



# Annual Review 2025



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# A Message from the Chairman



Dear colleagues and friends,

It is my pleasure to introduce our Annual Review for 2025. This was a particularly active year for our network, marked by the implementation of three European projects. I hope this report will offer you an interesting insight into our activities and show how our shared values are translated into meaningful diverse action across Europe and beyond.

Thanks to the dedicated work of the Clinical Working Group, JOIN published the second edition of its European First Aid Guidelines in April 2025. First launched in 2019 and updated in line with the latest ILCOR recommendations, the guidelines promote consistent first aid practices across Europe and complement JOIN's first aid resources for children and young people. They are designed for use at home, at work, and in public settings, being freely available for download at [www.firstaidjoin.org](http://www.firstaidjoin.org)

While our member organisations share one single aspiration - to help people in everyday life as well as in crisis-, the actual range of services is remarkably diverse. Rooted in the Christian values of the Orders of St John, the work of our members includes ambulance and rescue services, support for homeless people, retirement homes, hospitals, first aid and first aid training, mental health first aid, youth work, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, home nursing and many other related activities. The continued help provided to Ukraine and to the people affected by the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians deserves particular recognition.

Within this broad picture, the mission of JOIN is to help its members, both large and small, to cooperate wherever possible and to facilitate their engagement with the relevant institutions of the European Union. In 2025, the JOIN Office worked alongside member organisations from Austria, Cyprus, Germany and Italy on three EU-funded projects: TeamUP, focusing on innovative and holistic solutions for first responders facing Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosive (CBRN-E) incidents; PROBANT, developing first aid learning materials for children aged 8 to 12; and SHIELD, creating first aid training tailored to people with physical and cognitive disabilities.

JOIN's working groups remain at the heart of our network. They bring together representatives from our member organisations to exchange good practices, learn from one another and develop joint initiatives and projects. Most working group meetings took place online during the year, while the Fundraising and Clinical Working Groups also had the opportunity to meet in person.

A particular highlight was our 2025 Annual General Meeting in the historic city of Valletta, Malta. We were delighted to welcome St John Ambulance Cymru as an official member of our network. Delegates also elected a new Board, which I have the honour of chairing for the next two years.

I would like to thank our members, volunteers, partners and the JOIN office team for their commitment throughout the year. I hope you enjoy reading this report and discovering the many ways in which our network continues to turn shared values into action.

My very best wishes to you all.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'C. Velten-J'.

Christian Velten-Jameson

# Selected Activities 2025

## Johanniter International publishes Second Edition of the European First Aid Guidelines

30 April 2025

In 2025, Johanniter International published the second edition of the JOIN European First Aid Guidelines, marking an important milestone in the network's efforts to promote high-quality, accessible and harmonised first aid education across Europe.

The first edition of the Guidelines was published in 2019 and represented the first common European-wide set of first aid recommendations developed within the Johanniter and St John network. Six years later, the revised and enhanced second edition reflects the latest available medical guidance and the practical experience of first aid providers across Europe.

The updated Guidelines are aligned with current international recommendations, including the latest guidance available from the International Liaison Committee on Resuscitation (ILCOR). They are also consistent with other JOIN educational materials, including the First Aid stories for children aged 5 to 7 and the European First Aid materials for young people aged 13 to 17. In this way, JOIN continues to build a coherent first aid education pathway for different age groups and learning contexts.

The revision was carried out by the JOIN Clinical Working Group, a multinational team of healthcare professionals including doctors, paramedics and first aid experts. All members contribute practical experience from out-of-hospital care and emergency response, ensuring that the Guidelines are both medically sound and applicable in real-life situations.

The European First Aid Guidelines promote the importance of first aid in everyday life — at home, at work, at school, during travel and in public spaces. They are designed to support first aiders, trainers, health professionals and the general public with clear, practical and accessible guidance. By providing a common basis for first aid education, the Guidelines also help strengthen cross-border cooperation and contribute to a shared European understanding of first aid practice.

One of the key strengths of the Guidelines is their broad accessibility. They are available free of charge and can be used by all interested organisations and individuals. The first edition was translated into 17 languages, including Arabic, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Latvian, Polish, Russian, Spanish, Swedish and Ukrainian. This multilingual approach reflects JOIN's commitment to inclusion, international cooperation and the wider dissemination of lifesaving knowledge.

With the publication of the second edition, JOIN reaffirms its commitment to making first aid knowledge available to everyone. The Guidelines provide a strong foundation for future training, education and cooperation within the JOIN network and beyond.

The JOIN European First Aid Guidelines are available for free download at: [www.firstaidjoin.org](http://www.firstaidjoin.org).



## The JOIN Board at the 'Tag der Johanniter' 2025

Erfurt, Germany, 28 September 2025

Around 3,000 Johanniter volunteers and professionals gathered in Erfurt for the nationwide 'Tag der Johanniter' (Johanniter Day). The highlight of the event was the first aid and emergency rescue competition. Fifty winning teams from the preliminary competitions of the nine Johanniter regional associations and two guest teams competed to determine the best rescuers.

Among the distinguished guests were the members of the JOIN Board. They met with the Federal Board of Johanniter Germany, just before festivities began. This productive meeting allowed the Board to present the latest developments within the JOIN network and the strategy for the coming years. The JOIN Board also attended a ceremony honouring deserving members of Johanniter Germany, in the presence of Mario Voigt, Minister-President of Thuringia.



The national first aid competition, that takes place every two years, started on Saturday. All participants completed challenging tasks related to first aid and emergency rescue. They mastered scenarios such as traffic accidents, burn injuries, cardiovascular diseases and wound care. All simulations were convincingly performed by professional actors. A total of 130 referees evaluated the performances. Guest teams from our Polish member, Joannici Dzieło Pomocy also took part and achieved excellent results.



In parallel, a bustling market area featured dozens of stands, letting JOIN showcase its activities — most notably, the Volunteer Swap programme.



Volker Bescht, President of Johanniter Germany, concluded: "Over the past two days, we have experienced great team spirit and fair cooperation in the green heart of Germany. Erfurt was a great host. We would like to thank all the rescuers and participants who contributed to making this 'Tag der Johanniter' an unforgettable experience."



