



# ANNUAL REPORT 2014

JESUIT  
REFUGEE  
SERVICE  
EUROPE





The Jesuit Refugee Service is an international Catholic organisation established in 1980 by Fr Pedro Arrupe SJ. Its mission is to accompany, serve and defend the cause of forcibly displaced people.

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Published: May 2015  
This report covers the period January to  
December 2014

**Cover photo:** A refugee from Congo (L) and a social worker at a JRS Italy accommodation centre for refugee families in Rome.

© JRS ITALY - CENTRO ASTALLI

**Back cover photo:** A four-year-old boy from Guinea-Bissau who is being assisted by JRS Portugal. He lives in the Pedro Arrupe Centre with his mother. They came to Portugal under Health Protocols agreed between Portugal and Guinea, but still found themselves in a very vulnerable situation.

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## OPEN THE DOORS

Last year, my predecessor Michael Schöpf SJ called on all of us “to engage in everyday acts of hospitality and to show our political leaders that another way of leadership is entirely possible.” What is hospitality if not to open the doors and to give access and protection to those who desperately need it?

European states are quick to label ‘illegal’ the way in which 274,000 persons entered their territory in 2014.

Three times more people sought protection in Europe than in 2013. Most refugees try to reach Europe by sea, but many never make it. Those lucky enough to survive often end up on the streets in destitution or held in detention centres, sometimes for years. Syrian refugees are the most numerous, but there are also Somalis, Eritreans, Congolese and many other nationalities fleeing conflict and persecution.

To keep asylum-seekers in detention facilities, behind closed doors, is no

response to the request for protection and never respects the dignity of the person. The acceptance of homelessness and denial of basic social rights also fails our shared humanity. This is unanimously voiced by JRS members accompanying these people in the UK, Malta, Ireland and Belgium.

We must design and implement safe and legal access to protection in Europe. That is: open the doors to avoid life-threatening journeys and to put smugglers out of business. And this is a concern for JRS in Greece, Romania, Italy and Spain.

This is the strength of JRS in Europe to accompany and to give a voice to the refugees at the doors of Europe, as we did. As we did with our ‘Rescued - what next?’ report published in October and presented to the European Parliament.

Either at the borders, or at the very threshold of our homes “opening one’s door to the displaced is not only



a Christian value, but a human one that recognises through a personal encounter the claim that all of us have to be welcomed” said Fr General Nicolás at the 34th anniversary of JRS. Hospitality is not only a personal commitment; it is also a political stance.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Jm Carrière'.

Jean-Marie Carrière SJ  
Regional Director, JRS Europe  
May 2015

## Regional coordination

Based in Brussels, JRS Europe facilitates the network of JRS country offices through common planning and project work, advocating for refugees' rights at the EU-level and ensuring their voices are heard by policymakers.

The JRS Europe team saw new collaborators joining in 2014: Jean-Marie Carrière, SJ, from France, replaced Michael Schöpf, SJ as the regional director; Oscar Spooner, from UK, took up duties as the new communications officer in May.

- Specific accompaniment was provided to JRS South East Europe, with three visits and important work in terms of organisation; administrative as well as strategic.
- Visits to Greece laid the foundation for a new office in a country where asylum-seekers suffer very difficult conditions.
- During the Annual General Meeting, hosted by JRS Romania in Bucharest, a special workshop on accompaniment ran together with two members of the JRS International office.
- Advocacy, linked with communication, resulted in two successful operations:
  - At the end of September, the brochure 'Rescued, what next?' realised after a fruitful visit to Catania, in the south of Italy, was published, and publicised through two events: in the European Parliament, with the participation of a refugee from Sicily; and a public event in the Beguinage Church in Brussels.
  - The JRS advocacy officers in collaboration with the European Christian group of NGOs published a four-page document 'Recommendations for the development of safe and legal ways to protection in Europe' which was widely circulated in both policy and media fields.

## Policy and advocacy

Much of our work focused on the Mediterranean refugee crisis in 2014. Even in the stormy autumn and winter months, in the absence of full-scale search and rescue, migrants continued to risk their lives to reach safety in Europe. We advocated on behalf of the refugees fleeing terrible violence and abuses in the Middle East and Africa, consistently urging policymakers to recognise the scale of the crisis and put solidarity and compassion into practice.

- Together with six other Christian organisations we lobbied for the creation of safe and legal ways to Europe. The legal instruments such as humanitarian visas, resettlement and family reunification already exist, but they must be adapted to the current situation and enable people to apply for protection in Europe smoothly and safely.
- Our report 'Rescued – What Next?' found forced migrants struggling to make ends meet in Sicily and facing huge obstacles to rebuilding their lives. We urged EU Member States to support Italy in improving reception conditions as well as in developing faster and fairer asylum procedures.
- Issouf, a refugee from Burkina Faso, spoke at the report launch at the European Parliament before assembled MEPs, journalists and civil society members.
- Together with our Spanish partners, we lobbied the European Commission to take a firm stance on human rights violations at the borders of the Spanish enclaves Ceuta and Melilla in Morocco.
- For the second year running JRS Europe co-chaired the Consultative Forum on Fundamental Rights at the EU border agency Frontex. Whilst states have the right to manage their borders it is essential that there are effective safeguards for persons fleeing war, persecution and rights abuses to enter territory and apply for protection.

## Projects

Our Europe-wide projects focused on serving the most vulnerable groups of forced migrants. At the same time our projects promoted hospitality and social inclusion. The associated advocacy raised awareness about refugees and encouraged more face-to-face encounters between migrants and locals.

