, Sri Lanka and Ukraine. Negotiations are ongoing with Algeria, China, Morocco, Pakistan and Turkey.

<sup>5</sup> Airport travel visas are often introduced in response to an increase in asylum applications from people travelling a certain route. These visas can prevent asylum applications at airports by individuals in transit towards another destinations.

<sup>6</sup> COM (2008) 67, Report on the evaluation and future development of the Frontex agency.

tion and the synergies between migration and development policy. The conference followed the Commission's publication in October of its communication on Strengthening the Global Approach to Migration<sup>7</sup>, which similarly seeks to establish a means to mitigate irregular migration while opening up cooperation with third countries to foster legal migration and development schemes.

## JRS Europe Policy and Advocacy Activities

### **Administrative detention of asylum seekers and irregular migrants**

In March the national directors of the JRS country offices in Europe adopted a 14-point common position on administrative detention. Resting on four principles, the positions enumerate JRS in Europe's common opposition to the use of administrative detention, and its support for the human rights of asylum seekers and irregular migrants. The first three positions declare:

- No asylum seeker shall be detained during his or her asylum procedure
- Administrative detention shall not be used as a deterrent against persons who seek asylum
- Administrative detention of irregular migrants shall be avoided to the utmost extent possible

An important development in JRS's work in Europe during 2008 in the area of asylum and migration was the strengthening of the network between the regional and country offices. This allowed country offices to use their field experiences as direct inputs into issues that took place at the EU-level in Brussels. It also allowed the regional office to quickly obtain specific information from the country offices within a short time span.

JRS Europe engaged the country offices for the creation of a policy paper on the Dublin Regulation, entitled 'Dublin II: A summary of JRS experiences'. Published in October 2008, the paper shows the negative personal effects of the Dublin Regulation upon asylum seekers, and is used for advocacy with the Commission and Parliament.

The strengthened network with the country offices also allowed JRS Europe to actively lobby the Parliament on its concerns and positions on the Return Directive through-

In December the European Commission partnered with the United Nations for a joint initiative on migration and development. This initiative aims to support civil society and local government actors to innovate and boost small-scale initiatives that make migration work for development.

out 2008. It submitted a policy memorandum on the directive to the Slovenian Presidency of the Council (January-June), and participated in several meetings with MEPs. In the end, JRS Europe argued that despite having some positive points, the directive did not go far enough in protecting the fundamental rights of migrants due to its insistence on a lengthy maximum detention period (6-18 months), and its exclusion of mandatory free legal aid for detained migrants.

At the end of 2008 JRS Europe began preparing for its new research project on Detention for Vulnerable Asylum Seekers (DEVAS). A range of new research instruments, including new detainee interviewing methods, were developed by JRS Europe, with the assistance of the JRS International Pedro Arrupé tutor, and were tested against the experiences of the country offices. The DEVAS project will proceed until 2010.

### **Destitution**

JRS Europe advocated for the rights of destitute forced migrants at the EU preparatory meeting for the European Integration Forum, hosted by the Commission in April. It raised the situation of irregular migrants and asylum seekers with rejected applications who cannot return home for valid reasons, and thus remain in Europe without a legal status. JRS Europe continued to publicise and distribute its report on destitute forced migrants, *We Are Dying Silent*, to policymakers and politicians in the European Parliament and the Council of Europe.

Towards the second half of 2008 JRS Europe began to prepare for a new research and advocacy project on destitution. Funded by the second phase of the European Programme for the Integration of Migrants (EPIM II), this project will last until 2011 and will update the first destitution report,

<sup>7</sup> COM (2008) 611/3, *Strengthening the Global Approach to Migration: Increasing Coordination, Coherence and Synergies*.



research the issue in two new countries, organise national events in seven countries and build a European advocacy network on destitution.

### **Migration and development**

JRS Europe invited its partners to plan for a large migration and development event in the Parliament, modelled on the successful event that was organised in 2007. However the event was postponed to the next year due to the unavailability of a suitable time for JRS Europe's partners to hold it in 2008.

The second annual Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) took place in Manila in late October. At the Forum JRS Europe advocated for forced migrants to be included into the discourse on migration and development by using the experiences of JRS in Liberia, who actively assisted refugees returning home by empowering them to participate in post-conflict development

projects. JRS Europe prepared a lengthy dossier of advocacy materials to be used for the GFMD. Overall, JRS Europe continues to be one of the few organisations that advocate at global and regional fora for the recognition of the development capacity of forced migrants.

At the JRS Regional Directors meeting in November, JRS Europe obtained a commitment from other regional directors to collaborate on migration and development. The issue was also recognised by JRS International as one that maintains a cross-regional significance for JRS' global advocacy efforts.

In December, JRS Europe participated in a migration and development Knowledge Fair<sup>13</sup> in Brussels. JRS Europe presented the experiences of JRS Liberia at the fair, which was chosen by UNHCR as a migration and development 'best practice.'

## **Personnel, Networks and Partners**

### **Staff**

The Policy and Advocacy Officer, aided to a large extent by the Assistant Regional Director, managed and implemented JRS Europe's policy and advocacy portfolio. The Senior Policy and Advocacy Officer position remained vacant during 2008.

### **Networking at the JRS level**

- JRS Europe is a member of the JRS International Advocacy Network
- JRS Europe held two Regional Coordination Meetings with JRS country directors in March and in October
- JRS Europe strengthened its overseas contacts with the JRS regional offices in the West and East Africa, especially with staff from former JRS projects in Liberia concerning migration and development

### **Networking at the external level**

JRS Europe is a participating member in several Brussels- and global-based networks:

- The European Council for Refugees and Exiles (ECRE)
- The Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM)
- The 'EU NGO Platform on Asylum and Migration,' hosted by the EU office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- The 'Christian Group' in Brussels<sup>8</sup>

### **JRS Europe developed new contacts with**

- NGOs in 23 EU Member States for the project on detained vulnerable asylum seekers (the DEVAS project)
- Global migration and refugee networks in the field of migration and development, such as The Hague Process for Refugees, and the Scalabrinian Migration Network
- The Council of Europe's secretariat for refugees and migrants, in relation to advocacy opportunities on destitution and detention
- The Spanish network of Jesuit migration organisations (SJM España) in relation to advocacy opportunities on externalisation of EU asylum

<sup>8</sup> Consisting of Caritas Europa, the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community (COMECE), the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC), the Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) and the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME)

# Project Development

## Advocacy Oriented Projects

JRS Europe's advocacy projects remain concentrated on the administrative detention of asylum seekers and irregular migrants, with focus always on developing these projects into effective advocacy tools.

### **Detention of Vulnerable Asylum Seekers (DEVAS)**

In response to the European Refugee Fund (ERF) Call for Proposals, JRS Europe launched a research project focusing on detention of vulnerable asylum seekers (DEVAS). This new project is based on methodology developed by JRS on its previous project "Administrative Detention of Asylum Seekers and Illegally Staying Third Country Nationals in the 10 New Member States of the European Union", reviewed by a Oxford research expert. The new project foresees a more narrow focus on particularly vulnerable groups of administrative detainees - with an express aim, via the refined methodology, to give a voice to these detainees. The geographic scope has been extended to 23 Member States of the European Union. The project officially started on 17 November 2008. In December, JRS prepared the main documents to conduct the research by the project partners. In early January the first Steering Committee will take place in Brussels.

### **Advocacy Network for People on Destitution (ANDES)**

Throughout the year, JRS Europe continued to investigate a new group of persons of concern: the growing number of third-country nationals connected to the asylum system who live in situations of destitution.

With the financial support of the Network of European Foundations (NEF) and through their European Network for Integration and Migration (EPIM), JRS launched a second project on destitution. EPIM is a programme aiming to strengthen the role played by NGOs active on migration and integration issues in advocating for a European agenda that benefits migrants and host communities. The overall goal of JRS is to obtain a policy change at national and European levels to improve access to education, health care, accommodation and employment for illegal migrants and rejected asylum seekers. JRS will build on the previous study "We are Dying Silent", a research project carried out in 10 European countries to show the link between migration policies and situations of destitution. With ANDES, JRS will create a coalition of key actors at national levels in order to open up a broader debate at European level, highlighting the destitute migrants issue. The project was officially launched on 15 October 2008. JRS country offices are to organise seven national events in the coming months in order to identify the main actors working on the four areas linked to destitution mentioned above.

## Professional Development Projects

### **Detention Visitors Support Group II**

JRS organised the second Detention Visitor Support Group in 2008. The projects brought together staff and volunteers regularly visiting detainees in closed centres across Europe. The project included a 4-day seminar with opportunities for professional exchange, reflection, and specialised training. In 2008, the training focused on Intercultural Dialogue. It was complemented by a section on advocacy which allowed the detention visitors to test the DEVAS draft detainee questionnaire, as well as to study the paper on alternative measures to detention for future advocacy work. A website and an intranet section allow on-going support on cases and issues for which confidentiality needs to be assured. It was decided that the programme for the next seminar in May 2009 will focus on 'trauma and interacting with traumatised people'.

## Awareness Raising Projects

JRS Europe runs two awareness raising projects which are initiated alternately every other year.

### Competition for Student Journalists

JRS Europe completed the second edition of the competition for student journalists, that aims to familiarise aspiring journalists to the experience and the plight of refugees and forced migrants. An award ceremony for the winner and the two runners-up was held in the European Parliament in Brussels on April 15.

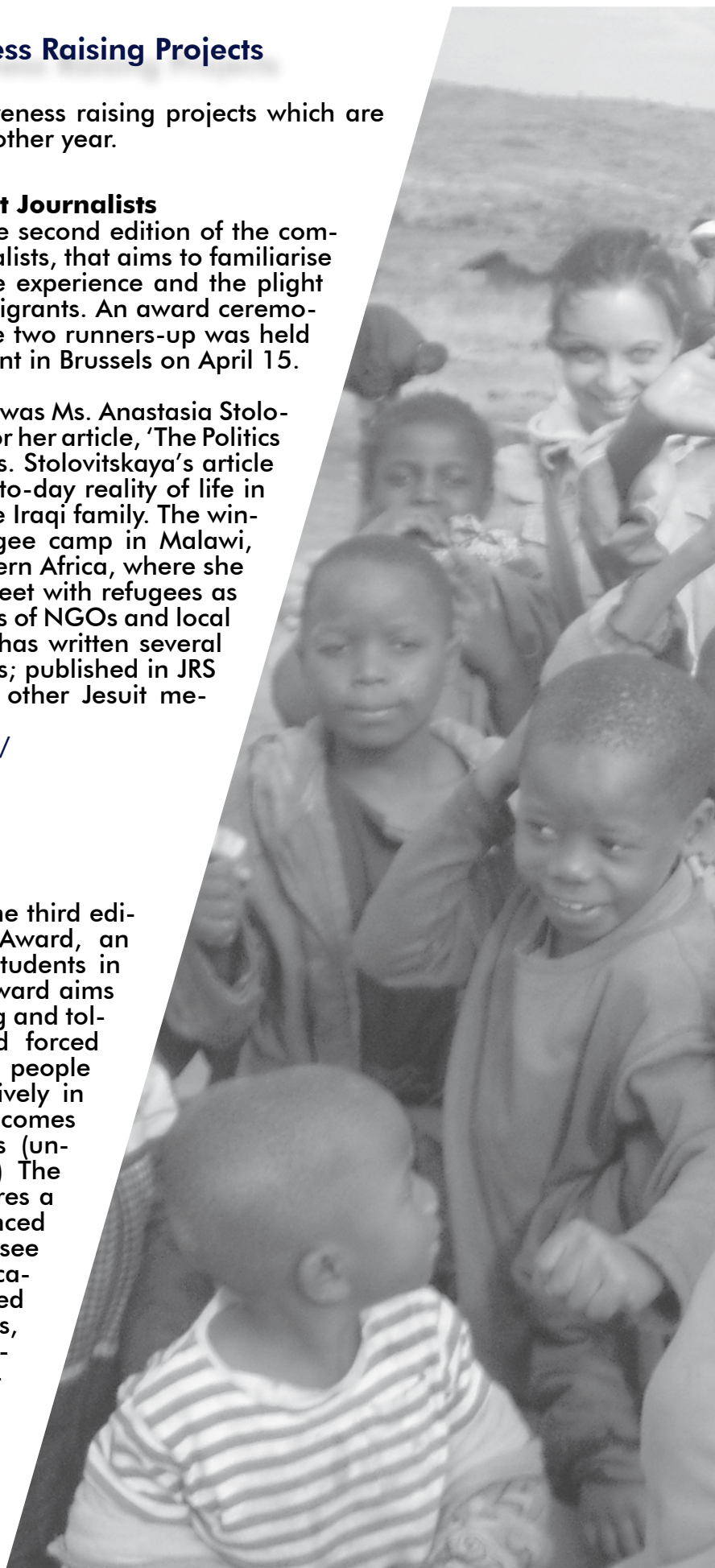
The winner of this edition was Ms. Anastasia Stolovitskaya from Denmark, for her article, 'The Politics of Fighting Windmills'. Ms. Stolovitskaya's article is an account of the day-to-day reality of life in a detention centre for one Iraqi family. The winner visited Dzaleka refugee camp in Malawi, as the guest of JRS Southern Africa, where she had the opportunity to meet with refugees as well as the representatives of NGOs and local media. Ms Stolovitskaya has written several articles of her experiences; published in JRS Europe publications and other Jesuit media.

