



# ANNUAL REPORT 2017

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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Cover photo: Saddam (L), a refugee from Syria, gets his first surfing lesson from Miguel in Nazare, Portugal.

© I GET YOU VIDEO: DENIS BOSNIC / JRS EUROPE

Back cover photo: A Syrian couple look out to sea from Nazare, Portugal.

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## FOREWORD

Over the course of 2017, JRS programmes, services and outreach had a meaningful impact on the lives of thousands of refugees in Europe.

From psychosocial and pastoral support in detention centres to legal counselling, vocational training, education for children and adults, and many social and cultural activities, JRS continued its mission to accompany, serve and advocate for and with refugees.

In addition to day-to-day services, JRS national offices took part in three major pan-European projects in 2017, coordinated by JRS Europe.

Firstly, I Get You, co-funded by the European Union, and focussed on refugee inclusion across nine countries concluded in December with a final report. This was the culmination

of over two years of networking and research on community building initiatives running diverse projects with refugees in Europe. A simultaneous online campaign saw ten campaign videos released on World Refugee Day.

Secondly, our human rights observatory Protection at External Borders (PEB) involving seven countries on the geographic edges of the European Union saw the collection of further data and publication of refugee testimonies highlighting the violence and injustice still faced by forced migrants at these borders. The conclusions and policy recommendations will be published in the summer of 2018.

Finally, Communities of Hospitality saw the creation of new associations, projects and campaigns aiming to welcome and include

refugees such as the At Home project in the United Kingdom, Up Together in Belgium, JRS Welcome in France and the Hospitalidad campaign in Spain.

As ever, we express of deepest thanks and gratitude to everyone who has been a part of our mission; not least refugees themselves who with their deep hope and spirit continue to inform and guide us in so many inspirational ways.

**Jose Ignacio Garcia SJ**  
Regional Director, JRS Europe  
June 2018

## I Get You

A major part of the JRS Europe team's work in 2017 was focused on the research, advocacy and campaigning for I Get You.

This two-year EU-funded project focused on the social inclusion of forced migrants in nine European countries. Specifically, it analysed Community Building Initiatives (CBIs) – small, locally run activities that bring volunteers and refugees together.

Over the course of I Get You, hundreds of connections were made and new networks and friendships built. The central idea that personal meetings break down fears and stereotypes was proven.

### CAMPAIGN VIDEOS

Ten short videos were released via social media for World Refugee Day in June to raise awareness about the diverse activities taking place across Europe.

*"I cannot do anything about the war, I cannot stop the influx of migrants, but maybe I can change the life of one person,"* said Brigitte who hosted Flavia, a refugee from Africa, in her home in Brussels.

Across all the initiatives filmed, refugees and migrants themselves were the key actors, volunteering and helping on an equal footing with locals. Activities covered included surfing in Portugal, cooking in Croatia, boxing in Germany and making music in Romania.

CBI Zagreb 041: refugee children  
enjoying the football match.  
© ZAGREB 041

### PUBLIC CONFERENCES AND FINAL REPORTS

In all, 315 community building initiatives completed the JRS mapping survey. Mapping reports analysing the data gathered were published in May 2017. Following this a smaller number of initiatives were selected for qualitative interviews.

This mixed-methods research resulted in nine national reports and an overall European report I Get You: Promoting Best Practices to



Prevent Racism and Xenophobia Towards Forced Migrants Through Community Building, published in December and launched at the European conference in Brussels.

Each partner held a conference locally to launch their report and spread their findings amongst policymakers and other stakeholders. New networks and connections were forged.

Two of the most useful tools in the European final report, are the best practices guidelines for CBLs and the policy recommendations for local, national and European levels. The guidelines for local activities are in three distinct areas: before you start, keeping people at the heart and organising the activities.

The European report launch in Brussels on 7 December 2017 was attended by practitioners, academics and refugees as well as a broad spectrum of NGO partners.

*"I Get You answers the crucial question that we have today as individuals, communities and countries: do you choose isolation or inclusion? If people feel welcomed, loved and supported they will reach their potential. Nothing could be more win-win than that,"* said JRS Europe director Jose Ignacio Garcia at the report launch.

Visit the I Get You website to find out more:  
<http://www.igetyou-jrs.org/>



I Get You was co-funded by the Right's Equality and Citizenship programme of the European Union.



Helena, Mariam and Alexandra as part of the CBI Fundacao Salesianos which supports refugees with hosting and education.

© I GET YOU



## 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.

### REGIONAL COORDINATION MEETINGS (RCMS)

JRS Europe organised and led two RCMS, which brought together JRS directors from all over Europe. The first meeting was hosted by JRS South-East Europe and took place in Zagreb, Croatia. Besides advocacy discussions, a visit to a local reception centre for asylum seekers was organised. The second meeting was held in Brussels in October. The guest speakers were Aspasia Papadopoulou, Senior Advocacy Officer at the European Council on Refugees and Exiles, and Aidan White, Director of the Ethical Journalism Network.

### PROTECTION AT EXTERNAL BORDERS (PEB)

PEB monitors and documents human rights violations against forced migrants at Europe's external borders through a research observatory while providing accompaniment and services to those affected. The implementing partners are: JRS Malta - SJM Spain - JRS South-East Europe (Croatia) - JRS Romania - JRS Greece - Instituto Pedro Arrupe (Sicily). The final report of this 3-year project will be released in June 2018.

### COMMUNITIES OF HOSPITALITY (COH)

A three-year project, CoH supports community building initiatives and grassroots advocacy for forced migrants in Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, United Kingdom and Spain. The project has helped fund a hosting project called Up Together in Belgium and volunteer training in Germany amongst many other activities.

### 11<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL DETENTION VISITORS SUPPORT GROUP (DVSG)

For the 11th year running, JRS Europe hosted a three-day workshop for volunteers and staff who visit detention centres across Europe. This year, the training focused on developing emotional resilience to prevent the burnout of visitors. Guest facilitator, Dr Nataly Kenely from the University of Malta, ran the specialised workshop. There was also time for a yoga session and quiet personal reflection.

### SOCIAL MEDIA

JRS Europe continued to raise awareness about refugees through social media. During the course of the year our following grew from around 3,000 to over 4,000 on Twitter and from about 400 to over 1,000 on our Facebook page which we launched in early 2016. As an example of our reach, the I Get You videos were viewed over 80,000 times on Facebook alone, just in the first two months of the campaign.