# Members in focus

## Insights into the work of our French member

The Association des Œuvres de Saint-Jean, JOIN's French member, supports people in vulnerable situations in France and abroad. Their work is further supported by committees dedicated to fraternity, fundraising, communication and the operation of residential facilities.



A central pillar of Saint-Jean France's work is supporting patients and their families. Its nine *Maisons d'accueil*, located in or near hospitals across the country, provide affordable accommodation in a total of 123 rooms and 241 beds for patients receiving outpatient treatment and for relatives who need to remain close to a hospitalised family member. In 2025, the houses recorded 52,634 overnight stays, maintaining the high level of activity seen in the previous years. As healthcare increasingly shifts towards outpatient procedures



and shorter hospital stays, Saint-Jean continues to adapt its facilities to the changing needs of patients and families. The volunteers also regularly visit sick, elderly and isolated people in hospitals and at home, offering companionship and practical support.

Through the *Fil Rouge* programme, the organisation provides educational and professional guidance to young people from disadvantaged backgrounds during their first years of higher education. Its work for people with disabilities includes weekend excursions and summer camps, creating opportunities for participation, friendship and respite.

The commitment of Saint-Jean extends beyond France. In Madagascar, a specialist clinic in Antananarivo provides essential care for people living with diabetes, while the day clinic in



Andranovelona carried out approximately 4,100 consultations in 2024. Saint-Jean also organised the transport of medical equipment to the diabetes clinic, helping strengthen access to healthcare in a country where poverty continues to affect a large majority of the population.

By combining accommodation, personal accompaniment, education, inclusive activities and international healthcare assistance, the Association des Œuvres de Saint-Jean continues to put the values of service, dignity and solidarity into practice.

## Insights into the work of our Danish member

Johanniterhjælpen in Denmark is JOIN's smallest member in terms of turnover but it benefits from the steadfast support of the Danish Subcommandery and its dedicated volunteers. Annual membership fees provide a stable source of income, complemented by donations raised through fundraising campaigns.

Johanniterhjælpen's activities focus primarily on two projects supporting people experiencing homelessness.

The first, *Morgencafeen*, is a facility that meets the basic needs of people affected by alcohol or drug dependency and mental health challenges. It provides two meals a day and access to volunteer doctors, nurses, lawyers and other professionals.



Each year, Johanniterhjælpen organises a charity concert featuring renowned artists in one of Copenhagen's main churches, with the proceeds directly supporting the *Morgencafeen*.

The second project, Hugs & Food, was established by Copenhagen Cathedral to assist people in need. It offers homeless people a free daily meal, laundry facilities and access to professional support. At the Cathedral's request, Johanniterhjælpen contributes to the initiative by providing high-quality coffee throughout its opening hours.

Alongside these two main projects, Johanniterhjælpen launched a pilot initiative in 2025 to introduce first aid training in schools. Although Danish law requires first aid to be taught, children do not always receive this training due to a shortage of qualified instructors. In the coming years, Johanniterhjælpen aims to develop the programme further by teaching children essential first aid skills and training teachers to deliver first aid education themselves.

In recent years, Johanniterhjælpen has also raised funds to support the Johanniter initiated *Mission Siret*. From a warehouse in the Romanian border town of Siret, volunteer drivers take vans and trucks directly across the border into Ukraine, delivering aid to hospitals, orphanages, refugee centers, and other facilities.



# Selected Meetings 2025

## JOIN Annual General Meeting 2025

Valletta, Malta, 23–25 May 2025

The JOIN Annual General Meeting 2025 was hosted by St John Malta and took place in the historic city of Valletta. The location held special significance for the 20 delegates who gathered to discuss a broad range of topics, as the Order of St John moved to Malta in 1530 and governed the island for more than 250 years, until it was expelled by Napoleon in 1798.

The first day began with the Chairman, Christian Velten-Jameson, presenting the activities of the Board and the wider JOIN network over the past twelve months. He highlighted the publication of the second edition of the JOIN European First Aid Guidelines, the events organised within the Volunteer Swap programme, and the publication of a third story as part of the “European First Aid for 5 to 7 years old” initiative. Delegates also warmly approved the application of St John Ambulance Cymru to become a member of Johanniter International.



► From left to right: First row: Frederik Ahlefeldt-Laurvig (Denmark), Dr George Pantelas (Cyprus), Friederike Moser von Filseck (Germany), Christian Velten-Jameson (France), Dr Michael Frendo (Malta), Petra Grell-Kunzinger (Austria). Second row: Thomas Vorwerk (Switzerland), Joachim Berney (JOIN Office). Third row: Melanija Grundšteina (Latvia), Nancy Kestler (Germany), Andrew Grech (Malta). Fourth row: Johannes Bucher (Austria), Christopher Borg Cardona (Malta). Fifth row: James Cilia (Malta), Harriet Wheeler (Jerusalem). Sixth row: Ray Cassar (Malta), Angela Overment (Wales), László Porcsalmy (Hungary), Eva Pelgen (JOIN Office).

This was followed by presentations from the JOIN Working Groups, which provided more detailed updates on their activities. Richard Webber, Head of the Clinical Working Group, presented the printed version of the second edition of the JOIN European First Aid Guidelines. He also reported on the implementation of the Erasmus+ PROBANT project, which aims to develop first aid material for children aged 8 to 12.

The PR, Marketing & Communication Working Group, led by Petra Grell-Kunzinger, outlined its new mission to support the activities of other Working Groups on an ad hoc basis. Delegates also welcomed the encouraging number of participants taking part in the Volunteer Swap programme, organised by the Volunteering & Youth Working Group and chaired by Nancy Kestler. Finally, the Fundraising Working Group, chaired by Frederik Ahlefeldt-Laurvig, reported on the latest developments concerning reporting directives for larger companies and NGOs, as well as on a fundraising campaign for the JOIN member in Jerusalem.

Two further presentations were given during the meeting. Harriet Wheeler from the St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group outlined the organisation’s humanitarian response to the current situation in Gaza and the West Bank. Thomas Vorwerk from the Swiss Johanniter provided an update on the Alliance Orders Charity Cooperation Group.

