AUTUMN 2026

RELIGIOUS IN EUROPE NETWORKING
AGAINST TRAFFICKING AND EXPLOITATION

RENATE

Religious in Europe Networking Against Trafficking and Exploitation



Joana Terzieva, Brian O'Toole and Dr Sr Adina Balan, CJ at UNTOC COP13

IN THIS ISSUE

02 Irish civil society at the UN
03 Talitha Kum's 2025 Annual Report
07 Medaille Trust at 20
08 Awareness Raising in Croatia
11 RENATE & University of Croatia Webinar
13 RENATE at UNTOC COP13
15 News from Dar Hosea, Malta
16 Welcoming evacuees from Oleshky
18 Amaranta Foundation at 20
19 RENATE Core Group Eindhoven

Ending Trafficking Begins With Us

Irish Civil Society at the United Nations in Geneva



RENATE was represented at the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) pre-sessions in Geneva in late August, as part of a delegation of Irish civil society organisations bringing human rights concerns and recommendations to the international community.

The UPR is the United Nations process through which the human rights record of each Member State is reviewed. The pre-sessions gave civil society the chance to engage directly with embassies and permanent missions ahead of a country's formal review. Ireland was one of 12 countries taking part in this round.

The submission from Act to Prevent Trafficking Ireland (APT) and Cork Life Centre, with the support of RENATE, focused on human trafficking and the protection of children and people who had experienced exploitation. Its recommendations included:

- full operationalisation of Ireland's National Referral Mechanism for victims of trafficking
- a human trafficking awareness module for all healthcare employees
- recognition of children as victims of trafficking
- recognition of people groomed and coerced into criminal activity as victims of trafficking
- meaningful and sincere engagement with the expertise of MECPATHS

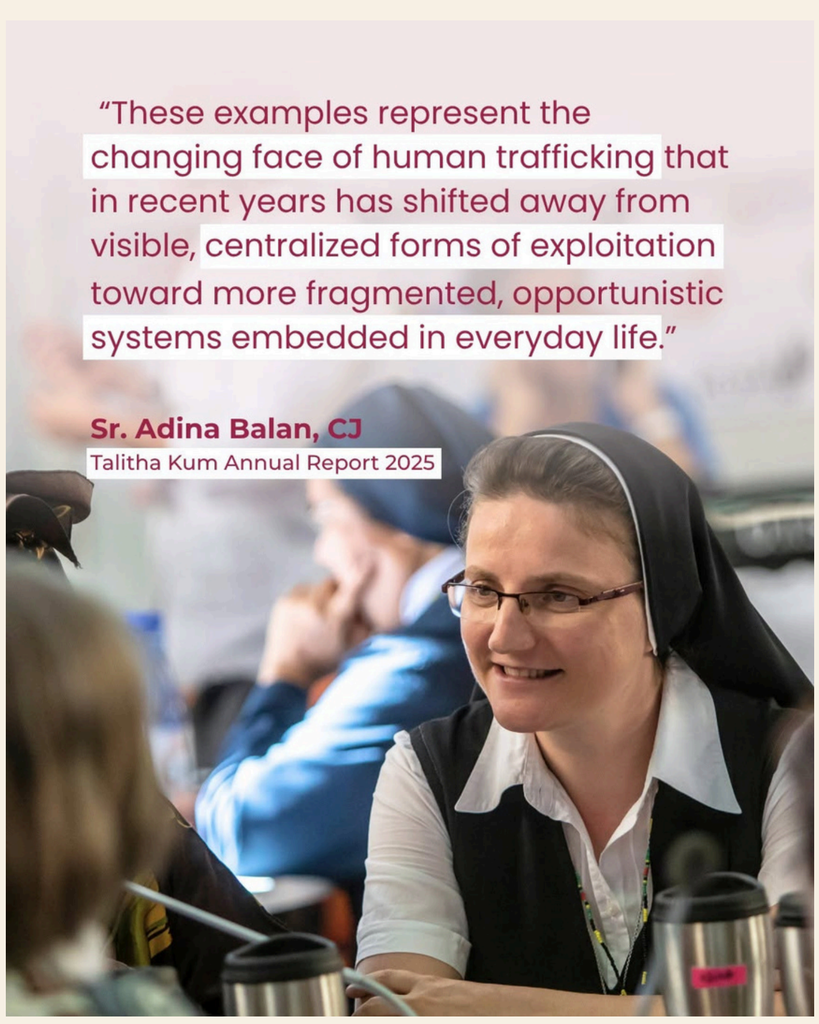
Throughout the week the delegation met representatives of a number of permanent missions to highlight where further action was needed. We were grateful for the support of the Irish Government, the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission. The delegation then looked ahead to Ireland's review in November, when these recommendations were formally considered.