JRS directors after a successful RCM in Zagreb, Croatia.  
© OSCAR SPOONER / JRS EUROPE



**BELGIUM**

**FRANCE**

**GERMANY**

**GREECE**

**HUNGARY**

**IRELAND**

**ITALY**

**MALTA**

**POLAND**

**PORTUGAL**

**ROMANIA**

**SLOVENIA**

**SE EUROPE (CROATIA, KOSOVO,  
MACEDONIA, SERBIA)**

**UNITED KINGDOM**

**JRS IN EUROPE**

## BELGIUM

With our Up Together initiative, JRS Belgium focused mostly on migrants who saw their residence permit rejected, but were nevertheless released for various reasons from the closed detention centres or return-houses where they awaited their removal.

These so-called 'non-returnable' migrants find themselves in a situation in which they are not allowed to work, cannot receive social support and run the risk of being exploited. JRS Belgium supports these people to give them the strength and the tools to take up their life and future again, whether that be abroad or in Belgium without a residence permit.

In March, Flemish Refugee Action awarded Up Together the prize of the best hospitality initiative of 2017 in the category Associations. Moreover, the King Baudouin Foundation recognized our project and decided to support it through its Opportunity Fund.

Our support to migrants in closed detention centres and return-houses continued in 2017. We have both visitors who take up mostly the role of emotional support ('friendly' visitors) and visitors who monitor the situation in the detention centres on top of this ('accredited' visitors).

JRS Belgium took part in several advocacy initiatives in 2017. Firstly, we worked hard to build up a constructive dialogue with the relevant authorities, more specifically, the Immigration Service. We now meet every three months with the board of the return-houses and the closed centres, to try to improve conditions. Secondly, we form part of the platform Minors in Exile, which is currently campaigning against the government's plans to detain families with children in closed detention centres in the future.

Awareness raising was a big priority in 2017. Three events of ours attracted notably large audiences. Firstly, we took part in the colloquium on the current state of detention centres organized by CIRE and Flemish Refugee Action in the Federal Parliament. Secondly, we gave a testimony for an audience of 300 priests and pastoral assistants. Thirdly, together with other partners, we organized the conference The Footprint of Migration in which 500 people participated.

*"Your visits bring us light, they tell us that we're not forgotten. That transforms my entire day."*

**– A person held in detention about the support provided by our visitors.**

*"I'm very happy. I learned to live with families that I didn't know and it will help me to live here."*

**– Issa, migrant assisted through the Up Together project.**

### QUICK FACTS

- Our accredited visitors made 118 visits to detention centres in 2017, which enabled us to support 536 detainees. Our 'friendly' visitors made 156 visits, speaking to 36 people.
- In 2017, 19 asylum seekers were welcomed by a total of 98 volunteers.
- 32 awareness raising occasions, reaching an audience of more than 2,000 people, which is 4 times more than the number of people we reached in 2016.

Brigitte from Brussels (L) and Flavia (R), a forced migrant from East Africa, watch Netflix together in Brigitte's apartment.

© I GET YOU VIDEO: DENIS BOSNIC / JRS EUROPE





## FRANCE

JRS France has six programs: JRS Welcome (asylum seekers offered temporary accommodation with French families), JRS Youth (activities based on reciprocity), JRS Ecole de Français (French language classes), JRS Integration (support in job search and career advice), JRS Ruralité (to explore the possibility to set up a program in the countryside) and JRS Advocacy which offers legal support to asylum seekers.

The 'Welcome Jeunes (Youth)' project offers around 30 to 40 activities per month, including yoga, soccer, dance, discussions, museum visits and hiking. But more importantly, we aim to uplift the spirit, where each member, whether a refugee or a local, is empowered to contribute to the organization of the activities and

co-animated programs. We intend to promote a place where there are no beneficiaries and volunteers, but human beings, companions, that meet each other, live in true encounter and eventually become friends.

To contribute to the social, professional and cultural integration of asylum seekers and refugees, JRS France offers a French language learning program, with a pedagogy differentiated to fit and meet the needs of everyone, for a limited number of students by course, to allow specific attention to each. In total, 900 hours of language classes were provided in the Paris region, with 19 JRS antennas around the country also providing language classes.

JRS France was called to show how new forms of solidarity are possible with the most

vulnerable refugees, regardless of their administrative status, and always with a view to a positive solution in the framework of the law. In terms of legal assistance, JRS France aided many individuals with their asylum applications and helped them to prepare for their asylum interviews.

Finally, JRS France held many public events and meetings to raise awareness about the situation of refugees in the country. JRS continued to reach new audiences via social media, newsletters, printed publications and personal networks.

*"I will never be able to express to Catherine and Jean-Pierre how much I love them and thank them. I have a family and I do not look for others, but thanks to them I do not feel like a stranger here."* – **Mohamed, hosted as part of the JRS Welcome Program.**

### QUICK FACTS

- 1,500 asylum seekers helped through projects run by JRS France
- 31 regional coordination teams
- 1,130 volunteers

A refugee looks out of a window over Paris from the apartment where he is hosted as part of JRS Welcome.

© ANTOINE TARDY



## GERMANY

The reception of a relatively high number of refugees in 2015 has had a significant impact on JRS Germany. JRS has continued its legal and counselling work in Berlin and Munich as well as its support of people in detention and refugees in church asylum. In addition, JRS Germany has started new projects. JRS is now present at a Jesuit school in Berlin, supporting refugee and migrant children who are attending classes.

In May 2017, two Jesuit members of JRS moved into the newly founded Abuna-Frans-Centre in the city of Essen, where they share everyday life with up to eight refugees.

Since the detention centre in Eisenhüttenstadt near the Polish border has been closed for renovation, a JRS staff member is instead regularly visiting the accommodation centre, where several hundred asylum seekers live at the edge of a small town with almost no contact to neighbours outside the facility.

Legal counselling for asylum seekers continues to be a main working field for JRS, and one much needed. In the Frans van der Lugt Project in Munich, JRS staff accompany up to 190 asylum seekers in an accommodation centre. They provide counsel concerning the asylum procedure as well as in everyday matters. General house assemblies are organized with the cohabitants from many different countries to enhance

empowerment, discussions and democratic decisions.

While detention centres in Berlin and Brandenburg have been closed, Bavaria was detaining significantly more people prior to deportation than in previous years. JRS visitors are in contact with most of the detainees in Bavaria and organize lawyers if there is a chance of improvement in their individual case.

To protect individual asylum seekers who would be facing unacceptable hardships when re-deported to another European country under the Dublin Regulation, JRS has counselled and financially supported more than 100 refugees and parishes who grant so called church asylum.

While still several million Germans are committed to volunteer work with refugees, the fierce anti-refugee roll-back of policies by the lawmakers continued in 2017. JRS critically commented on many legal drafts and was often present in the media as a strong voice for a just asylum policy and a future-orientated integration policy that benefits refugees as well as the hosting society. JRS advocated for policies not guided by fear and racism, but by humane and rational motives.