- JRS detention visitors attended the 8th Detention Visitors Support Group (DVSG) in Brussels. The 3-day programme 'Human Rights and Detention' included legal training as well as sessions on communications and advocacy.
- Together with national offices and donors JRS Europe developed and refined two new major project proposals to be submitted in 2015:
  - Communities of Hospitality which aims to support community-based initiatives for forced migrants as well as grassroots advocacy.
  - Protection at External Borders will monitor human rights implementation at the external borders of the EU whilst also providing services and accompaniment to migrants at these borders.
- The ADMIDE programme covered a wide range of advocacy activities for asylum seekers in detention and at the borders of the European Union. Alternatives to detention were consistently promoted whilst conditions for migrants at Europe's external borders were closely researched and reported on numerous field trips to Greece, Italy, Morocco and Spain.

## Communications

Communications continued to grow in 2014 as JRS Europe highlighted the voices of refugees across print, web and audio-visual media. Strategies for disseminating the key reports of the year 'Beyond Imagination' and 'Rescued: What Next?' were successfully developed and implemented. These colourful brochures with their photographs and powerful human stories brought refugee issues to new audiences. Finally, media outreach work was further developed and JRS Europe remained a key reference point for all refugee and asylum developments in Europe.

- The new website, launched in May, with its newsreel and link with the JRS global network has allowed us to swiftly react to refugee news and policy developments: [www.jrseurope.org](http://www.jrseurope.org)
- JRS actively supported and disseminated the messages of the campaign 'Europe Act Now #HelpSyriasRefugees' coordinated by the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE).
- Following on from the taskforce, the Communications Strategy Group held its first meeting in the autumn. Communications officers from across the network came together to plan joint initiatives.
- In November, JRS offices in Europe issued a joint press release as the Pope again called on Europe's leaders to do more for refugees in his speech to the European Parliament in Strasbourg. The press release was well-received in both national and international media.
- Over the year we connected with 1,000 new followers on Twitter @JRSEurope.



JRS members of staff from across Europe at the Regional  
Coordination Meeting in Bucharest, Romania.  
© GABRIEL ILIAS / JRS ROMANIA



**BELGIUM**  
**FRANCE**  
**GERMANY**  
**IRELAND**  
**ITALY**  
**MALTA**  
**PORTUGAL**  
**ROMANIA**  
**SLOVENIA**  
**SOUTHEAST EUROPE**  
**UNITED KINGDOM**

## **OVERVIEW OF JRS COUNTRY OFFICES**

## BELGIUM

### SUPPORTING FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

JRS staff continued to regularly visit migrants held in detention centres in Belgium. At the same time more focus was given to supporting children and their parents held in the so-called return homes. Families are sent to these homes pending deportation.

The housing units are spread across five villages in Belgium. In principle families can leave the units, as long as one parent remains on the site. Nevertheless, isolation remains a big problem and JRS realised that in order to provide quality accompaniment for the families more efforts were needed.

### ACCOMPANIMENT

- In the detention centre of Vottem 74 persons were visited, 130 in Steenokkerzeel, 300 in Bruges, 66 in Merksplas

### SERVICE

- In the Return Houses 50 families were visited and provided with support

### ADVOCACY

- The JRS Belgium team responded to 16 invitations this year to present our work, to clarify our positions and to testify about our visits in the detention centers.

A two-year project was launched in September 2014 to accompany and serve the migrants in return homes. They face a particularly difficult experience of transition.

JRS evaluates the return practices of the Aliens Office, in particular the cases of more vulnerable groups. The development of initiatives to support children is given special attention. JRS visitors are carrying out an evaluation of the housing units and will present a report of the work in 2016.

### TESTIMONY

Barry, a Guinean man, contacted us with the story of his cousin, Mamadou: "My cousin was 16 when he came to Belgium to ask for asylum. He was accommodated in a centre for minors. When his asylum request was rejected, he sometimes stayed with me. One day, after

he had turned 18, he was arrested in Brussels. From the moment he was detained he became depressed. Over a period of one month, the centre allowed him only once to speak to a psychologist.

*When I saw him myself I cried, because he was not like this before. The police hit him before they brought him to the detention centre. I'm quite sure that they mistreated him in the detention centre too. He said he felt tortured. I still feel very bad, not because of the fact that Belgium expels people, but because of the way this happens. Both times I visited my cousin he wanted to walk outside with me after the visit, but the guards said I had to leave because otherwise he would attack them."*

Finally, Mamadou was deported. According to Barry: "He still does not eat, he is traumatised."



The JRS Belgium team pose for a photo during a meeting in Brussels. © JRS BELGIUM



# FRANCE

## CULTURE OF ENCOUNTER

JRS France started a new project called Welcome Jeunes (Youth Welcome) in Paris. The project brought together young French adults with young asylum seekers and refugees. Twice per month the group got together to cook, discuss and share. Through workshops and collective actions the group exercised and promoted their cultural rights.

Awareness raising evenings were thought out, prepared and run by asylum seekers and refugees. The theme chosen by the group was "Tell me about your country". This action aimed to raise consciousness in civil society and enable a deeper understanding of the countries of asylum seekers and refugees beyond prejudices and folklore. Asylum seekers and refugees also facilitated art workshops, cooking classes, a sewing course, and an introduction to meditation.

Welcome Jeunes is a real partnership with asylum seekers and refugees because all the actions are thought out by them and completed with them. It builds upon the success of the Welcome Project in which volunteers from the community provide accommodation for asylum seekers in their own homes. Two short videos were produced to mark the fifth anniversary of the project and can be viewed on the JRS Youtube channel.