Talitha Kum Launches its 2025 Annual Report



Congratulations to all our colleagues at Talitha Kum on the release of their 2025 Annual Report, launched at the end of July to mark the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons. At the online launch, Sr. Abby Avelino, MM, International Coordinator of Talitha Kum, presented the highlights.
The report showed how, through collaborative work, human trafficking could be challenged, and how collective engagement across all sectors of society could build momentum towards combatting this crime against the dignity of the human person. Although trafficking increasingly intertwined with digital technology, speakers at the launch encouraged everyone to continue their actions.

The report gathered global data, survivor testimonies and updates on anti-trafficking missions. In 2025 the network reached 1.21 million people worldwide and supported 7,141 survivors in accessing justice.



Key highlights:

• Technological exploitation: traffickers increasingly used digital platforms, social media and new technologies to recruit victims and expand exploitation globally.

• Global collaboration: the network brought together grassroots leaders, international partners and survivors.

• Call to action: the report built on Talitha Kum's established framework to eradicate human slavery and promote human dignity.

The RENATE network was delighted to have contributed to these achievements through collaboration.

Read the full report at talithakum.info/en/report2025

Ana Majko (Albania) Selected as an Obama Leader

Congratulations to Ana Majko, Executive Director of the Initiative for Social Change ARSIS and RENATE Member in Albania. ARSIS is an Albanian organisation dedicated to advancing the rights, protection and social inclusion of children, young people and families in vulnerable situations.



In September the Obama Foundation welcomed its newest class of Obama Leaders, and Ana was one of 155 people from 64 countries and territories to be selected.

The Obama Leaders Program is a leadership development initiative built on the belief that change belongs to the next generation of leaders rather than coming from the top down. It equips changemakers aged 25 to 44 across government, business and civil society with values-based leadership skills and a network of support.

The 155 leaders set out to learn from each other, embrace new perspectives and gain the tools they needed to turn hope into action. We wished Ana all the very best and looked forward to following her progress over the year of the programme.

Cross Border Strategies to Prevent Human Trafficking

On Monday 28th September, an informative webinar on cross-border strategies to prevent human trafficking brought together an impressive line-up of speakers with experience from Albania, Canada, Mexico, India and Indonesia.

Speakers included Sr Imelda Poole, CJ, former RENATE President and President of the Mary Ward Loreto Foundation, Albania, and Sr Abby Avelino, MM, International Coordinator of Talitha Kum. Many RENATE members attended, bringing important learning back to their Task Groups.



