Europe

Czech Republic • Holland • Ireland • Italy • Spain • UK

Europe Overview

Culture & Demographics

Europe has played a pivotal role in the world in every aspect from politics and religion to the arts. Its people are extremely diverse in culture and language but are nevertheless held together by a common heritage. For centuries, Europe was the driving force in world mission even as its cultures drifted from Biblical faith. However, it is fast becoming less a sender of missionaries and more a continent in greater and greater need for international workers from other regions. The evangelical church represents just 2.5% of Europe's population.

Recent Developments

The past two years have been very encouraging in Europe with strengthening of our offices in Ireland, Spain and Czech. In particular there has been a growth of ministry based around volunteers. Two experienced AIS staff have also moved back to Europe to begin works in the Netherlands and Serbia. Both are experienced leaders and coaches, so they are also strengthening our TREC team.

Future Plans

We are now moving to a greater working together of our leaders and national teams across Europe. The first priority is to strengthen the existing offices and leaders, and to support the development of new works in Serbia and The Netherlands. The vision for Europe will be based around TREC and the formation of an Associates program. This year we will have a third TREC in Moldova and our first TREC in Ukraine. Our desire is to see trained, church-based football ministers across the Rumanian, Slavic and Russian speaking Eastern Europe..

Europe

Czech Republic

Overview

Building upon work that had begun years earlier by Ambassadors in Sport workers based in the UK, the Ambassadors in Sport Czech office was officially launched in 2004. The office has now transitioned to Czech leadership and the ministry has continued to grow. The main focus of the ministry is on football teams that are organised in cooperation with local churches, as well as camps during summer.

2011 Highlights

- Hosted an Ambassadors Womens Team on a short-term tour.
- Started another two teams with local churches, one in Prague, one in Pardubice.
- Started new team in Slovakia, Nové Zámky.

2012 Objectives

- Continue the training of new leaders.
- Implement financial sustainability measures.
- Find local long term partners for our ministry.
- Set good structures and system in our ministries.

Europe

Holland

Overview

The work in Holland was founded in July, 2011. Since then a Board has been established and an intern started in the office in September. The first year will be a research year, aimed at developing the vision and strategy for the years to come.

2011 Highlights

- Hosted a Women's World Cup Tour.
- Initiated internship program in September.
- Held Dutch 3-day, character-based soccer camps at two soccer clubs.
- Started soccer cell group in November.

2012 Objectives

- Continue to develop vision and strategy for Holland.
- Lead Football Tour to Mongolia.
- Take team of Dutch coaches to USA for Summer Coaching Tour.
- Establish football academy.
- Organise Ambassadors 7v7 Cup in June.

Europe

Ireland

Overview

The work in Ireland began in 2003 with a major focus on overseas tours. Since then we have established a football club with both men's and women's teams, a soccer school program, internship, and schools work as well as running an annual Churches Cup tournament and a Sports Ministry Training Course. We rely heavily on our volunteer base and so although progress is at times slow, this provides long term sustainability and over the next few years our focus will be on developing our youth academy and providing training for our volunteers.

2011 Highlights

- Held a TREC with close to 50 attending from many different churches.
- Hosted a Churches Cup, which had nearly 200 people involved.
- Promoted the book, 'To Who', which opened up many opportunities for ministry.
- Held a great summer of soccer schools with several kids coming to know Jesus.
- The football club achieved promotion to Division 1 and a cup final appearance.

2012 Objectives

- Continue to develop the academy.
- Launch a volunteer training program.
- Lead the "Cycle for Hope" Europe Tour.

Europe

Spain

Overview

The Ambassadors in Sport office in Spain was launched in 2000 in Granada. Due to the nature of the culture and religious history of Spain, the ministry is based on evangelism and discipleship through relationship building. This has led to a focus on teams (mens, ladies and youth), prison work, social activities, and international tours both to and from Spain. The ministry relies upon the dedicated involvement of a team of local volunteers.

2011 Highlights

- Established a new work in a nearby town through a local pastor who has been coming to our activities in Granada.
- Successful transitioned national leadership.
- Record numbers participated in our men's programs.
- Re-launched the women's ministry through volunteer involvement.

2012 Objectives

- Consolidate the ministry under new leadership.
- Ensure that all local ministry is being effectively run by volunteers.
- Explore options for establishing a base in another part of Spain.

Europe

United Kingdom

Overview

Our 21st year in the UK was a challenging year, with the closure of the Manchester office, staff changes, financial pressures, social unrest in the UK and the unexpected death of our London leader, Mark Versey. Despite this, the numbers of programs and participants has remained stable, which is a great testimony to the staff involved, and the number of churches partnering with us in football ministry has grown substantially. Add to all of this the outstanding work of the Brits abroad and there is much to be encouraged about despite the challenges of 2011.

2011 Highlights

- The continued growth of the church partnerships, now in 24 of the 33 London boroughs.
- Over 100 people participated in Ambassadors' training programs and 700 players participated in tournaments run by Ambassadors.
- The Hope FC projects for the poor, marginalised and vulnerable continued to grow and impact many lives, for example our young men winning Fair Play Awards at tournaments.
- Children responding positively to the message of Jesus at virtually every soccer school.

2012 Objectives

- Expand the number and increase the level of expertise on the UK Board of Trustees, and implement new financial policies and procedures to ensure sustainable operations.
- Continue to grow the work in London so that we can see all 33 boroughs have a church based football outreach established by the end of the Olympic Games.
- Remain fully engaged with the Global Strategic Plan so that the UK can fulfill its leadership and support role in Europe.

Europe

Testimonies

For several months in our prison ministry we spent time building relationships with a Columbian called Herman. We were surprised and happy to see him show up at one of our evening trainings shortly after his release. He started coming regularly and is also brining his son and some of his friends. Since then he has also come along to a local Church and has also brought another ex-prisoner along. It is great to see how God has worked in his life through the initial contact in prison.

Spain

Darius an immigrant from Romania first came along to one of our London projects just over a year ago as he loved his football. However he was a broken soul that was screaming out for love, purpose and truth. In his search for God and through the football project he challenged God to reveal Himself and give clear direction in life. He gave God a time limit for a Friday in March. On that Friday evening he went to play football in a tournament organized by Ambassadors. From that evening, God started a process of transformation in him through the Ambassadors workers and a radical change followed. For Darius he has peace in his life, direction, a purpose to serve God using football as a channel to change people's lives. So much so that he is now part of our London team!

UK

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