<http://www.jrseurope.org/Competition/2007/journohome.htm>

### The Pedro Arrupe Award 2008/2009

In 2008, JRS organised the third edition the Pedro Arrupe Award, an educational project for students in European schools. The award aims to promote understanding and tolerance for refugees and forced migrants among young people by engaging them creatively in the issues. The winner comes from two age categories (under 16s and under 19s) The 2008-2009 edition features a new website and enhanced background material (see 'Media and Communications'). JRS has contacted over 150 Jesuit schools, providing them with posters, brochures and information leaflets.

<http://www.jrseurope.org/pedroarrupe-award/>





# Media and Communications

The role of communications within JRS Europe is constantly changing and redefining itself. With new media, and in the ever evolving domain of online media, it is imperative that JRS Europe adapts to, and utilises, the technology that is at hand.

The further expansion of JRS Europe's network of country offices in 2008 demanded that communications be a cohesive energy, from the regional office through to the national offices, and vice-versa. Within JRS Europe, be it through staff Intranets or internal news bulletins, there existed a necessity for a consistent, and constantly increasing, flow of information.

We recognise that the more attuned internal communications is, the more informed our advocacy work in the region will be - adding to the quality of the work we do in assisting the people we are working for.

## Publications

After sixteen years of existence, in 2008 the 'JRS Newsletter' was finally given a name. Christened 'The Refuge', the name change was accompanied by a face lift and a new layout.

As JRS Europe's primary physical medium for JRS news, we appreciate the importance of this publication and are constantly striving to improve the content and its presentation.

Progrès, as ever, remains an indispensable resource for JRS Europe personnel. Given the ever increasing number of country offices, the internal bulletin promises to grow over the coming year.



## Electronic Media

In 2008, the JRS-Europe website – [www.jrseurope.org](http://www.jrseurope.org) – underwent a number of aesthetic changes. As with any JRS promotional media, we adjust to the demands of our audience, striking a balance between user friendly information, for the casual browser, and more involved information, for the academic/institutional audience.

JRS Europe's sister site - [www.detention-in-europe.org](http://www.detention-in-europe.org) – entered its second year of operation in 2008, and remains a useful resource tool for country specific policy and detention information. The website was regularly updated throughout the year, keeping readers abreast of important detention issues and news stories.

The Pedro Arrupe Award website was relaunched for the third edition of the competition – [www.jrseurope.org/pedroarrupe-award](http://www.jrseurope.org/pedroarrupe-award) – offering entrants to this year's competition updated educational resources on a multimedia platform, such as a series of eight interactive lessons, with engaging exercises and activities that can be brought into the classroom.

In December 2008 the DEVAS website was launched. The site accompanies the multi-partner 'Detention of Vulnerable Asylum Seekers' research project launched in November 2008. The site includes a project overview, a list of relevant documents for project partners, and updates on steering committee meetings.

## Awareness Raising Projects

For the communications office in Brussels, the focal point of 2008 was the competition for student journalists. The competition was heavily promoted through email correspondence with third level institutions across Europe, through media organisations in Brussels and on national levels, on internet forums, and through the JRS country offices. On completion of the competition, the three winning articles were printed in both Jesuit and non-Jesuit media.

In Autumn 2008, the third edition of the Pedro Arrupe Award was launched. With a new website, and a promotional campaign launched in over 150 schools across Europe, the Pedro Arrupe Award 2008/2009 promises to build on the successes of previous years, maintaining its position as JRS Europe's flagship awareness raising project.



JOURNALIST AWARD CEREMONY IN EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

# PEDRO ARRUPPE AWARD 2008-2009

DÉCOUVRIR LA VIE D'UN RÉFUGIÉ...ODKRYĆ ŻYCIE UCHODźCY...ENTDECKE DAS  
EINES FLÜCHTLINGS...DISCOVER THE LIFE OF A REFUGEE...DESCUBRE LA VIDA  
REFUGIADO...SCOPRIRE LA VITA DI UN REFUGIATO...SPOZNAJTE ŽIVOT UTĚ

[www.jrseurope.org/pedroarrupe-award.htm](http://www.jrseurope.org/pedroarrupe-award.htm)

PEDRO ARRUPPE AWARD  
PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL

### Personnel

In February 2008 Mr Michael Donohoe took over from Ms Elizabeth Underhill as Media Officer for JRS Europe for a period of 18 months.

## **Country Reports**

### **National Offices and Contact Persons**

## CHANGES IN MIGRATION FLOWS

- The 27 Member States of the European Union registered 202,911 new asylum applications between January-December 2008 (a decrease on 2007 figure of 221,954).

- Between January and December in the south of Europe, asylum applications registered were down 32.5% on the 2007 figure. However, this figure was by no means uniform across the region, with applications in Malta doubling, and figures up almost 50% in Turkey.

- In the Nordic region applications fell by 7% on the same 12 months of 2007. This decrease can be attributed to the tightening of Swedish borders, with asylum claims increasing in both Finland and Norway; by the year's end in Finland, asylum applications were over double of those for 2007 (3,347 in 2008; 1,434 in 2007), and in Norway, figures rose from 6,528 in 2007 to 14,431 in 2008. In Sweden figures fell by 33% on the number for 2007 (24,353 in 2008; 36,207 in 2007).

- Applications in the whole European continent totalled 247,421, outstripping Canada/USA (85,901); Japan/Rep Korea (1,799); and Australia/NZ (5,004).

## JRS EUROPE







## DISTRIBUTION OF ASYLUM APPLICATIONS

- Of a total of 26,195 Iraqi asylum applications registered in the 27 EU Member States in 2008 - 6,904 were registered in Turkey; 6,627 were registered in Germany; 6,083 in Sweden; and 5,027 were registered in the Netherlands.

- Of the 12,872 Somali asylum applications registered in the 27 EU Member States in 2008 - 3,361 applications were registered in Sweden; 2,014 were registered in Switzerland; 1,293 in Norway; 1,255 in the UK; and 1,081 in Malta.

- Of the 12,012 Serbian asylum applications registered - 1,989 applications were registered in Sweden; 1,593 were registered in Hungary; 1,511 in Germany; and 1,301 in Switzerland.

- Of the 10,927 Afghani asylum applications registered - 2,655 applications were registered in the UK; 2,642 were registered in Turkey; and 1,363 in Norway.

- Of all asylum applications registered in the 27 Member States of the EU in 2008, Sweden received the most applications, numbering some 24,353 applications; the United Kingdom received 22,530 applications; Switzerland received 16,606 applications; Norway 14,431; the Netherlands 13,399; and so forth, down to Portugal with 143 asylum applications.

All statistics courtesy of UNHCR:  
<http://www.unhcr.org/statistics.html>



## Number of asylum applications 2008:

12,252 ( 2007: 11,115; 2006: 11,587; 2005: 15,957; 2000: 42,691)

## Top 5 countries of origin:

Russia, Iraq, Afghanistan,  
Guinea, Iran

## Political Developments

In 2008, Belgium experienced much political instability: while general elections took place in June 2007, a government was not installed until March 2008. Tensions amongst the various parties of the governmental coalition were omnipresent throughout the year, having a negative impact on immigration policy.

In a coalition agreement, the government stated that a circular letter should be drawn up defining criteria allowing undocumented migrants, already well integrated into Belgian society, to be legalised. Despite the promises, the government did not come to an agreement on the issue in 2008, leading to various protests across the country. Two major demonstrations took place in Brussels and Antwerp in favour of undocumented people, with JRS Belgium present at both. Several hunger strikes by groups of undocumented people, some of which lasted more than two months, also took place throughout the year - with some of these hunger strikers getting a resident permit of three to nine months. The actions of a number of undocumented people gathered much media attention during the summer months, after they mounted several construction cranes around Brussels.

Blamed for inactivity in her field, the Minister for Asylum and Migration Policy, Ms Annemie Turtelboom, attempted to make some progress on other issues, namely, the detention of families with children. Initially, she stated that this practice did not impinge on rights of the child, but following pressure from civil society organisations, she decided to implement alternatives. These organisations had reminded her of a study on alternatives to the detention of families with children made upon the request of the

Minister of Home Affairs in February 2007 and which stated that detention can be very harmful for children. As of October 2008, families with children staying irregularly on the territory were no longer detained. Instead, they were brought to open housing, accompanied by a "coach", with a view of returning to their country of origin.

This "coach" idea is based on models already used in Sweden and Australia, but with some differences. In Belgium the coach is only appointed once all other procedures have been exhausted, while in Australia, each family gets a coach from the beginning of the procedure. Moreover, in Belgium the coach is not an independent person, since he is a civil servant of the Alien's Board, and his only task is to convince families to accept the return to their home country. These elements are seen as an obstacle for the families, in view of building a relationship of trust with the coach.

NGOs, while commending the Minister's search for such alternatives, feared that a badly prepared pilot project would not be successful, and that failure would be used as an argument to detain families with children again. They expressed their discontent that the measure was not applicable to all families, in that, families with children applying for asylum at the border, mainly Brussels airport, were still being detained.

## JRS Activities

### Visits to detainees and the monitoring of detention centres

The core of JRS Belgium activities was the accompaniment and services offered to foreigners – asylum seekers and irregular migrants – detained in administrative detention centres. In 2008, JRS Belgium ex-

perienced an increase in the number of detention centre visitors, whether employed workers or volunteers. This made JRS Belgium the only Belgian organisation visiting all five detention centres on a weekly basis, meaning the expertise of JRS-Belgium in this domain also increased.

### **Advocacy and awareness-raising**

Following policy changes concerning the detention of children in 2008, JRS Belgium joined several other NGOs and official children's rights bodies in a follow-up appraisal on the implementation of the new alternatives to the detention of families with children. They evaluated the pilot project and proposed improvements to the Minister and her administration.

In Belgium, and according to the Dublin II Convention, large numbers of Chechen and Afghan/Iraqi detainees were being sent back to Poland and Greece respectively. Usually, these asylum seekers had already had a bad experience in these EU Member States, that is, a lack of reception facilities, few chances to be recognized as a refugee, feelings of insecurity. Through detention visits and advocacy work, JRS Belgium paid special attention to this group, sending accurate information to their lawyers, and raising the issue with the government and policy makers.

### **Publications**

On 19 November 2008, a report on the legal aid in the detention centres was published by JRS-Belgium and other NGOs

involved in visiting detainees. The report stressed that all detainees must have access to high quality legal aid and counselling, which is not always the case. The report made 50 recommendations to centre staff, the Aliens Board, the Bars and lawyers, the federal government and the legislators on how to improve the access to legal aid. The most important recommendations were: detainees must be provided with clear and rapid information about their individual case; the exchange of information between the lawyers and the centre must be improved; and more training and support should be available for lawyers defending the rights of foreigners in detention centres. The report is available in French and in Dutch, and can be found on the website [www.jrsbelgium.org](http://www.jrsbelgium.org).

In 2008 JRS-Belgium continued to raise awareness of its work through workshops and information sessions (mainly in Jesuit schools).

For World Refugee Day 2008, JRS detention visitors gave testimonies in Church vigils organised close to detention centres in Bruges and Merksplas.

During the Taizé European Meeting in Brussels at the end of 2008, JRS-Belgium together with members of a parish who welcomed undocumented migrants in the church organised a workshop on the theme "I was a foreigner, and you invited me in".



Protests on streets of Brussels. Nathalie Salazar/JRS



## Asylum applications 2008:

28,018 (2007: 30,303; 2006: 30,100;  
2005: 42,908; 2000: 117,648)

## Top 5 countries of origin:

Iraq, Afghanistan, Vietnam,  
Turkey, Iran

## Detainees in Berlin Detention Centre

1,250 (2007: 1,380; 2006: 1,750)

## Political Developments

During 2008, the number of detainees housed in detention facilities in Germany diminished, with 1,250 detained in the Berlin Detention Centre (this compares with 1,380 in 2007). In Munich there were between 300-400 persons, 20-30% of these detainees were released and not forcibly returned to their country of origin. At the end of the year, there were 30 detainees housed in the Eisenhüttenstadt detention centre (Brandenburg).

