

30 years of JRS Europe: achievements, challenges, concerns, and a message of hope

In occasion of the 30-year anniversary of the Jesuit Refugee Service Europe, and in a context of ongoing crisis and displacement in Ukraine, and rising populism and polarization across Europe, the 23 JRS Country offices and the regional office express **strong solidarity with Ukraine and those forcibly displaced within**. We also **reiterate our commitment to continue supporting all people fleeing the violence in Ukraine** and **express our deep concern for the already developing two-tier European response to asylum seekers**, in which Europe welcomes some while it turns its back on others.

We also take this opportunity to highlight our concern for:

- The **severe deterioration in protection standards** around Europe.
- The **worsened living conditions and reception conditions** for asylum seekers, as well as the dissatisfaction of their basic needs and dignity.
- The **rise of challenges to democracy**.
- The **increase of antiimmigrant sentiment** in Europe.

In response, we encourage to see the response to the Ukraine crisis as **an example of generosity and welcoming**. We hope that it inspires everyone to realize the importance of a human-centred response as well as the enrichment and growth refugees and asylum seekers provide the recipient countries in both societal and individual level.

The 30-year anniversary also provided the JRS Europe network a chance to reflect on the achievements throughout the last three decades as well as the missed opportunities and ongoing challenges. Looking back, we highlight the growth over the last 30 years in a family spirit among the whole network with a common mission now present in **23 countries in Europe**, the increased capacity to serve to more people reaching more than **117,000 in 2021**, and the collaborative efforts done in European wide projects such as the **educational project CHANGE** or the **ongoing response to the Ukraine crisis: the One Proposal**.

Looking at the future of the network, we reconfirm our commitment to accompany, serve and advocate for refugees and asylum seekers and pledge to continue to improve our service by focusing on:

- Continuing and strengthening our **collaboration and cooperation as network**, as well **as with other groups and networks with similar objectives**.
- Becoming more "**Glocal**", focusing on **local solutions** and how they interact with the **global reality**.

JRS Europe and the 23 JRS country offices will continue to work 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.

Signatories

The JRS Europe network is constituted by JRS Austria, JRS Belgium, JRS France, JRS Germany, JRS Greece, JRS Hungary, JRS Ireland, Centro Astalli (Italy), JRS Luxembourg, JRS Malta, JRS Poland, JRS Portugal, JRS Romania, JRS Slovenia, JRS South East Europe (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Serbia), SJM España (Spain), JRS Switzerland, JRS United Kingdom, JRS Ukraine and the regional office located in Brussels.