



ANNUAL REPORT 2016

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: A mother carries a child on her shoulders after
refugees arrive at the port of Piraeus, near Athens, Greece.

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Back cover photo: A JRS staff member and refugee child at the
transit camp in Sid, Serbia.

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WHY THEM, AND NOT ME?

In our annual report, we present the main activities carried out by the teams of JRS in Europe, data on the people who have benefited from our programmes and details of the financial resources needed for these activities. But all of this information is always insufficient to convey the complexity of the lives involved in this commitment to the service of the forcibly displaced people who arrive in Europe.

Behind this report are hundreds of hours of dedicated work by professionals and volunteers, sometimes in face-to-face meetings with beneficiaries, sometimes in the loneliness of the office drafting reports or squaring budgets. Nor can this report fully account for the generosity of our donors, as well as their diversity. In addition to funds from public and private institutions, we have also received small donations from individuals and friends. Everything is valuable, and we thank you all for your generosity.

Finally, a report can never adequately account for the vital efforts of refugees and migrants. They are the victims of violence, exploitation or the lack of future. Their efforts

to find protection and to secure a better life for their families reminds us of the most basic principles of human solidarity. As Pope Francis recently recalled, “*why them, and not me?*” A minimum of human empathy makes us feel the strength of this call to commit ourselves to the safety and well-being of those who suffer so much. In our case, our Christian faith, makes us recognize in the efforts of these peoples a precise call from God to commit ourselves to accompany, serve and to defend these populations.

The year 2016 has seen the end of the dramatic arrival of thousands of people in Europe. The result of successive border closures is that more than 60,000 people are stranded in Greece as an indeterminate number are on the route to Central Europe. We note, with concern, that while some nationalities receive a rapid response to their asylum applications others are denied very quickly or the response is extended indefinitely. All this provokes an obvious lack of protection. Processes such as family reunification are now painfully prolonged in time. The message that is sent is quite clear: Europe does not want to make any more effort.

In this lack of real commitment, we must



mention the shameful agreement between the EU and Turkey which implies a clear neglect of European responsibilities - legal, political and moral - and the inability to carry out the planned relocation scheme. Not to mention the direct refusal to receive refugees by some governments, which have even promoted campaigns in favour of fear, and, in the end, stoking divisions in society.

The year 2016 leaves a bitter memory, because when it was most needed the European response was – at the least – poor. Our report tries to show that although our governments have been disappointing, the solidarity and commitment of many men and women in Europe continues to shine brightly. Our gratitude to all of them.

Jose Ignacio Garcia SJ
Regional Director, JRS Europe
June 2017

Policy and advocacy 2016

Whilst in 2015 over one million forced migrants travelled to Europe in search of safety, in 2016 the number of arrivals was two thirds lower, partly due to border restrictions and partly other factors which made travel even more dangerous and costly for the victims of war and persecution.

With an unprecedented number of displaced people worldwide (over 65 million), we drew attention to the limitations of the European response within the global refugee context.

JRS Europe's advocacy continued to work for solutions prioritising human dignity and justice.

Access to protection

With no other options open, the vast majority of refugees were forced to pay smugglers extortionate fees to board unseaworthy and overcrowded vessels to try and reach a European shore – sometimes Italy, sometimes Greece. Over 5000 people died in shipwrecks during

the deadliest year to date. JRS Europe continued to urge policymakers to open up more safe and regular channels for people to reach Europe in order to undercut the business model of smugglers and prevent more unnecessary deaths.

Sadly, European states often acted independently of each other, closing borders and introducing restrictive laws. This greatly hindered a common European effort to receive and care for refugees in an appropriate way.

The EU-Turkey deal of March represented a low-point for refugee protection in Europe and we published a detailed analysis of its deficiencies which was widely used with policymakers.

Social inclusion

As part of the project Best Practices to Combat Racism and Xenophobia and its campaign 'I Get You' we designed a research methodology to analyse grassroots initiatives working with refugees in Europe. This drew on the expertise of academics, practitioners and forced migrants themselves as we narrowed down our criteria for assessing best practices. The final report will be published in 2017.

Alternatives to detention

During the year we saw an unfortunate increase in the use of detention by states. Therefore, we re-doubled our efforts to promote alternatives to detention together with national offices and as part of the International Detention Coalition. We also conducted an advocacy training session with detention visitors from around Europe in Brussels, as part of the 10th Detention Visitor's Support Group.

JRS Europe policy and advocacy officer Mark Provera (seated centre) takes part in a policy seminar on alternatives to detention.

© JRS EUROPE



Projects 2016

During the course of the year our services shifted from helping refugees on the move to establishing projects more focused on education and integration.

I Get You

We launched the *I Get You* campaign two months ahead of World Refugee Day to collect stories of welcome and to map local refugee initiatives. During the course of the mapping campaign we collected data on over 300 initiatives across the nine participating countries. The EU-funded project will result in a report highlighting best practices to combat racism and xenophobia. We also collected many photos and testimonies covering diverse activities from a bike workshop in Zagreb to an archaeological dig in Italy and a refugee walk in Germany. For more information please visit the campaign website here: www.igetyou-jrs.org

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 a hospitality campaign in Spain amongst many other activities.

Protection at External Borders (PEB)

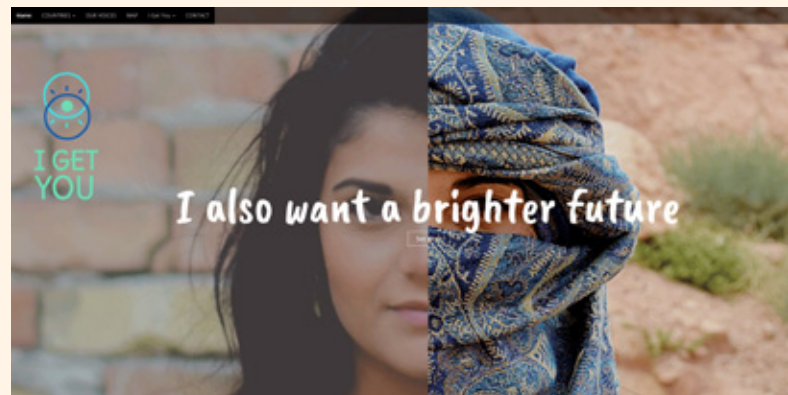
Monitors and documents human rights violations against forced migrants at Europe's external borders through a research observatory while providing accompaniment and services to those affected. The implementing partners are: JRS Malta - SJM Spain - JRS South-East Europe (Croatia and Serbia) - JRS Romania - JRS Greece - Instituto Pedro Arrupe (Sicily).

Greece and the Balkans

JRS Europe coordinated the emergency response of several JRS country offices to the increased refugee arrivals in Europe. We catered to the most basic needs of people on the move such as accommodation, food, and language translation. Following border closures which made movement for refugees more difficult we have adapted to more long-term services, such as language and IT training, for refugees in the region. Finally, JRS Portugal and JRS Greece are working together to inform and assist refugees in Greece who are eligible for relocation to Portugal under the EU scheme.

