



JESUITS

Euro-Mediterranean Province of the Society of Jesus
Albania - Italy - Malta - Romania

Rediscovering our first love

Apostolic plan of the EUM Province



*"Nevertheless I have this against you,
that you have left your first love" (Rev 2:4)*

*This is what the prophet of the Book of the Apocalypse writes
to the Church of Ephesus, "perseverant" in persecution, but fearful
and disoriented by the radical changes they are going through.*



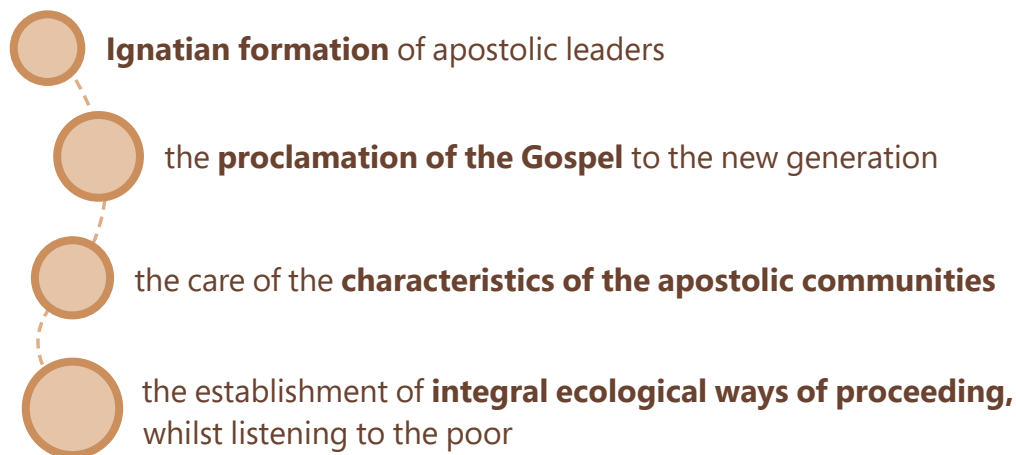
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It is only through the rediscovery of its original vocation, that every Christian community transform its difficulties into “kairos”, a renewed creativity. This is what the Jesuits and the Ignatian laity of Albania, Italy, Malta and Romania are called to live today through this apostolic plan.

The establishment of the new “Euro-Mediterranean” province (July 2017) has taken place within a historical context defined as “a change of era” rather than as “an era of changes”, in response to a radical redefinition of the role of the believer in Western society, and alongside the many victims of phenomena such as mass migrations, loneliness and addiction. In the midst of conflicting and sometimes disruptive powers, it seems vitally important to reflect on how we should redirect our energy, in response to the Lord’s calling as His companions.

The apostolic project gave all the territories of the existing province the opportunity to listen deeply to this call throughout its structures (works, communities, groups of apostolates, networks). During these three years, the apostolic project went through several stages: a contextual study, the discernment of guidelines, a proposal of four orientations and nine criteria, a new familiarisation with our territory, the identification of the strengths and weaknesses of each reality and the preparation of five workshops. All this was discussed during the meetings of the directors of works and zonal meetings. Finally, in the beginning June 2018, the canonical consult and the apostolic consult together with the Provincial formulated the following objectives as the final result of the process. They are to be integrated in every field, in an interconnected way:

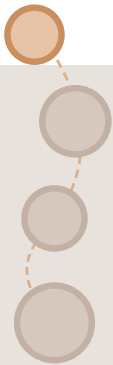


The process of discernment that has come to an end today has already yielded positive results, well before its timely conclusion. In many local works and in several networks, the slow and inclusive unfolding of the apostolic plan has given rise to new approaches and new emphases, leading to a more intimate knowledge of the “apostolic body” that is made up of Jesuits and lay people.