### TESTIMONY

*"For me, finding JRS France was like a miracle. As an asylum seeker we are forced to leave our motherland and to look for a new life. When I came to JRS people took the time to explain to me my situation in a friendly atmosphere. Through JRS I realized that there were other people in a similar situation and that I was not alone. I had the chance to meet many people not only from other countries but also from my homeland."*



A refugee (L) and an asylum seeker (R) both from Bangladesh help each other with their French studies whilst on a summer retreat as part of the Welcome Youth project. © JRS FRANCE

*In JRS I feel like I can begin a new life, through the Welcome Project each family and each person is a new chance to better understand life and culture in France, to improve, step by step, my French. I'm also very active in Welcome Jeunes, I'm facilitating art workshops. As a cartoonist I can continue to create and to put my abilities at the service of others."*  
Ali Jamshidi Far, cartoonist and journalist from Iran. Ali was hosted in the Welcome Project and took part in many JRS activities.

## ACCOMPANIMENT

- About 480 people (asylum seekers and members of French society) came together as part of the Welcome Jeunes project.
- Through the Welcome Project more than 100 asylum seekers were hosted by local families and religious communities.

## SERVICE

- Once a week JRS France organised French language courses facilitated by a teacher in FFL (French as a Foreign Language). Language workshops were also given by students at the university of Political Sciences in Paris.

## ADVOCACY

- In the framework of Asylum Law reform, JRS France proposed amendments in some key points such as guarantees for fair procedures, accommodation, integration, right to work and access to professional training. Some amendments were accepted by the National Assembly.

## GERMANY

### PROTESTS, PROTECTION AND HOSPITALITY

In public, JRS took a clear stand against racist protests that erupted around Germany. The protests often targeted recently established accommodation facilities for refugees. Although thousands protested, even greater numbers stood up in solidarity for refugees. Many people contacted JRS expressing a desire to help, as well as parishes offering church asylum.

In the state of Bavaria, JRS offered advice and financial support to about 70 parishes sheltering asylum seekers from deportation. Most of these people are facing deportation to another European country but have substantial reasons not to leave Germany as they have suffered homelessness and/or violence in other countries before.

The number of refugees in church asylum rose sharply in 2014 indicating that the existing legal framework was failing the needs of refugees. JRS offered support and advice in individual cases and continued to lobby for a reform of the Dublin Regulation on the political scale. In July 2014, the European Court of Justice delivered a ruling on several cases that were supported by JRS. Refugees in detention awaiting deportation had filed charges because they were held in normal prisons in Germany,

although a European Directive requires separate detention facilities. Ending the detention of asylum seekers in regular prisons is a significant improvement for those who are submitted to detention.

### TESTIMONY

*"Because I have given my fingerprints in Italy, I am now in prison in Germany. All I want is a normal life – to work, to live somewhere, maybe to have a family. But the Dublin Regulation is a war on refugees."* – A young Eritrean held in a Berlin detention centre.

JRS organised a lawyer for him and he was released from detention. His current whereabouts and legal situation is unknown to JRS.

### ACCOMPANIMENT

- Visited 1,000 asylum seekers and migrants detained in Berlin, Brandenburg and Bavaria and advised or supported 100 persons in church asylum.

### ADVOCACY

- Brought 160 cases to court, leading to the release 130 people from detention.

### HARDSHIP COMMISSION

- Advised more than 2,000 people on their residence status. Brought 80 cases to the Hardship Commission of Berlin and to the Minister of Interior. Residence permits were granted to about 40% of these cases.

A young Afghan family in church asylum in Munich. © SJ-BILD



## IRELAND

### HIGH LEVEL DIALOGUE

Years awaiting a final determination on applications for asylum continued to be the biggest issue facing asylum seekers in Ireland in 2014. Building on the findings within JRS Ireland's policy report 'No End in Sight' - which identified structural barriers in the asylum system - direct dialogue with policymakers was intensified.

In October, the Irish government established a working group to recommend improvements on living conditions within the Direct Provision system; identify enhanced supports for protection applicants; and propose improvements to the processing of applications with particular regard to the length of the process. Eugene Quinn, JRS Ireland Director, was appointed to the Working Group and immediately established a reference group of asylum seekers with whom JRS works to help inform its advocacy priorities.

Direct Provision also regularly featured in the media during 2014 due to incidents of protest, enforced transfers, hunger strikes and calls for the closure of accommodation centres throughout the country.

JRS Ireland ensured service delivery remained consistent and maintained a presence on the ground in 10 accommodation centres as a priority response for asylum seekers living in such stressful and volatile circumstances.

### TESTIMONY

*"For [seven] years I have lived in the same shared room, in the same bed of the same direct provision centre – years spent in limbo!"* Ibrahim used to be a computer technician, but his skills have gradually become outdated.

As an asylum seeker in Ireland he has no right to work and there is a de-facto barrier to further education, except for basic language and computer courses. He mourns the lost opportunities and fears the consequences of this de-skilling for the future: *"These wasted years doing nothing. What is the chance of getting a job after leaving the system? What would I put on my CV for these years?"*

As a single man in his early forties, Ibrahim emphasises an often overlooked but hugely challenging aspect of living long term in Direct Provision: its incompatibility with forming relationships and as a result, the experience of great loneliness.

*"Life in direct provision can be so lonely. How can I develop a relationship with a woman? Even after years I always have to share my room with other males. There is no privacy."*

Children from direct provision centres play football at the JRS Ireland Summer Programme Sports Day.  
© JRS IRELAND

### ACCOMPANIMENT

- Weekly visits to women detained in the Dóchas Centre (a prison); accompanied more than 50 individuals on a weekly basis in 10 Direct Provision centres.