10th Annual Detention Visitors Support Group in Brussels (DVSG)

For the 10th year running, JRS detention visitors from around Europe convened in Brussels to exchange experiences and learn together. The focus of this year's training was on identifying victims of human trafficking.



Screenshot of the I Get You website.
© JRS EUROPE

Communications 2016

JRS Europe communications continued to grow in 2016 as we highlighted the voices of refugees across print, web and audio-visual media. Our ability to reach new audiences and seamlessly communicate our advocacy positions and work on the ground was crucial.

Journeys of Hope

From February to March 2016 we travelled with refugees through Greece and the Balkans, listening to their stories, hopes and dreams for a new life in safety. JRS writer, Danielle Vella, sent a weekly dispatch from the refugee routes which was published on the JRS Europe website and shared via electronic newsletter.



This awareness raising campaign came at a pivotal moment, just as countries along the Balkans started closing their borders in a domino effect and before the EU-Turkey deal was made. Journeys of Hope gave a voice to individual people who were otherwise noted as mere statistics by state authorities.

The title page of Journeys of Hope (English edition).
© JRS EUROPE

The stories were vividly illustrated by award-winning photojournalist Darrin Zammit Lupi who travelled with Danielle. Finally, all eight dispatches were printed in an 80-page colour booklet that was released for World Refugee Day on 20 June. By September several thousand booklets had been disseminated, including French, German, Italian and Spanish language editions.

Media

During the year JRS Europe was featured in several prominent news outlets in Europe. As parts of the media and politicians continued to use the rhetoric of a 'refugee crisis', JRS Europe provided a clear, balanced analysis of events, consistently urging the EU with its vast wealth and resources to do more. Our voice was shared by Newsweek, Euronews, the IRIN humanitarian news network, America Magazine, Catholic Review, Vatican Radio, and KNA amongst others.

Networking

In the face of increasingly restrictive EU asylum policies we reinforced our cooperation with other organisations who support refugees.

JRS Europe engaged and cooperated regularly with civil society partners in Brussels and beyond – from Caritas Europa, the Red Cross and Oxfam to Amnesty Europe.

JRS Europe remained an active member of the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) and the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM).

BELGIUM

FRANCE

GERMANY

GREECE

HUNGARY

IRELAND

ITALY

MALTA

POLAND

PORTUGAL

ROMANIA

SLOVENIA

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

SWEDEN

UNITED KINGDOM

JRS IN EUROPE

BELGIUM

COMMUNITIES OF HOSPITALITY

JRS Belgium has been hunting for best practices in 2016. We approached over a hundred Belgian refugee welcome initiatives and conducted in-depth interviews with over a dozen. These encounters, to quote *I Get You* (italics) expert Elisabeth, “inspire tremendous hope.” Belgian citizens are showing a strong drive to build their communities and have very diverse ways to go about it.

It always seems to start the same way: people see a hole in the system and decide to do something about it. We are especially impressed by the strength of “buddy systems”, where a one-on-one partnership is formed to enable a

personal accompaniment. Take a look at the *I Get You* website to see what we’ve been up to (<http://www.igetyou-jrs.org/belgium/> available in French and Dutch).

Meanwhile, our visitors are keeping up the pace. Detention remains among our top priorities with nine accredited visitors and as many volunteers. They delivered visits at all Belgian detention centres and return houses but one.

Our *Up Together* community of hospitality grew from strength to strength this year. Ordinary Belgians are opening their homes and lives to people released from detention centres with no rights, hope, or guidance. They offer a place of rest and dignity to those at the most vulnerable points in their migration project. The next step

is to orient themselves toward their future. JRS Belgium accompanies both hosts and guests every step of the way. With networks in six cities, *Up Together* is now present in all three federal regions of Belgium. Several refugees and forced migrants have completed the one-year program.

To enable people to make up their own mind about their future is extremely rewarding for the hosts. Meanwhile, the friends and families of the hosts get to meet, in a dignified setting, the people they are used to hearing about as illegals, and who are, of course, just people.

QUICK FACTS

- 330 visits in detention.
- 136 community-building initiatives identified and contacted as part of “*I Get You*”.
- 515 people interested in “*Up Together*” attended info sessions in 12 cities across the country.

Career mentor Chantal (R) shares a laugh with Mamadou (L) who is taking part in the Duo for a Job scheme to help re-build his life in Belgium. This initiative was mapped as part of “*I Get You*”.

© JRS BELGIUM



FRANCE

OPENING DOORS, HORIZONS AND MINDS

In 2016, the number of asylum seekers increased by 13% compared to the previous year. Only around half of those people who request asylum receive shelter. Therefore, JRS France keeps on developing the “Welcome en France” project which is a network of homes where the person will find hospitality, for periods of four to six weeks over a time up to nine months. This year, we doubled our capacity and welcomed 582 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-animate 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 promote true encounters drives us to organize our French classes or jobs workshops and to strive for an accompaniment based on one-to-one relationships. In addition to

QUICK FACTS

- 1,719 asylum seekers were hosted by French families at home as part of the Welcome en France project.
- During the year over 800 people (refugees and locals) took part in the activities of the Welcome Youth project.
- 4,000 hours of French language classes provided.

Music class in the park as part of the Welcome Youth project.
© FEDERICO ZAA / JRS FRANCE



a group dynamic, there is always a buddy to support each individual so that the community support serves the personal voice. In that respect, we produced some publications and journals, that give people a chance to express themselves.

Thanks to the “I Get You” Campaign, we have explored and identified 55 new initiatives, that were promoting ways of welcoming refugees. It helped us to step back from our work and open our minds to the dynamism of other associations and reflect upon what we were doing. We also started to develop a

web portal for asylum seekers, refugees and those who accompany them, in four different languages to ease the access to French classes, formation, and employment etc.

JRS France keeps on strengthening and developing the existing programs as well as inventing new ones.

“I love to participate in the activities because the discovery of another culture is enriching. I love to share and to listen to other people. I love mankind, and that is what JRS is for me.”

– **Zarif, refugee**

GERMANY

LOCALS' WELCOME / GOVERNMENT ROLL-BACK

On the political level, 2016 was a year of legal roll-back in German asylum policy laws. Probably the most severe of the new regulations makes it impossible for many of the refugees from Syria and other violence-torn countries to reunite with their closest family members. Further, Germany is pushing mass deportations to Afghanistan.

JRS has been fighting this severely negative policy trend, lobbying for a more just and reasonable approach. JRS has been communicating to policymakers and the public why many of these laws do not make sense neither for refugees nor for the host society. In public lectures and discussions within parishes,

schools, civil and political initiatives – often covered by the press - JRS director and staff intensely engaged in awareness raising with the general public.

At the same time, the overwhelming support for refugees amongst ordinary citizens has continued. As part of the “I Get You” campaign, JRS Germany has been in contact with 50 refugee initiatives around Germany to understand factors of success and challenges and to collect best practices. The feedback of these community building initiatives is valuable for those policymakers who want to effectively support the grassroots driven welcoming culture.