A growing number of the detainees were so-called Dublin II cases; i.e. individuals who had come to Germany via another European Union member state, were subsequently arrested, usually at the airport, and ordered to return to their country of first entry.

In 2008, JRS took part in a joint agreement promoting the resettlement of Iraqi refugees driven from Iraq to neighbouring countries. The German churches pushed for 30,000, with the final coming in at around 2,500 Iraqi refugees (this from a total of 10,000 Iraqis within the framework of a European Union agreement).

Also, according to a new directive, pregnant women were to be deported three months either side of their pregnancy.

## JRS Activities

### Detention

Established in 2005, the legal aid funds for detainees in Berlin, Brandenburg and Bavaria were further developed in 2008. With a budget of almost 19,000 EUR, 87 legal cases were assisted, 57 of which had a successful outcome.

JRS Munich staff cared for about 200 detainees individually: be it in a legal, a social or a pastoral sense.

As a result of the lobbying activities by JRS in Berlin, all moneyless detainees received 55 EUR prior to their deportation for survival and transport purposes in their home country.

### Undocumented migrants

Being a founding member of the Catholic Forum on Life in Illegality, a forum bringing together several Catholic organizations including the German Conference of Bishops, JRS Germany actively took part in a number of advocacy activities, in particular the debate on access to schools for undocumented children.

As a member of the Migration Committee in the Council of Catholics in the Diocese of Munich, JRS contributed to a leaflet containing information on assisting undocumented migrants, along with the contact addresses (including the JRS office) where migrants can be sent to for further advice and assistance. The leaflet was spread to all parishes in the diocese.

### Advocacy

Advocacy activities mainly focused on undocumented migrants, in terms of advice and assistance for the undocumented. In this context, a longer article written by JRS was published in a German law journal.

JRS Germany actively took part in the debate on the EU Return Directive and, after the text had been passed by European Parliament and Council, began promotion of implementation, especially of those parts of the Directive which could bring substantive changes to the situation of detainees.



On this subject, another longer article was published in a German law journal.

### Hardship Case Commission

In 2008, there were 8 meetings of the commission for hardship cases in Berlin, which decided on 210 cases. In 140 cases the commission recommended to the Home Affairs Secretary of the Land of Berlin to issue a humanitarian residence status, granted in 96 cases. JRS, as a representative of the Catholic Church, filed 42 applications. The commission decided on a total of 28 applications from 2007 and previous years. In 12 cases the Home Secretary granted a humanitarian residence status. In 4 other cases the people were granted a residence

permit according to other regulations. As a result of JRS activities within the commission, 29 persons were granted the right to stay in Germany.

As a result of lobbying on the part of several NGOs including JRS, a new law provided for an extension of the existence of hardship case commissions until 2010.

### Staff News

A new Jesuit was appointed for pastoral care in the detention centre in Berlin-Köpenick and Eisenhüttenstadt, while a Jesuit in formation began his regency within JRS, visiting and accompanying detainees in Berlin.



Detainees in Berlin detention centre



## Asylum applications 2008:

3,866 ( 2007: 3,985; 2006: 4,314;  
Applications peak 2002: 11,634)

## Top 5 countries of origin:

Nigeria, Pakistan, Iraq,  
Georgia, China

## Political Developments

During 2008, the number of asylum applications fell by just over 3%, to 3,866 for the year, in contrast to 3,985 in 2007. Applications for asylum in 2008 are one third of peak level of 11,634 received in 2002. The Refugee Recognition Rate at First Instance fell to 6.4% in 2008 from 9.1% in 2007.

As of 16th November 2008, 999 people were granted leave to remain. 852 people were granted leave to remain in 2007.

In 2007 there were 1,249 committals in respect of immigration issues involving 1,145 detainees. This represents an increase of 3% over the 1,113 persons detained in 2006. There was an average daily number of persons in custody in 2007 under this category of 24, a significant reduction on the average number in 2006 of 45.

There were 162 deportations to non-EU countries last year and 271 transfers back to other EU states under Dublin II. In addition to these, 519 people who would otherwise have been deported chose to be assisted with returning home voluntarily. This compares with 416 people who opted for voluntary repatriation in 2007.

A revised Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill 2008, which sets out comprehensive statutory procedures for the various stages of the asylum and immigration processes, was published in January 2008. The Select Committee on Justice, Equality, Defence and Women's Rights received 58 written submissions on the draft legislation from interested parties. At the Committee Stage of the Bill over 700 amendments were considered. The Bill is now entering the final drafting stage and is expected to

be passed into law early in 2009.

Ireland's extraordinary economic reversal during 2008 resulted in serious cutbacks in public funding for the sector. The National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI) closed down when the Government terminated their funding.

## JRS Activities

There was a strategic review of the work of JRS Ireland in January 2008 arising from a decision not to seek a renewal of funding from the European Refugee Fund. As a result, JRS Ireland decided to refocus its work and resources into developing services and activities for asylum seekers in state provided accommodation centres. JRS Ireland aims to expand its existing language services, to develop capacity building activities and to provide outreach and psychosocial support to people seeking asylum.

## Language Classes

JRS Ireland expanded its language support services significantly during 2008 with one-to-one tutoring projects in Belvedere College and Hatch Hall in Dublin city and in Clongowes College in Kildare.

Programme	Beneficiaries	Classes	Volunteer Tutors
Belvedere TY Language	54	119	28
Clongowes TY Language	31	122	18
Hatch Hall Language	68	280	24
Belvedere ESOL Language	66	212	26
Total	219	733	96

## Detention

JRS Ireland continued its weekly outreach and psychosocial support service to women

detained under immigration provisions in the Dochas Centre (the women's prison in Dublin). A second staff member who speaks Mandarin visits the Chinese immigration detainees weekly. The JRS Ireland Detention & Outreach Officer is recognised as a visiting chaplain to Cloverhill Prison, where male immigrant detainees are held. In total 182 persons detained under immigration provisions were visited throughout the year. Overall there were 460 visits, which translate into an average of 2.5 visits per detainee.

### **Education and Training Courses**

In September 2008, at the invitation of the Accommodation Centre staff, JRS Ireland started a Homework Club in Clondalkin Towers. The homework club is held twice a week when the children return from school. 11 children attend on a regular basis.

In Hatch Hall there were 7 Personal Development Courses and 12 Training Classes organised by JRS Ireland. In total there were 45 individual asylum seekers who completed 114 activities. A training course for teachers in February 2008 was attended by 25 teachers and other education stakeholders.

### **Employment Rights**

JRS Ireland developed a new employment rights project in 2008. Working with Crosscare, this project provides information, advice and support to non Irish Nationals who experience exploitation in the workplace. 84 individuals were supported through 278 interventions.

### **Intercultural Activities**

Over the months of July and August JRS coordinated an extensive Summer Programme of activities including weekly swimming sessions, art classes, astronomy workshops as

well as a trip to Glenroe Farm, a picnic at the beach and a Family Fun Day. In all 142 children seeking asylum participated in the programme of events. Also, during 2008 there was a very successful Easter Egg Hunt and Christmas Toy Appeal.

### **Outreach**

JRS Ireland increased their accompaniment and support for asylum seekers in state provided accommodation centres. In Dublin there was outreach to 80 asylum seekers in 5 centres (Balseskin, Georgian Court, Hatch Hall, Clondalkin Towers and Kilmacud House).

In Limerick a Vulnerable Asylum Seekers project was started in September 2008. Psychosocial support and outreach was provided to 20 persons seeking asylum.

### **Advocacy**

During 2008 JRS Ireland made written submissions on the Immigration, Residency and Protection Bill and Intercultural Education Strategy. JRS Ireland enjoyed an increased public profile in print and on radio. JRS Ireland was the only Irish NGO visited by the OECD as part of its Thematic Review on Migrant Education in Europe.

### **Publications**

JRS Ireland had a very successful launch of a Guide for Migrant Parents on the Irish Education System published in 8 languages (2,350 guides distributed). The Interfaith and Intercultural Calendar 2008 was widely circulated (1,760 calendars disseminated). Finally, a revised school folder was developed (80 folders purchased).



## Asylum applications 2008:

31,097 ( 2007: 14,053; 2006: 10,350;  
2005: 9,550; previous high 1999: 24,808)

## Top 5 countries of origin:

Nigeria, Somalia, Eritrea,  
Pakistan, Ivory Coast

## Political Developments

During 2008 the number of asylum applications presented in Italy increased dramatically, totaling a number of 31,097 new applications. Already in 2007, with 14,053 applications, the Italian reception system experienced many difficulties: the new trend caused a real emergency, which exploded during the summer. The National System for Protection of Asylum Seekers and Refugees, though it has been refinanced with emergency funds, has only 4,388 places in the whole country.

The new right-wing Government faced up to the situation with contradictory measures, such as opening huge centres to collect asylum seekers without effective projects of legal and social assistance. Legislation concerning asylum was still lacking, and the progress made during 2007 with the implementation of European directives<sup>1</sup> was partly cancelled.

The implementing Legislative Decree, the result of many meetings and consultations between the Ministry of Interior and a group of experts from Italian NGOs, including JRS Italy, was heavily modified. The appeal against a negative decision of the Commission is now even more difficult and, for the first time in Italian legislation, the concept of "manifestly unfounded application" was introduced. Some laws which have an impact on immigration and asylum matters were also introduced in the so-called "Security Package", a set of urgent norms concerning public security which has been presented to the Parliament.

Italians experienced a general feeling of social insecurity, somehow encouraged by unwise public statements by some members of the Government. Episodes of xenophobia and racism, including unmotivated attacks to migrants, occurred during the year.

## JRS Activities

In the different territorial offices (Roma, Palermo, Catania, Trento, Vicenza) JRS Italy reached about 20,000 beneficiaries during 2008. In Rome, the soup kitchen served more than 400 meals every day, and 481 people attended five days a week the Italian language course. Most of the effort during the year was focused on increasing the capacity of the services and opening new ones.

### Reception centre

A new reception centre for 25 women and children was opened in Palermo. The Ministry for Welfare financed the renovation of the building, which made it possible for Centro Astalli Palermo to give an answer to an urgent need of the town.

### Health care

The project for assistance and health care to asylum seekers and refugees Sa.Mi.Fo., based in Rome and started in 2007 thanks to a partnership between JRS Italy and the Italian National Health Service with the support of UNHCR, was potentiated and moved to new offices in the city centre.

### Awareness raising

During 2008, programs of awareness

<sup>1</sup>Council Directive 2004/83/EC of 29 April 2004 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 and Directive 2005/85/EC of 1 December 2005 on minimum standards on procedures in Member States for granting and withdrawing refugee status.



raising were particularly important, especially the programs for young people. The two projects offered by JRS Italy, 'the right to asylum', and the 'interfaith dialogue for high school students' were continued in 2008. Thousands of teenagers in many Italian towns, including Rome, Catania, Palermo, Padova, Lecce, Imperia, Milan, participated in the projects.

The second edition of the writing competition, "La scrittura non va in esilio", supported by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, was a great success, with the winning story coming from a 14 year old Roman student. The story was published on the front page of the national newspaper "L'Unità", and will be the basis for a short movie to be directed by the Cinema School of Rome.

### Training

A training course on asylum rights in Europe and in Italy, "Borders or Barriers?",

was organised, as every spring, for staff and volunteers in Rome. The three conferences, whose speakers were representative of UNHCR and of the main NGOs working on the theme, were attended by an average of 100 people each.

In June JRS Italy was visited by Father Nicolás SJ, the newly elected Father General of the Society of Jesus, who gave a long and meaningful speech on migration in the light of his own personal experiences.

### Communications

On the occasion of the Refugee Day a new website for JRS Italy was launched ([www.centroastalli.it](http://www.centroastalli.it)) and a monthly newsletter for a quick sharing of activities and initiatives was created.