Participants of the Frans van der Lugt Project that JRS runs at an accommodation centre in Munich.

© JRS GERMANY

### QUICK FACTS

- 700 refugees, migrants and asylum seekers in detention were visited.
- 160 people, most of them either in church asylum or in detention, JRS financed or organised a lawyer to take care of their legal case.
- 140 refugees in church asylum were supported by JRS, approx. 800 people visited JRS in Berlin for legal counsel in asylum matters or to appeal to the hardship commission, up to 190 asylum seekers accompanied in an accommodation centre in Munich.

## GREECE

JRS Greece operated two shelters and hosted 108 vulnerable refugees during the year. We provided psychosocial support for our beneficiaries, through the daily presence of a psychologist, as well as that of three nuns who manage the shelter. Volunteers from different European countries also offered their presence, and accompanied the people living with us. Monthly excursions were organised for the shelter residents.

We also collaborated with several NGOs and organisations in our neighbourhood to ensure that forced migrants received the support they need. We worked with Amurtel, an NGO following pregnant women, and newborn babies, with Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) both for medical check-ups and health training sessions, as well as with the International Rescue Committee (IRC) for psychological follow-up of 2 families, and for stress management sessions with the 13 women of the shelter.

At the Pedro Arrupe Integration centre we welcomed daily from 3pm to 7pm children of poor families from the neighbourhood, mostly migrant and refugee families. For the school year 2017-2018, 165 children were registered in the centre and got school support from four teachers, as well as creative activities such as guitar playing, cooking, and arts and crafts. 25 children had lunch every day in the centre, as

their families were in dire need, and we provided 10 families with a food basket every month.

JRS regularly visited refugees in the hotspot in Lesbos to assess needs and respond efficiently. We developed a good collaboration with SYNIPARXI, a Greek local association to fight against ignorance and discrimination especially towards African migrants.

As part of the Protection at External Borders project, JRS Greece conducted about 40 interviews with forced migrants to be able to monitor the application of national law and European directives, and observe conditions and treatment of each case and identify human rights violations.

JRS Greece regularly participated in working groups and contributed to joint policy papers and reports. JRS also took part in a digital campaign #opentheislands, with another 19 NGOs, with the goal to transfer people from the overcrowded hotspots to the mainland for their asylum case to be examined. The deteriorating conditions on the islands and the rise of arrivals from Turkey during the last semester of 2017 were mentioned through visual and text content on the campaign that urged the authorities to end the containment policy which was a result of the 2016 EU-Turkey deal. As a result, transfers were started by the Greek government with the assistance of UNHCR but the problem is not solved.

### QUICK FACTS

- In 2017, we accommodated 108 forced migrants, of which 46% were children, and 35% adult women, for periods of time ranging from a few weeks to more than a year.
- For the school year, 165 children were registered in the Arrupe Centre.
- 40 interviews with forced migrants were conducted in order to record human rights violations and challenges in reception procedures.

Children participate in an art workshop as part of the summer school at the Pedro Arrupe Centre in Athens. © JRS GREECE



## HUNGARY

Since the closure of the refugee camp in Bicske at the end of 2016, JRS in Hungary primarily focuses on supporting the social inclusion of those who received refugee status in the country. We provide social, educational and legal assistance, as well as housing for two families.

As language skills are enormously important in having access both to employment and quality education; we put a great emphasis on teaching Hungarian as a foreign language both for young students and adults. Aside from regular language courses, a language-teaching summer camp was also organized. Aiming to increase the efficiency of language education, JRS Hungary developed online and printed educational materials in 2017.

To exchange experiences and discuss the difficulties observed in education, we organized educational workshops and forums for various professionals. We are in intensive cooperation with several schools that enrol children from refugee families, and with various church-run organizations and NGOs working with refugees.

Raising awareness and strengthening the sense of solidarity and compassion in our society is an equally important part of our mission. To reach this goal, we prepare or adapt various educational materials for elementary or high school students for a more differentiated understanding of the current situation and to

make reflection on social tensions possible in the classrooms. In 2017, we created a new e-learning material supporting educational inclusion, adapted a booklet for teachers called "The Journey towards Inclusion" previously developed by JRS Latin America.

Intercultural in-class activities and school workshops were organized in cooperation with an initiative called 'Creative Planet' which connected the participating school classes with classes from Burundi, Africa, expanding students' horizons and knowledge about migration.

As we aim to support our society to become more sensitive for its vulnerable groups, we organized various public events in the local House of Dialogue. Among these events were roundtable discussions, photo exhibitions and film screenings.

*"I have just started to teach a 12-year-old boy from Cameroon. During the lessons with him I need to be very creative to help him to understand better what we studied. Usually I use some comics to do this. To work for JRS it is not easy as many times I feel that I can only help with a little drop in the ocean of their lives. This situation helps me remember that in this job it is not me who is important but they and I am only a tool in God's hand."*

– JRS Hungary volunteer.

### QUICK FACTS

- Worked together with 30 volunteers in total.
- Accompanied 5 families (with 25 members) and 6 individuals in many different stages of their integration process in Hungary.
- Created closer cooperation with 4 other professional organizations in different fields serving refugees in Budapest.

Children participate in a workshop organised by JRS Hungary. © JRS HUNGARY



## IRELAND

Length of time in the system and the ban on work impact greatest on the long-term integration prospects of protection applicants. In 2017 JRS Ireland prioritised enhancing pathways to integration, through the provision of targeted supports and the delivery of training aimed at improving employability and life skills of asylum seekers, both while in the process and after status has been granted.

JRS Ireland directly assisted over 40 asylum seeker households with status, living long term in Direct Provision, to begin the process of transition to independent living in 2017. Through the PATHS Project, a joint initiative with the Peter McVerry Trust, 'long-stayers' were assisted to secure accommodation and provided with comprehensive supports to enhance their integration prospects.

A new International Protection Procedure,

designed to streamline the asylum process, was commenced. A failure to resolve legacy cases resulted in more than 3,500 existing open cases being transferred over. JRS Ireland successfully advocated for the prioritisation of persons longest in the process. However, by the end of 2017 significant delays in processing had re-emerged, with new applicants waiting on average 19 months for their first instance interview.