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1. IGNATIAN FORMATION OF APOSTOLIC LEADERS

*The relationship between the lay persons and Jesuits responsible for works has been a recurring theme since the moment material for the apostolic plan began to be gathered. A deeper 'Ignatianisation' of all our works surfaced immediately as a common and fundamental need. In the "first version of the A.P." (summer 2017) the theme of "formation" had already emerged as one of the nine criteria. After an extensive study of the works and communities, in the spring of 2018 the "formation of jointly-responsible lay people" surfaced as a "point of focus" that has been greatly desired for a long time. Following the discernment by the joint consult (June 2018), the EUM governance is calling the Province to a special time of formation for lay people and Jesuits, and has selected the following action plans for **the ignatian formation of apostolic leaders (Jesuits and laity)**:*

- In autumn 2018, **an EUM team of lay people and Jesuits** will be set up, having its own budget and communication platform. The team, also inspired by the other three objectives, will have the following goals:
 - » Identify good formation practices and explore their possible interconnections
 - » Develop a course of Ignatian formation for apostolic leaders that includes: delving deeper into the sources of Ignatian spirituality and pedagogy; adopting the recent renewed directives of the Magisterium of the Church; the option of dialogue with contemporary culture and with other religions; group dynamics and networking; the act of reconciliation, management; Ignatian thought strategy; the practice of supervision and self-examination, and other directives offered by the recent General Congregations
 - » Develop the criteria and requirements for participation in the formation course, together with the province governance
 - » Together with the EUM Jesuit formation delegate, develop the modules that can possibly be offered in common for this course and for the formation of Jesuits
- During the summer of 2019 the **specific modules** for this intensive formation will be launched
- After the first year **an evaluation** will be carried out and repeated annually. The aim of this evaluation is to **ascertain** whether this formation is really helpful to the apostolic leaders and whether it is contributing towards making our works more Ignatian.



2. THE PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL TO THE NEW GENERATION

*The Apostolic Body's concern for "young people" emerged during the initial stages of the process together with concern for "families" and for the "poor". In the "first draft of the A.P." (summer 2017) the first point of the four "orientations" was "the explicit proclamation of the Gospel". The greater part of the Province has shown a strong enthusiasm for this orientation which, from March 2018, has given rise to the theme "the transmission of faith". During the process of discernment by the joint consult (June 2018) it was decided to give this "transmission" a new slant, with the accentuation of "new generations". The EUM governance has called upon the Province to re-orientate the initial calling for accompaniment in faith, and has chosen the following plans of action for the **proclamation of the Gospel to the new generation**:*

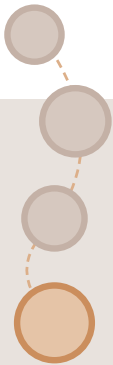
- In autumn 2018, a team of **lay persons and Jesuits** will be set up. It will interact with the other three objectives and work towards the following goals:
 - » Identify and study experiences (Ignatian and otherwise) of the "first proclamation made to young people"
 - » Stimulate and encourage connection among existing Ignatian experiences of this first proclamation
 - » Put into concrete practice this "first proclamation to young people", experimenting with "street" initiatives and "faith initiation" programmes
 - » Develop specific formation courses in evangelization (both residential as well as in other parts of the territory) for motivated young people. Particularly, in summer 2019 a structured experience of "formation in evangelization" is to be launched, including the following "elements": teaching of the Word, the Spiritual Exercises, getting to know St. Ignatius and the Society, elements of vocational discernment, an experience with the poorest of the poor, various "outreach" experiences (direct evangelization, on the street and in other creative forms), engagement with contemporary reasoning
 - » Together with the delegate for formation and the person responsible for ongoing formation, possible initiatives will be studied in order to kindle enthusiasm among scholastics and formed Jesuits for this 'first proclamation'. This will be done in collaboration with networks and existing resources within the province
 - » To promote continuity and collaboration among the various youth pastoral works in EUM
- After one year in operation, **an evaluation** is to be carried out annually in order **to verify** whether these initiatives have restored "apostolic zeal" within the Province and if there have been any results on a vocational level and in our cultural development.