### SERVICEE

- Homework and literacy clubs in Dublin and Limerick; organisation of intercultural events and integration activities; provision of transitional training to long term residents of Direct Provision; participation of 149 children in JRS Ireland's Summer Programme.

### ADVOCACY

- New JRS Ireland website launched featuring a streaming news blog, downloadable resources, statistics and educational resources.



## ITALY

## ACROSS THE SEA

Italian officials reported that in 2014 more than 160,000 migrants were rescued at sea. JRS along with other NGOs and UNHCR consistently called for a full-scale European search and rescue mission to take over from Italy's Mare Nostrum as it was ended in the autumn. Our warnings that more migrants would drown at sea without a proper rescue mission, seemingly went unheeded as solidarity in Europe was found lacking yet again.

During the year JRS promoted intensive advocacy and communication activity on this issue. On many occasions JRS urged Italian and EU institutions to adopt a unified strategy to save migrant lives at sea and to establish humanitarian channels to allow victims of war and conflict to safely obtain international protection.

Even after they arrive, forced migrants face a long process to obtain effective protection. After landing on southern Italian shores, many later become invisible in Italian cities. Rome is a second landing place for forced migrants. A shortage of accommodation places and complex bureaucracy are just some of the huge challenges that they face.

*"Empty convents shouldn't be turned into hotels to make money: they exist for the flesh of Christ, they exist for the refugees."* Following the invitation of Pope Francis during his visit to Centro Astalli (September 2013), some religious communities

opened their doors to refugees in Rome. During 2014, JRS Italy ran a pilot project where responsibility for the reception of refugees was shared between religious communities. By the end of the year 20 refugees were hosted in 7 religious communities in Rome.

## TESTIMONY

Antony, aged 28, and his family fled Kenya after a gang of armed men attacked them at their home. His 12-year-old sister and 92-year-old grandmother were badly harassed and traumatised. Fortunately, his mother, the person that the men wanted to attack because she worked for Kenya's security services wasn't at home at the time.

*"After such a traumatic event, we lived our lives in fear, sleeping in shifts at night, while the local police guarded our compound, we stood watch too. The investigations were going nowhere; and after four months of this, we took the decision as a family to leave the country that we had called home for all our lives into an uncertain future."*

*We arrived in Italy on 21 January 2014 and the superior general of the Franciscan capuchins offered us accommodation at their monastery San-Lorenzo di Brindisi.*

*We have been living with them for one year and two months now. They have helped us not only by offering us a roof over our heads but also a place to heal our inner wounds by providing us with counselling and by allowing us to be part of their family."*

An Italian language class for new arrivals in Catania. © OSCAR SPOONER / JRS EUROPE



## ACCOMPANIMENT

- Assisted 34,000 refugees and asylum seekers in Rome, Vicenza, Trento, Catania and Palermo

## EDUCATION

- 972 people attended Italian language classes. Many of them had access to professional training to have the possibility to find a job.

## OUTREACH

- Every day 450 volunteers (lawyers, doctors, students, teachers etc.) and 49 staff members offer their time and expertise to asylum seekers and refugees to make them feel at home in Italy.



## MALTA

### REACHING OUT

The school outreach programme continues to grow in strength as it brings refugees to meet pupils in Malta. When children get to meet and speak with refugees they realise that they are normal people who often have amazing stories to tell.

The children's book 'Kidane' (published by JRS Malta in 2012) based on the real story of an Eritrean refugee who escaped to Malta was made into a play and widely performed in schools across the island. The main actors were refugees. In light of this very positive experience, last year, JRS Malta put up another theatre production called 'SOS: Stories of Somalia.'

On the advocacy level, JRS Malta published two reports in 2014. 'Beyond Imagination' documents the experiences of asylum seekers arriving to Malta from Libya. All of those interviewed described a life of constant fear and insecurity and many described horrific abuses in Libya's unofficial detention centres. JRS highlighted that asylum seekers must not be returned to Libya for any reason whatsoever because their life would be at risk.

The second report, 'Care in Captivity', explains how the mental health needs of detainees

are being met and evaluates the extent to which they receive the care and protection they need. It concludes with a number of recommendations.

### TESTIMONY

Farah, one of the migrants interviewed for the 'Beyond Imagination' report:  
*"The question: 'why didn't you seek asylum in Libya?' is disgusting for me, it makes a mockery of what we have gone through. Where am I supposed to seek asylum in a place that doesn't even have institutions?"*

### ACCOMPANY

- Over 50 vulnerable persons in detention identified and provided with social support; over 500 asylum seekers and migrants cared for in the community.

### SERVICE

- Provided asylum information to over 500 newly arrived migrants; 57 individuals received psychological support; mental health educational sessions for 130 detainees; provided legal services to over 200 people.

### ADVOCACY

- Organized awareness-raising activities in 41 schools reaching 4,000 children and teenagers.

Participants, actors and producers of the theatre production 'SOS: Stories of Somalia.' The play was staged as part of REACT, a project partly financed by the European Refugee Fund. © JRS MALTA



## PORTUGAL

### GIVING HOPE

JRS Portugal welcomed 14 resettled refugees, including five children, under the Portuguese resettlement programme co-financed by the European Refugee Fund. These refugees came from diverse countries such as Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Senegal and Iran. The project was named “Seeds of Hope”.

A specific programme to host and integrate these refugees into Portuguese society was developed. This involved language training, accompanying them to public and private institutions, providing psychosocial support, as well as training for employment. The programme runs until June 2015 and JRS Portugal will continue to accompany and serve these refugees as they integrate into Portuguese society.