In May 2017, the Irish Supreme Court found the prohibition on a right to work for asylum seekers to be unconstitutional. This decision affirmed the experience of JRS and validated the voices of asylum seekers, which articulated the human costs of the ban on employment. Welcoming the ruling, Eugene Quinn, JRS Ireland National Director emphasised: *"A right to work will enable a person seeking asylum to live with greater dignity and affirm their sense of self-worth while awaiting a final determination of their claim."*

In July 2017, JRS Ireland published 'Living with Dignity: Right to Work' and engaged in direct dialogue with policymakers. The submission called for a right to work to be granted at the earliest possible juncture after arrival, without restrictive conditions, to enable protection applicants live with greater dignity and contribute fully to the life of their community.

In response to an increase in numbers seeking asylum, JRS Ireland launched the Fáilte Project. The project promotes positive mental health through the provision of psychosocial education, information and advice. By the end of 2017, there were roughly 500 beneficiaries of the Fáilte Project.

JRS Ireland chaired the Limerick Integration Working Group, comprised of 19 statutory and voluntary service providers and migrant support agencies, which is overseeing the development of a third migrant integration strategy for the region, Belonging to Limerick: 2017-21.

### QUICK FACTS

- JRS Ireland provided outreach to individuals and families living in 10 Direct Provision centres and visited women detained in the Dóchas Centre (a prison) on a weekly basis.
- JRS Ireland's priority focus on children was realised through the running of homework and literacy clubs in Limerick; the delivery of over 1,000 Christmas presents to Direct Provision centres; and participation by 70 children on JRS Ireland's Summer Programme.
- 38 asylum seekers were sponsored, through the JRS Ireland Education Fund, to undertake and complete further education.

Art classes delivered in local schools as part of the 2017 Africa Day celebrations in Limerick.

© JRS IRELAND





## ITALY

In a particularly difficult year for the protection of refugees in Europe, Centro Astalli continued to provide services to asylum seekers and refugees such as daily hot meals, Italian language lessons, shelters, medical and legal support.

Alongside these services, Centro Astalli improved activities and projects to accompany refugees to become independent in a new context. We have given particular attention to the accompaniment of the most vulnerable refugees, such as those who have been victims of torture.

Thanks to the coordination of various services of Centro Astalli, such as the legal office, the clinic and the program to support survivors of torture, around 700 vulnerable refugees were welcomed and accompanied in a path towards rehabilitation.

Another major project was our collaboration with various religious institutions who have opened their communities to give hospitality to refugees. Centro Astalli supported 35 Congregations who have welcomed around 200 refugees: men, women and families. Many refugees have been able to find independent accommodation and a work contract after this experience of hospitality.

A very good opportunity to highlight the positive experiences of integration in Italy was the

presentation of the European project I Get You. At the moment, it is more urgent than ever to advocate for integration policies which create occasions of dialogue and interaction with the host community. Vulnerable people should not pay the price for a system that erects higher and higher barriers and at the same time is unable to grant security.

Much work was done in Italian schools, through the cultural project 'Finestre e Incontri' on asylum and inter-faith dialogue. Around 25,000 students in 15 Italian cities had an opportunity to listen to the testimony of a refugee or of a person of another faith.

Refugee Day 2017 was an important opportunity to value the precious contribution that refugees can give to the society in which they live. This year the issue of refugees was hotly debated in Italy. Centro Astalli increased communications activities, to work against divisive and dangerous xenophobia and to urge the creation of a hospitable society.

*"I have many Italian friends, I am quite happy here. It was not difficult to learn the Italian language and the Italian way of life. Since I have been a refugee in Italy, I have met many Italian students in high schools thanks to Centro Astalli... Numbers, statistics, racism and xenophobia can be won only through meetings and knowledge."*

– Osman, refugee from Somalia

## QUICK FACTS

- 30,000 asylum seekers and refugees assisted, 14,000 of these in Rome.
- Five days a week meals for about 300 forced migrants are cooked at the soup kitchen. Social and legal assistance for 1,000 asylum seekers and refugees with particular attention to vulnerable people (victims of torture, pregnant women...).
- Every day 450 volunteers (lawyers, doctors, students, teachers ...) and 49 staff members offer their time, skills and competences to asylum seekers and refugees to make them feel at home.

A refugee has a medical check-up at the special clinic run by Centro Astalli in Rome.

© CENTRO ASTALLI



## MALTA

On December 17, 2017 JRS Malta, aditus foundation and Integra Foundation, with the support of several other local NGOs, launched 'This is Home', a campaign calling for the creation of a pathway to regularisation for rejected asylum seekers who are stranded in Malta.

Through this campaign we are calling on the government to establish a legal pathway to regularisation for all rejected asylum seekers who have lived in Malta for five years or more and have not been returned to their country through no fault of their own, so that they may be able to live with dignity.

For a while, between 2010 and 2012, people in this situation could acquire Temporary Humanitarian Protection N (THPN), a temporary legal status, on certain conditions. From 2012 this status was no longer granted in new cases, which meant that, while those who had managed to obtain THPN until then would have their status renewed, migrants arriving in Malta from 2008 onwards could not benefit from it.

In spite of this most remained in Malta. Today, they have been living in Malta for many years, some as long as ten or fifteen years. Most, if not all, are likely to remain in Malta indefinitely. Their presence is known to the authorities who grant them 'tolerated stay' – which is temporary permission to stay, supposedly until they can be

sent back home. As they do not enjoy formal legal status they live a precarious and insecure existence, with very limited rights. They are constantly at risk of exploitation and abuse at the hands of unscrupulous employers and live in constant fear of deportation.

Despite the huge difficulties they face, many have managed to build a life for themselves in Malta and they have forged real and lasting bonds within the community. Against all odds, Malta has become their home – they are now part of our community in fact, though not in law. JRS Malta and our partners are asking that their legal status reflects this reality.

'This is Home' highlights the reality of people who are forced to live in a legal limbo, and to create a space for their voices to be heard, so that their contribution to Maltese society can be recognised and acknowledged. We are also advocating for concrete changes in law and policy to grant them a clear legal status that will allow them to live with dignity.

*"I know Malta more than I know Sudan. It is my country, my home. I love Malta and I feel I belong here. Having documents will give me peace of mind. If I have documents, my life will be settled. Now I don't know what will happen to me – they can send me back tomorrow. Every time I go to renew my documents at the police I am afraid of what they will tell me."*  
– Alreshid, in Malta since 2005



Heidi (L) teaches English to asylum seekers as part of a community building initiative in Malta.

© STILL TAKEN FROM THE JRS MALTA 'I GET YOU' VIDEO  
BY DENIS BOSNIC

### QUICK FACTS

- Protection (legal assistance): 278 of which 72 were in detention
- Support to access employment: CV and job search: 552 / In-depth support: 117
- Drop-in service (information, needs assessment and basic legal and social support): 1,061

## POLAND

The Jesuit Social Centre 'W Akcji' (In Action) in Poland grew in strength and focused on intercultural exchange and learning in 2017, ranging from pastoral care to language classes and special workshops for children.