On the second day, delegates gave an overview of the activities of their respective charities over the past twelve months. The work of the Brussels Office was presented by Joachim Berney, JOIN General Manager, who provided an update on its activities and priorities. Eva Pelgen from the JOIN Office presented the ongoing TeamUP research project and its latest developments.

The delegates unanimously re-elected Christian Velten-Jameson from the Association des Oeuvres de Saint-Jean France as Chair for the next two years and elected Petra Grell-Kunzinger from Johanniter Austria as Vice Chair. Andrew Grech from St John Malta and Friederike Moser von Filseck from Johanniter Germany were also elected as Board members.

The AGM concluded with a final tour de table, offering delegates the opportunity for lively discussions on common interests, current challenges and future strategies. The meeting was perceived by all delegates as a successful and constructive

gathering, strengthening cooperation across the JOIN network.

The AGM 2026 is planned to take place in Vienna from 29 to 31 May.

## JOIN Board Meetings in 2025

In 2025, the JOIN Board played a central role in guiding the organisation's strategic direction while engaging with member organisations across Europe. Through regular formal meetings and participation in major events, the Board strengthened cooperation, advanced key initiatives, and reinforced JOIN's visibility within the wider network.

The year began with a meeting on 15 January, where Board members focused on both governance and forward planning. The Chairman reported on the Alliance of the Orders of St John meeting held in Zurich in October 2024. Planning for the AGM 2025 in Malta (see pages 8) was also set in motion. The anticipated participation of St John Ambulance Cymru (Wales), following its membership application, reflected JOIN's continued growth.

After online meetings in March and April, the Board and JOIN delegates came together in Valletta for the Annual General Meeting, hosted by St John Malta in May. The meeting offered an important opportunity for members to exchange on current developments, discuss shared priorities and strengthen cooperation within the network.



► From left to right: Friederike Moser von Filseck (Germany), Christian Velten-Jameson (Chair, France), Mark Broughton (Adviser to the Board), Andrew Grech (Malta).

Later in the year, the JOIN Board took part in the 'Tag der Johanniter' in Erfurt, Germany in September, one of the largest gatherings within the Johanniter network (see page 5).

On the margins of the event, the Board met with the Federal Board of Johanniter Germany and presented JOIN's latest developments and strategic priorities for the coming years. Board members also attended official ceremonies recognising outstanding contributions, held in the presence of high-level political representatives.



► From left to right: Friederike Moser von Filseck (Germany), Christian Velten-Jameson (Chair, France), Christian Meyer-Landrut, Petra Grell-Kunzinger (Vice-Chair, Austria), Thomas Mähner.

JOIN was represented with a stand showcasing its programmes, particularly the Volunteer Swap initiative, highlighting opportunities for cross-border collaboration within the network.

The final Board meeting of the year took place online on 1 December 2025. During this meeting, the Board reviewed the latest developments across the network and looked ahead to the priorities for 2026.

Across all meetings in 2025, the JOIN Board played an active role in supporting the network's strategic direction, strengthening cooperation between member organisations and ensuring that JOIN remained engaged in relevant European initiatives.

## Clinical Working Group Meetings in 2025

One of the most important achievements of the year was the publication of the second edition of the JOIN European First Aid Guidelines (see page 4), which was made available to the public on 30 April 2025. First published in 2019, the Guidelines provide a common European basis for first aid practice and training. In 2025, the Clinical Working Group completed the revised and enhanced edition, updated in line with the latest available international guidance and aligned with JOIN's wider series of first aid education materials.

Alongside this milestone, the group met several times throughout the year to start implementing the PROBANT project which aims to introduce first aid to children aged 8 to 12 (see pages 21).

Through its meetings and expert contributions, the Clinical Working Group continued to demonstrate the value of cross-border medical cooperation. Its work ensures that first aid education across JOIN

remains practical, evidence-based and accessible to people of all ages. In doing so, the group helps strengthen the confidence and preparedness of communities across the network.



► From left to right: Dr Alexandros Vassiliades (Cyprus), Dr Nils Schröder (Germany), Carl Lane, Richard Webber, Dr Rainer Thell (Austria) and Dr Andreas Tanos. On the screen: Trevor Abela Fiorentino and Dr Sarah Vecchione (Italy).

## JOIN Fundraising Working Group Meets in Valletta

Valletta, Malta, 23 May 2025

On 23 May, the JOIN Fundraising Working Group met in Valletta, hosted by St John Malta at its main office. Representatives from Austria, Denmark, France, Jerusalem, Malta and Switzerland attended in person, while Johanniter Nederland and St John Ambulance Cymru joined the meeting online.

The day opened with an exchange on the latest online fundraising activities carried out by the participating organisations. Members shared practical experiences, current challenges and examples of successful approaches in their national

contexts. This was followed by a discussion on recent legislative developments related to the European Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive. Johanniter Austria presented the latest edition of the Christmas Trucker initiative and invited all JOIN members to take part in the 2025 campaign. The initiative remains a strong example of cross-border solidarity within the network and offers opportunities for members to cooperate around a shared humanitarian activity.

In the afternoon, the St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group provided a comprehensive update on the situation in Gaza and the wider region, outlining its continued response to the ongoing humanitarian crisis. Participants exchanged information on the assistance already provided and explored further ways to support the JOIN member in Jerusalem.



► From left to right: Joachim Berney (JOIN Office), Johannes Bucher (Austria), Frederik Ahlefeldt-Laurvig (Denmark), Eva Pelgen (JOIN Office), Petra Grell-Kunzinger (Austria), Christopher Borg Cardona (Malta), Harriet Wheeler (Jerusalem), Ray Cassar (Malta), Christian Velten-Jameson (France), Thomas Vorwerk (Switzerland). On the screen: Owen Thomas (Wales) and Marina Untersteiner (Austria).