Training in vocational skills was also offered to help migrants enter the labour market. For the second year running, the ‘House in Order’ project trained a group of migrants in domestic services. Two new courses were also launched: one trained migrant women in the field of the elderly care and the other project provided young migrants with the necessary skills and confidence to find work.

On 10th December, International Human Rights Day, JRS-Portugal was awarded a commemorative gold medal for its work with forced migrants by the Portuguese parliament.



### TESTIMONY

After a fire at his flat, Pedro from Guinea-Bissau lost his wife. In his subsequent grief and distress he also lost his job.

*“In February 2014, I came to JRS for help and they gave me shelter in the Pedro Arrupe Centre,” says Pedro.*

Accompanied by a multidisciplinary team, which includes psychological support, Pedro gradually rebuilt his life. Thanks to his determination and with the help of JRS he made steady progress.

*“I started working in September and I’m enjoying it. I try to work as much as I can in order to thrive. I will continue doing that and I will not give up on my dream of study. I have hope and faith that everything will be all right.”*

Participants of the ‘House in Order’ project pose for a photo. © JRS PORTUGAL

### ACCOMPANIMENT

- Assisted 4,250 migrants during 2014.

### SERVICE

- Accommodated 55 vulnerable migrants in the Pedro Arrupe Centre; psychosocial services to 163 migrants in detention; language and professional training to 135 migrants. JRS coordinated and was helped by 55 volunteers.

### ADVOCACY

- Lobbied the government to create broader and fairer access to the health service for migrants.

## ROMANIA

### MY PLACE

From January onwards the new hospitality project of JRS Romania went from strength to strength. The multicultural centre, My Place, was created as a space where people from different countries and cultures living in Romania can meet, share and make friends, irrespective of their legal status and the stories they have behind them.

The multi-purpose rooms offered a range of services such as tea room, internet cafe, courses and workshops. Many events were organised together with migrants from diverse countries like Nigeria, Syria and Peru. The Filipino Independence Day was celebrated as was Angola National Day, offering a chance for cultural exchange. There were also sightseeing tours in Bucharest and culinary workshops dedicated to different cuisines. Courses covered everything from yoga, self-defence, dance and make-up to English and German language classes.

Since its creation around 800 people visited My Place and attended the activities organised, becoming co-creators of the project. Together with the staff and volunteers involved My Place became a community where everyone was always welcome. The trust and confidence established helped some to ask for more help and advice (legal or social) and thus the hospitality was extended to friendly and professional guidance when needed.

### TESTIMONY

*"My name is Samuel, I am 23 and I come from the French Guinea. I am a student at ASE Bucharest, studying Economics and I've been here for 2 years and 5 months now.*

*What is great about My Place is the fact that they are always proposing new courses, including language ones, or other events. I really liked the fact that I had the chance to meet with Romanians, and to go the museum or take a tour of Bucharest, or go to visit other cities in Romania.*

*This is very important to us foreigners because we get to know Romania and the people that are great. I also like the way they organized My Place, always nice to us and really making us want to join more and more activities at the centre."*

### ACCOMPANIMENT

- Information, assistance and legal representation for more than 1,000 asylum seekers; 165 in detention. Counselling and social assistance for more than 550 persons with a form of protection.

### SERVICE

- Housing services, legal and social assistance, and employment help.

### ADVOCACY

- Awareness and information campaigns: on the electronic platform Stock of Good organized by Romanian Commercial Bank (BCR) to support refugees arriving via the Black Sea; taking part in the campaign organized by the European Network on Statelessness.

Festivities during the Halloween party at My Place. © JRS ROMANIA



## SLOVENIA

## SUPPORTING CHILDREN

JRS Slovenia continued to be present in the asylum home in Ljubljana, organising different activities. JRS ran a kindergarten for small children as a very important response to a concrete need. Usually, up to four children participated in the kindergarten activity. JRS also offered several creative workshops for the school children in the asylum home. JRS also offered psychosocial support to a great number of vulnerable people.

JRS took part in regular coordination meetings in the asylum home. At these meetings different members of the staff met with members of NGOs also working in the asylum home. Such meetings – where both sides can listen to each other – are a very good opportunity to tackle an array of challenges that can arise.

For many years, JRS Slovenia, has been visiting the detention centre in Postojna, 50km south of Ljubljana, on a weekly basis. Here, JRS has offered psychosocial support, legal advice and pastoral care. The main focus has been to ease the lives of the detainees as far as possible. The work of JRS Slovenia is appreciated very much by the staff, as it is the only NGO that regularly visits the detention centre. Before Christmas, JRS coordinated a

## ACCOMPANIMENT

- Weekly visits to the detention centre in Postojna giving psycho-social support, legal advice and pastoral care.

## SERVICE

- Daily consultations with people at the JRS office providing advice from legal issues to life in Slovenia.

## ADVOCACY

- Monthly radio show called “Building a more open society” about migrant and refugee issues; writing articles and giving various conferences and lectures.

concert where the children with their parents sang several songs and played on different instruments. It was a joyful time for all.

## TESTIMONY

Daniel was attacked several times by a group of men in Kosovo. He fled with his family in 2008 but was unable to find safety in Serbia and then Switzerland. Their second attempt to escape persecution brought them to Slovenia. Here, Daniel, his wife and three children were detained for several months.

