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## **Strategic Framework for JRS in Europe 2019-2021**

Growing in Hospitality  
and Solidarity across  
Europe

# Index

## **1** **Introduction**

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Page 3

## **2** **Our Context**

---

Page 4

## **3** **Mission, Vision & Values**

---

Page 10

## **4** **Core Competencies**

---

Page 12

## **5** **The way we work together**

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Page 14

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Where we come from

The history of the Jesuit Refugee Service has its roots in a single individual feeling compelled to action and mobilising others to do the same. In 1980, moved by the situation of the Vietnamese boat people Pedro Arrupe, the then Superior General of the Society of Jesus, felt compelled to act. Today, as a network of 22 JRS offices and contact persons in Europe, we are continually reminded that those most vulnerable in society, those at risk of exclusion, whose fundamental human rights have been violated, are those on whom our attention must fall.

Our spiritual tradition leads us to have an optimistic and committed attitude towards the human person. A committed attitude because God, who seeks the good of all creation, focuses attentively on the part of humanity that suffers most, victim of injustice and violence. Ours is an optimistic spirituality because it finds God in all events, in all people, especially in the poor and marginalised, God's presence mobilise a dynamic of solidarity, hospitality and closeness to those who suffer. Our inspiration is our gratitude for this presence of God, which leads us to a radical and sincere commitment.

In Europe, the strength of the work of JRS has often been where interpersonal hospitality and collective advocacy meet. Indeed, in 2014 Fr Adolfo Nicolás, former Superior General, noted that JRS is "Gospel hospitality in action." Through JRS's programmes and awareness raising campaigns, we have seen once again how individual people have felt called to stand alongside refugees and forced migrants and, through their own involvement, convince neighbours, classmates or political leaders to do the same. As members of European society, we also see hospitality as a political responsibility and are challenged to think creatively on how to influence, effectively and positively, rising tendencies of isolation and unwelcoming cultural attitudes.



## 1.2 Who we work with

In the recent past, we have seen over one million people find their way to Europe – refugees and forced migrants fleeing persecution, armed conflict, poverty or natural disasters in their homeland where they can no longer find safety and security – seeking protection and assistance. At the same time, we have also seen a tremendous outpouring of compassion and solidarity from European citizens who have felt compelled to help in any way they can. Every

day, JRS has come into contact with many of these people – both refugees and local citizens – and has watched as new friendships form, emergency needs are met and policies shift as a result.

Following Catholic social teaching, JRS understands the term ‘refugee’ to include not only persons persecuted because of race, religion, membership in social or political groups, but also internally displaced persons and all forcibly displaced people who are driven from their homes by armed conflict, ruinous economic policy or natural disasters.

JRS also has a particular care for those who are the most vulnerable or whose needs are most urgent. A person can be considered vulnerable because of any number of personal, social or environmental factors. While our past research has shown that vulnerability is a complex and multi-layered reality that encompasses many different kinds of people, we typically mean groups such as unaccompanied minors, women affected by gender-based violence, people with physical and mental health challenges and people at risk of becoming destitute.

## 1.3 Where we are going

In order to re-articulate our mission, founding values and the future direction of our work, this strategic framework and plan will act as a guidepost. The Strategic Framework for the region of JRS in Europe aims to identify common interests and purposes and key communication channels between countries within the network. To complement this Strategic Framework, the Regional Office of JRS Europe will implement its own Strategic Plan to provide a clear vision of the work to be done and the goals to be achieved within the next three years.

Finally, we have been inspired and affirmed in our work by the recent words of Pope Francis, who recently described our shared response with four verbs: “ *to welcome, to protect, to promote and to integrate.*”

## 2. Our Context

### 2.1 Global Context

The current global context is one of persisting inequality. Excessive social and economic inequality and the denial of basic human rights have long been understood as causes of forced migration around the globe.

According to the World Bank’s most recent data from 2015, although extreme poverty has been decreasing in the past years, more than 730 million people – or 10% of the world’s population – live on less than \$1.90 (USD) a day. Also, the decrease in extreme poverty has not happened equally in all regions of the world. In fact, the number of people who are poor in Sub-Saharan Africa increased by 9 million between 2013 and 2015, with 413 million people living on less than \$1.90 (USD) a day in 2015, more than all other regions combined.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> World Bank, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/overview>, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2018/09/19/decline-of-global-extreme-poverty-continues-but-has-slowed-world-bank>, last accessed 05/10/2018

At the same time, global mobility and global information systems have been making the world smaller: people are more aware of the deep divisions of the world. Travel has become accessible to more people while new streams of communication have accelerated the speed at which information can be exchanged.