## Alliance of the Orders of St John meeting in London

London, United Kingdom, 16 May 2025

From 14 to 16 May, the Order of St John hosted the triennial Alliance and Joint Orders meeting at the historic St John's Gate in London. This event brought together senior representatives of the Five recognised Orders of St John:

- The Johanniterorden
- The Order of St John (host)
- The Johanniter Orde in Nederland
- The Johanniterorden i Sverige
- The Sovereign Military Order of Malta

Among the delegates who convened to discuss ongoing initiatives and strengthen cooperation

was Christian Velten-Jameson, Chairman of Johanniter International. The meeting addressed a range of topics, with a focus on collaborative efforts in war-affected regions like Ukraine and the Middle East. Highlights included the Mission Siret initiative, launched by the Johanniterorden to provide humanitarian aid in Ukraine and now supported by all Alliance members. Emergency aid in Gaza and the region was also further discussed.

This rare assembly symbolises the unity and shared mission of the Five Orders as they reaffirmed their historic ties and collective service ethos.



# JOIN Volunteer Swap

## Looking back on the Volunteer Swap programme 2025

In 2025, the JOIN Volunteer Swap programme continued to bring volunteers from across the network together through meaningful international exchanges. With 22 opportunities offered throughout the year, volunteers were able to visit partner organisations abroad, gain new practical experience, and strengthen the sense of solidarity that connects the JOIN community.

Four JOIN member organisations welcomed volunteers in Austria, Finland, Germany and Malta. The programme included involvement in major public events such as the 51st Berlin Marathon, the Espoo Rantamaraton in Finland, Austria's National Holiday celebrations in Vienna and the Isle of MTV music festival in Malta. Volunteers also joined the annual German first aid competition, where they exchanged knowledge and shared their experience.

In addition to event-based exchanges, four Volunteer Swap opportunities were offered throughout the year without fixed dates. These flexible placements allowed volunteers to experience the daily work of host organisations in a more personal and in-depth

way, for example within the Patient Transport and Ambulance Service in Carinthia or the Mobile Care Service in Tyrol, Austria.

In total, **61 volunteers** from four countries took part in the 2025 Volunteer Swap programme:

- **30** volunteers from Johanniter Austria
- **5** volunteers from St John Ambulance England and the Islands
- **11** volunteers from Johanniter-Unfall-Hilfe Germany
- **15** volunteers from Joannici Dzieło Pomocy Poland

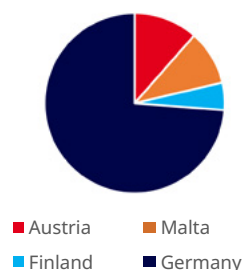
### A year of exchange, learning and connection

The 2025 Volunteer Swap programme offered more than practical experience. It created space for learning, friendship and mutual understanding across national borders. Through shared service, new encounters and memorable experiences, volunteers once again showed what it means to be part of one international Johanniter and St John community.

### Volunteer Swap opportunities offered



Volunteers welcomed in



Volunteers from



## Two Austrian volunteers at Munich Mash in Germany

During the last week of May, two volunteers from Austria joined their German colleagues at Munich Mash, one of the largest action sports events in Europe, to support the medical team and gain valuable cross-border experience in paramedicine. Jakob Brabec reports:

“From 27 to 29 May, we had the great opportunity to volunteer at Munich Mash, one of the largest and most spectacular action sports events in Europe. The motto ‘MUNICH. ACTION. SPORTS. HEROES.’ was vividly lived throughout the event and reflected both in the breathtaking shows and in the professional work of all those involved.



The team in Munich welcomed us warmly and quickly made us feel at home. Our new colleagues introduced us to all relevant procedures for the following two days, allowing us to work closely



► Jakob Brabec (left) with Ida Mirojevic (right)

“Pure adrenaline — not just for the athletes! As a volunteer paramedic at MASH, I had the opportunity to be at a festival, help people and learn along the way.”

Ida Mirojevic

together and respond professionally and effectively to various emergencies.

Although the Volunteer Swap came with several challenging moments, the experience gained from it far outweighed these difficulties. The insights we



gained over the two days were significant, especially due to the differences in paramedic training and volunteer structures in Austria and Germany. Aside from the paramedicine team, we also cooperated closely with the event management and security team on site, which ensured the smooth and professional handling of emergency situations.

“The vibe at MASH was super relaxed, and the team was really awesome. Working as a paramedic was a lot of fun. Special shoutout to Antonia from Saturday; it was really cool hanging out with you!”

Jakob Brabec

What impressed us volunteers the most was the passion and professionalism of everyone involved, whether athletes, organisers or the medical team. This event was not only an opportunity to expand our medical skills but also an experience that strengthened our enthusiasm for helping people and working in a team.”

## Three German volunteers at the Neustifter Kirtag in Vienna

From Thursday, 21 August to Sunday, 24 August 2025, Johanniter Austria once again ensured medical safety at the traditional Neustifter Kirtag in Vienna. This popular wine festival attracts thousands of visitors to the 19th district every year and has been a fixed part of the Johanniter event calendar for many years. With around 40 paramedics on duty each day, several ambulances and a medical station located directly on the festival grounds, the team was well prepared to provide quick and professional assistance.



► Jeremy in Vienna

This year, the Vienna team received special support: as part of the Volunteer Swap programme, three Johanniter volunteers from Germany worked alongside their Austrian colleagues. Jeremy Schmieder from Leipzig and two other participants from Bavaria spent an entire week in Vienna, taking part in missions both in patient transport vehicles and directly in the treatment tent as well as on foot patrol during the Kirtag.



On just their second day in Vienna, the visiting volunteers joined missions on an emergency patient transport vehicle, known locally as an N-KTW. They gained valuable insights into the processes and structures of Vienna's emergency departments and assisted in treating patients after falls, circulatory problems and high blood pressure.

Jeremy continues his report:

- **Day 3:** First day at the Neustifter Kirtag. After a briefing by the operations manager on site, I was assigned to the treatment tent in the Yellow (2) category but also assisted in the Green (3) category.
- **Day 4:** Second day at the Neustifter Kirtag. I was deployed in a foot patrol unit with a stretcher, backpack, AED and suction pump. The evening was mostly calm, but there were several minor incidents, mainly related to alcohol intoxication.
- **Day 5:** Third day at the Neustifter Kirtag. On this day, I was assigned to a patient transport vehicle and accompanied several transfers, including cases involving lacerations, a broken nose, head wounds and alcohol intoxication.
- **Day 6:** Fourth and final day at the Neustifter Kirtag. Once again, I was responsible for patient transports. Overall, the day was calm, which allowed me to exchange experiences with my colleagues from Vienna.