*“It was like a prison. It was particularly difficult*



JRS Slovenia director Robin Schweiger SJ (R) sits with the kindergarten group in the asylum centre. © JRS SLOVENIA

*time for the children to be in the detention centre. Often they asked me: ‘what have we done to be here in this prison?’”*

Eventually, the family was transferred to the asylum home where conditions are better. Now, the family is waiting for the solution of their case. For the children, things are better in the asylum home. The two boys like to go to school and they speak Slovenian well. The youngest daughter is still with the family in the asylum home. She is a faithful member of the kindergarten run by JRS Slovenia.



## SE EUROPE (CROATIA, MACEDONIA, KOSOVO)

### MAKING A DIFFERENCE

In Croatia, JRS was present at the reception centre for men in Zagreb and aside from accompaniment, provided a variety of services, such as internet communication facilities. Representatives of the government invited JRS to provide expertise at the reception centre for vulnerable groups.

The team in Macedonia continued to implement an array of services. A very important service was to help family members or close friends of tragically deceased asylum seekers to organise funerals. This involved being in contact with civil and religious institutions since most of the asylum seekers who died in Macedonia were Muslims.

Thanks to good relations with government officials, JRS was present in the Vizbegovo asylum centre outside Skopje and provided a range of services, including kindergarten and medical care. Because

of the work here, the JRS team was granted access to the Gazibaba detention centre which is a great breakthrough compared to previous years.

The assistance project for landmine survivors in Kosovo, came to a successful conclusion in December. The project assisted young female landmine survivors in their rehabilitation and access to education, work and healthcare.

In Kosovo, JRS continues to advocate for access to visit asylum seekers in the new detention centre, scheduled to open in 2015.

### TESTIMONY

*"I have nothing but my children and now I lost my only son. If it wasn't for you he would be lost forever, he would be forgotten,"* said Amir, an Afghan man to the JRS team in Macedonia. After the death of his wife, Amir sold everything he had so he and his five children could try to find a

better and safer life somewhere where he could provide for all of them.

Following the steps of many others, Amir and his family were trying to reach Western Europe by walking along the rail tracks leading north out of Macedonia. The tracks offer a straight surface to walk on through treacherous terrain. One night the family were resting on the tracks when tragedy struck. Amir's eldest child and only son, Farooq, was hit by a train and killed. Amir covered his son's body with stones he found next to the tracks, and he and his four daughters continued on their journey to Skopje.

JRS helped the family to arrange a Muslim burial for Farooq. He was laid to rest in a Muslim cemetery at the entrance of the city of Veles. Since then the four girls and their father have been living in the Skopje reception centre for foreigners. JRS continues to support them.

### ACCOMPANIMENT

- Visits to asylum seekers in detention centres.

### SERVICE

- Psychosocial and medical support, education and pastoral care.

### ADVOCACY

- Work with government authorities and civil society to improve conditions for asylum seekers and migrants.



Asylum seekers make use of the internet in the computer room run by JRS in the Zagreb reception centre.  
© JRS SEE

## UNITED KINGDOM

### SHINING A LIGHT

JRS participated in a landmark cross-party parliamentary inquiry into the use of immigration detention in the UK. Through its long experience of visiting detention centres and accompanying detainees JRS made a detailed submission to the inquiry. The JRS office in London hosted one of the evidence sessions and provided a live link so members of parliament could speak with 3 detainees directly.

Refugees, staff and volunteers held a night-time vigil to honour individuals who had lost their lives in detention. The darkness and candles of the event perhaps symbolised how even though the lives of detainees are often hidden, with compassion and solidarity, it is possible to bring their stories to light.

Creative activities at the day centre had a strong focus in 2014 with a photography exhibition held in central London at the Lumen United Reform Church and Gallery. Eleven refugees took part in a 12-week photography course and pointed the camera at their experience of living in destitution.

The 90 plus images on display were a testimony to their teamwork, creativity and generosity in sharing aspects of their own lives. A selection from this exhibition is now available on-line as a resource for churches, community groups and campaigners.

Participants review their photos during the photography project. © JRS UK/FOTOSYNTHESIS

### TESTIMONY

Sebastien looks back on his experience of producing the images for the photography show. *"Photography is like a message from the future. Through this workshop, I can see I still have a future. When you are in detention, for example, your life is nothing, you cannot move. Life is like that here for us. You can't see outside, but from this experience with JRS you can move from there.*

*When people came to the gallery, for me it was a good experience. Before this, as an asylum seeker, I did not feel I had a right to speak. Now I was given this right. People were interested in the project, in my pictures. They came to ask me: why did you take this photo? I met many*

*people, new people. When I learnt that people wanted to meet me, to know about my life, I learned how to speak."*

### ACCOMPANIMENT

- Weekly day centre for 200 refugees and asylum seekers; 50% took part in an extra creative activities or peer support groups.

### SERVICE

- 170 detainees; 90 of which accessed support through Legal Liaison Service. Weekly chaplaincy service in two Immigration Removal Centres.

### ADVOCACY

- Played active role in NGO and church-based campaigns and forums.



Brother Salvu (R) and lawyer Roxanne Borg (2-R) of JRS Malta are welcomed by three Eritrean women into their container home during a visit to Hal Far open centre in Malta.  
© OSCAR SPOONER / JRS EUROPE







A young migrant sleeps on a bench outside the railway station in Catania, Sicily. Many forced migrants fall through protection gaps and end up living on the streets in Italy.

© OSCAR SPOONER / IRS EUROPE



**APPENDIX I**  
**THE STRUCTURE OF JRS IN EUROPE**

**APPENDIX II**  
**DIRECTORY OF JRS IN EUROPE**

**APPENDIX III**  
**FINANCIAL SUMMARY**

**APPENDICES**

## The 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 recognised as a refugee-assisting NGO by the EU institutions and by several states within Europe and beyond.