Moreover, armed conflicts have raged for years in many regions of the world, in particular in several African countries, in the Middle East and in Central Asia. In addition, persecution to groups and individuals is still globally widespread.

In an international context characterised by conflicts and profound inequality, it is inevitable that people who can will sometimes move from their home countries in search of better opportunities elsewhere. Although statistically it is clear that only a tiny minority of the world's population actually leaves its country of origin, the numbers have nevertheless been rising. According to the most recent estimates of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), there are currently 244 million international migrants globally, or 3.3% of the world's population.<sup>2</sup>

According to the UN Refugee Agency (UNCHR) global displacement is at a record high, with the number of internally displaced at over 40 million and the number of refugees more than 25 million. Within these numbers, also lies an unbalance, as we see that 85% of displaced people currently reside in developing countries, with Turkey, Uganda and Pakistan hosting the highest numbers.<sup>3</sup>

## 2.2 European Trends

As one of the most secure and wealthy regions in the world, Europe is naturally a destination for many migrants. In 2015, Europe hosted about 75 million migrants.<sup>4</sup> The numbers are much more modest when it comes to forced migrants, with Europe hosting about 2.6 million people, representing less than 15% of the world's refugee population.<sup>5</sup>

Therefore, the European Union (EU), with a total population of more than 500 million, has comparatively received a small number of migrants and refugees. Despite this, the increase in arrivals of forced migrants between 2014 and 2016 led to a panic reaction by EU governments, who have proved incapable of facing the challenges posed by the phenomenon of human mobility in a humane and effective way. In 2015 only, more than 1 million people reached Europe by sea, mainly through Greece.<sup>6</sup> Most came from Syria and other countries affected by conflicts and severe human rights violations, making most of the people who arrived eligible for protection status in the European Union. Instead of a unified reaction and of

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2 IOM, "World Migration Report 2018", [https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr\\_2018\\_en.pdf](https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr_2018_en.pdf), last accessed 05/10/2018

3 UNCHR, Global Trends Forced Displacement 2017, <http://www.unhcr.org/statistics/unhcrstats/5b27be547/unhcr-global-trends-2017.html>, last accessed 22/10/2018

4 IOM, "World Migration Report 2018", [https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr\\_2018\\_en.pdf](https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr_2018_en.pdf), last accessed 05/10/2018

5 UNCHR, Global Trends Forced Displacement 2017, <http://www.unhcr.org/statistics/unhcrstats/5b27be547/unhcr-global-trends-2017.html>, last accessed 08/10/2018

6 UNCHR operational portal refugee situation, Mediterranean, <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean>, last accessed 05/10/2018

measures to welcome and protect people in the best way, EU governments could only agree on actions aiming at preventing people from reaching EU territory. An example of such action is the EU-Turkey statement<sup>7</sup>, according to which Turkey agreed to readmit all migrants arriving irregularly on the Greek islands from its shores.

In 2017 and 2018 the number of people who reached Europe by sea considerably decreased. Nevertheless, both the EU and its Member States continue to deal with the challenges posed by migration in emergency mode. Proposals in the summer of 2018 still focus on the need to prevent people from reaching Europe, by using disembarkation platforms in third-countries, by containing those arriving in specific “controlled” centres and by swiftly enforcing the return of those not found in need of international protection.



On the ground, the experience of JRS shows that protection and reception conditions for asylum seekers has not improved in the past three to four years. On the contrary, as the heat of the so-called emergency has passed and attention from media and public opinion has diminished, the conditions in some countries – such as in Greece – have worsened.<sup>8</sup>

The process of reform of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) does not seem likely to bring positive change. One of the most worrying developments is the continued detention of people, even people who are seeking asylum. For example, the reform could allow a wider option of resorting to administrative detention. This legislative development reflects a trend that is visible on the ground, since the policy of detention is on the agenda even in countries, such as Italy, where it had always been limited. Of particular concern is the increased acceptance of that child detention is unavoidable, after years of attempts to ban it. This trend is also visible in national policies. Belgium, for instance, banned child detention ten years ago, in 2018 again started detaining families with children. Other countries, such as Romania and Croatia, are also detaining children, or are considering detention facilities “suitable” to accommodate children.