Thanks to the support of JRS International we were able to expand our education services. We ran several Polish language courses in 2017. Moreover, we put an emphasis on quality with teacher training workshops too. Hundreds of hours of Polish language classes were delivered over the year. Improved Polish language skills of forced migrants led to better integration and being more independent on the job market.

Besides language tuition we offered computer skills workshops and special workshops for children in art, sculpture and science. We also started a Polish cooking class for refugee women because many of them told us that their children are already used to Polish food in school, and they wanted to know how to prepare it for them too.

As part of the Communities of Hospitality project (a pan-European effort led by JRS Europe), seven new community building initiatives and services were developed. A total of 90 refugees took part and benefitted from the project.

A new user-friendly website was launched (<http://www.wakcji.org/>) whilst 2,000 copies of the magazine 'In Action' were printed and distributed.

*"Carols were sung by many people in their native languages in Ukrainian, Vietnamese, Indian, etc. A room full of people from different parts of the world singing carol verses. It was wonderful! It was beautiful and magical! Once again, I did not want to leave and of course we left much later than planned."*

**– Malgorzata who attended the Christmas carol singing event organised by the Jesuit Social Centre**

Children take part in an indoor climbing session organised by W Akcji.  
© W AKCJI



### QUICK FACTS

- Over 4,500 people were reached through events.
- 78 volunteers engaged in different kind of initiatives.
- 835 hours of Polish Language classes provided.

## PORTUGAL

JRS Portugal celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2017. Since it opened in 1992, JRS Portugal has positioned itself as a reference organization in the field of migration and asylum issues. In 2017, we highlighted the value of 'hospitality'.

JRS Portugal continued its work with relocated refugees under the scope of PAR (Refugee Support Platform) which had completed 2 years by the end of 2017 and of CATR (Temporary Centre for Refugees of Lisbon Municipality). JRS Portugal had a central role to prepare and accompany these organizations throughout the two-year reception period, providing them materials and guidance, gathering data, monitoring the integration process, channelling resources to the communities and liaising with the Portuguese authorities. PAR hosted 144 families, 671 persons, in 90 different organizations across the country, whilst CATR welcomed 151 refugees.

JRS trained about 140 people in different areas, such as elderly care, childcare, domestic services and retail, having a common ground training in Portuguese Language and Development of Personal and Social Skills.

JRS continued to provide shelter to the most vulnerable at the Pedro Arrupe Shelter. We welcomed here, throughout the year, 59 people from 18 different countries. It is important to

mention that all the activities performed by JRS Portugal are only possible because of the help of dozens of volunteers who dedicated their time and passion to the JRS mission. In 2017, JRS Portugal counted on the help of 80 volunteers.

JRS Portugal reinforced its presence on the ground, with the continuation of partnerships and projects in the field of the reception and integration of refugees. JRS Portugal directly or indirectly welcomed about 60% of asylum seekers arriving in Portugal under relocation and resettlement programs. This provided the ideal basis to advocate for access to rights and services by immigrants and refugees with the relevant bodies.

In terms of communications, JRS Portugal unveiled an attractive new website in 2017. Several events with the purpose of raising awareness around the theme of hospitality were held. A highlight was the event organized for International Migrants Day, named 'From Hostility to Hospitality' that had a high media coverage.

*"I started my work as a volunteer in JRS Portugal in October 2016. Since then, I have worked in the Employment Office, where I am responsible for guiding migrants to find job offers. Finding a job means, for most of them, the opportunity to stay legally in Portugal.*

*Personally, this experience threw me some challenges, namely the appreciation of the*

*importance of the anonymous help. It also helped me to value and to develop a close relationship with people whose diversity reveals the treasure of each person individually and the enormous potential for the development of a society that practices and cherishes social inclusion."*

**– Teresa Alves Martins, volunteer**

### QUICK FACTS

- PAR won the European Citizen's prize awarded by the European Parliament.
- 408 people found a job, following the accompaniment given by JRS Portugal employment office.
- 1,109 migrants came to JRS Portugal searching for help for the first time.

Ghalia Taki (left) and Saeda Abdelnour, members of JRS Portugal staff, during an awareness raising event for the 'Communities of Hospitality' project on International Migrants Day. © JRS PORTUGAL



## ROMANIA

During 2017 JRS Romania implemented a total of 12 projects, with financial support from the EU, UNHCR Romania and private donors and embassies.

We assisted all categories of refugees and migrants through the projects which covered: activities related to border monitoring and assistance for persons in difficulty; work in reception centres; support in the integration process for refugees and third country nationals; counselling and information for migrants in detention; accommodation and social assistance for destitute migrants.

JRS Romania opened in Galati and Constanta two regional integration centres designed to offer support in the integration process. More than 150 persons were assisted so far and benefited from educational and recreational activities, medical assistance and counselling.

After 16 years in operation the Pedro Arrupe night shelter accommodated 88 persons in 2017. Other accommodation was found for 182 people including vulnerable persons such as single mothers, disabled minors, and people with medical problems.

JRS Romania advocacy work is based on documenting the cases directly assisted and

identifying the gaps or negative trends that could be further discussed with all relevant stakeholders. 2017 recorded the highest number of asylum applications submitted ever in Romania, resulting in an increased number of cases, as well as issues of concern. JRS advocated to improve humanitarian support at the Black Sea, general reception conditions and called for alternatives to detention amongst other issues.

In 2017, JRS Romania started working on a national campaign to raise awareness about migration in Romania. The campaign includes fliers, posters, TV and radio promotion, as well as online content. JRS Romania was also implementing partner of 'I Get You', having produced and disseminated a campaign video as well as two national reports.

*"I like the most the fact that we have a shelter, this was very big help. I have somebody here I can turn to when I have problems...not like before. When volunteers come to stay with children I am more independent."*

**– Philippine single mother of three young children**

### QUICK FACTS

- 5,396 migrants assisted in 2017 by JRS Romania; 673 migrants served in detention.
- 472 migrants recorded as maritime arrivals through the Black Sea received assistance at the border from JRS Romania in 2017.
- Rent and utilities covered for over 250 persons with a form of protection across the country in the project 'A New Home'.

View of a Romanian language class run organised by JRS. © JRS ROMANIA





## SLOVENIA

JRS's operations in Slovenia are focused on providing services for individuals, children and families while also maintaining our mission of accompaniment in the detention centre where we provide weekly visits. Through these activities, we hope to engage in active solidarity with the people seeking safety that we encounter.