► The Johanniter team ensuring medical safety at the Neustifter Kirtag 2025

### Conclusion

"The week in Vienna was a very enriching experience for me. I not only gained numerous professional insights but also got to know many friendly colleagues. I would like to sincerely thank everyone for the opportunity to take part in this exchange. I would be very happy to have another chance to work with and support the team in Vienna again."

## Three German volunteers at the Rantamaraton in Finland

From 17 to 19 September 2025, the annual Rantamaraton took place along the seaside of Espoo City. Three German volunteers travelled to Espoo to join their Finnish colleagues in providing first aid to runners and spectators.

Here is what Anneke and Philipp report about their Volunteer Swap experience in Finland:

“In September, we had the opportunity to take part in a Johanniter Volunteer Swap and spend four days in Finland, supporting the team at the Espoo Rantamaraton.

Upon arrival in Helsinki, we were warmly welcomed by Merja and Pekka Rekola, two long-standing Finnish Johanniter members. Our very first stop was the House of Nobility in Helsinki, where we received a special guided tour of the Johanniter headquarters. The tour was led by Johan v. Knorring of the Finnish Order, giving us a fascinating insight into the history and current activities of the Order in Finland.

Afterwards, Merja and Pekka invited us into their home. We went for a walk through the nearby forest before enjoying a shared dinner. Right from the beginning, they took great care of us and made sure that our wishes and interests were considered. This gave us an excellent insight both into the practical aspects of the marathon event and into Finnish nature and culture. We stayed in a very nice hotel nearby.

On Friday, we set out for the nearby Nuuksio National Park, where we hiked through the beautiful forest landscape and had lunch with a fantastic view over the park. In the afternoon, we met local Johanniter members as well as members of the voluntary fire brigade and helped to set up the medical tent at the marathon grounds. Afterwards, we once again ended the evening together over a nice meal.

Saturday, marathon day, was the highlight of our stay. It was exciting to see both the similarities and the small but important differences between the Finnish procedures and those we are familiar with in Germany. As we were mostly stationed at the start and finish area, we supported wherever needed, from patient history to wound care and checking

vital signs, as far as possible in English. We were even given small souvenirs as tokens of thanks, which meant a lot to us. Another highlight was the conversation with the Finnish EMS personnel working alongside us. After the race, we all joined the team in dismantling the medical tent before ending the evening with another meal together.



On Sunday, before our departure, we still had time for sightseeing: a ferry trip to a nearby island, a walk through Helsinki and, as throughout the whole trip, the constant companionship of Merja, Pekka and Frieda, the puppy.

The entire weekend was truly fantastic. Everyone we met was open and welcoming, and we gained a deep and personal impression of Finland's culture alongside our volunteer mission. We are very grateful to our hosts and our new Finnish Johanniter friends for making this experience so special. It is one we can warmly recommend to other Johanniter volunteers, and we would like to say a heartfelt thank you once again to everyone involved, especially to Johanniter International, for making it all possible."

## A bond of friendship between the North Sea and the Mediterranean

### Johanniter from Weser-Ems visit their sister organisation St John Malta

From 7 – 14 July, youth leaders and volunteers from the Johanniter-Unfall-Hilfe Regional Association Weser-Ems spent a week on Malta – a place of deep significance in Johanniter history – for an inspiring international exchange with the St John Ambulance and Rescue Corps Malta.



The visit, organised under the Erasmus+ programme, focused on European values, youth engagement, humanitarian service, and the shared mission of helping others. While the island's rich Johanniter heritage provided a historical backdrop, the exchange looked firmly toward the future: fostering collaboration and understanding between young people of both countries.



"We realised that our organisations and countries have much in common – the same core values and similar structures, with only small differences in how things are carried out," said Axel Ebbecke, member of the regional youth leadership of Weser-Ems.

### Learning, Sharing, and Serving Together

The 24 participants – from Garrel, Emden, Wiesmoor, Delmenhorst, Osnabrück, Cloppenburg,

Nordenham, Oldenburg, Ahlhorn, and the Weser-Ems regional headquarters – included Regional Board Member Dieter Meyer and members of the regional youth leadership.



After arriving late at night, the group began their programme the next morning with a tour of Fort Madliena, which also served as their accommodation. There they met the Maltese Cadets and introduced their respective organisations, exploring their diverse activities



from social services and day care to emergency response, first aid, and youth work. The day concluded with a lively discussion on shared European values – and a joint evening by the sea.

The following days offered a rich mix of history, dialogue, and hands-on collaboration. Participants visited St John's Co-Cathedral and the Grand Master's Palace in Valletta, explored Malta's fortifications, and experienced the island's strong connection to Johanniter history.

They also met with representatives of the European Migration Network Malta and Eurodesk, discussing humanitarian engagement, migration issues, and youth opportunities across Europe.

Practical sessions followed, including joint emergency service exercises, case studies, and workshops on youth work concepts. After days filled with learning, the Maltese hosts treated their guests to a pool party and a farewell barbecue, where gifts were exchanged and new friendships celebrated.



On their final day, the volunteers took part in a community service project at Fort Madliena, helping with gardening and renovation work before ending their visit with a boat trip and a closing ceremony.



Two German volunteers stayed a few days longer to join the Isle of MTV 2025 Festival.

"It was a great adventure," summarised Axel Ebbecke.

Dieter Meyer, Regional Board Member, added: "We were especially moved by the warmth and hospitality of our hosts – and we look forward to welcoming them in Germany soon."



# European-funded projects

## TeamUP Project

Building on the foundations laid in 2024, the TeamUP project continued to advance its mission in 2025: strengthening Europe's preparedness for Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosive incidents and supporting first responders with innovative, user-centred technologies. After an intensive first year of co-creation, exercises and requirements gathering, 2025 marked an important transition from conceptual development and stakeholder exchange towards practical testing, scientific validation and preparation for larger-scale operational trials.

Throughout the year, the consortium remained closely connected to the wider European research and innovation community, while also moving forward with the development and evaluation of concrete tools for CBRN-E detection, triage, decontamination, decision support and responder safety.