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<sup>7</sup> Council of the European Union, EU-Turkey statement, 18 March 2016, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/18/eu-turkey-statement/>

<sup>8</sup> JRS Europe, ‘Forgotten at the gates of Europe’, 2018, last accessed 08/10/2018, [https://jrseurope.org/Assets/Publications/File/PEB\\_Report1.pdf](https://jrseurope.org/Assets/Publications/File/PEB_Report1.pdf)



Another weakness revealed by the CEAS revision is a deep crisis in solidarity and trust among Member States. Instead of accepting shared responsibility for protecting and welcoming in a spirit of European cooperation – Member States' sole concern has been to limit arrivals. As a result, the CEAS reform is mainly driven by so-called national interests considering needs and interests of forced migrants. Here, as JRS and other European NGOs have seen, forced migrants and refugees are treated without dignity, moved around to different European countries and even outside of the EU.

Beyond respecting the rights of asylum seekers, there lies the obligation to integrate adequately those who have already arrived. The differences in cultural and religious backgrounds between forced migrants and the local population, the language barriers, the difficulties in matching the needs of the European labour markets to the skills and qualifications of newcomers are all real challenges. To overcome them, a mutual effort is needed to meet, to dialogue with and to understand each other.

JRS experience shows that among local populations there is often ample willingness to engage in these integration processes.<sup>9</sup> Yet the dominant political discourse focuses on difference, on feeding fears of the other. Nationalistic, anti-migrant and extremist movements are on the rise in many EU countries. Even more worrying, several mainstream parties at times adopt this anti-migration discourse. The result is a polarised society with, on the one hand, those who accept that migration is a natural fact and who are willing to embrace the challenges and changes brought by multiculturalism and, on the other hand, those who cannot reconcile themselves to a changing European identity and believe that migration can and should be stopped.

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<sup>9</sup> JRS Europe, 'I Get You - Promoting best practices to prevent racism and xenophobia towards forced migrants through community building', 2017, [https://jrseurope.org/Assets/Publications/File/JRS\\_Europe\\_igetyou\\_eu.pdf](https://jrseurope.org/Assets/Publications/File/JRS_Europe_igetyou_eu.pdf), last accessed 08/10/2018

A further result of the rise of far-right, anti-migration forces is the growing penalisation and even criminalisation of solidarity. In several countries in Europe we see authorities reducing civil society movements into silence by cutting public funding. Individuals and organisations may even be criminally prosecuted for helping migrants.<sup>10</sup>

From the perspective of JRS, the European Parliament elections of May 2019 will take place in this context. Their outcome will be particularly important for the future of EU policy on asylum and migration and, in particular, for the future development of the Common European Asylum System. The European Parliament has proved to be the most progressive of the EU institution in the past years in the field of migration. Its positions have traditionally been respectful of asylum seekers' rights and needs and are typically reached via a large majority. For example, the European Parliament has reached positions that reduced detention, banned child detention and took into consideration asylum seekers' own desires. Therefore, a potential growth in far-right forces within the Parliament could have a particularly negative impact for future EU decision-making in this.

Finally, despite this difficult context, it is important to mention those movements that openly support migration and especially the effective protection of forced migrants. Despite a certain fatigue caused by the lack of political support, grassroots movements continue to humanity and hospitality to people in need. Both at national and European level, the number of civil society organisations actively working on asylum and migration issues has recently increased. This positive development entails the need for better coordination of movements, so that each can best make effective from its own competence.

For JRS as a Catholic organisation, the clear messages of Pope Francis and the Holy See's string positioning within the relevant international forums – such as the Global Compacts on both Migrants and Refugees – are an important encouragement.<sup>11</sup> The Holy See's new Migrant & Refugee Section, and positions taken by national Bishops' Conferences, have brought issues of forced migration to the forefront of Catholic thought and action.