Centro Astalli soup kitchen. Fabrizio Cavaliere/Agenzia Siciliani



### Asylum applications 2008:

2,607 ( 2007: 1,379; 2006: 1,272;  
2005: 1,170; 2004: 1,000 )

### Top 5 countries of origin:

Somalia, Ivory Coast,  
Nigeria, Ethiopia, Togo

## Political Developments

Among the thousands of people crossing the Mediterranean Sea to seek refuge in the EU in 2008, almost 2,800 arrived in Malta. Not only was this the largest number to arrive in Malta in one single year; it was also the longest 'season' so far, with immigrants continuing to make the sea crossing even in treacherous weather conditions in winter. The number of new arrivals, up 60% over last year's figures, meant that detention centres became more crowded and conditions deteriorated. Similar overcrowding occurred in the Open Reception Centres. For boatload upon boatload of African immigrants who reached the island, this was simply the added trauma.

With immigration being the number one issue on the national agenda, and public opinion strongly marked by a strong anti-immigrant feeling, the Maltese authorities continued to maintain a policy of detention upon arrival for irregular immigrants. Asylum seekers were not spared, and faced several months in detention centres while their case was being determined. The traditional Maltese value of hospitality has been severely put to the test and crumbled somewhat during 2008.

The general election held in March 2008 returned the incumbent Nationalist Party to office. There was no major changes in immigration policy and media coverage remained largely dominated by Malta's efforts to secure at least "voluntary burden-sharing" (by the resettlement of third country nationals) in the European Pact on Immigration and Asylum adopted by the European Council in October. By the end of the year, only France had come forward with an offer to take 80 people.

## JRS Activities

The JRS team shares, albeit in a very limited way, in this trauma of disrupted lives. The stories, the despair and the faces of asylum seekers and immigrants in detention etch themselves in our conversations, in our office meetings and in our consciousness. Throughout 2008, JRS Malta maintained its clear focus on reaching out to people in detention, while struggling with diminishing resources. Our very committed team kept up a regular presence in the detention centres, offering legal, social work and pastoral services. A number of volunteers, including Jesuit priests and scholastics in the latter, contributed to sustaining the important dimension of the pastoral accompaniment of detainees.

### Projects

JRS Malta handled three main projects in 2008. Strengthening Protection of Asylum Seekers, was implemented by JRS Malta, UNHCR and Red Cross and co-financed by the ERF and FAI. The aim of the project was to enhance the protection asylum seekers receive through direct provision of information and legal assistance; training lawyers and law students in refugee law; facilitation of networking and information sharing among lawyers working in the field; and provision of training and support to Detention Service and NGO personnel working with asylum seekers. The project included the Detention Service Training Seminar, which ran from January to November as well as a three-day seminar on EU Directives Regulating the Treatment of Asylum Seekers.

In a second project, entitled Refugee Empowerment as an Integration Tool, which aimed to empower vulnerable asylum

seekers, JRS organised group sessions in detention and open centres focused on empowerment through skills and knowledge, information sessions in the detention centres and literacy, language and computer classes, organised in conjunction with the Jesuit-run Paulo Freire Institute.

### **Schools Outreach Project**

The Schools Outreach Project was carried over from one academic year into the next with great determination from the awareness-raising team and much collaboration from the authorities concerned. Our team visited some forty-five state and non-state schools, where sessions were held to explain the background of forced migration as well as to enable students to come in touch with the rich cultures and traditions of Africa.

### **SGBV**

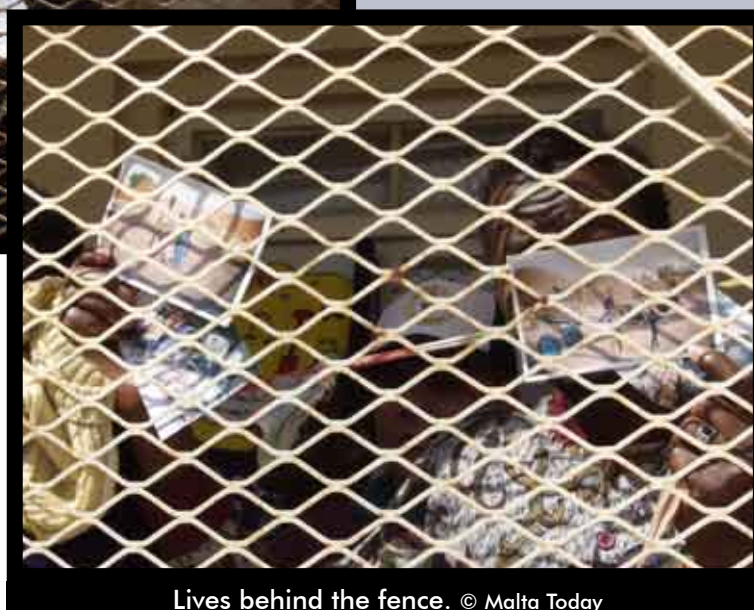
During the year, JRS also concluded a UN-HCR-financed project on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, with a publication entitled Try to Understand.

### **Legal Work**

The JRS Legal Team maintained its high standards and efforts in favour of asylum seekers, both through direct legal aid and information as well as by contributing to the ongoing public debate and through formal courses and training sessions held at the University of Malta and elsewhere. We are pleased to point out that as the year came to a close, Katrine Camilleri, head of JRS Malta's legal team, was appointed Member of the Order of Merit Gien ir-Repubblika, one of the highest recognitions of the State.

### **Personnel Changes**

The last quarter featured a number of staff changes in the composition of the team. Among them, JRS Director Fr Paul Pace was appointed Provincial of the Jesuits in Malta and was replaced by Fr Joseph Cassar, who returned to JRS after an absence of twelve years. Fr Pierre Grech Marguerat, Director 1996-2005 and for over a decade the face of JRS in Malta, has been entrusted with another mission.



Lives behind the fence. © Malta Today





## Asylum applications 2008:

143 ( 2007: 223; 2006: 130;  
2005: 110; 2004: 100)

## Top 5 countries of origin:

Sri Lanka, Colombia,  
Eritrea, Congo, Nigeria

## Political Developments

The economic downturn brought certain repercussions for groups of migrants in Portugal, namely with access to employment and health. This led to an increase in returns, and the number of migrants relying on social security. According to the Board and Aliens Service (SEF), Portugal saw a gradual decrease of migrants in the last three years. In 2008 SEF stated there were 435,000 regular immigrants living in Portugal.

An increase in xenophobia and insecurity on the part of Portuguese people, was offset by the successful adoption of a plan for the promotion of integration for migrants. The plan has seen positive results, offering assistance to all migrants, including access to healthcare or social support, regardless of their status in Portugal.

A new Asylum Act was also implemented in 2008. This act was designed to facilitate the circulation of asylum seekers on Portuguese territory, better training and access to the labour market, and to create better asylum conditions.

## JRS Activities

In April 2008 a new board was elected and changes were introduced to the organization of JRS Portugal, namely the creation of areas that will promote a multidisciplinary approach. This brought major benefits for migrants, since receiving support in a holistic manner enabled them to rebuild their expectations, and consequently, to become more resilient in overcoming future difficulties.

JRS Portugal supported approximately 6,700

people in 2008. As in 2007, the majority of JRS' beneficiaries were migrants from Eastern European countries (Ukraine, Moldova and Russia); from Portuguese speaking countries in Africa (Angola, Guinea, etc.); and from Brazil.

## Migrant Integration Area

### Social Work

During 2008, the social aid office provided emergency social support to undocumented migrants, the homeless, migrants with alcohol/drugs problems, single mothers/fathers, and the unemployed (totaled 1,291 appointments, 60% women/40% men. Some of these appointments were made outside of the centre (on the street, hospitals, etc.).

The social aid office was also involved in several partnerships in order to support integration, encourage reflection and plan new interventions.

### UNIVA

The UNIVA project, in collaboration with a number of NGOs in Portugal, provided support for young people and adults in helping them to solve integration and employment problems. In 2008, UNIVA held 2,832 interviews, with 796 of those interviews referred to jobs. The main referral areas for employment were construction, housekeeping and care services.

### Legal Assistance

The Local Centre for Migrant Support offered information and material to assist, welcome, assist, and integrate migrants. The centre offered information on legalisation, renewal of documents, applications for Portuguese nationality, education, right to health and voluntary return. In 2008, 786 individuals visited the Local Centre and ap-



pointments were made in neighbourhoods where migrants live.

The Local Centre was also an information source for many Portuguese employers. In order to help migrants to create their own business, partnerships were established for micro-credit with the organization ANDC and the CGD bank.

### **Pedro Arrupe Centre (PAC)**

PAC received 39 new immigrants, seven of which were children, from 15 different Portuguese speaking countries, various East-European countries and other countries again. Throughout the year 67 people lived in PAC, with eight of these voluntarily returning to their country of origin; 29 left having achieved their life project, that is, having an autonomous life.

### **Migrant Health Area**

#### *Medical Aid*

Approximately 50 migrants were seen by two volunteer doctors, who provided 111 appointments to immigrants in poor health. Although the aim of medical support was to help irregular migrants, there was a significant increase in the number of regular migrants who also depended on the service.

#### *Psychological Support*

JRS provided 292 sessions of psychological support to 70 migrants. Of these, 80% were from Portuguese speaking African countries and Brazil, with 65% aged between 26 and 46 years. The main psychological problems presented by these migrants were symptoms of depression (25%), anxiety (28%), loneliness/isolation (24%), grief and loss (13%), and suicidal tendencies (10%).

Data shows that the distress experienced by most of these migrants are mainly caused by external factors such as unemployment, poor living conditions, illegal status, isolation, etc. Such situations led these migrants to experience a sense of hopelessness, and thus, to doubt their own capacity to overcome obstacles.

JRS is also responsible for the psycho-social support of all immigrants staying in Unidade Habitacional de Santo António (UHSA) in Porto. This is accomplished through a social team composed of a psychologist (full time), a chaplain, cultural mediators and a group of volunteers, namely a law firm which provides legal advice.

UHSA is a temporary centre for irregular migrants who receive a removal order from Portuguese territory. This centre is managed by the Portuguese Border and Aliens Service. In 2008, around 250 people passed through the centre, mainly from Brazil, Morocco and Ukraine (this number represents a decrease of 20% on 2007).

#### *Medical Aid*

There were 273 appointments with migrants in need of medical aid. This support was provided on the basis of migrants' social and financial vulnerable condition, regardless of their residency status. The number of migrants depending on medical aid increased considerably over the past year.

### **Project Development Area**

#### *Recognition of Qualifications*

JRS Portugal ran a number of projects aimed at the recognition of qualifications of migrants. In 2008, 749 highly qualified migrants were followed up in their recognition process, most of them having degrees in health care and engineering.

2008 was also the year of the re-edition of the Recognition for Qualification of Doctors Project. This project, partnered by JRS-Portugal, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and the Health Ministry, aims at the integration of 150 doctors in the Portuguese health care system until June 2010.

### **Communication, Education and Training**

This project (responsible for communications, training and project development) focused on schools, with the goal of promoting attitudes of respect and openness to other cultures and raising awareness of migrant issues. The project is to be implemented in 50 schools in regions with higher rate of immigrants.

JRS Portugal participated in several debates and conferences, a number of which were attended by the national media. A quarterly newsletter was distributed to 1,500 people, along with a radio broadcast on migration every week.



## Asylum applications 2008:

931 ( 2007: 657; 2006: 460;  
2005: 590; 2004: 660 )

## Top 5 countries of origin:

Pakistan, India, Iraq,  
Bangladesh, Turkey

## Political Developments

In 2008, 931 people applied for asylum in Romania, an increase of 45% on 2007, when 657 asylum requests were submitted. The main countries of origin of those seeking asylum were Pakistan, India, Iraq, Bangladesh and Turkey. Of the total number of asylum seekers, 353 entered legally, 554 irregularly, thirteen were foreigners born in Romania (minors), and 20 were cases of family reunification. There were 88 asylum requests submitted in the detention centres.

Regarding the asylum process, 87 people obtained refugee status and 7 subsidiary protection; in court, 15 people obtained refugee status and 28 subsidiary protection.

The average duration of the asylum procedure in Romania, including both the administrative phase and the judiciary phase, was 6-8 months.

In July, the number of irregular foreigners in the country was double of that figure for the same six months of 2007, when 2,916 foreigners were found to be staying irregularly on Romanian territory. Of these 2,916 people, 401 were returned by force and 257 were put into administrative detention. The returnees were sent back to countries such as Moldova, Turkey, China, India, Morocco, Nigeria, Iran, Liberia, Sudan, Cameroon, Somalia, etc.

## JRS Activities

### Accommodation

More than 80 refugees and migrants were accommodated in the JRS Pedro Arrupe Centre and in the social apartments, help-

ing them to take responsibility for their future and preventing against social exclusion. Most of these migrants had no rights to work, to medical insurance or to benefits from any other social service provided by the state.