A new JRS team working with Br. Dieter Müller SJ in Munich has begun to counsel and accompany 180 asylum seekers who live in

a state-run refugee accommodation centre in the city. From the beginning of this project, JRS worked closely with the Jesuit University for Philosophy Munich and the Institute of Social Policy. JRS has facilitated meetings between students and neighbours and the refugees here right from the start.

As in the years before, JRS continued to support parishes who host refugees in order to prevent their deportation under the Dublin-regulation (known as Church asylum). JRS also continued to provide pastoral care and legal counsel for refugees, migrants and asylum seekers in detention centres.

An ‘I Get You’ initiative: ‘Frans Hiking’ is organised by Syrians who have brought the idea of their friend Frans van der Lugt SJ to Germany. © C.ENDER/JRS

QUICK FACTS

- Legal aid to 1,800 asylum seekers and migrants in Berlin and Munich, individual and group counselling in state-run accommodation centres as well as within the hardship commission of Berlin.
- Pastoral and legal care of 500 migrants and refugees held in detention prior to their deportation, giving legal aid to 110 of them, securing release in 40% of these cases.
- Support for 100 refugees and parishes in church asylum.



GREECE

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

2016 was a year of growth and development for JRS Greece. It was a year of consolidation of our work but also a year to face new challenges, with and for the refugees, especially for those stranded in Greece including for those waiting for relocation processes and family reunification to other EU Member States.

As border controls tightened in March 2016, the situation radically changed in Greece. Thousands of people became stranded in the country for an unknown period of time. In that context, JRS Greece began the plans to open a second shelter in the Victoria Square neighbourhood in Athens to continue to welcome displaced people especially vulnerable families, single women with children, and victims of violence or torture.

Through the generosity of international donors, JRS Greece was able to distribute clothes, food and non-food aid to those most in need.

Besides humanitarian relief, JRS Greece facilitated integration workshops and access to education. More than 20 European volunteers organised special skills workshops as well as language classes in Greek, English and German.

The Pedro Arrupe Centre in Athens supported the education 158 children of migrant families living in the area. Despite great adversity, JRS Greece was also able to enrol all of the refugee children living in the shelter in Greek public schools, as well as with additional after school support at the Pedro Arrupe Centre.

Through accompaniment and advocacy efforts, our staff witnessed testimonies about survival experiences of refugees who have reached Greek shores. As part of the Protection at External Borders (PEB) project, around 40 cases of human rights violations in Greece were logged for further reporting and analysis.

Finally, JRS Greece offered its expertise as part of the EU relocation scheme in partnership with JRS Portugal, the Portuguese Embassy and Platform for Refugee Support (PAR). Since January 2016, around 90 families were interviewed by the JRS Portugal team, in JRS Greece's offices, to help them to be better oriented before their arrival and welcome in Portugal.

A computer skills class provided by Wahid, originally from Afghanistan, in the JRS shelter in Athens.

© JRS GREECE

QUICK FACTS

- Since the beginning of the year, JRS Greece welcomed more than 800 people on the move. Since March 2016, around 120 people have been welcomed for more than 4 months.
- JRS Greece shelters: 55 vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers hosted from Syria, Afghanistan, Kurdistan, Pakistan, Iraq. 110 meals served each day, prepared in rotation by the residents themselves.
- 20 vans of donations (45 tonnes of non-food items, clothes, food) were distributed.



HUNGARY

EDUCATION AND CULTURAL DIALOGUE

JRS Hungary continued to support the social inclusion of refugees in Hungary. The office developed programmes that reflected local needs and were built on the experiences of JRS and followed Jesuit traditions by providing direct support and starting to build models designed to be easy to pass on.

In terms of direct support, we provided social, educational and legal assistance for asylum seekers living in camp Bicske or in Fót centre for unaccompanied minors and for refugees living in Budapest. One of the refugees, living in the camp said that *"the service helped us to study, to buy food and gave us shelter"*.

Focusing on school inclusion, we launched a pioneering programme in cooperation with a local catholic school centre. Based on observed experiences, we plan to develop an educational booklet containing recommendations on curricula and programme implementation for Hungarian schools willing to provide access to education for refugees.

To support teachers to welcome and institutions to enrol refugee children and youth, we started to develop and adapt educational materials based on which reflections on various social tensions become possible. Within this framework

a JRS booklet was adapted for elementary school students to learn about inclusion, an e-learning material was elaborated that helps high school students to understand the complexity of migration, and various in-class activities were organised.

As we aim to support our society to become more sensitive to and responsible for its vulnerable groups, we organised various public events in the local House of Dialogue. Among these events we hosted a concert with a Kurdish folk singer as well as various public debates.

In order to achieve our mission we cooperate with volunteers. As part of this, a methodology for welcoming, involving, selecting and training volunteers was developed and introduced in 2016. Why support the supporters? As one of our volunteers claimed: *"It is a very interesting experience to understand how you can help. It is difficult when you can't help. Sometimes you can't give what is needed. Sometimes they don't need what you offer"*. In this way, we cooperated with trained volunteers whose work we respect to the highest degree. On one hand, volunteers help us to reach our goals, and, on the other hand, by serving and accompanying refugees they demonstrate solidarity and hospitality in a very direct manner. One of them recently said: *"Working with refugees confirmed my belief that turning personally to another individual always means an answer in every difficult situation."*

Hungarian language lesson
© KRISTÓF HÖLVÉNYI / JRS HUNGARY

QUICK FACTS

- Individual and small-group Hungarian language courses for all ages throughout 2016. The majority of these classes were held by volunteers but professional Hungarian as a Foreign Language experts joined us as well.
- 50 trained volunteers worked with JRS Hungary in 2016.
- 22 persons participated in social and educational programmes received direct and ongoing support from the local JRS.



IRELAND

CHAMPIONING FORGOTTEN REFUGEES

Throughout 2016, while much of the focus was on the 'refugee crisis', JRS Ireland sought to ensure that the needs of asylum seekers hidden from sight living long term in Direct Provision were not forgotten.

JRS Ireland directly assisted more than 500 'long stayers' in resolving their status. However, due to national housing crisis, by the end of 2016 there were 450 people with status still residing in state accommodation centres. Since publication of the Report of the Working Group on the Protection Process in June 2015, 90 percent of persons five or more years in the system (around 2,000 persons) have been granted leave to remain.

Throughout 2016 the JRS Ireland Transition Project prioritised the long-term integration needs of asylum seekers, seeking to increase

employability through training, information and sponsorship. Furthermore, a joint initiative with the Peter McVerry Trust, a homeless agency, is being developed to help secure accommodation and provide wraparound integration supports for long stayers exiting Direct Provision during 2017.