JRS Europe is a region of the Jesuit Refugee Service worldwide. In Europe, it is organised as a project of the Conference of European Provincials and an inter-provincial apostolic work of the Society of Jesus, covering 20 Jesuit provinces. National coordinators and directors answer to their respective provincials and for certain matters directly to the JRS Europe regional director.

The directors of the JRS country offices meet twice annually for regional coordination meetings, which facilitates strategic planning for the region.

### PERMANENT STAFF, MAY 2015

Jean-Marie Carrière SJ Regional Director  
 Stefan Kessler Senior Policy and Advocacy Officer  
 Olga Siebert Advocacy Officer  
 Carola Jimenez-Asenjo Project Development Coordinator  
 Davide Oddo Project Development Officer  
 Oscar Spooner Communications Officer  
 Isabelle de Sazilly Administrator

### STAFF WHO LEFT IN 2014

Michael Schöpf SJ Regional Director (left in November)  
 Philip Amaral Advocacy and Communications Coordinator (left in May)

### VOLUNTEERS, TEMPORARY STAFF

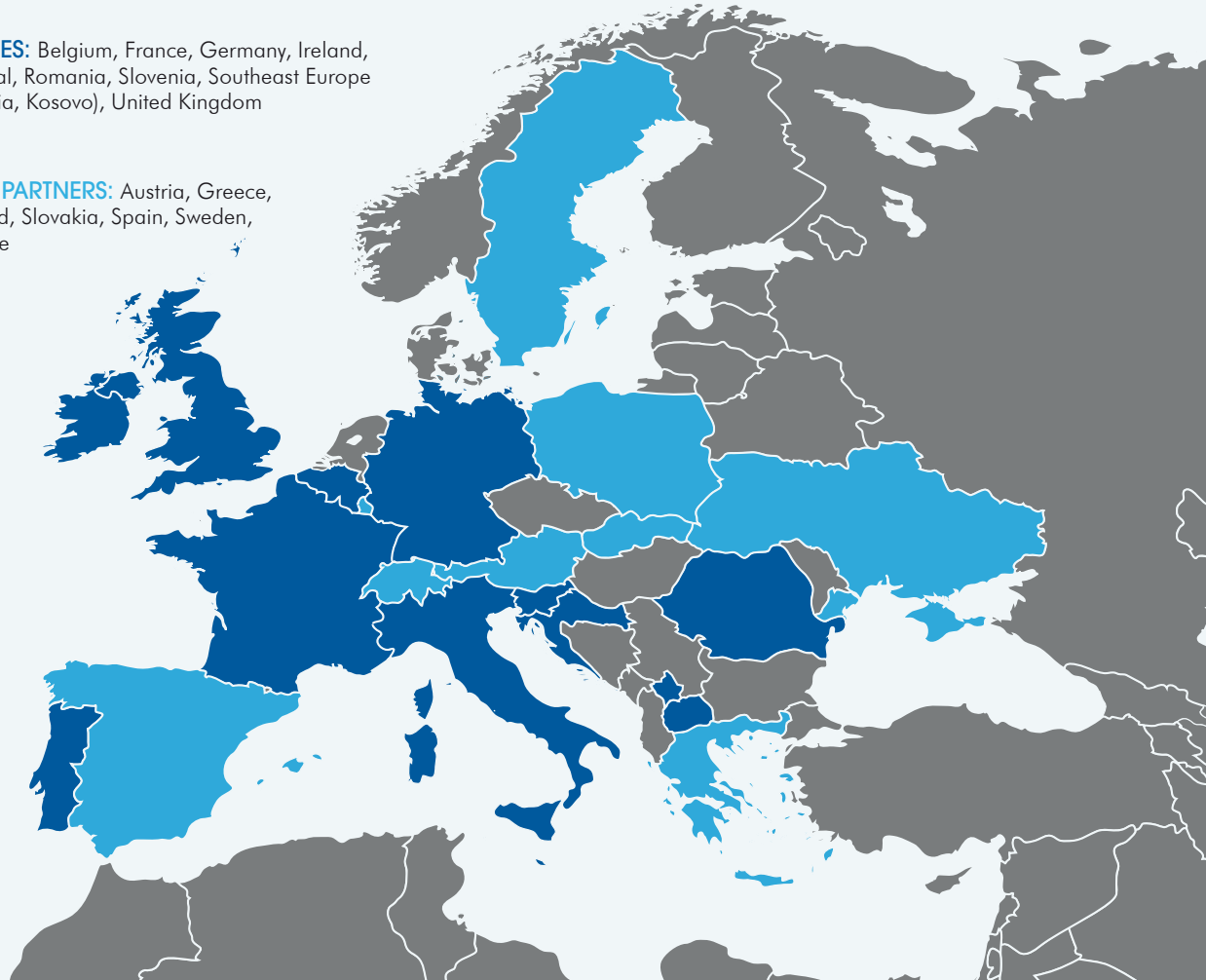
Joseph Poncin Administrative Assistant  
 Gianluigi Campogrande Advocacy Assistant  
 Antonio Bohorquez SJ Assistant to the Regional Director

### ADVISORY COUNCIL

Andre Costa-Jorge Director, JRS Portugal  
 Katrine Camilleri Director, JRS Malta  
 Gianfranco Matarazzo SJ Provincial Italy  
 Jose-Ignacio Garcia-Jimenez SJ Director, JESC  
 Luis Arancibia Director, Entreculturas

**COUNTRY OFFICES:** Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Southeast Europe (Croatia, Macedonia, Kosovo), United Kingdom

