



Jesuit Refugee Service – Europe

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## What's next for Europe's southern borders?

### What happens on the other side of the fence?

A testimony from the field on the eve of MEPs mission to Spanish enclaves in Morocco

#### Invitation to informal journalist breakfast

Tuesday, 6<sup>th</sup> December, 9.30am

Reading Room, International Press Centre, Residence Palace

From 7<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> December, a delegation of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) will lead a fact finding mission to the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla to investigate the conditions of migrants and asylum seekers arriving at this southern border of the EU.

On 6<sup>th</sup> December, Father Josep Boades Fuster SJ, who followed the progress of a group of migrants and asylum seekers expelled from the enclaves in October, will come to Brussels to brief them before they leave. Fr Boades is a Jesuit priest from Spain, where he works for the Centro de Estudios para la Integración Social y Formación de Inmigrantes in Valencia.

The MEPs will meet the Spanish authorities and visit the reception centres in the enclaves; Fr Boades offers first-hand experience with migrants on the other side of the fences, among whom there are certified refugees, children and sick people.

Journalists are invited to meet him and MEPs from the delegation on the eve of their departure for an informal breakfast at **9.30 am** in the **Reading Room** of the **Residence Palace**.

Ceuta and Melilla first hit the headlines on 7<sup>th</sup> October when the Moroccan government abandoned 100s of men, women and children in a remote part of its southern desert after they were deported from the enclaves. This came after a week of scenes resembling a mediaeval siege, when hundreds of young Africans launched co-ordinated assaults on the fences. At least dozen were shot by the Spanish police.

This investigative mission by MEPs to Ceuta and Melilla will ask the EU wider questions about how its borders can be managed in a level headed and humane way. It is crucial that they hear the voices of those migrants on the other side of the fence, before they decide what's next for Europe's southern borders.

*The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) is a global Catholic organization, which was founded in 1980 and whose mission is to accompany, serve and defend the rights of refugees and forcibly displaced people regardless of their religious affiliations. The regional office of JRS - Europe in Brussels networks with JRS staff in 22 European countries. JRS personnel in Europe accompany inter alia detained asylum seekers and former detainees.*

**For further details, please contact Alice Kennedy, Media and Communications Officer, Jesuit Refugee Service Europe; Telephone +32 2 250 32 20; Cellular +32 48 47 11 579; email: [press.europe@jrs.net](mailto:press.europe@jrs.net)**