In April 2016 JRS Ireland published *'Time to Act: Implementation of the Report of the Working Group on the Protection Process'*, which received widespread coverage across news and print media. At the launch, the former chairperson of the Government Working Group, Judge Bryan McMahon, stated: *"Ten months on, implementation of key recommendations has been slow and inadequately resourced. Worryingly, delays are again growing significantly at the earlier stages in the protection process"*. Furthermore, Eugene Quinn, JRS Ireland National Director, highlighted: *"Regrettably, the living conditions and supports for the almost 5,000 people residing in Direct Provision, one*

quarter of whom are children, have not improved in any meaningful way."

A new International Protection Procedure, which aims to streamline the asylum process and produce more speedy decisions, commenced on 31 December 2016. However, JRS Ireland has warned that it may be some time before the anticipated benefits of a single application procedure reducing waiting times for protection decisions are realised.

The failure to resolve outstanding backlogs in advance of the introduction of this new procedure, as recommended by the Government Working Group, has resulted in the transfer of nearly 4,000 existing cases into the International Protection Office. The processing of these legacy cases under transition arrangements from the old system will significantly undermine its ability to eliminate the lengthy delays that characterised the Irish protection process for over a decade, with all the associated human costs.

QUICK FACTS

- JRS Ireland provided outreach to individuals and families living in 13 Direct Provision centres and visited women detained in the Dóchas Centre (a prison) on a weekly basis.
- Children remained a priority focus and benefited through: homework and literacy clubs in Dublin and Limerick; the delivery of over 1,000 Christmas presents to Direct Provision centres; and 97 participants on JRS Ireland's Summer Programme.
- Advocacy for a stronger national response to the plight of refugees arriving in Europe, successfully making the case for enhanced resettlement places in light of failing EU relocation programmes.

JRS Ireland capacity building workshop in Baleskin Reception Centre, in Dublin.

© JRS IRELAND



ITALY

**INTEGRATION AND
INTERCULTURAL EXCHANGE**

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

Alongside these services, Centro Astalli improved activities and projects to accompany refugees and help them 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 programme to support survivors of torture, around 700 vulnerable refugees have been welcomed and accompanied in a path towards rehabilitation.

During 2016, another major project has been collaboration with various religious institutions who have opened their communities to give hospitality to refugees. Centro Astalli has supported 30 congregations who have welcomed around 120 refugees: men, women and families. Many refugees have been able to find independent accommodation and a work contract after this experience of hospitality.

During this year, much work has been 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 have had an opportunity to listen to the testimony of a refugee or of a person of another faith.

Giulia (aged 15) says: *"It has been very interesting to meet Osman in our class. He is a Somali refugee, and he has spoken about his journey in the desert and on the sea to arrive at Lampedusa. At the end of telling his story I and my friends had many questions to know his life before the war. Now we have a completely different idea about migrants and refugees living in Italy. The media very often present migrants like a problem and never like possible friends."*

In June 2016, the President of the Italian Republic Sergio Mattarella visited our accommodation centre for men to celebrate the 35th anniversary of Centro Astalli on World Refugee Day.

In October 2016, *"Io sono con te. Storia di Brigitte"* a novel by Melania Mazzucco (celebrated Italian writer whose work has been translated into 27 languages) was published. The book speaks about Brigitte, a woman refugee victim of torture, accompanied and assisted by the many services of Centro Astalli.

QUICK FACTS

- Centro Astalli served about 30,000 asylum seekers and refugees. Of those 15,000 living 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. 600 forced migrants (in Rome, in Palermo and in Catania) have attended Italian language school.
- Every day 450 volunteers (lawyers, doctors, students, teachers etc.) and 49 staff members offer their time, skills and competences to asylum seekers and refugees to make them feel at home.

Two girls in the Centro Astalli soup kitchen in Rome.

© JRS ITALY



MALTA

INTEGRATION

"We are a big family with three children, I earn 500 Euros a month and I am expected to pay 350 Euros in rent. How can we survive?" - Tesfay, Eritrea

A staggering 80 percent of asylum seekers in Malta are currently living at risk of poverty according to the JRS Malta report *Struggling to Survive*. This percentage is more than five times the rate in the general population. The study, the first of its kind to specifically target poverty among asylum seekers also found that asylum seekers who have been in Malta for a longer period of time are no less likely than new arrivals to be at risk of poverty, thus highlighting the failure of Malta's integration policy.

According to Dr Julian Caruana, the author of the study and psychosocial coordinator at JRS Malta, the interviews carried out clearly point to a significant heightened risk of poverty and material deprivation in the asylum seeker population, independently of their protection status.

Another finding of the report points to high unemployment among asylum seekers, with 45 percent of household heads jobless despite the majority having access to a work permit and in some cases social benefits.

"The unfortunate reality is that if you're earning minimum wage or low-average wage, you

need both adults working not to be in poverty," Dr Caruana said. "In an asylum-seeking context, that becomes extremely difficult."

The report also found a high level of mental health problems among migrants at risk of poverty, creating the possibility of a vicious cycle and making it even harder for people to find work. As a result, throughout 2016, we continued to offer psychological support to a number of asylum seekers in order to help them cope and eventually overcome the many obstacles which they face on a daily basis.

Moreover, JRS Malta continued to respond to the other needs identified in *Struggling to Survive* through its twice weekly drop-in service which welcomes all those requiring the assistance and support of a social worker, lawyer or nurse. Despite a sharp decrease in the number of persons staying in one of Malta's detention

or open centres, we still visits these centres on a regular basis to provide information and professional support. And in response to the prohibitively high rental prices, two families were welcomed by religious communities as part of the Communities of Hospitality project. In the next few months another two families will be accommodated in a house which is currently being refurbished by a religious community.

Lastly, given that the difficulty in finding stable and well-remunerated employment is undoubtedly one of the main factors which explains the very high percentage of asylum seekers who are at risk of poverty, in 2016, JRS Malta held English language classes and three employment orientation courses on topics such as attending an interview and rights/behaviour at the workplace as part of our efforts to strengthen our employment support programme.

QUICK FACTS

- 426 individuals were provided with basic integration support, including support to access employment, education and social services.
- Legal assistance provided in 254 cases.
- In-depth social work services provided in 66 cases (40 families and 26 individuals).

People hold hands during a JRS Malta event. © JRS MALTA



POLAND

INTERCULTURAL EXCHANGE

JRS in Poland grew in strength and focused on intercultural exchange and learning in 2016, ranging from pastoral care to language classes and special workshops for children.

We ran several Polish language courses in 2016. From the second part of the year we also set up additional conversational classes with volunteers. These courses gathered nearly 60 people wanting to learn Polish.

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.

In terms of pastoral care, we established a monthly meeting for Arabic Christians in Warsaw. With help of Fr. Zygmunt Kwiatkowski SJ, former missionary in Syria, we organized monthly masses in Arabic for refugees from the Middle East. During the year people attending these masses started to create a community. We even celebrated the 25th wedding anniversary of a Syrian-Polish couple at one of these masses. During the year, we offered refugees the opportunity to explore Poland and Polish traditions. We organized day trips to the Polish national shrine in Częstochowa and the centre for blind children in Łaski. Our intercultural summer camp in Rozewie took place as usual.