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<sup>10</sup> Medecins Sans Frontiers. European governments are obstructing lifesaving rescues and returning people to unsafe Libya, 2018. <https://www.msf.org/central-mediterranean-european-governments-are-obstructing-lifesaving-rescues-and-returning-people>

<sup>11</sup> Migrants and Refugees Section: Integral Human Development, Vatican City. 'Towards the Global Compacts on Migrants and on Refugees,' 2018. <https://migrants-refugees.va/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Legal-size-ENG-2nd-Edition-Towards-the-Global-Compacts-2018-EMAIL.pdf>

## Mission

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1

Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) is an international Catholic organisation with a mission to accompany, serve and advocate for the rights of refugees and others who are forcibly displaced.

## Vision

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2

JRS in Europe works towards a Europe where human rights, protection, hospitality, integration, and reconciliation all have a place to flourish within a larger vision for inclusive and welcoming societies.

## Values

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3

Compassion  
Hope  
Dignity  
Solidarity  
Hospitality  
Justice  
Participation

## 3. Mission, Vision & Values

### 3.1 Mission

Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) is an international Catholic organisation with a mission to accompany, serve and advocate for the rights of refugees and others who are forcibly displaced.

### 3.2 Vision

JRS in Europe works towards a Europe where human rights, protection, hospitality, integration, and reconciliation all have a place to flourish within a larger vision for inclusive and welcoming societies.

By 2021, JRS in Europe has enhanced and articulated its role and strategic areas of work in order to fulfil its threefold mission of accompaniment, service and advocacy for refugees. All JRS offices – at national and European level – share a common base of values and an understanding about the importance of working together across Europe at different levels.

Because of the strength of the network, the Regional Office of JRS Europe is able to utilise the experience of country offices at national level to effectively contribute to policy, programme and awareness raising work at European level. At the same time, the Country Offices endorse, value and actively participate in the work of JRS at European level. The Regional Office works with and for the JRS country offices, and it has established itself as a main reference point for them – supporting the country offices in identified areas, including best practice exchange through the network, programmatic growth, advocacy and communication expansion, fundraising and capacity building. The network of JRS in Europe has reached a sustained and stable level of healthy financial growth through fundraising, planning and effective programme management.



At European level, the JRS network has expanded its presence and reach and has engaged with a network of stakeholders and advocacy allies. It has defined its expertise within these groups. JRS in Europe has relevant advocacy positions regarding asylum and refugee issues that are connected with national realities and the direct experience of refugees. Therefore, the JRS network in Europe, mainly through the action of the Regional Office, is able to influence the European agenda towards the relevant policy changes.

## 3.3 Values

JRS in Europe is inspired by core values that inform our work. These values were started by JRS International in 2012, and they are now reaffirmed and freshly articulated within our current context.

### Compassion

Compassion means treating others with equity and respect, and working to alleviate the suffering of others, starting from a base of love, empathy and understanding.

### Hope

Hope is the quality of the spirit that provides the necessary energy and direction to keep working towards our aims for an inclusive and welcoming society. Guided by hope, JRS focuses on positivity and solutions rather than problems. Through accompaniment, JRS can inspire hope among people in difficult situations, there by contributing to societal change.

### Dignity

Dignity means that all human beings, regardless of their social status, circumstances or identity, are endowed with human rights, agency and a unique personal history. These human rights are inherent and inalienable and must therefore always be respected and protected.

### Solidarity

Solidarity is represented by our firm and preserving commitment to do good in society for individuals. It is present when JRS respectfully walks alongside and works with people – refugees and migrants from diverse cultures, nationalities and religions – in order to find solutions for their needs.

### Hospitality

Hospitality is at the heart of creating a welcoming and inclusive environment where everyone can be 'at home'. For JRS, hospitality begins upon a person's first arrival, and we create spaces where people interact, make connections and develop positive networks of relationships.

### Justice

Justice is achieved when people – regardless of race, religion, gender, age or ability – enjoy equal opportunities and conditions that ensure access to a dignified way of life. JRS engages in a root cause analysis of injustices that refugees and migrants face in order to seek positive societal and cultural change.

### Participation

Participation is a way of working that intentionally involves refugees and migrants in decision-making, planning and evaluation as well as in efforts to raise awareness and advocate on

their own behalf. Participation is rooted in relationships based on trust, mutuality and reciprocity. More broadly, participation strives to empower refugees to contribute actively and confidently to society.