3. THE CARE OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF APOSTOLIC COMMUNITIES

*The urgency to liberate apostolic energy and foster reconciliation within our works, networks and communities has been felt ever since the process began. The issue of discernment and in particular communal discernment was discussed in depth whilst the orientations of the "first version of the A.P" were being defined (summer 2017). The concrete life of our communities was the central focus while discussing criteria such as "inner conversion" or "leadership style". In the spring of 2018 the rich workshop on "apostolic community" took place but even this was tied to identity and being sent on mission. Following the process of discernment within the joint consult (June 2018) the EUM governance called upon the province to emphasize the **COMMUNITARIAN DIMENSION OF OUR MISSION** and of each of the other objectives and has chosen the following plans of action for the **constitution and accompaniment of apostolic communities**:*

- After drawing a distinction between SJ communities and lay people (or Jesuits and lay people), in the autumn of 2018 the EUM government will establish and publish **the characteristics of "apostolic communities"**. For Jesuits, the renewal of their availability to be sent on mission will be of particular importance. In a more general way, attention will be given to: the practice of communal discernment; fraternal life and life in the spirit; reconciliation; deep sharing and evaluation of the apostolates, using the good practices that some communities already have as a starting point
- Even the non-Jesuit communities will be included in the catalogue
- During the social year 2018/2019, together with the Ignatian formation team and the delegate for formation, the EUM Governance guarantees **joint formation in leadership and collaboration of lay people and Jesuits**
- During the social year 2018/2019, the provincial will appoint a permanent accompanying team, whose task will be to offer help to communities and to all structures within the province **where situations of conflicts are identified**
- In order to sustain the unity of the body and to support the territorial governance (the groups of apostolates, areas, etc.), the EUM governance will organize **a meeting of the entire province** every three years and encourages **the territories and the groups of apostolates** to hold meetings at closer intervals
- The EUM governance will **assign** experienced Jesuits, young Jesuit fathers and brothers mainly to communities that have an apostolic mission
- After a year in operation and then annually, **an evaluation** is to be carried out, **to verify** whether the apostolic communities are accomplishing the mission assigned to them, in terms of vocation promotion, perseverance and bearing witness in the local and civil fabric.



4. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF INTEGRAL ECOLOGICAL WAYS OF PROCEEDING, WHILST LISTENING TO THE POOR

*From the very start of the process, the apostolic body identified the issue of refugees and immigrants as one of the categories that needed most urgent attention. In the summer of 2017 the "Promotion of justice" became one of the four orientations of the "first version of the A.P." After the process of discernment by the joint consult (June 2018) the governance is calling the EUM province to renew its proximity to the poorest of the poor and chooses the following plans of action to be able to **listen to the poor** and develop **integral ecological ways of proceeding**:*

- Regarding the Jesuit Social Network ("JSN"): by October 2019, a **reorganization of the JSN will take place in order to fit better into the framework of the new EUM province** and the mandate of its committee will be extended:
 - » Assess the eventual update of its legal status, paying attention to the legislation of the different countries and preserving the richness that comes with interaction with the national scenarios
 - » Maintain consistency within the network
 - » Offer formation
 - » Assist in the rotation of roles
 - » Encourage reflection on cultures, and action in the field of "advocacy"
 - » Write an annual report
- Regarding the Province, during the social year 2018/2019:
 - » See that **the social dimension is present within the operations of the province governance and within formation programmes**
 - » **Develop a reference document** that outlines how the paradigms of our intellectual apostolate (Faculties, Magazines, ...) will have integral ecology and reconciliation at their roots
- Regarding the ordinary life of the communities, during the social year 2018/2019:
 - » Encourage communities to **welcome** migrants and refugees in a concrete way
 - » The Province will guarantee to donate funds for **experimental projects** which offer to accompany fragile people
 - » **The ethical nature of financial investments** will be given its due attention
 - » Adopt **a lifestyle** where integral ecological considerations are a priority
- After a year in operation and then annually, **an extensive evaluation** is to be carried out. The aim is **to assess** whether these measures have helped the Province to be more in touch with the poor and to renew the radical nature of our vocation and the creativity of our cultural development.



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The apostolic project of the EUM province has been a lively process of communal discernment that has now (summer 2018) entered its operational stage. This stage will be under the direction of the EUM governance and of the appointed members within the various teams, so as to periodically monitor and evaluate the processes launched within the apostolates, networks and communities. The interconnectedness and transversality nature of the four objectives remain vital tensions that the EUM governance is committed to maintaining and coordinating, with the help of the Lord.