Apostolic Nuncio Meets Survivors of Modern Slavery, Medaille Trust, UK



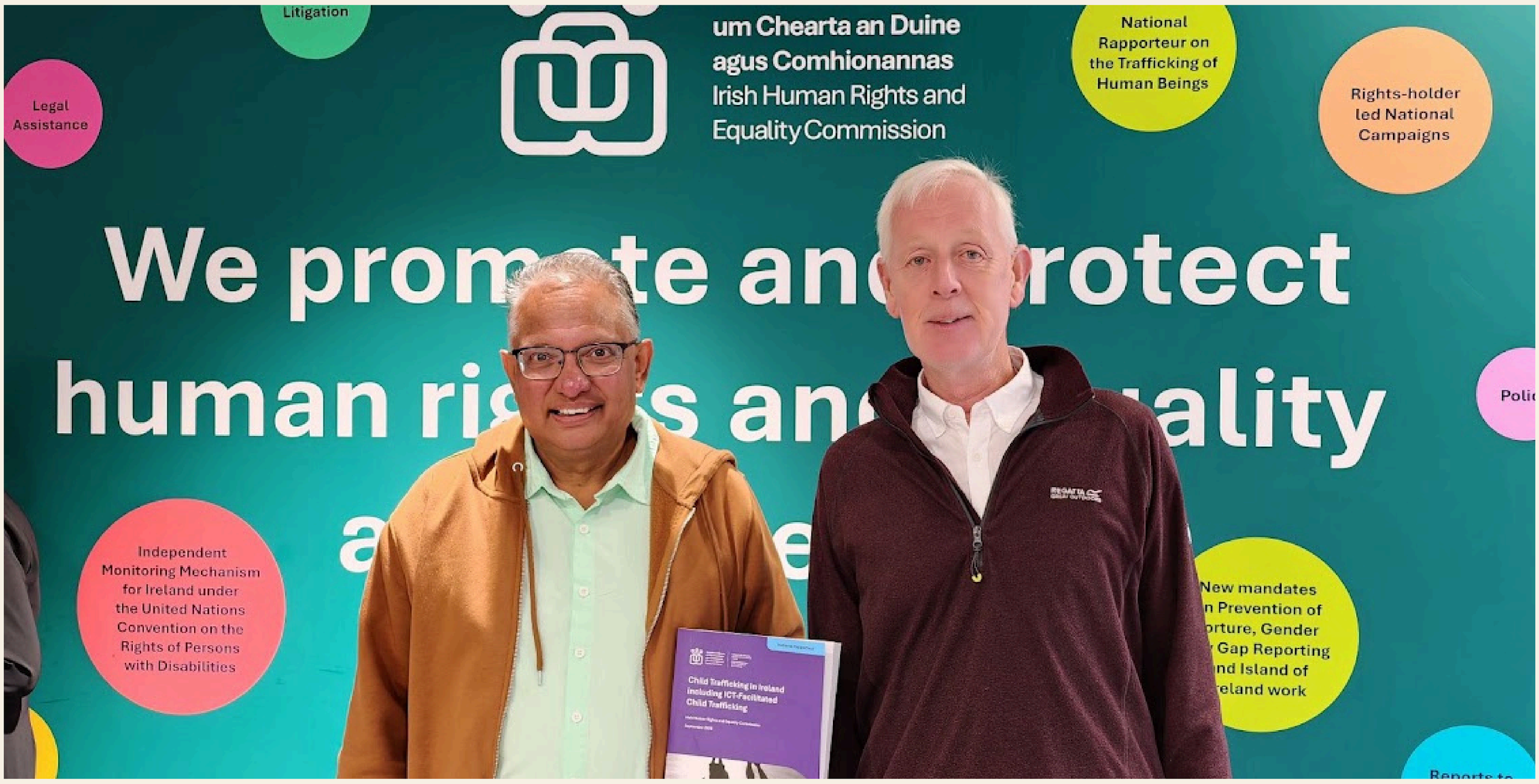
Survivors of trafficking and modern slavery supported by Medaille Trust met with Archbishop Miguel Maury Buendía, the Apostolic Nuncio to Great Britain, in September.

The Nuncio met survivors while visiting a Medaille Trust safe house gifted to the charity by the Archdiocese of Liverpool, as part of a tour of social action projects across the Archdiocese. He heard first-hand about the difficulties survivors in the UK faced in being recognised and supported to rebuild their lives, and about the contribution of Catholic volunteers and projects.
At the time, more than 120,000 victims were estimated to be living in the UK. The previous year, a record 23,411 potential victims had been identified and referred into the official National Referral Mechanism.

MEDAILLE TRUST
REFUGE AND FREEDOM FROM MODERN SLAVERY

Medaille Trust, one of the leading Catholic charities in the fight against modern slavery, supported more than 700 survivors a year across a network of safe houses and community projects. Inspired by Catholic Social Teaching, Medaille worked to restore dignity and empowerment, and to support the first steps toward a new life.

Launch of the Report on Child Trafficking in Ireland



In September, the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC), Ireland's National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings, launched its report Child Trafficking in Ireland including ICT-Facilitated Child Trafficking.
Introducing the report, Chief Commissioner Liam Herrick described vulnerable children as “hidden in plain sight” and said the real question was how many had been missed. Researcher Tegwyn Stephenson called the findings devastating.

What the report found

- Child victims were going unidentified and unprotected, while perpetrators acted with impunity and prosecutions were very low.
- Online grooming, including through gaming platforms, could be where exploitation began.
- Children trafficked into criminal activity, such as selling drugs, were often treated as offenders rather than victims.
- Irish child victims appeared in UK referral figures but were not identified in Ireland.

A panel with An Garda Síochána, MECPATHS, Tusla and Children's Health Ireland followed. JP O'Sullivan of MECPATHS said the first step was for the State to clearly acknowledge that children were being trafficked in Ireland.