Unfortunately, last year, more and more people without a solution for the future requested the assistance of JRS, putting a strain on the office's resources. JRS is the only NGO in Romania providing temporary accommodation, and equally, the state have no possibility to accommodate these people due to the lack of legislative regulations and the necessary infrastructure.

### Social assistance

JRS helped refugees and migrants to search for appropriate employment and private accommodation. JRS assisted refugees and migrants to comply with administrative requirements set down by the state to benefit from the social rights. With the support of other civil society organisations, JRS offered counselling in order to identify durable solutions for the migrants.

### Detention

JRS social workers provided counselling and pastoral care in one detention centre once a week.

### Medical assistance

Two medical doctors and a network of young medical students supported JRS' work as volunteers, attending to people living in the accommodation centres. Free medical exams and analyses, vaccines and drugs were offered by JRS.

### Emergency relief

Emergency relief (food, clothes, hygiene products, etc.) was offered to persons in

all five accommodation centres across the country. This aid targeted the most vulnerable people and those with special needs.

### **Education Courses**

Romanian and English language classes and also computer classes continued during the year.

### **Recreational/Therapeutic activities**

A series of sporting activities such as football and tennis matches were organised. These activities were carried out for a therapeutic purpose, intending to develop team spirit and cooperation, and to facilitate intercultural communication between beneficiaries: garden decoration, culinary workshops, etc.

### **Cultural orientation**

A number of social and cultural events for

Ramadan, Christmas, Easter, New Year, March 8, June 1, World Refugee Day were organised.

### **Advocacy**

Radio and television broadcasts were seen as a means of spreading knowledge regarding the realities and issues related to refugees and migrants living in Romania. Through these media, JRS managed to promote certain aspects of refugee's life conditions in Romania.

### **Volunteers**

The network of volunteers was extended to 45 students and professionals, who were offered specialised training sessions in order to work in a professional manner with the refugees.



Activities for asylum seekers. JRS Romania



## Asylum applications 2008:

260 ( 2007: 434; 2006: 518;  
2005: 1,600; 2004: 1,170 )

## Top 5 countries of origin:

Turkey, Serbia, Kosovo,  
Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iran

## Political Developments

Two major events defined 2008 for Slovenia. For the first six-months of the year, Slovenia presided the European Union for the very first time, leading many meetings on issues such as irregular migration, harmonization of the asylum system, organised crime, and the Schengen area. Also, during the Slovenian presidency the Return Directive was accepted.

In September, parliament elections were held, which brought a change in the political makeup of the Slovenian government. After 4 years of opposition, the left wing coalition won the election. There emerged a substantial hope that the new government would be more open to changes regarding issues on migration and asylum law.

Due to political and socio-economic factors, Slovenia attracted people on their way to EU, many from former Yugoslavia. Some wished to stay in the country, while others continued their journeys to other EU countries. In 2008, the single biggest group of asylum seekers came from Turkey, while collectively, the biggest groups came from the Balkan region.

With the independence of Kosovo, the situation in the country improved, but was far from stable. There was considerable fear that with independence, tensions would arise and that many would have to leave the country - such fears can be understood when one looks at the multi-ethnic province of Vojvodina in the north of Serbia. There remains some way to go before stability and integration into EU can be achieved for these countries in the West Balkans .

According to official governmental figures in 2008, there were 260 people seeking

asylum, a decrease on the 2007 figure of 434 - this drop is consistent with trends observed in the last number of years.

The year saw an increase of the so called 'Dublin II cases', as many asylum seekers requested asylum in Slovenia, but later left for other EU countries. Refugee status was granted to just 4 people in 2008; 9 people received such status in 2007.

In December, on her first visit to the asylum house in Ljubljana, Ms Katarina Kresal, the new minister for Home affairs, stated she would like to raise the standards of international protection for asylum seekers. With this statement, one envisages the change of the asylum law (Zakon o mednarodni zaščiti), which was harmonized with the appropriate EU directives and came into force in January 2008. The coalition of NGOs, of which JRS is a part, will influence the debate on changing certain amendments of this law (largely considered to be too strict).

## JRS Activities

JRS' biggest achievement of 2008, in the European year of intercultural dialogue, was the opening of the multi-religious 'Room of silence', in the Postojna detention centre. It was the desire of many detainees to have such a room (found during research for the 2007 EU project, 'Administrative detention of asylum seekers and illegally staying third country nationals in the 10 new member states of the EU'). The room provided detainees of different religious denominations with a place where they can pray, meditate or simply be silent.

The project was led by the JRS Slovenia Country Director, Robin Schweiger, along with the chief of the detention centre. The new room was officially opened by Dr



Zdenka Čebašek-Travnik, the Human Rights Ombudsman of Slovenia, with a representative of the Islamic and Orthodox communities, a representative of the police headquarters and staff of the detention center present at the opening. The occasion was also a chance to share experiences and good practices in serving illegal migrants.

## **Volunteer work**

### *Training of Volunteers*

In 2008, JRS put much emphasis on the training of volunteers. JRS organized four seminars for the volunteers working in the Asylum home (Ljubljana) and in the Detention Centre (Postojna), with seventeen volunteers completing the training programme. Besides these seminars, the volunteers attended regular two-hour monthly meetings to discuss issues encountered in their work. Many volunteers availed themselves of the opportunity to meet with the JRS social worker, in order to improve their capacities to deal with the needs of their beneficiaries.

### *Visiting Detention Centre (Postojna)*

JRS Slovenia visited the Detention Centre in Postojna twice a week. The number of detainees varied, but approximately 60 people were constantly present. The main activity of JRS was to accompany the detainees, namely, talking, socializing with them, and playing with the children.

JRS prepared three major events for detainees during the year. On the eve of the Slovenian Day of Culture, JRS presented 'culture' through the medium of a Powerpoint presentation, with singing and the offering of a characteristic Slovene cake, 'Potica'. In May, a sports event was held, called 'Games Without Frontiers', while at Christmas, a concert was held. All the events were a great success, with detainees taking part in singing, playing and per-

forming.

### *Visiting Asylum home (Ljubljana)*

The JRS social worker and volunteers visited people living in the Asylum home four times a week. Here they offered psychosocial support, creative workshops, and cultural activities for families, women and children. The JRS social worker helped the children in their education. For the 'Santa Claus Celebration', JRS prepared a ceremony, with gifts for 30 children - all in an attempt to ease the burden of being in the Asylum home.

### *Summer holidays*

This year, for the sixth time, JRS organized a one week holiday in August for 34 women and children in Portorož. They came from the Asylum home, with others coming from families who have permission to remain outside the Asylum home.

### *Awareness raising*

Throughout the year, JRS Slovenia broadcast a radio programme on the fourth Tuesday of every month, entitled, 'Building a more Open Society'. The programme was broadcast on the Catholic radio station 'Radio Ognjišče' and focused on refugee, migration and development issues.

## **Education**

### *Computer courses*

In total, JRS Slovenia organized three computer courses for 24 participants in the computer room housed in the St. Joseph Jesuit spiritual center in Ljubljana. Computer courses were offered for asylum seekers and refugees as a method toward better integration into Slovenian society.







## Asylum applications 2008:

2,062 ( 2007: 2,270; 2006: 2,080;  
2005: 1,770 )

## Top 5 countries of origin:

Chechnya, Georgia,  
Somalia, Sudan, Afghanistan

## Political Developments

Since its first refugee law was passed in 1993, Ukraine has granted status to 5,459 claimants. In 2008, 2,277 of these continued to live in Ukraine while 978 became citizens. However, these figures were very small and did not accurately represent the picture of migration in and through Ukraine - a further analysis of these minimal statistics tell us more.

Of these 5,459 refugees, 5,000 were granted that status before 2002, when the state began to institute standard international procedures, setting up offices for the proper processing of claimants. Ironically, with the sustained help of the European Union, as the various offices in Ukraine have become more defined, better staffed, and accountable, the number of successful claimants has dramatically diminished.

From 2002 to 2007 approximately 400 claimants were granted refugee status. During the same period, particularly following the expansion of the European Union in 2004, the number of migrants in the country dramatically and visibly increased, with all major cities inhabited by significant minorities. Kharkiv had a major Vietnamese community, while the Chinese flocked to Donetsk. Central Africans were regularly seen in Kyiv and Odessa; the Somalis and Sudanese have created a community in Vinnitsa. There were Chechnyans, Georgians, Afghans, Iraqis, Indians, Palestinians, and Russians to be found ubiquitously. They were either in the system applying for status or, more commonly, working illegally under police radar.

To return to the official statistics, of those granted status 1,171 were from Afghanistan, 652 from former Soviet republics,

239 from Africa, with representations from Iraq, Pakistan, Vietnam, Korea, China, and elsewhere.

The biggest variable in Ukraine lay in the difference between being apprehended or not, given that Ukraine has no eastern border control. Movement of people and contraband along the frontier with Russia is virtually without supervision. The Ministry of Internal Affairs estimated that 20,000 illegal migrants were dealt with officially in the last five years. There was no even vague estimate on the numbers that passed through without detection. More troubling still were the stories of corruption on the western border where migrants pay the guards for the passage - corruption that exists on both sides of the border.

Parallel to the development of procedures and the establishing of regional offices for the processing of refugee applications, the EU helped Ukraine to renovate two former army barracks as detention centres for irregular migrants. This created two such centres in Ukraine, with a capacity of 430 irregular migrants, who, for the most part, awaited deportation. As these centres are new, procedures are in the process of being established. Access to them was made available to JRS and to other agencies.

Although the above statistics are current and official, there are other statistics that suggest much more to the general story of migration in Ukraine. The department of Internal Affairs, for example, estimated that in 2007 there were 4 million foreigners living in Ukraine. This figure included migrants of all kinds: business, students, military, legal and irregular migrants. Furthermore, it is known that the black market is highly active in Ukraine, most notably in the border areas with Moldova and Slova-

kia. Newspapers sometimes carried stories reporting twenty to forty irregular migrants being apprehended at the border or somewhere within the country. Statistics from 2005 said that up to 150,000 women were trafficked each year from former Soviet republics.

The emigration of Ukrainian citizens, legal and illegal, is thought to have reached as much as 7 million in the first 15 years following independence in 1991. These statistics, while quite broad, at the very least paint a more complicated picture than the official state statistics allow. This is one of the main problems in post-Soviet countries: research and reliable information.

### JRS Activities

JRS-Ukraine opened its centre on 1 October 2008. Currently, it houses refugees from the war in Abkhazia (Georgia), and

from the war in Iraq. It counts among its close collaborators: UNHCR, ERSO, ECRE, Caritas Ukraine, Caritas Austria, NEEKA, and other non-governmental organizations. The culture of NGOs is in its earliest stages in Ukraine, so most of our work in this regard lies in building networks and links for future collaboration.

We also can count on candour and good working relationships with the relevant organs of state: Migration Service, Border Patrol, and police, all of whom have distinct responsibilities with the migrant population. JRS Ukraine has added to its direct work with refugee claimants, researching the statistics behind the individual stories.



The JRS Ukraine Centre. JRS



# UNITED KINGDOM



## Asylum applications 2008:

22,530 ( 2007: 27,200; 2006: 28,320;  
2005: 30,840; 2004: 40,620 )

## Top 5 countries of origin:

Afghanistan, Iran, China,  
Iraq, Eritrea

## Political Developments

In July 2006, the Home Secretary announced that all outstanding asylum cases (the back-log) outside the New Asylum Model would be resolved by July 2011. These cases are known as Case Resolution Cases and it was originally estimated that there were 450,000 such cases.

The Home Office reported to the Parliamentary Home Affairs Committee in May 2008. They reported that they had concluded 90,000 of those cases by that time. This figure includes dependents. There have been 20,000 removals; 39,000 decisions to grant some form of leave to remain in the UK; and in 32,000 cases the files were closed because it was an error or a duplicate.

To give some sort of idea of how long people have been waiting in the back-log the following statistics provided by the Home Office are useful:

- Of the 20,000 removals, 21% (4,200) had been waiting for under three years; 54% (10,800) for between 3 and 7 years; and 25% (5,000) for more than 7 years.

- Of the 39,000 grants of leave to remain, 41% (16,000) had waited under 3 years; 51% (19,900) between 3 and 7 years; and 8% (3,100) over 7 years.

The longer someone has been in the country, the more likely they are to have been left with no status, no permission to work and no recourse to public funds. The Home Office provided no statistics on how many people were destitute, nor a breakdown comparison from the whole of the Case Resolution Cases of how many people had been waiting in total for up to three years,

between 3 and 7 years or for more than 7 years.

There are growing concerns that all of the Case Resolution Cases will not be concluded by July 2011.