Br. Andrew Malenda SJ joined the team as a lawyer, and helped with a great number of asylum cases last year. In addition, Slovakian trainee/intern Andrea Krizanova joined us as part of her Erasmus+ programme. Andrea provides support

to refugees with English and psychosocial help due to her studies in psychology.

Why did she decide to join us? In article for our newsletter she wrote: *"I feel at home here. I believe that this feeling makes the difference between this centre and others, it is because the Jesuit Social Centre beats in the same heart rhythm as the heart of the people whom we try to help."*

We moved to a bigger office at the end of the year and the grand opening was attended by the Papal Nuncio to Poland, monsignor Salvatore Penacchio, who blessed the new office. At the end of this meeting we could listen to refugees, one of them, Goddette from Congo, said: *"I hope that this new office becomes like home, because the old one managed to do so!"*



QUICK FACTS

- As a part of pastoral care we organized a pilgrimage to Częstochowa - Polish National Shrine. Nearly 50 people attended the event, and half of them were Muslims.
- 60 people attended Polish language classes.
- Moved to new office with 130 square meters for various activities and events.

A group photo on the celebration with children and families on St Nicholas Day. © W AKCJI

PORTUGAL

WORKING TOGETHER

2016 was a memorable year for JRS Portugal, considering the urgency of our work in the face of the compelling needs of refugees arriving to Europe and to Portugal.

In 2016, 781 relocated refugees arrived to our country, and JRS Portugal, through the multiple fronts in which it operated, accompanied 370 of these refugees.

The Lisbon office continued to provide services and was visited by 1,291 people seeking support in several areas, such as employment, training, health and legal support issues. In total, there were 8,755 appointments, distributed across the different services covered by the office.

We strengthened our work in vocational training, and we were certified as an official training entity by the Ministry of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security. Finally, in our Pedro Arrupe Shelter we continued to provide hospitality to homeless migrants. During the year 58 people from different countries, found temporary shelter here.

We continued our work with resettled refugees, closing the second edition of the "Seeds of Hope" project, which supported a group of 15 Syrian and Eritrean refugees that arrived to

Portugal in 2015, being resettled from Egypt.

JRS Portugal played a coordinating role in the civil society Refugee Support Platform (PAR). This platform enabled JRS Portugal to accompany 72 families and 63 host institutions throughout the year.

A JRS Portugal team was assigned to work at the Temporary Centre for Refugees (CATR) of Lisbon Municipality - opened in February 2016 - exclusively dedicated to give psychosocial support to relocated refugees being welcomed there under the EU relocation scheme. JRS Portugal was invited to be part of this project and to assure the daily management of this centre, covering the logistical aspects as well as all the work developed directly with the asylum seekers.

"I often think: If it was me in this situation, I would not be able to smile and get up with the will and strength to attend the Portuguese language classes or to be searching for a job. The truth is that despite all their difficulties, losing family members, risking their lives to escape the war and being delivered to a destiny they don't seem to have any kind of control, their willingness to live is stronger. They taught me that there is always something we can decide: the way we react to situations that happen in our lives." - **Francisca Matias, volunteer in CATR (Temporary Centre for Refugees)**

QUICK FACTS

- 303 people found a job, following the accompaniment given by JRS Portugal employment office.
- 1,875 migrants were provided with socio-legal information, social and medical support by the social office.
- 187 migrants in-detention accompanied by JRS Portugal in Unidade Habitacional de Santo António, in Porto, a detention centre for migrants.

André Livone (left), who lives in our shelter, with his friends during a football match in Luz Stadium. They are supporters of SLBenfica. © JRS PORTUGAL



ROMANIA

AWARENESS RAISING AND ADVOCACY

In 2016, JRS Romania developed 12 projects. In most of the projects JRS Romania had the lead role, developing projects that cover integration, advocacy, training for authorities, legal counselling, access to labour market, accommodation, social assistance and medical assistance.

JRS Romania continued its project with the US Embassy in Romania for delivering immediate intervention at the border with urgent care, having served 212 asylum seekers, including 46 children over the course of the year.

"We hadn't any food for 2 days. At the border, we received some water from the border police, but thanks to JRS we later had a good meal." - MH., asylum seeker assisted by JRS at the border.

JRS Romania continued to work on a project that offers accommodation for tolerated people at the Pedro Arrupe Centre. Accommodation in this centre represents an alternative to detention for vulnerable people and is the result of JRS Romania's active and prolonged lobbying efforts. In the words of one refugee staying in the centre, *"Where I live now is good... If I find a job here, I stay."*

Moreover, through the project *"A New Home"* JRS Romania provided accommodation incentives for more than 300 refugees in 115 locative spaces, covering their rent over a period of 7.5 months. Also, medical assistance was provided all over Romania to 300 asylum seekers in 2016, as part of the project *"Help-Med"*.

JRS Romania has also been working with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) in 2016, delivering a project for voluntary return counselling to 433 migrants and assisting 118 migrants in safe repatriation to their home countries.

JRS Romania intensified advocacy efforts through other activities such as promoting awareness raising campaigns through social media channels, such as videos about the Romanian landlords refusing to rent to refugees or videos about the beautiful initiative of a group of high school students to create a play about the refugee crisis in Europe. JRS Romania developed fundraising campaigns throughout 2016, mostly covering the story of Ahmad, a teenage refugee from Iraq that risked having his right leg amputated because of war wounds. Fortunately, the funds for his operation have been covered and he is recovering well.

QUICK FACTS

- 12 projects were developed in total in 2016 in partnership with both European and national organisations.
- Housing services, legal and social assistance and employment help provided.
- We assisted all categories of refugees and migrants by being present in all 6 of the open centres in the country and in a total of 2 of the detention centres.

Party for refugee children held at the 'My Place' social centre. © JRS ROMANIA



SLOVENIA

ACCOMPANIMENT AND AWARENESS RAISING

This year, JRS Slovenia has been present in the detention centre with different activities. For many years, since 2002, JRS Slovenia, has been visiting the detention centre weekly. It has been an opportunity to help the detainees in many ways.

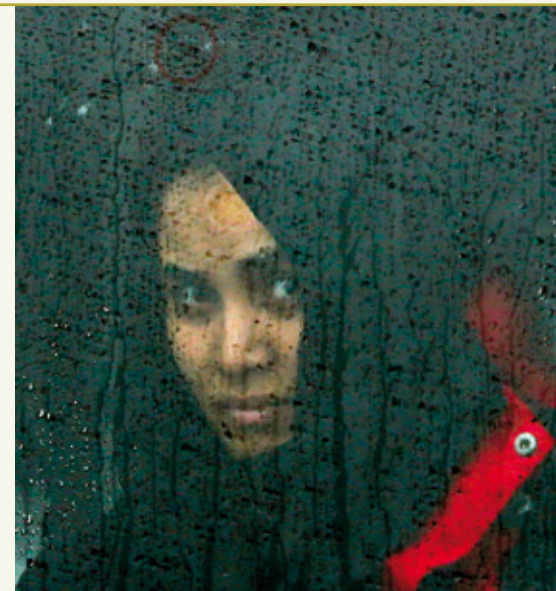
We offered psycho-social support, legal advice when necessary and special pastoral care for detainees who are Catholics. Our focus has been to ease the lives of the detainees. The detainees are always very happy to meet us. One detainee told us: *"you are the only contact with the outside world. Thank you for visiting us and listening to us"*.