Key recommendations

- A child-centred National Referral Mechanism with clear guidelines
- Transposition of the 2024 EU Anti-Trafficking Directive
- Safe accommodation, healthcare and counselling for child victims
- Non-punishment of children compelled into crime

READ THE FULL REPORT HERE

Different & Equal: Highlights, Partnerships and Activities Sept-Oct 2026, Albania



Working Together for Prevention, Protection and Reintegration

During autumn 2026, Different & Equal continued its efforts to prevent human trafficking and exploitation, strengthen institutional cooperation, raise awareness among young people and improve support for survivors.
Through its Mobile Units, partnerships with public institutions, vocational training providers and international partners, the organization remained committed to promoting safer communities and creating opportunities for recovery and reintegration.



Strengthening Cooperation to Prevent Human Trafficking and Labour Exploitation

On 6 October 2026, Different & Equal strengthened its institutional cooperation with the State Labour Inspectorate through a joint commitment to prevent human trafficking and labour exploitation, particularly in the tourism sector.

Throughout October, a series of complementary activities were carried out, including information sessions, focus group discussions, distribution of awareness-raising materials and fieldwork. These activities aimed to increase awareness, strengthen the identification of potential victims and promote safe and fair working conditions.

These efforts contribute to improved cooperation among relevant stakeholders, a better understanding of trafficking risks and more effective identification and referral of potential victims.

Empowering Young People to Recognize and Prevent Human Trafficking

Framework: National Anti-Trafficking Month
Locations: Tirana, Shkodër, Pogradec and Lezhë

During the National Anti-Trafficking Month, Different & Equal, through its Mobile Units, conducted awareness-raising sessions with students in Tirana, Shkodër, Pogradec and Lezhë.
The sessions focused on child trafficking, potential exploitation risks, ways to recognize unsafe situations, and how to seek help and report suspected cases to the responsible authorities.
Through cooperation with schools, psychosocial staff and local child protection structures, the activities aimed to strengthen young people's knowledge and awareness, empowering them to better recognize and prevent trafficking risks.
Informed young people are better equipped to protect themselves and others.

Strengthening Local Cooperation for Safe Tourism and the Prevention of Human Trafficking

As part of the project “Strengthening Identification and Prevention of Human Trafficking through Responsible Tourism Engagement”, Different & Equal organized roundtable discussions in Shkodër and Tirana, in cooperation with local stakeholders.
The meetings brought together representatives of local institutions, agencies and organizations working in the field of human trafficking prevention and victim support. Discussions focused on strengthening inter-institutional coordination, preventing trafficking and labour exploitation in the tourism sector, proactively identifying potential victims, and improving the implementation of Standard Operating Procedures.
Participants also highlighted the importance of specialized training and expressed their willingness to contribute to joint local action plans aimed at strengthening prevention and identification mechanisms.
The project is being implemented by Different & Equal in Shkodër, Tirana, Lezhë and Pogradec, with the financial support of GIZ.



Awareness Raising in Schools and the 20th EUAnti-Trafficking Day in Croatia



Sr Victoria Šimić, SCSC, a member of the RENATE network and Delegate for the prevention of human trafficking for the Archdiocese of Đakovo-Osijek, continued her school visits this academic year, working with schools that expressed interest in her workshops.

She returned to the elementary school in Sikirevci for a second time, leading workshops for three classes of students aged around 14. The students showed great interest in the visual and written material and took part diligently in group activities, reflecting on the forms human trafficking takes and why it happens. Four consecutive generations of students at this school had now been introduced to an issue present in nearly every country in the world.

The conversation did not end with the workshop. Discussions continued among the children, within their families and throughout the school. The religious education teacher was inspired to keep exploring the subject using films mentioned during the workshop, including the film about St Bakhita and Sound of Freedom, and the school published a short report on its website.

On 8 October, a workshop was held for the first time at the elementary school in Komletinci for 7th and 8th grade students, following a teacher's recommendation and with the Principal's support.

On 15 October, Sr Victoria visited the elementary school in Račinovci, right on the border with Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, for grades 5 to 8. She made an exception here because she knew every student personally, having been their teacher for many years. Seven generations of students at this school had now taken part in her preventive workshops.

The final October workshop took place on 22 October in Cerna for 8th grade students, two years after her first visit there. Her November schedule was mostly full, with a different school each week.

