

KEEPING HOPE ALIVE: A Christmas letter from our director

19/12/2022

Dear friends,

As the year comes to a close, we at JRS Europe want to take a moment to express our heartfelt gratitude for your support. A year that has been filled with energy and ambitious projects for JRS in Europe, but also one that has been convulsive and has profoundly affected our lives, particularly with the outbreak of the International Armed Conflict in Ukraine, which has affected the whole of Europe.

This conflict has caused the largest humanitarian crisis in the continent in recent history. Millions have been forced to flee their homes, and millions more remain displaced or in need in Ukraine itself. The Society of Jesus as a whole has stepped forward, offering a coordinated response to this crisis: One Proposal.

Since then, JRS Europe and the European JRS Country Offices have worked to accompany and assist Internally Displaced Persons within and refugees outside Ukraine who were displaced by the conflict. Over the course of this year, we heard many stories of vulnerability that shape our daily work at JRS. The winter and the energy crisis are making many people's lives more precarious, and the cold weather means that we have to increase our aid efforts.

In addition to this crisis, JRS continues to accompany, serve and advocate for thousands of refugees in our 23 country offices in Europe, in more than 100 cities and municipalities. Projects which, as you all know, keep social inclusion, access to protection, and detention at the heart of our mission. We are excited to see how our Change project has reached over 40,000 young people in more than 700 schools and educated them about the positive contributions of refugees to society.

On these special days of celebration, we would like to especially thank you for all the generosity and affection that has made a profound difference in the lives of refugees and displaced people in Europe by building a more welcoming, just, and caring society, and offering them a sense of hope and community.

As Pope Francis invites us: “We are all called to commit ourselves to building a future based on a new global system that better responds to God's plan, a world where everyone can live in peace and prosperity. How do you think we can build this future together?” (WMRD, 2022)

As we look towards the coming year, we remain committed to our mission of keeping hope alive for refugees and displaced people in Europe. We are hopeful that with your continued support, we can maintain to make a positive impact on the lives of those who have been forced to flee their homes.

Once again, thank you for your generosity and compassion, which help us to keep hope alive. We wish you and your loved ones a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Many blessings,

Alberto Ares, SJ

Regional Director

Jesuit Refugee Service Europe