Another detainee mentioned, *"How it is great to participate at the mass. God is present everywhere. He gave me the strength and consolation especially when I am stuck here in the detention centre."* The work of JRS Slovenia in the detention centre is appreciated very much by the staff, as we are the only NGO present regularly in the detention centre.

As usual, we have been collaborating at special events held in the asylum home this year. An outstanding success was the Christmas celebration with presentation of gifts to the refugee children. This event has always brought a lot of joy and fun for the children.

Every month JRS Slovenia hosts the radio broadcast *"Building a more open society"* on the national Catholic radio called Ognjišče, where we tackle different issues from the migration and development field. The JRS Slovenia country director Fr. Robin Schweiger SJ stated about the radio broadcast *"It has been an opportunity to present a more positive view while dealing with the migrants and refugees."* Usually, we have a guest where s/he presents her/his own view regarding refugee and migrants issues. The second half of the radio broadcast has been dedicated to different JRS news from home and abroad.

JRS Slovenia was also present at the coordination meetings held regularly at SLOGA, which is a platform of NGOs dealing with migrants, refugees, detainees and their problems.



A woman looks through the window of a train departing from Croatia to Slovenia. © DARRIN ZAMMIT LUPI / JRS EUROPE

QUICK FACTS

- Weekly visits to the detention centre.
- Monthly radio broadcast *"Building a more open society"* dealing with the refugees and migration issues.
- Participation at two roundtables and giving three conferences on the 'refugee crisis'.

SE EUROPE (CROATIA, KOSOVO, MACEDONIA, SERBIA)

CROATIA

IAfter closing of the transits camps in Croatia in April 2016, through which more than 650,000 refugees passed and in which JRS was 24/7 present from the first day, we continued and reinforced our work with asylum seekers in the reception centres in Zagreb and Kutina and in the detention centre. Psychosocial support, medical assistance and advocating for the rights of refugees were our priorities.

Under the EU Dublin III regulation, since August 2016 more international protection seekers have been returned to Croatia because it is often the first country where they were registered. As a consequence of the deportation, refugees often arrived shocked and depressed and in these moments the psychosocial support and work of JRS is crucial.

Through counselling and tailor-made workshops like “Women for Women”, intercultural workshops, Croatian language classes and educational workshops with refugee children JRS is serving and empowering refugees.

JRS in Croatia is also highly focused on improving the integration process for people who receive refugee status. We work closely with refugees and their families offering support

with homework, language learning, dealing with bureaucracy and learning about Croatian culture.

JRS is a member of a working group that is preparing the action plan for integration of refugees in Croatia organised by Croatian Government's Office for Human Rights and Minorities.

“When we fled Afghanistan, I left behind my parents and friends, I left my life. I did not think I was going to find it here again. Today, after a long time I did not feel like a stranger.” - Sameer

KOSOVO

JRS in Kosovo with the project “Providing help to asylum seekers in the Reception Centres” entered its fourth year of supporting the refugees in Kosovo. It is a leading NGO partner in two reception centres in the country.

In 2016, the number of asylum seekers in Kosovo increased by 330% and still JRS remains the only organization that is distributing medical supplies, hygiene packages, clothes and food. With the purpose of enhancing the integration process JRS is organising Albanian language classes for refugees.

A group photo taken during a summer excursion with asylum seekers in Croatia. © JRS SEE



Finally, in June, JRS and the Ministry of Interior signed a cooperation agreement with the aim to increase the quality of life for refugees and to assist the needs of asylum seekers and detained persons in Kosovo.

FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA (FYROM)

Our 'Safe House' in Skopje which opened in 2015 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 organised games and activities for the children.

As large numbers of migrants continued to pass through the country in the first months of the year, the JRS team was present in Geggelija transit camp accompanying forced migrants during the night shift and providing emergency support (food, medicines etc.).

JRS continued to visit and offer support to forced migrants in the reception and detention centres in the country (Vizbegovo and Gazi Baba).

A JRS volunteer leads an arts workshop with children in the JRS safe house in Skopje. © JRS SEE

SERBIA

Opening the JRS office in Serbia in March 2016 came as the 'Balkan route' was closing and when over 2,000 people were moving in Serbia towards Western Europe. In the following months, daily arrivals were between 150 and 300 new refugees and an emergency response became our daily task. We have served all refugees who needed the support, help and assistance in any way; from registration and referral assistance, providing food, medicine and psychosocial support. Sometimes just a simple talk was recognised by refugees as great help.

"We spoke almost an hour and my problem is same one as hour before, but I feel calmer now. I feel that I'm not alone in this." - Amar

QUICK FACTS

- Medical assistance in over 1,000 cases in the Croatian reception centres for asylum seekers.
- Support to over 3,000 refugees in process of official registration in the Serbian asylum office.
- JRS Croatia organized "Christmas lunch with a refugee" in which 20 Croatian families hosted 55 refugees in their home on Christmas Day.
- 195 vulnerable migrants offered shelter and support in JRS safe house in Skopje.



SWEDEN

SOLIDARITY

Different initiatives by JRS and by other faith-based actors were initiated and others continued, with the main focus on offering hospitality and further education.

JRS Sweden's integration project, El Liqa' – Encounter, matched locals with newcomers – asylum seekers and those with residence permits. Since March 2016 we organised monthly activities in and around Stockholm to enhance migrants' understanding of Swedish culture and help build their social network. Volunteers also took part in these activities to increase the migrants' opportunities to communicate in Swedish. The activities included guided visits to museums, exploring

the yearly "Culture Night" together, as well as celebrating Lucia and the Swedish national holiday.

"I signed up for El Liqa'– Encounter as I wanted a Swedish friend to spend time and practice my Swedish with. As I kept coming to the monthly activities I got the chance to extend my social network, and I now have more friends, both Swedes and non-Swedes, than I ever expected when I enrolled." – **Zain, 27.**

During the summer of 2016 JRS Sweden began implementing a project focusing on female asylum seekers. The aim was to improve the women's language skills and equip them with the vocabulary and practical skills needed for a career in care, as this is a sector that needs workers and is relatively easy to access.

We ran a summer course in the Swedish language, which was followed by a course in care professions. Many of the women brought their children, and JRS offered babysitting with the help of volunteers. At the end of the course, the women applied for further education, internships or jobs depending on their status as asylum seekers or residents. The majority went on to do internships, and a few of the women who received their resident permits enrolled on government-funded courses to become care assistants.