During 2008, two prospective new Bills were announced: a Borders, Immigration and Citizenship Bill and an Immigration Simplification Bill. Both are due to be considered during the current parliament. The details of neither Bill have been fully announced yet, nor has full consultation taken place yet. However, there are concerns that the new Bills will continue with the drive to create tougher border controls and more difficult conditions for asylum seekers in the UK.

## JRS Activities

### Detention

During 2008 JRS continued the programme of detention visits by staff members and a small volunteer team. Each volunteer visitor made a commitment to visit one or two people each week on JRS' behalf over a six month period, and to liaise with solicitors, health care professionals, etc. as required on behalf of the detainee they visit.

The detention outreach worker provided training, support, visited detainees and was also responsible for advocacy work on this issue. In addition, a member of the JRS team acts as a Catholic chaplain at Colnbrook and at Harmondsworth detention centres (near Heathrow). In this way, JRS was able to give more support to especially vulnerable detainees through follow-ups with health professionals and legal advisors.

We have access to between 40 and 60 detainees a week on average, mainly because Harry is able to visit the centres as a Chaplain.

### **Destitution**

Increasing numbers of asylum seekers, who received final refusals in their claims, came to JRS in our new office premises in central London for support and help. The office received visits from around 130 people a week seeking transport grants; help with grant applications for emergency relief grants to other small charities; hygiene packs; solicitors; the JRS hardship support (max of £200 per person) for daily living needs; and clothing when available. In total about 600 people at any one time were getting help from JRS.

Many migrants in the UK received a weekly £35 voucher if they were able to reopen their asylum claim, were seriously unwell or had agreed to leave the country. Some people received vouchers for two years or more. JRS started an exchange scheme to allow for greater choice for individuals and families to purchase cheaper food from street markets. The supermarket voucher exchange scheme gained much popularity, exchanging over £7,000 worth of vouchers every month. Because of the increased demand, JRS ran two day centres in London: on Tuesdays at Forest Gate in East London and on Thursdays in Stamford Hill in North London.

In September 2008 a small legal charity, Asylum Aid, started offering legal advice at the JRS Office at London Bridge on a Tuesday (on an appointment only basis) for those who had problems getting good legal representation and were destitute. Besides the practical assistance offered, JRS used the quantitative and qualitative data to lobby for better legal representation and more public funding to increase access to good legal representation.

### **Outreach work**

The JRS UK staff and volunteers continued 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. Requests for JRS guest speakers have increased steadily over the year, with JRS looking to organise more events each year.

### **Advocacy work**

JRS worked very well in coalitions, undertaking lobbying work and campaigning work on destitution and detention issues.

JRS helped set up the Independent Asylum Commission (a people's inquiry into the asylum process in the UK). The Commissioners included human rights experts, members of the House of Lords, a theologian and a refugee. Over the course of 2007, public hearings were held across the UK and written evidence was requested. The findings were published in 2008 in one large report; conclusions and recommendations were published separately. The reports were well received and provide a good basis of information to help lobbying for the new Immigration Bills being considered in this parliament.

JRS was involved with the asylum working party of the Centre for Social Justice (a think tank in the UK) which published a report in December 2008 on destitution of asylum seekers; making recommendations for the improvement of the asylum process and the asylum support system in the UK.

JRS UK also started its Speak Out project in the autumn of 2008. This project provided training in presentation skills, radio interview techniques and writing articles for newsletters, websites and other publications. The project was aimed at asylum seekers and refugees wanting to help JRS with advocacy work, but who felt they needed some training and support to help their confidence and to be effective in doing such things for JRS. The first small group of six refugees just completed the course at the end of the year. They were from Uganda, Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea and Cote d'Ivoire.

### **Volunteer Programme**

Apart from the team of volunteer detention visitors, JRS had a small team of volunteers who help with administrative tasks, reception and welcoming duties, producing publications and event organisation in the office.





## Asylum applications 2008:

Croatia: 155 (2007: 197);  
Bosnia and Herz: 100 (2007: 572);  
Serbia: 77 (2007: 640);  
FYR Macedonia: 54 (2007: 33)

## Top 5 countries of origin (Croatia):

Iraq, Turkey, Iran, Kosovo, Russia  
(not including internal applicants)

## Political Developments

In the Western Balkans, two important events marked 2008; the independence of Kosovo, and the arrest and extradition of Radovan Karadzic to the UN war crimes tribunal in The Hague. Together, these events are a turning point for the former Yugoslav countries of Kosovo, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, that is, a break from the ethnically driven politics of the past, and a step towards integration in the EU.

The political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina was directly affected by events in Kosovo, with the prime minister of Bosnia's Serb entity (Republika Srpska), Milorad Dodik, indicating that Kosovo was an example to be followed in order to secede from Sarajevo. This threat was part of a running nationalist feud between Dodik and his Bosnian rival, Haris Silajdzic, a Muslim member of the country's tripartite presidency - who himself has called for the abolition of Republika Srpska.

In April, Croatia and Albania received invitations to join the NATO military alliance - a third country, Macedonia had its invitation blocked by Greece amid a lingering dispute over its name. Brussels offered Serbia a Stabilization and Association Agreement, a deal seen as a key step toward EU membership. At the end of the year the economic crisis hit the Balkans.

Thirteen years after the end of the war, politically, economically and socially the situation has yet to truly stabilise.

### Bosnia and Herzegovina

- As of June 2008 more than 132,000 Bosnians remained displaced.
- UNHCR registered 286 IDPs and 246 refugee returns during the first half of 2008.

- Limited economic opportunities and lack of adequate housing constitute the two main practical obstacles to sustainable return.

- Roma refugees in Bosnia, remain vulnerable and dependent on periodic extensions of their temporary protection status.

### Croatia

- By the end of September 2008, a total of 387,093 returnees/IDPs were registered in Croatia. Out of this number, 131,160 were Croatian Serb minority returns. Access to rights and employment remain a challenge for Serb returnees in their reintegration into Croatia's social and legal system.

- Some 7,000 displaced persons in collective centres remained particularly vulnerable, living in difficult conditions. These situations persist in neighbouring countries.

### Bosnian refugees

UNHCR estimates that approximately 120,000 Bosnian refugees of Croatian ethnicity, who obtained Croatian citizenship, have integrated within the areas outlined by the 'Special State Concern'.

### Asylum seekers

- Only four asylum seekers - from Sudan, Afghanistan and a Kurd from Turkey - were granted refugee status in Croatia since 2004; asylum requests doubled between 2006 and 2007.

### Serbia

- More than 7,000 refugees from Bosnia and Croatia, and displaced persons from Kosovo remain in collective centres, often in substandard conditions.

### Kosovo

- The number of voluntary returns to Kosovo declined, with only 229 registered during the first eight months of the year.



- Serbs, Roma, and Albanians from areas where they are in the minority remain in need of international protection (UNHCR).
- Forced returns from Western Europe continued, with 1,727 persons returned in the first eight months of 2008.

### **FYR Macedonia**

- Some 1,860 refugees from Kosovo remained in Macedonia. The majority were Roma and Ashkalia refugees from Kosovo who had been granted temporary 'asylum for humanitarian protection'.
- The state failed to guarantee refugees access to social and economic rights. Many feared forcible deportation; in June the authorities agreed to suspend deportations pending the resolution of the status of Kosovo.

## **JRS Activities**

### **Bosnia and Herzegovina**

JRS supported more than twenty families through the 'Assistance to self-supporting mothers' project in Sarajevo, both 80 people directly, and a further 200 indirectly. The project was operated on psychosocial, educational, material and medical levels. A second project, 'Elderly home care' was aimed at vulnerable and displaced returnees, assisting 50 people.

### **Croatia**

Over the last 5 years 'Reconciliation through alternative education' has been run in Knin. JRS has helped 50 children with different cultural, religious and social backgrounds to live with their neighbours in a peaceful atmosphere where tolerance is practised.

In October, JRS, with the Croatian Red Cross visited the Jezevo detention centre near Zagreb, helping and supporting detainees at a psychosocial, material, educational, and medical level. Between 25-50 persons are housed in the detention centre.

The 'Telealarm' project, helping elderly people living alone, helped more than 300 people in Zagreb County. The project was set-up by JRS and The Recobot Foundation.

### **Kosovo**

With the land mine survivor support project, JRS helps rehabilitate young victims of land-mines. This year we helped 68 persons with medical procedures (prosthesis, eye surgery, limb surgery, orthopaedic follow ups, rehabilitation through physiotherapy); the rebuilding of their property; accommodation, food and travel for students in university; transport to secondary schools; and English courses.



Landmine rehabilitation in Kosovo. JRS



Detainee computer course in Skopje. JRS



## Asylum applications 2008:

35,520 ( 2007: 29,158; 2006: 30,750;  
2005: 49,370; 2004: 58,550)

## Top 5 countries of origin:

Sri Lanka, Kosovo, Chechnya,  
DRC, Iraq

## Political Developments

The OFPRA report of 2007 points to a stabilisation of asylum demands: 35,520, with a less centralised geographical origin (mainly Sri Lanka/India, Kosovo, Chechnya, the DRC, and Iraq), a feminisation of the asylum population, with more adults accompanied by a minor (of which, the gender is predominantly female).

Asylum demands at the border, mainly at Roissy-Charles de Gaulle, increased by 40% on the figures of 2006. Favourable decisions to these demands amounted to 28%. Currently in France there are some 131,000 refugees.

Increasingly, the French government tried to weaken and reduce the help civil society organisations gave to asylum seekers and migrants; firstly, by modifying, unsuccessfully, the rules of legal assistance in detention centers; and secondly, by trying to modify legal procedures enabling more efficient removals.

In the second half of 2008, the French presidency of the EU proposed 'The European Pact on Immigration and Asylum', whose aim was to reinforce the controls of migrants at the borders. A proposal for the European Asylum Support Office was scheduled to be realised at the start of 2009.

## JRS Activities

Field involvement with refugees continued throughout 2008, with a dozen of volunteers conducting a number of projects, along with language courses in partnership with the Church. A number of refugees are now directly in contact with JRS France.

'The Pierre Claver Association' managed

about 40 asylum procedures and organised language courses for about 50 people, most of the beneficiaries being asylum seekers.

Following the government's refusal to allow the Pierre Claver Association access to the Roissy complex, the association looked for other ways to assist those most in need, and began to develop other initiatives, such as housing asylum seekers or refugees and providing meals and entertainment around the Christmas period.

The Fraternexo project in Chambéry provided a place to receive refugees, and to accompany them in very ordinary moments of their life - driving lessons, family outings in the mountains, etc.

Awareness raising events took place in a number of forms in 2008: an information sharing evening in a Jesuit college; a conference at the CVX Europe Migration Commission, etc. The strong advocacy link with JRS Europe continued, aiding and developing JRS France's own advocacy work.

During 2008, the JRS France website was renewed every two months, and a newsletter was periodically produced by the office.

# MOROCCO

Limited statistics available

## **Sub-Saharan migrants:**

Home to 10,000 sub-Saharan migrants (2008 est.)

## **Refugee population:**

Ivory Coast (37%); DRC (28%);  
75% of pop. between 18-59 yrs old

## **Applications for refugee status:**

2005-2008: 4,118 applications;  
2008: averaged 70 per month



## **Political Developments**

The political scene remained relatively stable with no serious challenges to the central role of the king, Mohammed VI. The Moroccan parliament remained weak due to the continued prominence of the monarch in decision making processes, the root of considerable public disaffection.

The country remained hindered by financial constraints throughout 2008, with a widening of the budget deficit, and an economic decline - this too a source of public discontent.

As in previous years, clashes continued between Moroccan police forces and illegal immigrants, largely concentrated around the border fence of the Spanish enclave of Melilla.

Moroccan officials vehemently denied reports that irregular migrants were being deported to the Algerian border, claiming that a reliable repatriation scheme with other African countries was in place.

Such claims were dismissed by migrants and migrant defence lawyers alike, stating that migrants continued to be deported by the dozen to the border town of Oujda. Lawyers and humanitarian organisations continued to point to consistent violations of Morocco's 2003 law on immigration.

Racial tensions between the local population and Sub-Saharan migrants persisted, and, coupled with unemployment rates, this made it difficult for migrants to find work.

## **JRS Activities**

In July 2008, JRS Europe began work in Morocco, with the 'Service Accueil Migrants' (SAM) project. The project was led by Fr Josep Lluís Iriberry SJ, and advances JRS' accompaniment work on externalisation of asylum through the assistance of migrant women and children who, through one way or another, have come to be stranded in Casablanca.

