

# **Alternatives to Immigration Detention less Costly**

## **National Launch of pan-European Study on Detention of Vulnerable Asylum Seekers and Migrants**

Today a new comparative report called “Becoming Vulnerable in Detention: Civil Society Report on the Detention of Vulnerable Asylum Seekers and Irregular Migrants in the European Union” will be launched by Fr John Dardis, President of the Conference of European Jesuit Provincial in Belvedere College, as part of an event celebrating 30 years of the Jesuit Refugee Service. The report is a comparative study of 23 EU member states. It presents the findings of a project which investigates and analyses vulnerability in detained asylum seekers and irregular migrants.

Fr Dardis said, “I welcome the fact the report highlights Ireland as a model of good practice in certain areas such as the prohibition of immigration related detention of minors. However, there remain strong financial and moral arguments for the Government to seriously consider instituting less costly non custodial alternatives to immigration related detention.”

The Irish chapter of the study concludes: “Ireland is clearly not a country of bad practices as relates to immigration-related detention. Some of Ireland’s practices – such as the prohibition against the detention of children for immigration reasons – should be copied by other countries. However, the government can and should improve on its treatment of non-nationals and asylum seekers in detention as suggested in the recommendations. The first step in doing so could and should be the creation of alternatives to detention, something which the international community as well as the UNHCR has been and continues to promote, particularly for asylum seekers.”

Immigration related detention is an administrative measure not a punitive one. JRS Ireland strongly advocates the use of alternatives to detention as they create savings in terms of human and financial costs. Eugene Quinn, National Director, JRS Ireland said “In addition to the savings in the cost of detaining people in prison, non custodial alternatives would help ease the current dangerous level of overcrowding in Irish prisons, especially since immigration detainees have not been found guilty of any crime.”

The report suggests alternatives to detention that could be implemented include regular reporting or the posting of a bond or restrictions in movement.

*Fr John Dardis is available to interview after 4.00pm for further information about this new Report please contact Mr. Eugene Quinn, National Director, JRS Ireland, at 086-8214888 or visit [www.jrs.ie](http://www.jrs.ie)*