## 4. Core Competencies

Inspired by our Jesuit identity, JRS in Europe affirms the following core competencies and recognises them as “Our way of proceeding”. As such, these competencies consist of certain attitudes, values, and patterns of behaviour that join together to become our way of proceeding. As partners in mission, the JRS network in Europe is not content with the status quo, the known, the tried, the already existing. We are constantly driven to discover, redefine, and reach out on behalf of forced migrants and refugees. For us, frontiers and boundaries are not obstacles or ends, but new challenges to be faced, new opportunities to be welcomed. Our way of proceeding is a way of challenge.<sup>12</sup>

**We are constantly driven to discover, redefine, and reach out on behalf of forced migrants and refugees.**

Abiding by, and striving to improve upon, JRS’s core competencies are central to the success and fulfilment of our mission. They are what help us stand out from other similar actors in the field and enable us to find the key spaces where we, as a mission-driven organisation, can bring added value.

### 4.1 Promoting a culture of Welcome in Europe

JRS strives to promote a culture of welcome in Europe, through our core value of hospitality. We promote encounters between local citizens and refugees, creating opportunities for mutual exchange and new friendships. We strive to ensure that these relationships are based on reciprocity and respect. JRS also engages in projects, research and advocacy campaigns in order to counter the insidious societal effects of racism and xenophobia.

### 4.2 Reconciliation

JRS understands reconciliation as the bridge-building which is never blind to the demands of justice; as the fostering of understanding between different social groups, especially amidst tensions and misunderstandings. We promote these aims societally, and equally in our own work and lives: in our personal relationships, our relationship with God and with the natural environment. In our increasingly polarised European societies, JRS sees one path to reconciliation as the acceptance that migration is a historical constant. It can be justly and judiciously managed, but never simply controlled. JRS sees migration as an act of human freedom, often in the face of oppression or destitution; an act that changes both host societies and migrants themselves. Migration is no threat to European identity but can enrich that identity. In facing the inevitable challenges, JRS affirms the importance of inter-religious partnerships.

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<sup>12</sup> Adapted from “Our way of proceeding”, General Congregation 34, Decree 26.



### 4.3 Spiritual Dimension

In meeting forcibly displaced persons we encounter profound suffering. But two aspects always stand out as absolutes. Personal dignity, to be made effective, depends on respect for one's rights, and on the capacity for self-esteem whatever the circumstances. Second, a person's 'spiritual dimension' is the capacity to be open to transcendence. Openness may be embodied in religious faith - in prayer, the reading of sacred texts or liturgical celebration: elsewhere in a deep and undeniable sense of relationship with the transcendent. JRS knows the capacity of faith, in its many expressions, to sustain persons in their worst ordeals.

### 4.4 Depth

In accordance with other works of the Society of Jesus, JRS engages in robust social analysis of the most pressing migration and refugee issues of our time. Our multidimensional approach is sustained by our threefold mission of accompaniment, service and advocacy, each activity enriching the other. We practise evidence-based research to inform our advocacy positions.

In the Ignatian tradition, depth of thought and imagination require a profound engagement with the real, a determination to reach below the surface. Careful analysis must serve a subsequent practical commitment to the people we serve, and to God, Christ, and the Gospel.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Fr. Adolfo Nicolas, General Superior of the Jesuits. *Depth, Universality, and Learned Ministry: Challenges to Jesuit Higher Education today*. Mexico City. 2010.

## 4.5 Accountability

JRS upholds across the organisation professionalism and high ethical standards. As a network we work to develop our internal capacities. We do so through improving our operational policies and procedures, practising transparency in finance and administration, being accountable to our staff, through respectful policies in human resources. We adhere to high standards of relationship with our donors and build up our fundraising capacities to ensure the sustainability of our projects. JRS engages in careful monitoring and evaluation of its activities, and of its communications.

## 4.6 Humility

The network of twenty one JRS country offices and a far greater number of contact persons across Europe has often described itself as members of an inclusive family. The network, like a healthy family, aspires to uphold and foster its internal relationships with humility and openness. We practise subsidiarity, knowing that the people on the ground and those closest to situations are experts in their own realities. In addition, we approach the people aware that we are privileged to share in their journeys and accompany them in their challenges, sometimes their desolation, and their joy.