### TeamUP at the CERIS Workshop on Solutions for First Responders

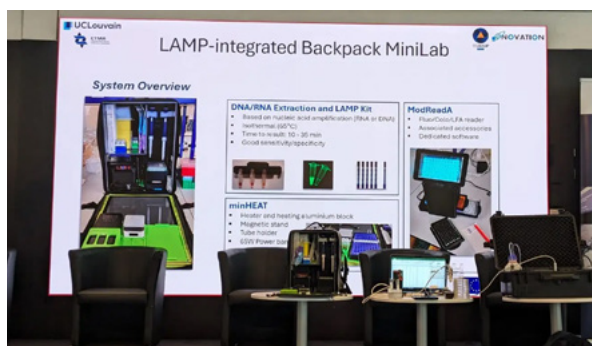
On 27 March 2025, TeamUP participated in the workshop "Solutions for First Responders" in Brussels, organised by the Community for European Research and Innovation for Security (CERIS). Practitioners, researchers, technology developers and policymakers discussed how innovation can strengthen emergency response and move successfully from research into operational use.



Project Coordinator Eleftherios Ouzounoglou represented TeamUP as a panellist and shared insights on the role of Testing Actions and support mechanisms in accelerating the uptake of new technologies. During the demonstration sessions, TeamUP presented two of its key tools: the Digital Triage Tag, which supports rapid digital categorisation of victims in mass casualty incidents, and the Decision-Support Toolkit, designed to help emergency response teams make informed decisions in real time.

### CERIS Disaster Resilience Days

In May 2025, TeamUP participated in the CERIS Disaster Resilience Days, which brought together experts, policymakers, practitioners and innovators to discuss disaster preparedness and technological innovation in crisis management.



TeamUP was represented by JOIN and four partners. In a panel, speakers highlighted the role of training centres, continuous cooperation between developers and end users, and the operational and legal conditions affecting the uptake of CBRN-E technologies.

The CERIS Disaster Resilience Days reaffirmed the relevance of TeamUP's approach: combining technological development with practical training, end-user feedback and European cooperation.

### Scientific Contribution on AI-Powered Decontamination

On 4 June 2025, TeamUP partners presented a joint paper at the 18th Crisis Management Days International Conference in Opatija, Croatia. The paper, titled "A Compact, AI-Powered System for Rapid Decontamination during CBRNE Incidents", focused on a deployable solution to support decontamination in CBRN-E emergencies.

The proposed solution combines a lightweight decontamination tunnel, deployable in under ten minutes, with an AI-powered tool that uses posture tracking and multilingual audio instructions to guide individuals through wet or dry decontamination. The system aims to make the process faster and more consistent while reducing the need for manual guidance and the risk of cross-contamination.



### First Laboratory Tests hosted by Johanniter Austria

A major milestone in 2025 was the launch of the first Europe-wide Laboratory Test phase. From 17 to 19 September, TeamUP conducted a Laboratory Test at the Johanniter Center Nord in Vienna, hosted by Johanniter Austria. The test marked the beginning of a wider series of laboratory evaluations across Europe, designed to assess innovative technologies and training approaches under controlled but realistic conditions.

The Vienna test brought together the project coordinator and consortium partners from Belgium, the United Kingdom, France and Greece, alongside Austrian emergency organisations.

Participants assessed procedures and technologies for detecting, identifying and responding to CBRN-E materials through software, simulators, digital field tools, practical exercises and drone technology. The



activities followed TeamUP's operational sequence of threat detection, triage and decontamination before medical treatment.

The test also examined systems for monitoring first responders' health and linking this information with triage and decontamination processes. By combining technical evaluation with operational feedback, the laboratory tests help ensure that TeamUP tools reflect responders' needs and can support standardised procedures and cross-organisational training.

### Completion of the First Laboratory Testing Cycle

On 8 October 2025, the first Laboratory Testing cycle was completed with a test at Hochschule Bonn-Rhein-Sieg in Rheinbach, Germany. Following successful tests in Austria and Belgium, Technology providers, researchers and experienced end users evaluated emerging chemical and explosives detection solutions under controlled conditions.

The test focused on three complementary systems: the DOVER chemical detector and FemtoMachine vapour generation unit developed by T4i Engineering, and the RapID rapid explosives identification device developed by Hochschule Bonn-Rhein-Sieg. Participants rotated through three stations and compared the prototypes with conventional burn tests.

The tests confirmed the potential of all three systems and generated practical recommendations for further development. Feedback focused on greater automation and connectivity for DOVER, the FemtoMachine's value for training and calibration, and improved sampling, alarms and display readability for RapID, particularly when used with protective gloves.

### Looking Ahead to 2026

By the end of 2025, TeamUP had made significant



progress from co-creation and stakeholder dialogue towards structured testing and technological refinement.

The outcomes of the 2025 Laboratory Tests now form the basis for the next phase of the project. In February 2026, targeted Usability Tests and a Small-Scale Trial will take place at Campus VESTA in Ranst, Belgium. These will be followed by two Full-Scale Trials: one in Lyon, France, from 24 to 28 August 2026, and another in Athens, Greece, from 19 to 23 October 2026.

## Launch of the European SHIELD project involving three Johanniter organisations

The European Erasmus+ project SHIELD stands for 'Safety and Health: Inclusion to Emergency Training and First Aid for Disabled Persons'. It started in December and will aim to strengthen the resilience, safety and participation of people with disabilities through their active continuation to emergency preparedness and disaster management. The project is coordinated by Johanniter Germany (Johanniter-Akademie Mitteldeutschland, Leipzig) and brings together a consortium of organisations from Austria, Belgium, Germany, Lithuania and Slovakia, including Johanniter Austria and the JOIN Office.

Across Europe, people with disabilities are still not sufficiently considered in disaster preparedness and civil protection systems. Recent disasters and emergencies have underlined that their specific needs must be better integrated into planning, training and operational decision-making. SHIELD will address this gap by developing inclusive training approaches for both civil protection personnel and people with disabilities.

At the core of the project is the development of new training material, train-the-trainer concepts, and adapted first-aid courses tailored to people with physical and cognitive disabilities. These activities will build on a comprehensive needs analysis conducted with civil protection experts and organisations of and for people with disabilities.