**CONTACTS AND PARTNERS:** Austria, Greece, Luxembourg, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine



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*Regional Director*

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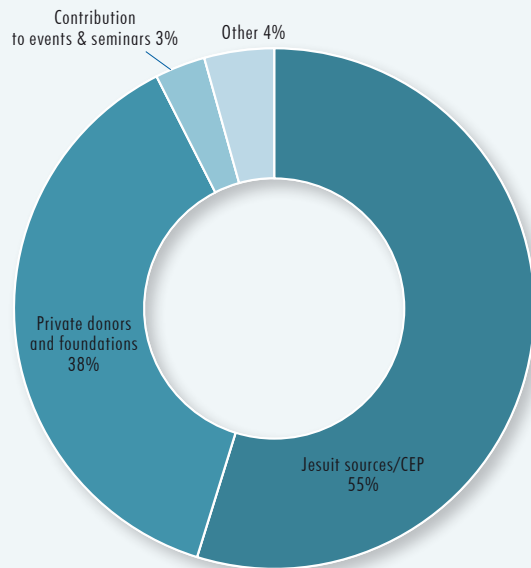
ukraine@jrs.net

**David Nazar SJ**

*Director*

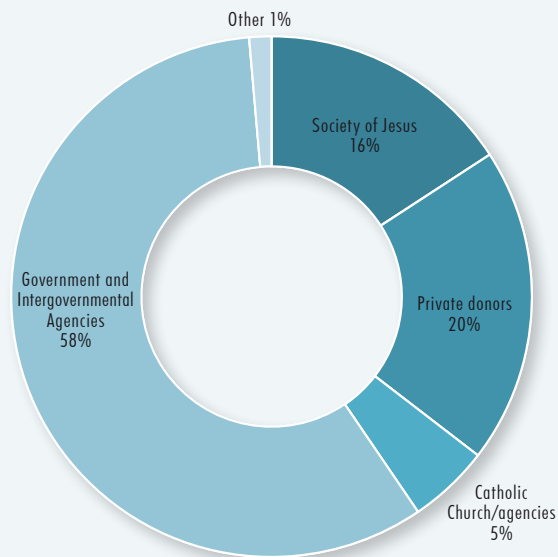
## Financial summary

### REGIONAL OFFICE - INCOME 2014 (EURO)



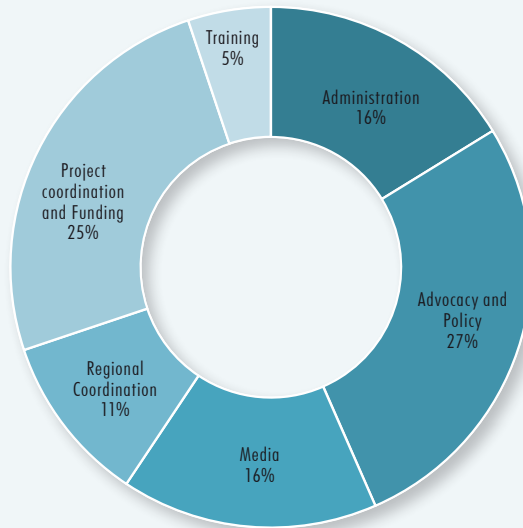
Jesuit sources/CEP	179,858
Private donors and foundations	123,900
Contribution to events & seminars	10,278
Other	14,236
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>328,272</b>

### COUNTRY OFFICES - INCOME



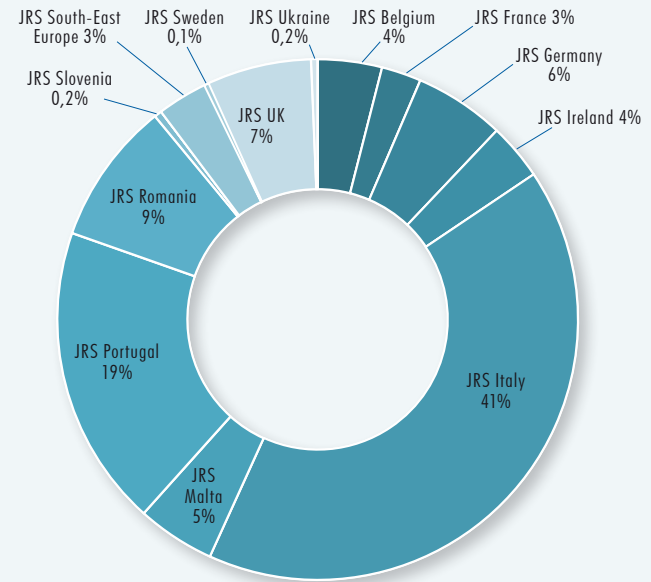
Society of Jesus	1,033,958
Private donors	1,282,730
Catholic Church/agencies	330,256
Government and Intergovernmental Agencies	3,800,280
Other	90,368
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,537,591</b>

### REGIONAL OFFICE - EXPENDITURE



Administration	55,711
Advocacy and Policy	93,394
Media	54,713
Regional Coordination	36,018
Project coordination and Funding	85,855
Training	17,668
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>343,359</b>

### COUNTRY OFFICES - EXPENDITURE



JRS Belgium	253,770
JRS France	156,900
JRS Germany	357,705
JRS Ireland	223,307
JRS Italy	2,624,000
JRS Malta	308,546
JRS Portugal	1,193,591
JRS Romania	580,042
JRS Slovenia	14,000
JRS South-East Europe	203,579
JRS Sweden	463
JRS UK	439,690
JRS Ukraine	10,794
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,366,387</b>



[www.jrseurope.org](http://www.jrseurope.org)

ACCOMPANY  
SERVE  
ADVOCATE