## 5. The way we work together

In order to adhere to the vision of a Europe where human rights, protection, hospitality, integration, and reconciliation all flourish, we will strive, as a network to uphold principles, establish clear working channels, work together on common advocacy and communications lines, and collaborate in common programmes.

### 5.1 To uphold the following principles when working together

The JRS network in Europe brings independent national country offices together for a common purpose. We take **trust** and **reciprocity** as foundational to our working relationships. Each country office and individual of the network is treated with **mutual understanding**, **fairness and equality** in order to **encourage** all to participate and **communicate openly**.

All national JRS offices bring **different specialisations** and expertise depending on their contexts, histories and capacities, together in the JRS network in Europe to **share in the responsibility** of accompanying, serving and advocating for refugees. As such, the network will **clearly define the roles and responsibilities** of each of its members, taking into consideration their different capacities, in order to **uphold standards** of service delivery to our beneficiaries and of our own professionalism.

**The JRS network in Europe brings independent national country offices together for a common purpose.**

Within the network, each partner should always act **transparently** and in the best interest of those we serve and of the organisation as a whole. Therefore, the JRS network makes **decisions through profound discernment** with the **active participation** of its members.

## 5.2 To establish clear, internal working channels throughout the network

Over the next three years, internally, the JRS network in Europe will ensure that each JRS national country office is connected with the Society of Jesus in the office's respective province and strengthens Jesuit links at national and regional level.

We will work to build up both existing and new channels of communication within the network. This will include channels between JRS Europe and the national country offices as well as directly between the different national offices in relation to common areas of work. By thus strengthening the network JRS Europe aims to strengthen its own capacities in areas such as governance, quality management, human resources and fundraising. We will do this by regular in-person meetings, including the bi-annual Regional Coordination Meeting (RCM) and Annual General Meeting (AGM), as well as by utilising technology to meet remotely as needed.

Other channels for regular encounter the Advocacy and Communications Taskforce, the Detention Visitors Support Group and the Steering Committees of the common European projects.

## 5.3 To work together on advocacy and communications

Regarding advocacy, JRS works together as a network to analyse relevant issues and policies as they arise, to identify problems, and to formulate common positions and recommendations for effective change. We then propose our positions and recommendation to those responsible for initiating change, such as politicians and administrators at European, national and local levels.

Regarding communications, JRS works together to communicate its programmatic work of JRS more effectively, as also the stories of the people we serve and accompany.



The Advocacy and Communications Taskforce is the platform in which, together, we develop common goals, positions and strategies and share experiences about our shared positions and campaigns.

At both national and European levels, JRS advocacy and communications cultivate strategic partnerships with other NGOs, civil society organisations, policymakers and journalists in order that they may represent JRS in the relevant fora.

## 5.4 To work together in common programmatic areas

During the Regional Coordination Meeting of March 2018, the directors agreed the following key programmatic areas that best describe JRS's work across Europe. Furthermore, these areas are those we consider most needed in the current European context.

These thematic areas should be borne in mind when choosing common European projects. We also work together on programmes in order to reinforce evidence-based research that we, as a network of 22 countries in Europe working in the field of asylum and migration, are uniquely positioned to do. For example, we engage in pilot projects to test if best practices from some project could be scaled up or mainstreamed. In addition, we engage in projects that aim at changing people's mind and behaviours in order to achieve systematic change, as well as projects oriented towards advocacy goals of gathering evidence and arguments for our positions.

### 5.4.1 Social Inclusion & Integration

Regarding this theme, JRS engages in projects that support people from the moment of first arrival in Europe and accompanies them along a path towards their self-sufficiency and full participation in their new home societies. These projects touch on areas of informal relationship-building between local citizens and refugees, housing, access to the labour market, education and participation in civic life. JRS also pays special attention to creating programmes that serve the most vulnerable.

#### **Where our strength lies, in the area of social inclusion & integration:**

In the past, projects focused on Hospitality have primarily demonstrated JRS's commitment to social inclusion and integration across Europe. From hosting schemes, to volunteer training, to campaigning, the Communities of Hospitality project has been the primary example of how JRS in Europe functions as Hospitality in Action for the people it works with.