RENATE Hosts Online Quarterly Prayer Service, Marking October 18th, EU Anti-Trafficking Day



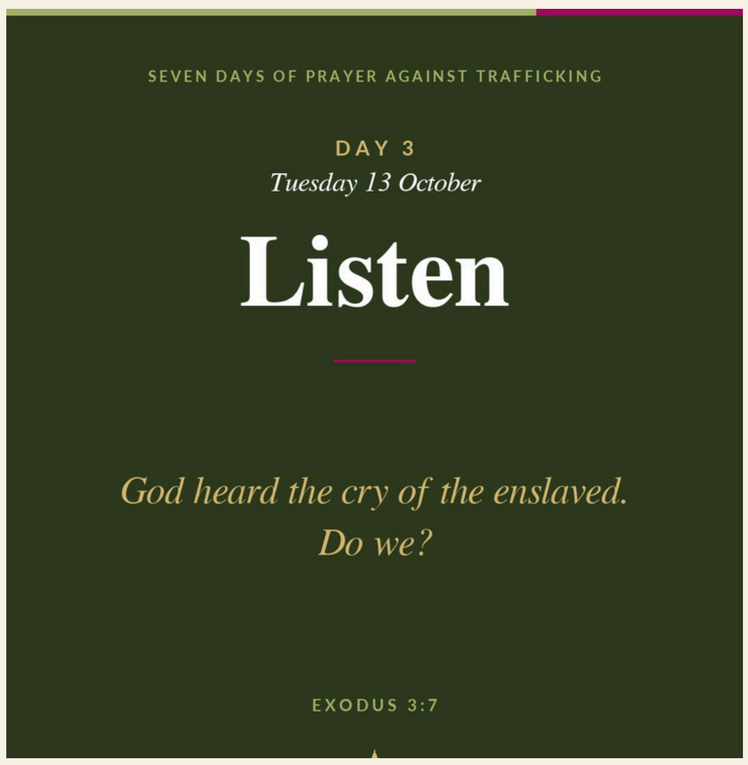
To mark the 20th EU Anti-Trafficking Day on 18 October, the RENATE network came together for our October 18th Prayer Service, the third of RENATE's four quarterly prayer services. It was, as always, a beautiful time to gather with the network.
In the lead-up, RENATE's House of Prayer Task Group prepared a seven-day prayer package: an A5 prayer booklet and daily social media graphics from 11th October, inviting people to pause each day and hold in prayer all those affected by trafficking and exploitation. Members continued to use the booklet well beyond the day itself.



Praying together in Malta

In community, the sisters in Malta prayed the booklet as a Novena in preparation for 18 October, during Morning Prayers, taking turns to read and reflect.

Sr Margaret Gonzi, RGS, and Fr. Joe Aquilina were also invited to the Anti-Human Trafficking Annual Conference 2026, organised by Malta's Human Rights Directorate. During the workshop they spoke about the online prayer on Zoom for victims of human trafficking, and about the RENATE network and its work in various countries.



“Human Trafficking Is Closer Than You Think!”, Webinar Organized by Caritas Ukraine, Caritas Romania and Caritas Moldova



Ahead of EU Anti-Trafficking Day, around 50 professionals and organisation representatives from different countries met online to discuss emerging risks and coordinate support for Ukrainians, with survivor testimony and cross-border cooperation at the heart of the event.

Vasyl (not his real name) shared his experience of captivity under Russian occupying forces. Taken captive in late 2022, he spent three years and seven months subjected to forced labour, physical violence and torture. He said the thought of his family waiting at home helped him endure.

- Elena Sofia Fanciulli, Caritas Internationalis and COATNET, presented the network's 2024 to 2030 strategy built on advocacy, protection, awareness-raising and survivor leadership.
- Natalia Holynska, Caritas Ukraine, and member of RENATE Core Group, spoke on emerging wartime challenges and person-centred, trauma-informed assistance.
- Oleksii Kozak, Caritas Ukraine, presented cross-border cooperation with Romania and Moldova to support safe returns.
- Thomas Hackl, Caritas Romania, shared a survey of 265 Ukrainians in Romania: over 40% saw the risk of trafficking as high, over 10% had faced a threat of exploitation, and 44% had sought support from NGOs.

Participants also discussed the deportation of Ukrainian children, the recruitment of foreign nationals for the war, and the recruitment of Ukrainian teenagers through social media to commit crimes. Caritas Ukraine had worked against trafficking for more than 22 years, assisting over 2,000 survivors and reaching around 1.6 million people through prevention. An animated awareness video, made with colleagues in Romania and Moldova, was presented.

Watch the video in English here.