Another key outreach that JRS Slovenia provides to asylum seekers is visits to detention centres. Once per week JRS goes to a detention centre 50 km away from the capital city. It is clear that the presence and solidarity offered by the JRS team in the detention centres has had a positive impact on those staying there. We are the only NGO that visits the detention centre on the regular base. For this reason, the detainees feel happy to have the contacts with us.

To help refugees rebuild their lives in Slovenia, we ran a number of Slovenian language courses over the year. This included one-on-one tutoring by volunteers.

JRS Slovenia was a member of the NGO coalition to advocate for a better international protection law and amend the aliens act. We were successful in many issues, unfortunately, in some cases we were not.

Since 2003 we have been broadcasting the radio programme "Building a more open society" once per month on the Catholic radio Ognjišče, where we were dealing with refugee and migrant issues. With this radio show we want to present to the listeners a more positive attitude towards refugees and migrants.

The programme usually features an interview with the person dealing with refugees and/or migrant issues. The second half of the programme features news about refugees in Slovenia and in their home countries. In this way, the listeners can receive a balanced view about refugees and migrants.

*"I always admire how much hope there is in certain detainees. They are admirable for what they went through."*

– JRS Slovenia director, Robin Schweiger SJ



Football match between multi-ethnic teams as part of a multicultural festival in Ljubljana, Slovenia. © K. URAN / UNHCR

### QUICK FACTS

- 50 visits to the detention centre per year
- 80 hours of Slovenian language classes provided for the asylum seekers
- 12 programs "Building a more open society" on Radio Ognjišče

## SE EUROPE (CROATIA, KOSOVO, MACEDONIA, SERBIA)

### CROATIA

JRS Croatia, with UNICEF support, created the Child Friendly Space in the Reception Centre for Asylum Seekers in Zagreb where children have a reliable environment in which they feel safe and secure. Children participated in different activities and workshops organised on a regular basis by JRS in the child-friendly space (language courses, painting workshops, handicrafts). This strengthened their cognitive, emotional and social development, minimized their stress and established a sense of security and self-esteem. It was a place of laughter, happiness and fun.

JRS continued to provide legal and psychosocial support to forced migrants in Ježevo detention centre, through a joint project with UNHCR.

In terms of advocacy, JRS called for Croatian language courses to be available for all people with international protection. JRS Croatia held different events, round tables and meetings with local and national representatives on providing the official language courses as the first and crucial step in the integration process.

JRS South-East Europe director Tvrtko Barun (2-L) with refugees and local Croatians as part of a Christmas lunch. © JRS SEE

JRS launched the 'Paths' newsletter created by asylum seekers and refugees. The main goal of this intercultural newspapers is to encourage the encounter between cultures and among refugees themselves.

For the second year, JRS organized the 'Christmas Lunch with a Refugee Initiative' to foster encounter, acquaintance and communication between the refugees and the local population. This Christmas, about 40 Croatian families hosted in their home more than 75 refugees.

*"I am among the privileged who received the opportunity to be a part of someone's Christmas joy."*

– Ayman, an asylum seeker from Libya.

### KOSOVO

JRS Kosovo successfully continued its main project which provides help to asylum seekers in the reception centres. JRS Kosovo is the only organisation which is providing Albanian language classes in the centre. The total number of forced migrants who took Albanian language classes in 2017 was 51 persons.

### FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA (FYROM)

Our 'Safe House' in Skopje played a key role in sheltering the most vulnerable migrants yet again. People with injuries, pregnant women and babies as well as unaccompanied children were cared for here. JRS provided everything in the house from



food to television and internet. Every day a psychologist visited the house to speak with the people and organise games and activities for the children.

JRS was present in Gevgelija transit camp accompanying forced migrants and providing emergency support. JRS continued to visit and offer support to forced migrants in the reception and detention centres in the country (Vizbegovo and Gazibaba).

## SERBIA

The central project in JRS Serbia in 2017 was opening of the Pedro Arrupe integration house for vulnerable groups of refugees (for unaccompanied and separated children up to age of 15) in Belgrade. By the end of the year a total of 20 beneficiaries were supported through our work.

For all children in the house, we provided basic needs: accommodation, food, clothes, safe environment, but also learning support for children who attended the school.

Finally, the JRS team created and conducted different types of activities, including language learning, workshops, sport and art activities in the integration house.

In 2017, JRS in Serbia established good communications with JRS offices in Hungary, Romania and Germany, countries where most of the refugees from Serbia went. This communication helped us to identify gaps in the system and support all those who were seeking protection in neighbouring countries.

*"I have visited the JRS integration house. The first thing you feel when you enter the house is the smell. The smell of 'home'. The one smell which is unique to every house in the world. It isn't the smell of a refugee camp or the smell of collective centres."*

**– Mr Milenko Nikic, minister and special advisor for refugees and chairman of the intergovernmental committee for mixed migration in the Republic of Serbia.**

JRS social worker Violeta Markovic working to support refugees in Belgrade, Serbia. © JRS SEE

## QUICK FACTS

- JRS SEE director, Tvrtko Barun, SJ, won the European Citizen's Prize 2017 in recognition for his work with and devotion to refugees.
- 800 refugees supported by winter clothes and hygiene products and 250 children and babies supported with food and nappies in Serbia.
- 20 children accommodated in the Pedro Arrupe integration house in Serbia for period more than 6 months.
- 40 Croatian families opened their home to refugees on Christmas day.
- 203 vulnerable migrants offered shelter and support in JRS safe house in Skopje.



## UNITED KINGDOM

JRS in the UK has a special ministry to accompany those held in immigration detention and those left destitute by the asylum process. Accompaniment is at the core of our work - being there for refugees, sharing food and conversation, building relationships, and sharing their journey. It is through these encounters between refugees and volunteers, between detainees and volunteer detention visitors, that we draw energy and inspiration to advocate for change.

Our weekly Day Centre is the hub of our work supporting destitute refugees and asylum seekers, who are amongst the most vulnerable group in British society – barred from working, unable to access benefits or rent property, and living with the constant knowledge that they could be detained at any moment. The Day Centre provides a mix of practical, emotional and spiritual support, aiming to restore refugees' sense of dignity and value, sustain their sense of hope, and enable them to seek justice.

Spring-boarding from the Day Centre, we continued to offer activities and groups enabling our refugee friends to develop their skills and interests: drama workshops, collaborating with RISE theatre; women's cycling lessons, collaborating with The Bike Project; one-to-one English classes; and the introduction of two new activities – Mindfulness and our Gospel Choir, in collaboration with Soul Sanctuary Gospel Choir.