The network also engages in research projects in the area of social inclusion and integration to define best practices that can be used at local, national and European level. The primary example of such a project is I Get You: Best practices to prevent Racism and Xenophobia towards forced migrants through community building (2016-2017).

JRS defines social inclusion as the process that ensures that those at risk of societal exclusion gain the opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in economic, social, political and cultural life and to enjoy a standard of living considered normal in the society in which they live. It implies that people have greater participation in decision-making which affects their lives and access to their fundamental rights.

For JRS integration is a dynamic, two-way process - between forced migrants and the society that receives them - of social interaction to overcome separation between people, with the objectives of reducing economic and social marginalization and supporting more cohesive, inclusive and robust societies.

### **5.4.2 Access to Protection**

In Europe, JRS has long advocated for more safe and legal ways for people seeking safety to reach Europe. This remains a vital issue, as so many are still caught in limbo either at the European borders or in prolonged asylum procedures once they have arrived. We focus on projects that address improving the access to asylum procedures in the EU territory, the accountability and oversight of border operations and the protection of human rights.

#### **Where our strength lies, in the area of access to protection:**

At the height of the so-called refugee crisis, JRS drew attention to migrants' arduous journeys to Europe through the project Journeys of Hope (2016). In addition, through the project Protection at the External Borders (2016-2018) JRS researched how migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees experience Europe's borders and the challenges they faced. The project also served and accompanied vulnerable migrants blocked at the borders.

For JRS access to protection is defined by two fundamental elements: (1) ensuring reasonable access to the European territory and (2) ensuring access to fair asylum procedures and dignified reception for people seeking protection. The first element is achieved by providing safe and legal pathways so that people do not need to embark on life-threatening journeys. We maintain that the EU should do this through increasing resettlement commitments, expanding family reunification policies, providing a clear legal framework for the use of humanitarian visas and other such measures. The second element is achieved by striving towards common European rules on asylum procedures and reception conditions that meet the necessary standards in order to respect asylum seekers' human rights and dignity. We will continue to engage in research, direct service and advocacy projects that highlight these issues.

On a smaller, or more personal scale, JRS in Europe also promotes the protection of people in light of our mission to accompany them. In the work of our national offices, we strive to create safe spaces where refugees and migrants can feel protected, comforted and assisted in whatever they are seeking.

### **5.4.3 Detention**

Again, given the current European context, JRS sees a need to respond to the increasing use of detention of asylum seekers and irregular migrants in Europe, including the detention of families and children. JRS works in direct service to people who are detained through visiting detention centres to provide legal, pastoral and psychosocial assistance.

JRS also conducts critical research into detention conditions and practices, including into alternatives to detention, in order to better serve and advocate for people detained. The ultimate goal of this research and advocacy is to reduce the use of administrative detention in all circumstances, ideally eliminating the practice of detention altogether. In the next years, we plan again to have a common research and advocacy programme at Europe level on detention, and to propose alternatives.



#### **Where our strength lies, in the area of detention:**

For over 12 years, the Detention Visitors Support Group (DVSG) has provided specialised training and experience sharing. Through the life-cycle of this framework, JRS Europe will sustain the DVSG as a vital training element for detention visitors. Offices will provide hosting and organisational support for the meetings.