CROATIA · ONLINE

19 OCTOBER 2026

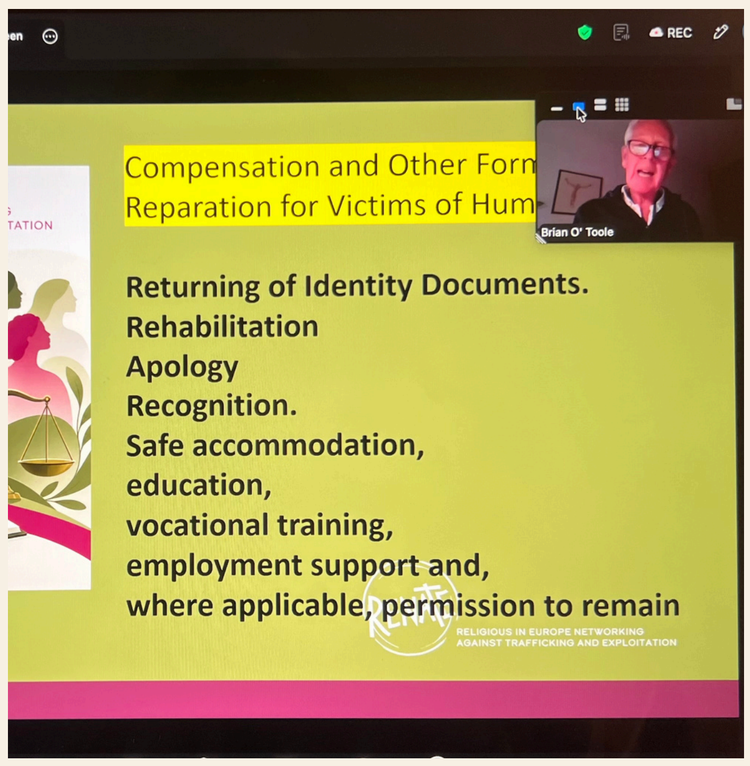
RENATE Webinar, in Collaboration with Catholic University of Croatia, Youth Ambassadors of Counter Trafficking



To mark EU Anti-Trafficking Day, on Monday 19 October RENATE introduced the network and research possibilities to students at the Catholic University of Croatia in Zagreb, organised by Sr Stanka Oršolić, SSND, with members and friends of the network joining online.



Ivonne van de Kar (Netherlands), Co-President of RENATE, introduced the network, from its beginnings in 2009 to around 300 members in 31 countries today. Natalia Holynska of Caritas Ukraine showed how the war had changed trafficking in Ukraine, where officially identified victims rose from 182 in 2024 to 793 in 2026, and more than 20,000 children had been forcibly deported to Russia. Martina Liebsch, Managing Director of the Catholic Forum Against Human Trafficking in Germany, spoke about the Forum's advocacy and coordination work, and the rise in child trafficking that had led to Germany's first specialised counselling centre for minors. She invited the students to engage through conferences, study days, research, and creativer awareness raising.



Brian O'Toole (Ireland) joined from UNTOC COP13 in Vienna. With a well-known awareness test, he showed how trafficking stays hidden in plain sight, introduced APT's Captives schools programme, and shared the Law Task Group's research on compensation for victims. Aferdita Gjoni of Mary Ward Loreto (Albania) closed with the journey of survivors from healing to leadership.

The students asked how to recognise a victim, and about the deportation of Ukrainian children. One student, herself a member of a religious congregation, asked how her sisters could become involved: start, the speakers said, with a RENATE prayer service. Sr Stanka offered to organise a further lecture on trafficking in Croatia and Europe.

"What kind of community do you want to live in? And what are you prepared to do together?" Brian O'Toole, RENATE Core Group Member

Preventing Trafficking: Vatra's October Awareness Activities in Albania



Photo: Activity at Sulejman Delvina Secondary School In Delvina

During October, in the frame of Anti-Trafficking Awareness Month, Vatra Psycho-Social Center has organized awareness-raising activities and institutional meetings to strengthen trafficking prevention, particularly among women and girls, and promote survivors' rights and protection.

A key development was the expansion of Vatra's Mobile Unit network with a new unit in Saranda, strengthening outreach, early identification, and referral of victims of trafficking/potential victim of trafficking and victims of violence. Meetings with Saranda Municipality's Social Services representatives further promoted institutional cooperation and survivor-center responses.

A special awareness-raising activity was organized at “Sulejman Delvina” Secondary School in Delvina, where students presented artwork conveying anti-trafficking messages, distributed informational materials, and participated in discussions on trafficking prevention. The activity brought together representatives of educational institutions, municipal social services, local police, and local authorities, highlighting the importance of youth engagement, early identification of risks, and inter-institutional cooperation in preventing trafficking and protecting vulnerable groups.