The Gospel choir had an incredible debut performance at our Christmas Carol Service this year with one of the participants expressing, "I get pleasure from singing, and singing in the choir boosted my self-esteem." We notice the impact these groups have on our refugee friends, increasing their confidence, reducing social isolation, and increasing personal resilience.

Our At Home hosting scheme, part of the pan-European project Communities of Hospitality, continues to grow from strength to strength, encouraging parishes and religious communities to create their own communities of hospitality by housing and welcoming destitute refugees.

Our immigration detention outreach work focusses on reducing social isolation and easing the heightened anxieties that immigration detention without a time limit causes. We provided welfare support and pastoral care to over 250 men, offering a mix of social visiting and

practical welfare support, treating each detainee with dignity and respect. Often, all we can offer to detainees is to be present with them.

JRS UK director, Sarah Teather, addressed an assembly of over 10,000 young people, during an event to premiere a film featuring six of our refugee friends. Although the theme of the assembly was refugees, JRS was the only slot which enabled the voices and experiences of refugees to be heard directly.

*"When I came to the JRS Day Centre I saw it as a home. It is very different to any other place I visited. The key things I cherish is the homely atmosphere that is here. The Godly atmosphere, the warmly welcome that your staff give is amazing. It is really, really amazing. You come here it is like those burdens fly away. It gives you hope and a smile. You feel at home and relaxed. I have been smiling since I came to this place."*

– Ufuma, a guest of the JRS Day Centre



### QUICK FACTS

- Over 300 destitute refugees accompanied through our Day Centre, from over 30 countries.
- Provided over 20,000 travel grants for essential journeys.
- 50 volunteers dedicated their time, energy and compassion to supporting JRS' work.

The Gospel choir sings during the JRS UK Christmas Carol Service in London. © JRS UK



Jo (L) and Henry (R) have developed a strong friendship through the JRS UK 'At Home' hosting scheme; here they enjoy a joke together.  
© PICTURE-U.NET/JRS UK





Students in the Pedro Arrupe Centre  
of JRS Greece study as part of the  
after-school programme.  
© IVÁN BENÍTEZ / ALBOAN



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

**APPENDIX II**  
**JRS CONTACT DETAILS**

**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 Jesuit provinces in Europe. 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

Jose Ignacio Garcia SJ Regional Director  
Carola Jimenez-Asenjo Project Development Coordinator  
Kathryn Doyle Programme and Advocacy Officer  
Claudia Bonamini Policy and Advocacy Officer  
Oscar Spooner Communications Officer  
Isabelle de Sazilly Finance Officer

### VOLUNTEERS, TEMPORARY STAFF

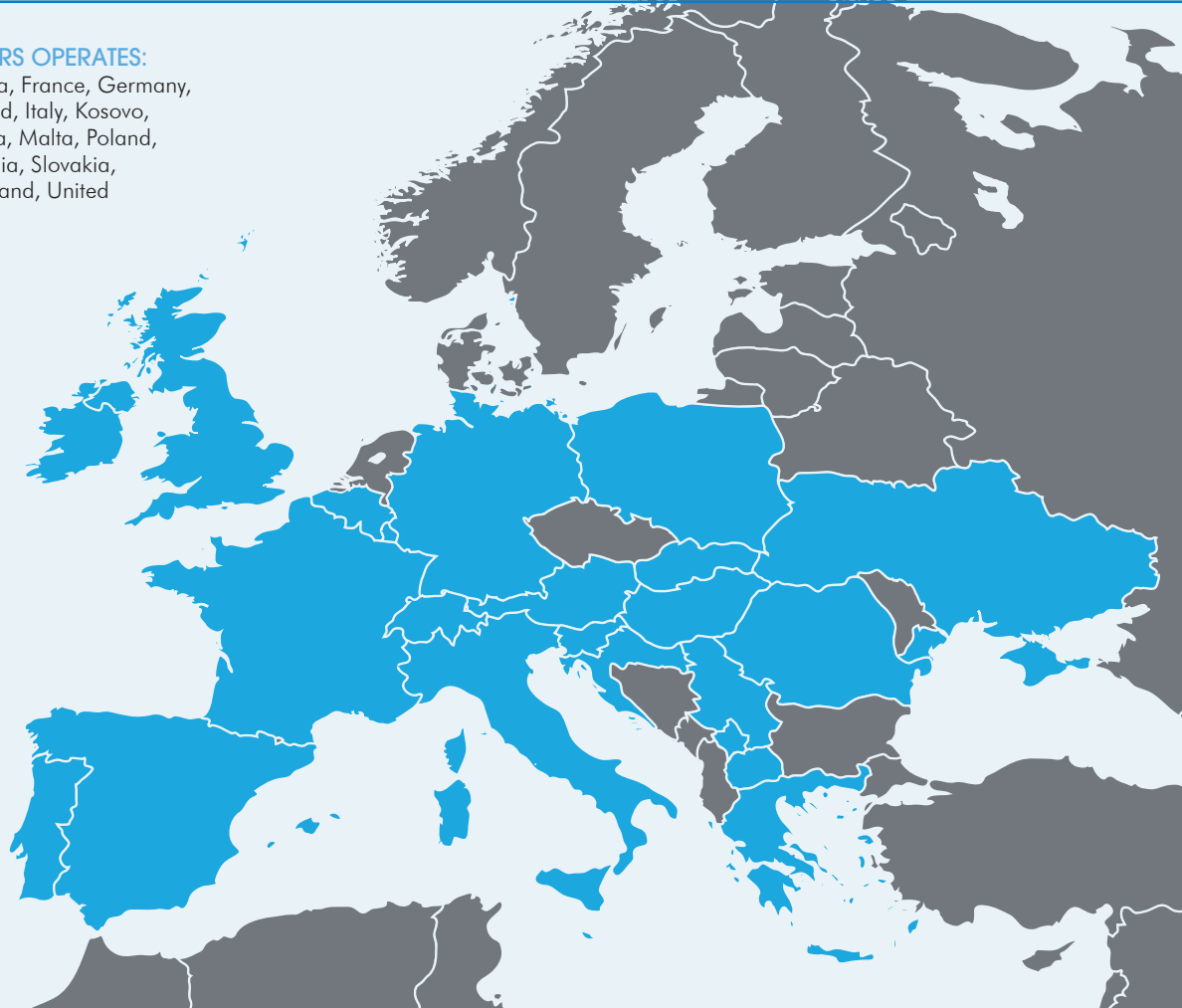
Joseph Poncin Administrative Assistant  
Gianluigi Campogrande Advocacy Assistant  
David Moya Advocacy Adviser  
Sara Garcia Intern  
Max Olgemoller Intern  
Covadonga Cervilla Intern  
Emile Agbede SJ Formation Assistant