To improve the preparedness of first responders, SHIELD will design practice-oriented civil protection training modules that raise awareness for the specific requirements of people with disabilities during emergency operations. Through joint exercises including people with disabilities as participants or role-players, the project will foster mutual understanding and improve response capabilities while strengthening the confidence and self-efficacy of all participants involved.

SHIELD will develop adapted first-aid courses including modules on self-protection for people with disabilities. It is with these trainings that persons are enabled to recognise emergency situations, take appropriate first steps, and act as multipliers within their communities.

To ensure long-term societal impact, SHIELD will create a Civil Protection Handbook summarising key validated findings, practical recommendations, and training concepts. National and European dissemination activities will ensure that the results reach civil protection authorities, emergency services, disability organisations, and policymakers across Europe.

The SHIELD consortium consists of:

- Johanniter-Unfall-Hilfe e.V. (Coordinator), Germany
- Asociácia samaritánov Slovenskej republiky, Slovakia
- Johanniter International, Belgium
- Diakonische Leipziger gGmbH, Germany
- Johanniter Österreich Ausbildung und Forschung GmbH, Austria
- Asociacija Lietuvos Negalios Organizacijų Forumas, Lithuania

The project runs for 24 months and is co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union.



## PROBANT Project: Introducing First Aid to Children Across Europe

In January 2025, Johanniter International launched the new Erasmus+ project PROBANT – Premiers secours européens pour enfants, which aims to introduce first aid to children aged 8 to 12 through accessible, engaging and age-appropriate educational materials. Led by JOIN, the consortium includes Johanniter Austria, Johanniter Germany, S.O.G.IT Italy, St John Cyprus and the Institut des Sacrés-Cœurs Waterloo. The project is co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union and will run until December 2026.

At its core, PROBANT seeks to empower children with simple lifesaving skills and a stronger awareness of health, safety and social responsibility. By learning how to recognise emergencies, care for themselves and support others, children can develop confidence, responsibility and early health awareness. In the long term, the project also aims to encourage social engagement and interest in healthcare-related skills.

The educational materials developed through PROBANT will be freely available in several languages, including Dutch, English, French, German, Greek, Italian and Ukrainian. The Ukrainian version is particularly intended to support both refugees and residents affected by the war. The final toolbox will include child-friendly first aid content, comic-style illustrations and a short trainer's guide. Follow the project on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

### Kick-off meeting in Brussels

The project officially began with a Kick-off Meeting in Brussels on 25 and 26 January. During the two-day meeting, medical experts from the partner organisations discussed the project's objectives and agreed on a first list of first aid topics suitable for children aged 8 to 12.

A key focus of the meeting was how first aid content should be adapted to the needs, abilities and everyday realities of this age group. The partners considered not only which medical topics should be included, but also how they should be explained in a way that is understandable, practical and encouraging for children.

The meeting laid the foundation for the project's future work and marked the beginning of regular cooperation between the consortium partners. Together, they agreed to develop innovative educational materials that would be both medically sound and pedagogically appropriate.

### Developing the First Aid educational materials in Munich

The second face-to-face meeting of PROBANT took place on 5 and 6 April in Munich, hosted by Johanniter Germany. Over two full days, the project's medical experts began drafting the first booklet and agreed on the first aid topics that would be developed and illustrated in the coming months.

The Munich meeting represented an important step from planning towards content creation. By the end of the meeting, the consortium had a clearer structure for the booklet and a shared understanding of how the selected first aid topics should be presented to young learners.

### Continued work on content and pedagogy in Austria

In September, Johanniter Austria hosted the third face-to-face meeting of PROBANT. The consortium gathered in Vienna for two further days of intensive work on the first aid materials for children aged 8 to 12.

During the meeting, the medical and educational experts continued developing the content of the booklet and confirmed the medical topics to be included. The partners discussed how to ensure that the materials are not only accurate, but also engaging, inclusive and easy to use for trainers. The aim is to create resources that support children's learning through clear explanations, visual storytelling and practical examples.



► From left to right: Dr Trevor Abela Fiorentino, Richard Webber, Dr Nils Schröder (Germany), Dr Andreas Tanos, Dr Paul Hunt, Carl Lane, Dr Alexandros Vassiliades (Cyprus), Mark Broughton. Not on the picture: Dr Alexander Hermann (Austria)



► From left to right: Dr Trevor Abela Fiorentino, Carsten Cüppers, Joachim Berney, Dr Andreas Tanos, Dr Rainer Thell, Richard Webber. Standing: Carl Lane. Not on the picture: Dr Alexander Hermann

The meeting in Austria showed the steady progress of the project in its first year. By combining medical expertise with educational experience, the consortium continued to shape a learning toolbox that can be used across different countries, languages and teaching contexts.

### Looking Ahead

In the next phase, the materials will be illustrated, translated and prepared for classroom testing. Feedback from teachers and trainers will help improve the toolbox and ensure that it meets high educational standards. Once finalised, the materials will be freely available to teachers, parents, caregivers and first aid trainers across Europe.

# JOIN's Work in 2025

## The JOIN Board

The JOIN Board is made up of representatives from JOIN member organisations who are elected by the Annual General Meeting for a period of two years. Its main tasks include supervising the work of the JOIN Secretariat and the General Manager, dealing with strategic questions and managing JOIN's relations with the Alliance of the Orders of St John.

Elected at the AGM 2025, the Board was composed of Chairman Christian Velten-Jameson (Association des Œuvres de Saint-Jean, France), Vice-Chair Petra

Grell-Kunzinger (Johanniter Austria), Friederike Moser von Filseck (Johanniter Germany) and Andrew Grech (St John Malta).

The Board meets regularly at face-to-face and online meetings. In 2025, the Board held six online and three face-to-face meetings (see page 9).

The term of the current Board ends at the Annual General Meeting in May 2027.

## Working Groups in 2025

Given the aim of JOIN to derive benefits for its members from increased exchange and cooperation, the working groups are one of the essential institutions in JOIN. The working groups provide a platform where JOIN members can exchange knowledge and experience on any given issue, and also offer a space where JOIN members can set the thematic foundation for common projects. By combining resources within the network, JOIN can realise projects for which individual members might not possess the capacity.