These initiatives reinforce Vatra's commitment to combating violence against women and girls through prevention, protection, and coordinated local action.

AUSTRIA

19 TO 23 OCTOBER 2026

RENATE at the UN Conference of the Parties (UNTOC COP13)



From 19 to 23 October, RENATE Core Group members Brian O'Toole (Ireland) and Dr Sr Adina Balan, CJ (Romania) represented the RENATE network at the thirteenth Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime in Vienna. They were also joined by RENATE Member in Bulgaria, Joana Terzieva, who was representing Right to Childhood Foundation. Both Brian and Sr. Adina shared detailed reports of their week, including daily reports and a gallery of photographs.



A week of learning and connection

Brian and Sr. Adina described the conference as very worthwhile, with excellent side events and many opportunities relevant to RENATE's work. It was a full and, at times, demanding week. The plenary agenda shifted often, sometimes without notice, and while two days had been expected to focus on human trafficking, the issue received less sustained attention in plenary than they had hoped.



Environmental justice was a major theme, largely reflecting efforts to secure an additional protocol on environmental crime. Other prominent topics included fraud and scams, recruitment, child sexual exploitation and abuse, and the use of algorithms to support tracking and tracing.

Across the workshops, prevention and awareness raising were repeatedly named as essential, yet received relatively little dedicated time. A clear message came through: stopping people from being drawn into exploitation in the first place was far better than intervening after harm had been done. Many speakers also spoke about the complexity of supporting victims and the long-lasting impact of trafficking.

AUSTRIA

19 TO 23 OCTOBER 2026

RENATE at the UN Conference of the Parties (UNTOC COP13)