### ADVISORY COUNCIL 2017

Andre Costa Jorge Director, JRS Portugal  
Katrine Camilleri Director, JRS Malta  
Luis Arancibia Director, Entreculturas  
Peter Rozic Social Delegate

**COUNTRIES WHERE JRS OPERATES:**

Austria, Belgium, Croatia, France, Germany,  
Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Kosovo,  
Luxembourg, Macedonia, Malta, Poland,  
Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia,  
Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, United  
Kingdom, Ukraine



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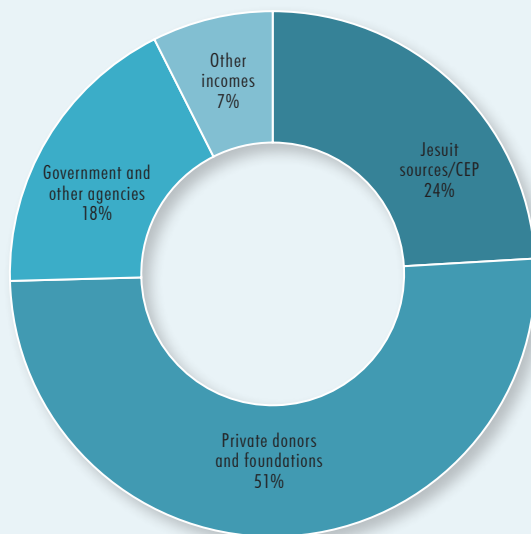
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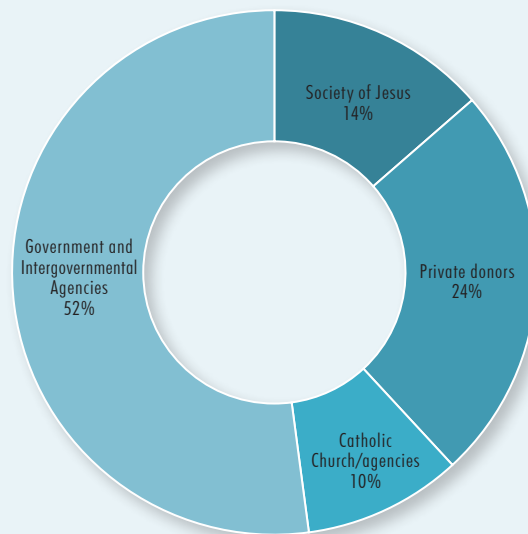
## Financial summary

### REGIONAL OFFICE - INCOME 2017 (EURO)



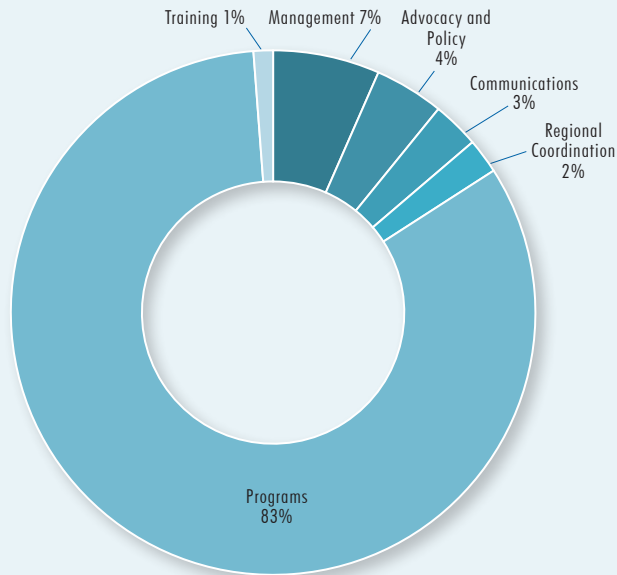
Jesuit sources/CEP	291.891
Private donors and foundations	612.472
Government and other agencies	218.196
Other incomes	90.121
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1.212.680</b>

### COUNTRY OFFICES - INCOME 2017 (EURO)



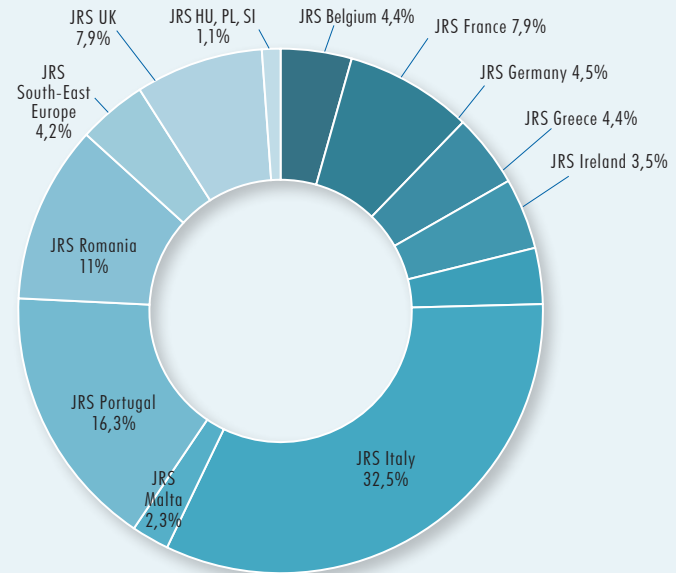
Society of Jesus	1.337.594
Private donors	2.413.928
Catholic Church/agencies	962.120
Government and Intergovernmental Agencies	5.127.304
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9.840.946</b>

### REGIONAL OFFICE - EXPENDITURE 2017



Management	72.229
Advocacy and Policy	46.950
Communications	31.738
Regional Coordination	23.641
Programs	910.330
Training	13.156
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1.098.044</b>

### COUNTRY OFFICES - EXPENDITURE 2017



JRS Belgium	430.742
JRS France	772.645
JRS Germany	444.560
JRS Greece	431.569
JRS Ireland	339.903
JRS Italy	3.201.980
JRS Malta	228.412
JRS Portugal	1.606.341
JRS Romania	1.078.863
JRS South-East Europe	418.130
JRS UK	775.322
JRS HU-PL-SI	112.478
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9.840.946</b>



The mission of the Jesuit Refugee Service is to **accompany**, **serve** and **advocate** for the rights of refugees and other forcibly displaced people.

Please support our mission:

You can donate via PayPal on our website or by bank transfer.

Account name: JRS Europe  
IBAN: BE 49 2100 9067 7571  
Swift code: GE BA BE BB

Thank you



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