Moreover, the working groups also guarantee a participatory and transparent structure within JOIN as participation in the working groups is not only open to all members, but also strongly encouraged.

The working groups meet on a regular basis. While a face-to-face meeting allows for a more thorough and personal exchange at least once a year, regular online conferences ensure continuous close collaboration between the working group members.

In 2025, three working groups were operative within JOIN.

### Clinical Working Group

The Clinical Working Group has been chaired by Richard Webber since 2022. As its name suggests, the group deals with clinical and medical cooperation at both national and international levels. It is made up of chief medical officers from JOIN members.

In 2025, the JOIN Clinical Working Group was very active. It is responsible for implementing the Erasmus+ project PROBANT, which aims to introduce first aid to children aged 8 to 12 through accessible, engaging and age-appropriate educational materials (see page 21).

It also released the publication of the second edition of the JOIN European First Aid Guidelines. First published in 2019, the Guidelines provide a common European basis for first aid practice and training. In 2025, the Clinical Working Group completed the revised and enhanced edition, updated in line with the latest available international guidance and aligned with JOIN's wider series of first aid education materials (see page 4).

The members of the working group met many times online as well as in Brussels, Munich and Vienna in the course of the year under review (see page 10).

### Volunteering & Youth Working Group

This working group, chaired by Nancy Kestler (Germany), is responsible for volunteer exchanges between JOIN members and the Volunteer Swap programme (see page 12). These activities enrich the individual volunteering experience, enhance cooperation and understanding between the members, and enable JOIN members to work together efficiently and practically. Moreover, the working group deals with all other issues regarding volunteering, such as legal guidelines and the

recruitment of volunteers. It also discusses common interests in JOIN members' youth activities such as summer camps, first aid training, competitions and youth exchanges.

The Volunteering & Youth Working Group held four online meetings.

### **Fundraising Working Group**

Motivated by positive cooperation examples in the past, this working group exchanges best practices

and know-how in fundraising, grant management and other related topics, with the aim to mobilise financial resources and to strengthen fundraising capacities and cooperation among JOIN members. The working group consists of senior members of the fundraising departments of JOIN members. Since 2023, it has been chaired by Frederik Ahlefeldt-Laurvig (Denmark).

The Fundraising Working Group held in 2025 a face-to-face meeting in Valletta (see page 10).

## **The JOIN Secretariat in 2025**

The JOIN Secretariat is located in Brussels, at the heart of decision-making in the European Union. This enables the office to observe relevant European policy developments firsthand and report these back to its members, as well as to advocate the positions and interests of JOIN and its member organisations directly to decision-makers.

The Secretariat also acts as a communication and information centre for JOIN members, e.g. by publishing the monthly newsletter JOINews, running an informative website and social media channels and replying to enquiries on European matters put forward by JOIN members. Furthermore, the JOIN Secretariat identifies relevant EU funding opportunities for its members.

The Secretariat maintains close contact with NGO partners, the Brussels offices of national and regional representations and the members of the Orders of St John who work in the European capital.

A significant influence on the work agenda of the JOIN Secretariat in 2025 was the implementation of the European projects TeamUP, PROBANT and SHIELD as highlighted on pages 18 - 21.

Furthermore, the JOIN Secretariat participated in the drafting of six European project proposals linked to the topics of health and of disaster response. The first proposal, called READY, aims to improve the resilience of infrastructure systems through co-creating early warning and climate-testing for disaster preparedness. The second proposal, called ROMEO, intends to develop multimodal robotic operations for efficient emergency outreach. The third proposal, called ESTHER, is designed to enhance safety through hazard education and

readiness. The fourth proposal, called FireWise, aims to foster community-led wildfire preparedness and resilience building. The fifth proposal, called ENGAGE, aims at co-creating preparedness solutions through science-community dialogue and participatory action for wildfires and urban resilience. The sixth proposal is called SHIELD and aims at inclusion to emergency training for people with disabilities. It was approved at the end of the year. The project proposals are involving either Johanniter Austria, Johanniter Germany or St John Malta.

Throughout the year, the JOIN Secretariat maintained its representative character for members in Brussels. Upon request and on behalf of several JOIN members, the JOIN Secretariat took part in various online meetings at European level, for instance, in the areas of humanitarian assistance, development cooperation, civil protection, care, research and innovation.

In 2025, the JOIN Office team consisted of Joachim Berney (General Manager) and Eva Pelgen (EU Officer).



# Perspectives on 2026

In 2026, the JOIN Office aims to remain the motor for cooperation among St John charities in Europe. In this light, the working groups continue to be the main priority for JOIN, and the Brussels office will support them in the best way possible.

One of the main challenges is expected to keep the links among JOIN members as tight as possible. Some JOIN members are currently under financial pressure and have expressed the pressing need to reduce every kind of expenses where possible. The JOIN Office will have to convince the member organisations not to reduce budget for cross-border projects.

The JOIN Office will continue implementing three European projects in 2026. The different consortia

notably involve Johanniter Austria, Johanniter Germany, S.O.G.IT Italy and St John Cyprus.

Furthermore, promoting EU funding opportunities to our member organisations will stay a priority. The JOIN Office is actively exploring options for preparing European project proposals, especially in the frame of 'Erasmus+', the funding programme to support education, training and youth, and 'Horizon Europe', the funding programme for research and innovation 2021-2027. JOIN wishes to bring its members closer to innovative, cutting-edge research in relevant service areas regarding research consortia.

The Annual General Meeting in 2026 will take place in Vienna from 29 to 31 May.

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# About JOIN

Johanniter International (JOIN) is the partnership of the protestant Orders of St John and their national charities. Our member organisations, based in Europe and the Middle East, work in close cooperation and are supported by more than 100,000 volunteers. They serve humanity with medical services and first aid, social care, international aid, disaster relief and youth work. The services of JOIN member organisations are open to everyone. Core to our values is our Christian heritage which underlines our work.

The JOIN central office in Brussels advocates the interest of the St John charities towards European and international bodies and facilitates international projects and working groups.

For further information please contact our Brussels office at [join.office@johanniter.org](mailto:join.office@johanniter.org) or [www.johanniter.org](http://www.johanniter.org).