"I worked as a nurse in my home country, but as I am still waiting for my asylum claim to be processed I cannot verify my diploma here. The course was therefore a great opportunity to learn relevant vocabulary for my field, and at the end of the course I applied for and received an internship in a care home for people with disabilities." – **Barlin, 26.**

QUICK FACTS

- In 2016 JRS Sweden served more than 700 refugees and forced migrants in the different projects and initiatives.
- About 150 volunteers were active in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the different projects and activities.
- 100 people accompanied through regularly visits in the detention centre at Mårsta, 30km outside Stockholm.

An excursion as part of El Liqa' – Encounter integration project. © JRS SWEDEN



UNITED KINGDOM

HOSPITALITY AND ACCOMPANIMENT

In the UK, JRS has a special ministry to those held in immigration detention and those made destitute by hostile government asylum policy. Hospitality and accompaniment is at the centre of all that we do, providing a warm and friendly welcome and journeying with people, often through many years of uncertainty.

The hub of our work supporting destitute refugees is our weekly day centre, where we welcome and offer practical support to refugees. We take the time to get to know our refugee friends, their hopes and skills, trying where we can to provide activities which help them to develop their interests.

The drama workshops we ran over the autumn and winter culminated in a performance by our refugee friends at the JRS Europe AGM and at a special performance at the Hurtado Jesuit Centre. We continue to facilitate a reflection group for men and a prayer circle and a mutual support group for women; and provide 1:1 English language classes for women.

Within the context of immigration detention which has no time limit, and the heightened anxiety this causes, we have accompanied 572 individuals held in immigration detention. Trained volunteers have offered pastoral support, solicitor liaison services, and referrals



The Soul Sanctuary Gospel Choir entertain our refugee friends, JRS volunteers and supporters during our annual summer party. © JRS UK

to specialist services; treating each detainee with dignity and respect.

In 2016 we focussed on raising awareness of the hardship faced by destitute refugees in the UK. Our new director, Sarah Teather, gave numerous talks and presentations in parishes, schools, universities and to Church leaders across the UK. We partnered with CAFOD and Caritas Social Action Network to lead a Lampedusa Cross action, inviting the catholic community to welcome the stranger and send a message of hope to refugees as part of the Year of Mercy. As part of this, we took part in a Refugees Welcome prayer service and march across London, that was attended by over 10,000 people from across the UK.

QUICK FACTS

- Accompanied 300 destitute refugees through our weekly Day Centre, from more than 30 different countries. Over 4,000 hot meals cooked by volunteers. Provided over 16,000 bus passes for essential journeys. 73 emergency hardship grants given to newly destitute refugees.
- 572 detainees accompanied. Over 40 volunteers dedicating their time to support JRS work.
- Over 30,000 'Messages of Hope' have been written by the Catholic Community of England and Wales to show solidarity and welcome to refugees across the UK and Europe.

As part of the pan-European project, *"Communities of Hospitality"*, we welcomed a new member of staff to co-ordinate our 'At Home' hosting scheme, which encourages parishes and religious communities to create their own communities of hospitality by housing and welcoming destitute refugees on a short-term basis.

2016 saw the loss of an important member of the JRS family. Louise Zanre guided and directed our work with love and compassion for over 15 years. Her legacy lives on in our accompaniment of refugees, which is the core of our work - being there for refugees, sharing food and conversation, building relationships, and sharing their journey.

Refugees wait to disembark from the ferry that brought them from Lesbos to the port of Piraeus, near Athens, Greece.

© DARRIN ZAMMIT LUPI / JRS EUROPE



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 over 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

[Jose Ignacio Garcia SJ](#) Regional Director (from January 2017)
[Carola Jimenez-Asenjo](#) Project Development Coordinator
[Kathryn Doyle](#) Project and Advocacy Assistant
[Olga Siebert](#) Advocacy Officer
[Oscar Spooner](#) Communications Officer
[Isabelle de Sazilly](#) Finance Officer
[Jean-Marie Carrière SJ](#) Regional Director (until December 2016)
[Mark Provera](#) Policy and Advocacy Officer

VOLUNTEERS, TEMPORARY STAFF

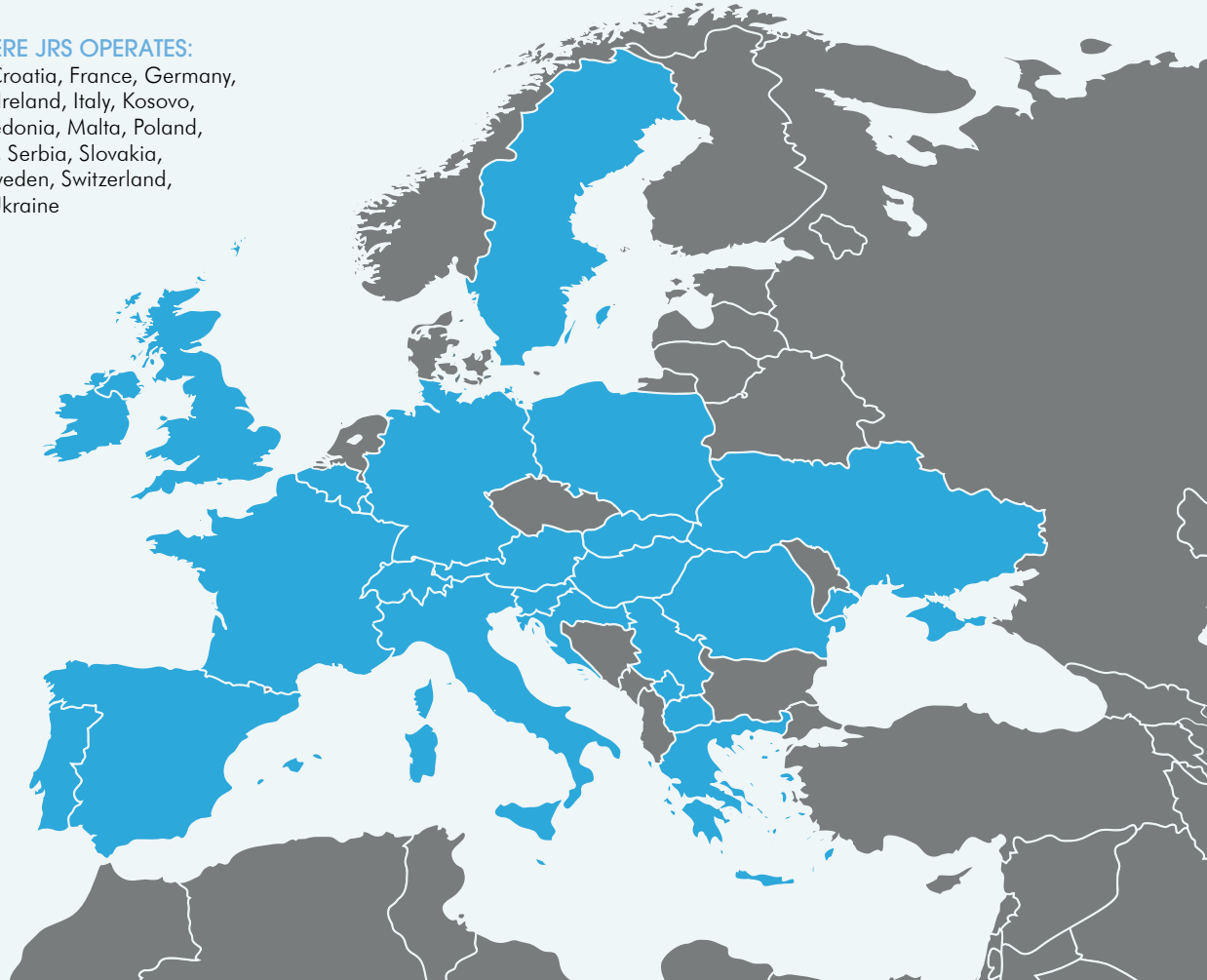
[Joseph Poncin](#) Administrative Assistant
[Gianluigi Campogrande](#) Advocacy Assistant
[David Moya](#) Advocacy Adviser
[Max Olgemoller](#) Intern