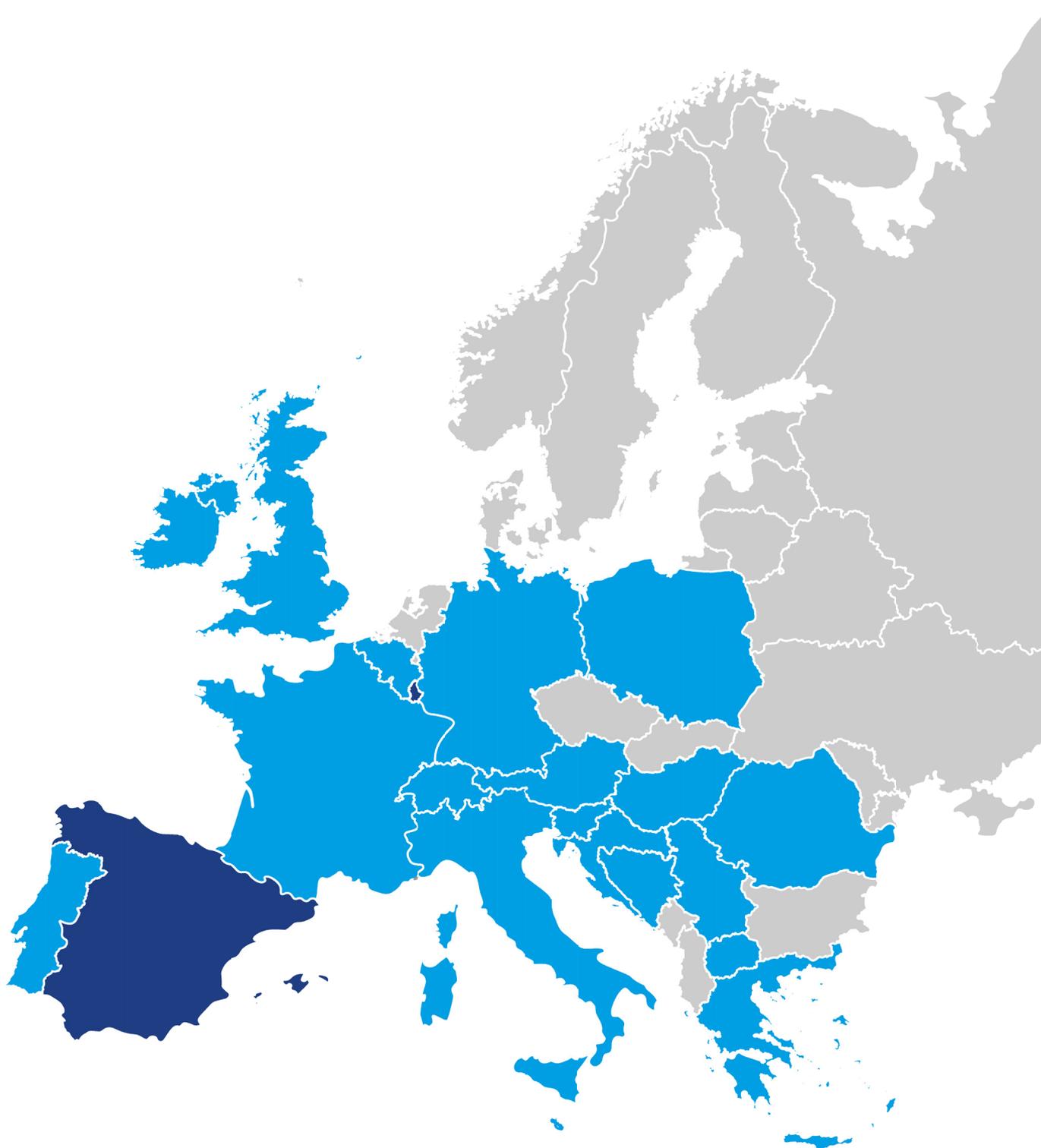
The 2010 DEVAS report, which uncovered the vulnerabilities of asylum seekers and migrants in detention in 23 EU Member States, represents JRS's most substantial region-wide research on detention. Its findings and recommendations are still relevant and continue to underlie our advocacy against the harmful practices of detention, including in our most recent research report *Forgotten at the Gates of Europe*.

#### **5.4.4 Awareness Raising**

All JRS projects focus not least on awareness raising as it relates to both communication and advocacy. Through awareness raising projects, JRS promotes common messaging and positions across our network, through campaigning, press interviews, social media, videos and testimonials.

Through project reports, advocacy activities and communications material, JRS projects focus on changing public attitudes by providing both facts and compelling stories about our work. In the process of awareness raising, we esteem refugees' own voices as crucial, since our mission and values are geared towards journeying with refugees and giving them a platform.

Therefore, awareness raising will be a major focus in the coming years, through educating young people, on issues faced by forced migrants and refugees. Programmes in this area will foster critical thinking skills among young people on the positive contribution of forced migrants to society through a combination of a fact-based curriculum and storytelling, creating classroom encounters with migrants, and supporting their own voices schools and local communities.



**JRS COUNTRY OFFICES**

Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Switzerland, United Kingdom

**JRS PARTNERS**

Luxembourg, Spain

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