In 2008, the principal beneficiaries of the SAM project were vulnerable sub-Saharan migrants enroute to Europe. The project assisted these migrants on a number of levels. A creche was provided for infants, with the women given the opportunity to take part in embroidery, hairdressing and handicraft lessons. Childcare classes and French and English language classes were also provided.

To dissuade the women from begging for money on the streets, they were encouraged to start 'micro-projects', where they could sell the items they produced with SAM in the local marketplace. By the year's end, 55 women had taken on a 'micro-project'.

A kindergarten was put in operation for minors, where they could take part in various educational activities, with the opportunity of picking up basic language, writing and mathematical skills.

The project was operated in cooperation with MSF, Caritas, and the Spanish Jesuit Migration Network (SJM).



## Asylum applications 2008:

24,000 ( 2007: 36,210; 2006: 24,320;  
2005: 17,530; 2004: 23,160 )

## Top 5 countries of origin:

Iraq, Somalia, Serbia,  
Russian Federation, Eritrea

## Political Developments

More than 24,000 persons (36,210 in 2007) sought asylum in Sweden in 2008, many of who came from Iraq. The general drop in asylum cases was more specifically due to a fall in the number of Iraqi asylum seekers coming to the country. This was largely due to stricter controls by the Swedish government on Iraqi asylum seekers, and an agreement between Baghdad and Stockholm to return rejected applicants back to Iraq. These controls meant Iraqis sought refuge elsewhere.

Such measures saw Finland witnessing record figures of asylum applicants in 2008. Finnish authorities put the rise down to the tougher policies taken by their Norwegian and Swedish counterparts.

While asylum cases were decreasing in Sweden, family-based immigration was rising. Part of this was due to the fact that Iraqis who came to Sweden as refugees were now getting their family members to live with them.

## JRS Activities

In Sweden, JRS primarily works in detention centres with detainees. There are five closed detention centres, with all removal centres run by the Swedish Migration Board, and a total capacity of around 150 places.

The biggest centre is Märsta, close to Stockholm International Airport, where JRS is active, and which has a capacity of 70 places.

In 2008 the volunteer group comprised of seven volunteers, including one Jesuit. The main task of the detention visitors group was to give psychological support to the

detainees, helping them to get in touch with lawyers and their relatives, or mediating between the detainees and the police or the Swedish migration board.

Confessions and Holy Communion were offered to Catholic detainees. On a case-by-case basis (especially for detainees held under the Dublin II regulation), contacts were established with NGOs or JRS offices in the destination country of the returnee.

On a less structured basis, JRS offered its support and advice to irregular migrants. An important focus of the work was also the continuous training of the volunteers, for example, through the detention visitors support group organised by JRS Europe.

## **Country Reports**

### **Activities in Other Countries**



## Activities in other Countries



Rising xenophobic sentiments in Austria were buoyed by a positive return for the far-right in the September parliamentary elections - with the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) receiving 17% of the vote, and the Alliance for the Future of Austria (BZÖ) returning with 11%.

Such was the public/political mood prior to the snap elections, that reports in Austrian daily 'Der Standard' implied that the government party, The Austrian People's Party (ÖVP), was leading somewhat of an anti-immigrant campaign, this in order to win over the vote of FPÖ and BZÖ supporters.

Routine detention of asylum seekers continued throughout 2008 (regardless of age or physical condition), with no independent system in-place for monitoring detention centre conditions.

Regular access to legal representation was not guaranteed to those in detention. The UNHCR levelled criticism at the Austrian system, due to the lack of qualified legal advisers and interpreters for detainees.

In 2008, Austria received 12,809 applications for asylum, an increase on the 2007 figure of 11,921. Among these applications 3,436 came from Russians; 1,702 came from Serbians; and 1,365 from Afghans.

Since 1990, JRS Austria has been present in Austria's largest reception centre in Traiskirchen. JRS is the only NGO in this centre, providing targeted care for vulnerable groups. JRS distributes clothing and toys, and offers counselling, language courses, and prayer services. Follow-up care is offered to a small number of refugees who left the centre but stayed in contact with JRS staff.

During the summer, both Anna Lengauer and Erich Droegsler concluded the work they had been doing with JRS.

In September, Fr Alois Riedlsperger SJ was appointed as the new contact person for JRS in Austria, working alongside Fr Hans Tschiggl in the missions office.



In November 2008, a bill for the creation and organisation of detention centres was approved by the government of Luxembourg. Up until now, asylum seekers had been detained in state prisons, reported to be subject to overcrowding by a UN Human Right Council report in December 2008.

Throughout the year, a support programme was instituted by the government for those persons denied asylum. The government

also adopted a new law on immigration which aimed at enhancing the enjoyment of rights for immigrants residing in Luxembourg.

In 2008, Luxembourg received 463 new asylum applications, up from 426 in 2007. Of this 463 applicants, the majority, 219, came from Serbia.

Following a proposal from the Christian Life Community (CLC) forced migration working group, CLC-Luxembourg and the Jesuit community of Luxembourg established a common initiative called "Groupe Ignatien de Migration" (GIM).

The initiative raised awareness within the CLC and Jesuit networks about the situation of forced migrants, carrying out advocacy work on a national level and operating as an antenna for JRS-Europe.

## THE NETHERLANDS



The regularisation of more than 24,000 long staying irregular migrants, which began in 2007, continued to dominate migration news throughout 2008. The initiative brought great relief to many individuals and families after years of protracted procedures.

The Netherlands received a total of 13,399 asylum applications in 2008, this marked

an increase on the 2007 figure of 7,102.

During 2008, there were sustained house/apartment shortages for a large number of migrants who were entitled to such social support. For those who did not qualify under the regularisation, and who could not return either, that is, the destitute, the main problem was access to health care.

Another, much smaller, group of particular concern, were family members of persons who are suspected of human rights violations in their country of origin and who could not receive status until the investigation is concluded – a procedure that takes many years.

Br Leo van Lanen SJ continued his pastoral and social activities in migrant communities in Rotterdam. Fr Jan Stuyt SJ was to become the new JRS contact person from January 2009.

## SPAIN



In 2008, JRS activities in Spain continued under an agreement between JRS Europe and the Spanish NGOs. By means of this agreement, ALBOAN, Entreculturas and IntermonOxfam represent JRS in Spain. They focus on fundraising to support JRS programmes in developing countries, promoting JRS and executing advocacy initiatives on behalf of JRS International.

The SAM project in Casablanca (see page 38), which began in summer 2008, was the fruit of a collaborative effort by JRS Europe, ALBOAN, Entreculturas, and SJM. ALBOAN and Entreculturas continue to support and partially fund the project. Representatives from the two organisations were present at an end-of-year review of the project in Casablanca.

JRS activities were published on the websites and printed editions of the three NGOs' magazines.

The central objective for advocacy – following the experiences of JRS in Morocco – has been to determine what 'protection' means for the lives of migrants who are in Morocco but cannot travel onwards to Europe, nor back to their home country. In order to determine this, on-the-ground research of migrants' lives in Morocco must be coupled with research on how EU Member State bilateral relations with Morocco affect the ability of migrants to seek protection for themselves.

To this end, the network of Spanish Jesuit NGOs began to collaborate in the final stages of 2008 in order to devise a set of common initiatives for advocacy. This collaboration will continue in the following year with actions that target Spanish candidates for the European elections, the Spanish government and the EU institutions. The aim of these actions will be to raise politicians' awareness of the consequences that national and EU relations with third countries have towards migrants who cannot access protection in Europe, due to policies that externalize the EU's borders and protection responsibilities to these third countries.

## Appendices

- (i) Structure of JRS Europe*
- (ii) JRS Contact Details*
- (iii) JRS Financial Summary*

## Appendix (i) - Structure of JRS Europe

JRS-Europe was established in March 1992. It is an incorporated "International Association" under Belgian law (AISBL # 452165993), 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 Jesuit Refugee Service-Europe AISBL, as of October 18th, 2008, the members of JRS-Europe Governing Council are: Br Michael Schöpf SJ, "Administrateur délégué" of JRS-Europe, Fr Peter Balleis SJ, President of JRS-Europe and International Director of JRS, Dermot O'Connor SJ, and Louise Zanré, Country Director of JRS-UK.

JRS-Europe has country offices in Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Morocco, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden, Ukraine, The United Kingdom, and the West Balkans region.

Furthermore, JRS-Europe has contact persons in Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Greece, Hungary, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, and Switzerland. Egypt and Lebanon also belong to the JRS-Europe region

JRS-Europe is an integral part of the Jesuit Refugee Service worldwide and depends on the Conference of European Provincials. It is a project of the Conference of the Jesuit Provincials in Europe and is part of the inter-provincial apostolic work of the Society in Europe. It currently covers around twenty Jesuit Provinces. 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 four members; in 2008 it was Jan Stuyt with: Robin Schweiger SJ, Michael Schöpf SJ, Ms Louise Zanré and Mr Ignacio Eguizabal. The Council meets three times a year.

The directors of each JRS country office meet twice annually for a regional coordination meeting, this facilitates strategic planning for the region.

## Appendix (ii) - JRS Contact Details

### JRS AUSTRIA

**Fr Alois Riedelsperger SJ, Contact Person**

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### JRS DENMARK

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### JRS FRANCE

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### JRS GERMANY

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### JRS HUNGARY

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## **JRS ITALY**

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### **Ms Chiara Peri, Contact Person (Eng, Fr)**

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## **JRS LUXEMBOURG**

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### **Ms Agnès Rausch, Contact Person**

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## **JRS MALTA**

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## **JRS MOROCCO**

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## **JRS NETHERLANDS**

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## **JRS POLAND**

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## **JRS PORTUGAL**

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## **JRS ROMANIA**

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**Fr Luc Duquenne, President of the Board of Management**

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## **JRS SLOVAKIA**

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## **JRS SLOVENIA**

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## **JRS SPAIN**

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**Mr Ignacio Eguizabal, Coordinator for Spain**

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## **JRS SWITZERLAND**

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## **JRS UKRAINE**

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## **JRS UNITED KINGDOM**

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## **JRS WESTERN BALKANS**

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**Mr Josip Divković, Director of Western Balkans Area**

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### **JRS BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**

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### **JRS KOSOVO**

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### **JRS MACEDONIA**

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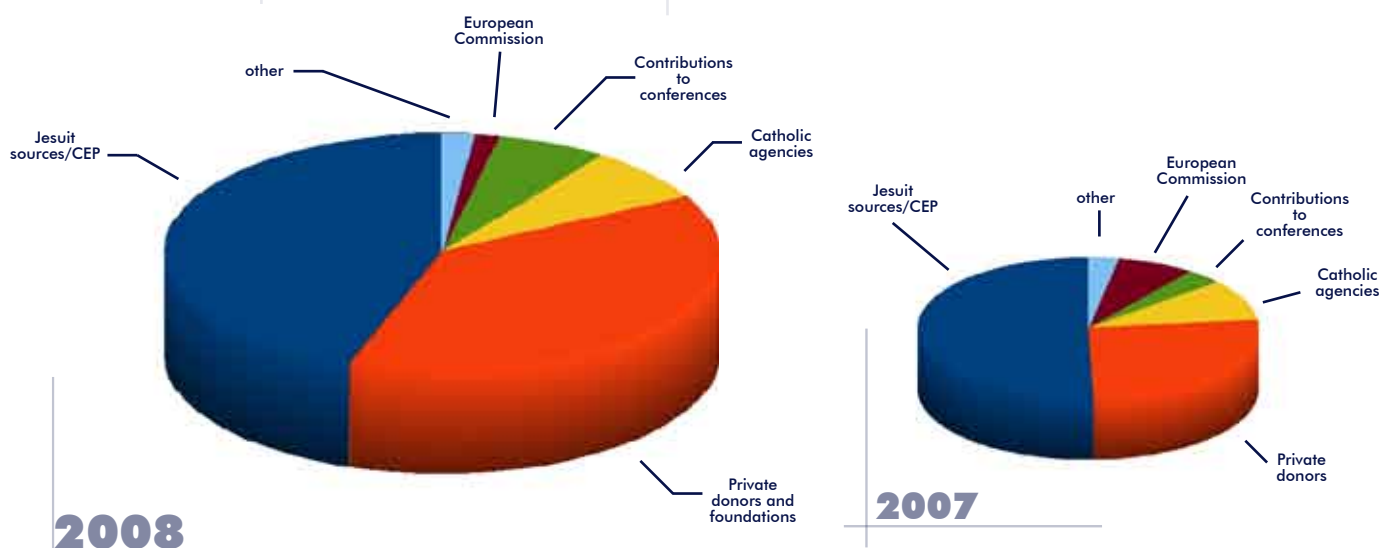
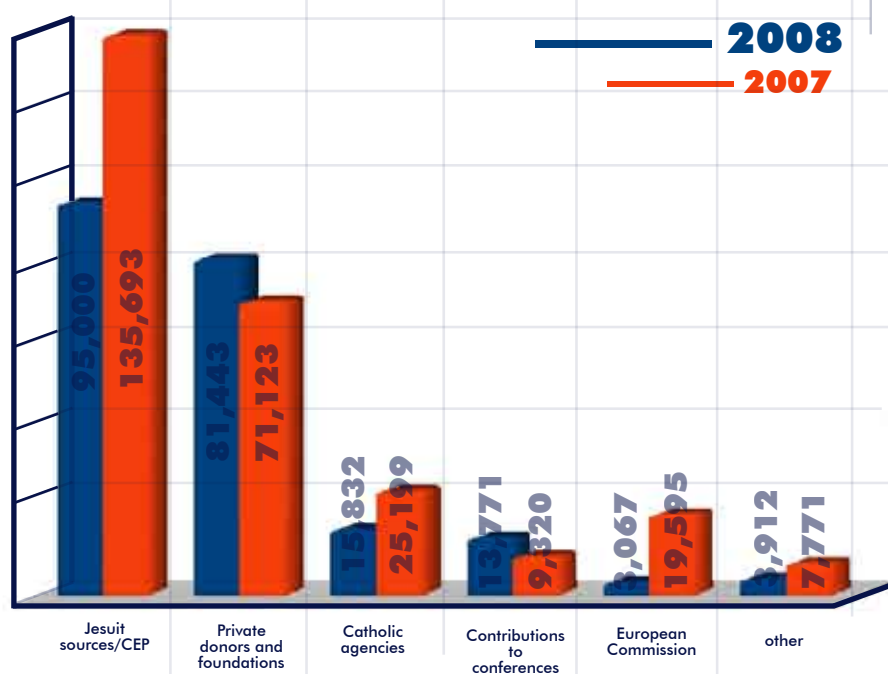
email: [macedonia@jrs.net](mailto:macedonia@jrs.net)