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[Katrine Camilleri](#) Director, JRS Malta
[Gianfranco Matarazzo SJ](#) Provincial Italy
[Jose Ignacio Garcia SJ](#) Social Delegate
[Luis Arancibia](#) Director, Entreculturas

COUNTRIES WHERE JRS OPERATES:

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



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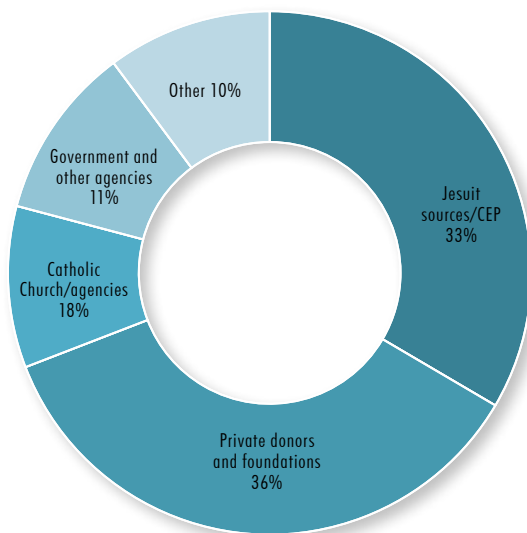
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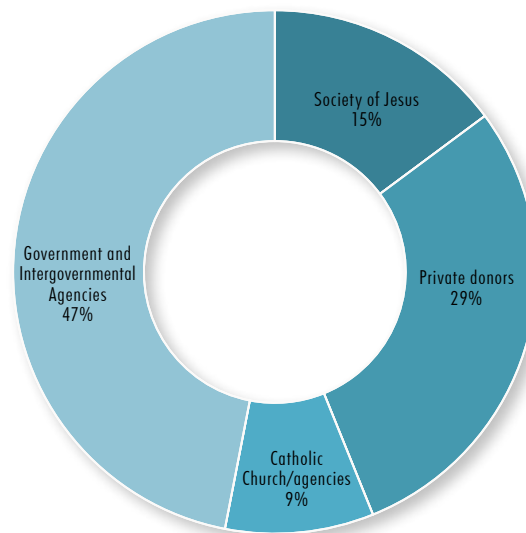
Financial summary

REGIONAL OFFICE - INCOME 2016 (EURO)



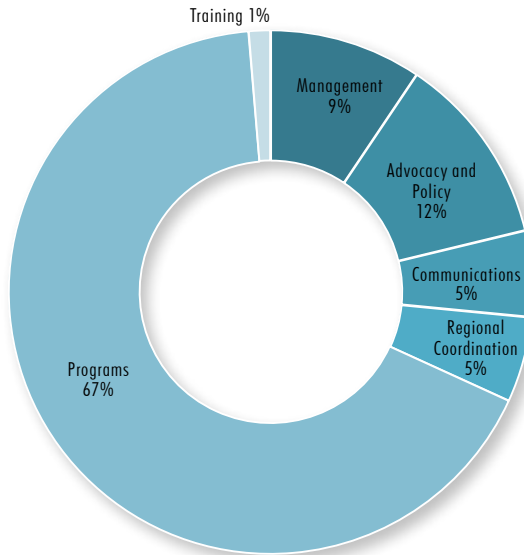
Jesuit sources/CEP	328.362
Private donors and foundations	350.256
Catholic Church/agencies	98.000
Government and other agencies	105.074
Other	99.877
TOTAL	981.568

COUNTRY OFFICES - INCOME 2016 (EURO)



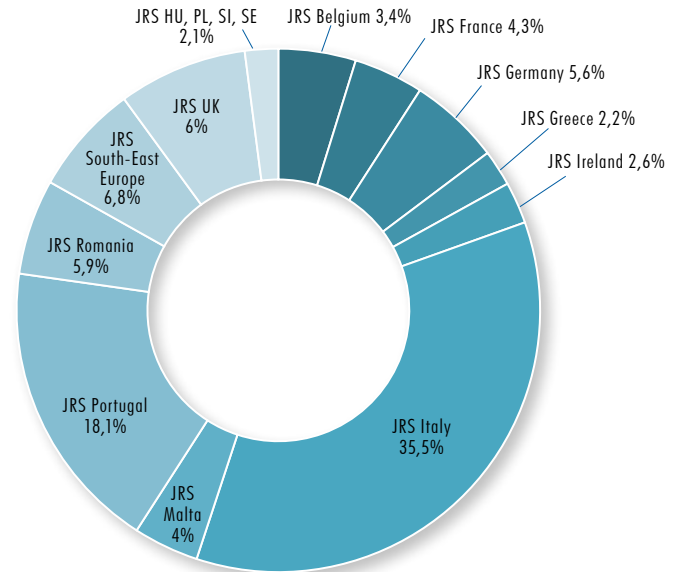
Society of Jesus	1.381.402
Private donors	2.705.308
Catholic Church/agencies	854.359
Government and Intergovernmental Agencies	4.371.807
TOTAL	9.312.876

REGIONAL OFFICE - EXPENDITURE 2016



Management	90.887
Advocacy and Policy	113.944
Communications	51.348
Regional Coordination	50.973
Programs	644.990
Training	13.126
TOTAL	965.268

COUNTRY OFFICES - EXPENDITURE 2016



JRS Belgium	417.541
JRS France	376.989
JRS Germany	491.684
JRS Greece	194.775
JRS Ireland	225.161
JRS Italy	3.100.000
JRS Malta	353.438
JRS Portugal	1.583.782
JRS Romania	514.928
JRS South-East Europe	595.420
JRS UK	696.160
JRS HU-PL-SI-SE	179.610
TOTAL	8.729.488



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