# Appendix (iii) - JRS Financial Summary

## JRS EUROPE OFFICE - BRUSSELS

### SOURCES OF INCOME 2008/2007 (euro)

	2008	2007
Jesuit sources/CEP	95,000	135,693
Private donors and foundations	81,443	71,123
Catholic agencies	15,832	25,199
Contributions to conferences	13,771	9,320
European Commission	3,067	19,595
other	3,912	7,771
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>213,025</b>	<b>268,702</b>

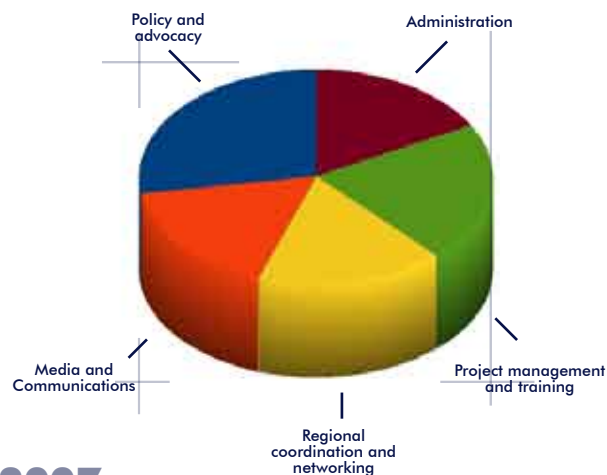
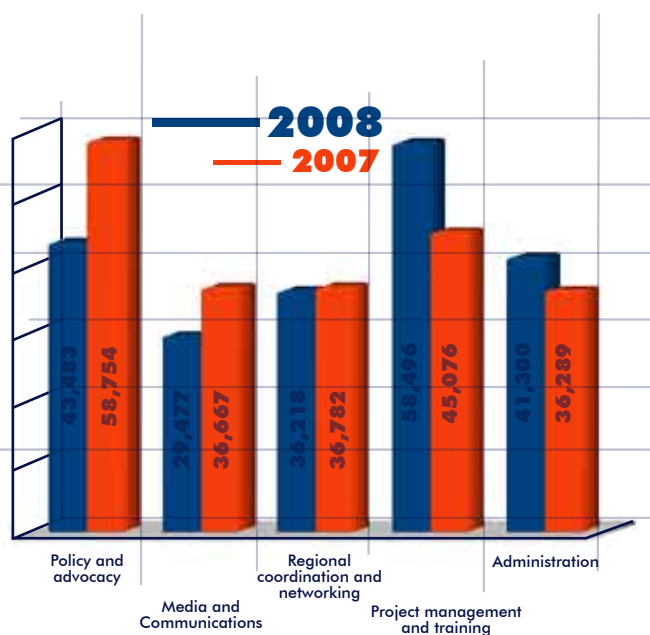


## JRS EUROPE OFFICE - BRUSSELS

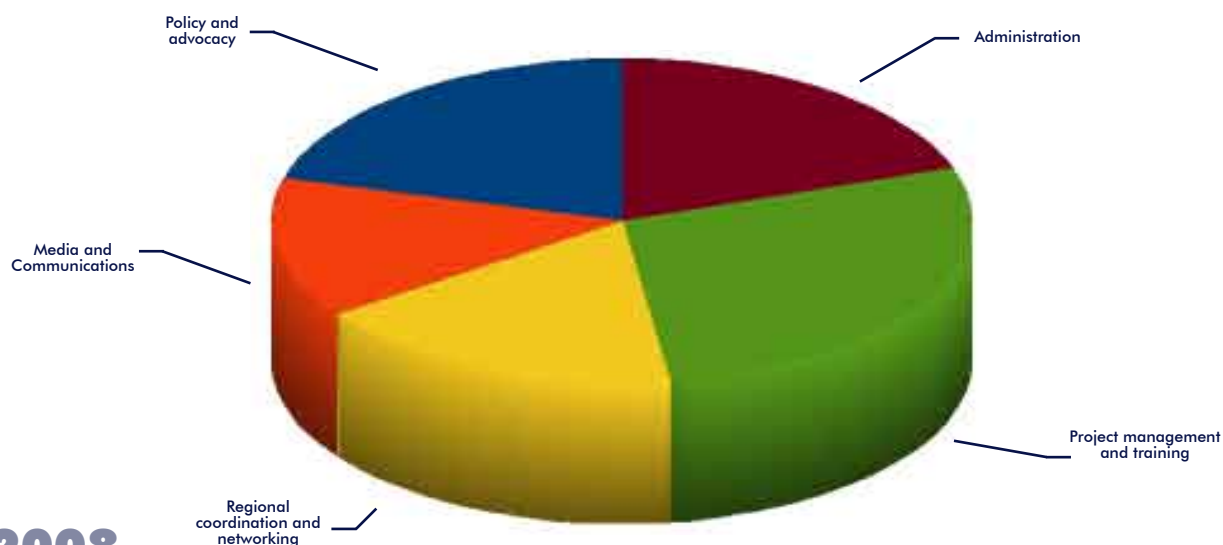
EXPENDITURE	2008	2007
Policy and advocacy	43,483	58,754
Media and communications	29,477	36,667
Regional coordination and networking	36,218	36,782
Project management and training	58,496	45,076
Administration	41,300	36,289
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>208,974</b>	<b>213,568</b>

### EXPENDITURE 2008/2007 (euro)

\*JRS Europe also administered the amount of 13,549 EUR to JRS Morocco in 2007; and 25,490 EUR in 2008



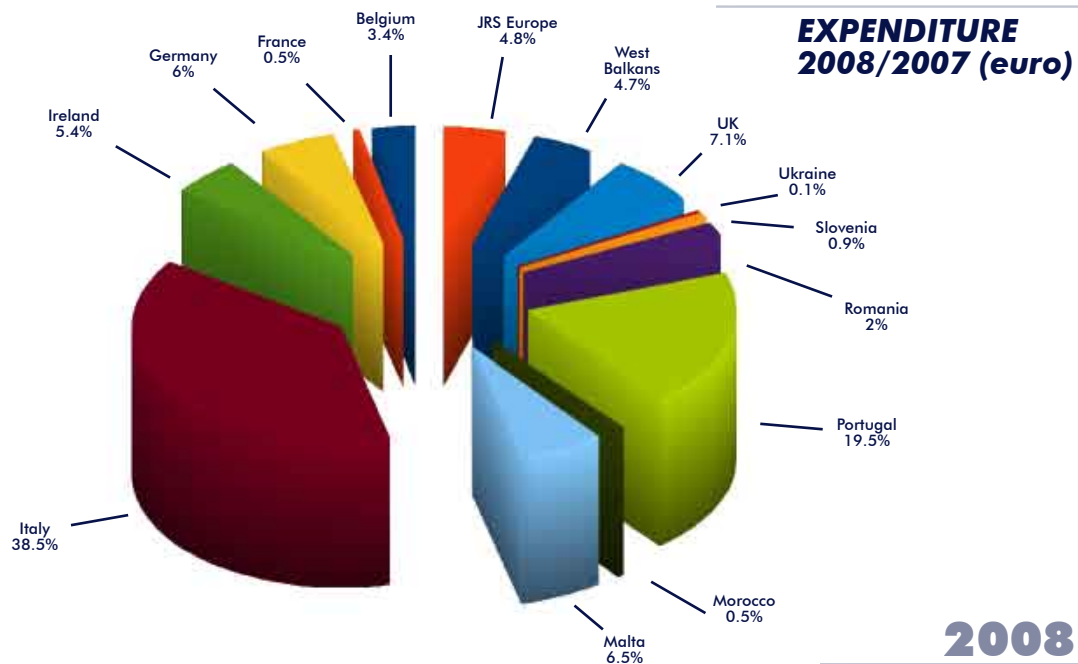
2007



2008

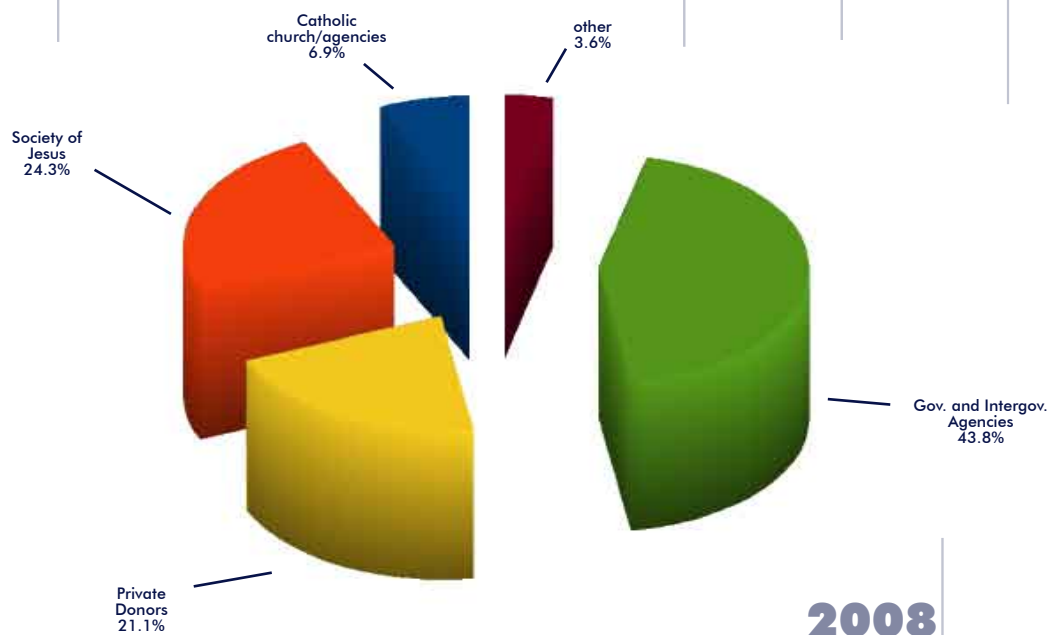


## JRS EUROPE COUNTRY OFFICES



## SOURCES OF INCOME 2008/2007 (euro)

	2008	2007
Society of Jesus	1,031,727	1,115,270
Private donors	896,372	1,819,836
Catholic church/agencies	295,753	271,013
Government and Intergovernmental Agencies	1,859,563	1,909,804
other	155,010	49,534
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,238,425</b>	<b>5,165,457</b>



\*No expenses for JRS Sweden in 2008. Budget in place as of 2009





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