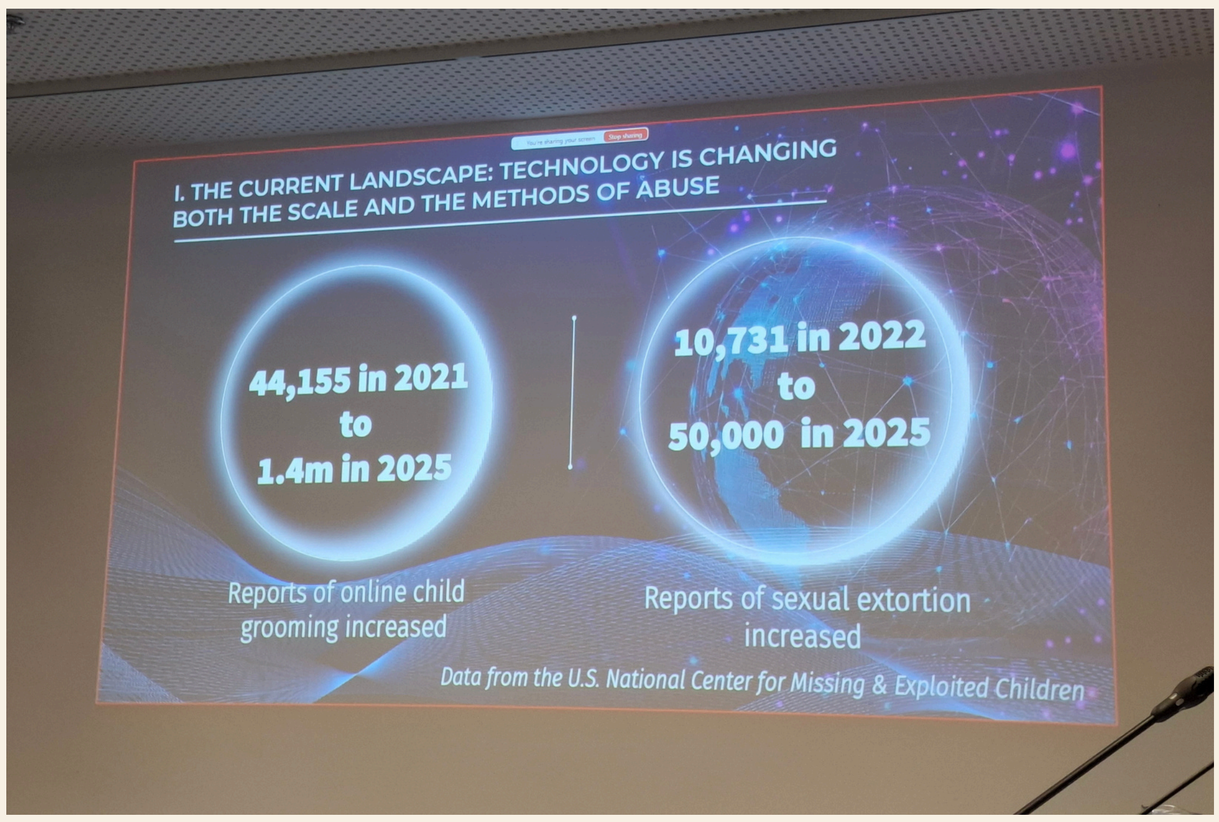
Insights from the side events

Brian and Sr. Adina found the side events especially valuable. Discussions explored the growing role of artificial intelligence, financial flows, and the business model behind human trafficking, people smuggling and forced movement. There was also significant focus on children being used as recruiters and exploited through forced criminality. The message was strong: look beyond the apparent offence, recognise the possibility of exploitation, and see the child first.

Why our presence matters

The report reinforced the importance of RENATE continuing to attend these conferences, especially as space for civil society became more restricted, a concern echoed by the Department of Foreign Affairs. With a significant presence of religious congregations and faith-based organisations in Vienna, Brian and Adina suggested ways to coordinate future participation, such as knowing in advance who was attending and holding a short daily briefing for civil society.

Read the full reports here.



News from Dar Hosea, Malta: A Season of Hope, Grief and Groundbreaking Research



Dar Hosea, Malta, had a very busy summer, packed with activities for its service users and their children, including days at the beach and water parks, ending with a BBQ. The women thanked the team and often said Dar Hosea gave them the hope and courage they needed to keep going. A fundraising BBQ in aid of Dar Hosea was attended by 350 guests.



The season also brought a sad moment. One of Dar Hosea's regular service users passed away. Staff and service users attended her funeral, and afterwards a wake was held at Dar Hosea.

The Cost of Buying Sex

On 30 October, Dar Hosea launched Malta's first study of the attitudes of men who pay for sex, at the conference The Cost of Buying Sex, held at Verdala Palace under the patronage of the President of Malta, Her Excellency Dr Myriam Spiteri Debono. The research was funded by the Commission on Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence through the Together We Empower programme.



The study involved face-to-face interviews with 72 male buyers in Malta. One of its most alarming findings was the buyers' awareness of exploitation: 60% admitted to encountering a woman they believed had been forced into prostitution, and 70% suspected a pimp controlled the women.

The conference was addressed by the Minister for Social Policy and the Family and the Minister for Equality and Civil Rights, and was very well attended.

Caritas Ukraine and Caritas Chernihiv Welcome Evacuees from Occupied Oleshky, Ukraine



Caritas Ukraine and Caritas Chernihiv welcomed evacuees from Russian-occupied Oleshky at the border between Ukraine and Belarus.

In the week before, Caritas Ukraine specialists worked alongside the Office of the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman), receiving requests from Oleshky residents about their needs and their wish to relocate to government-controlled territory.



The first group was welcomed at the border by government authorities, civil society, charitable organisations and journalists.

Caritas Ukraine arranged transport for the evacuees' relatives and provided psychological support. In a heated tent, people could receive SIM cards from longstanding partner lifecell Ukraine, have coffee and refreshments, and get online, with psychologists and crisis response specialists on site.



The evacuees were then transferred to a hospital, where Caritas continued to support them as they adjusted to their new circumstances.

This assistance was part of the project “Multi-Sectoral Assistance to War-Affected People in Ukraine”, supported by the American people through the United States Government, and was provided with Caritas Kyiv and financial support from Caritas Norway.

Supporting Ukrainians Returning From Occupation: From the Border to a New Beginning



After crossing from Belarus into Ukraine, people returning from temporarily occupied territories often needed comprehensive support, from food and shelter to psychological and legal help.

A delegation led by Tetiana Stawnychy, President of Caritas Ukraine, and Bronwen Moore, Catholic Relief Services Country Representative for Ukraine and Moldova, visited transit points in the Volyn region. Together with Caritas Volyn, Caritas Ukraine provided:

- Transport from the Domanove border crossing to Kovel, and overnight shelter near the border
- Hot meals at the railway station and tickets to onward destinations
- SIM cards, unrestricted cash assistance and hygiene kits
- Crisis support and case management



This year, counter-trafficking specialists joined these efforts, training frontline professionals and creating leaflets for border crossing points. Project Manager Ihor Trydub explained that returnees often experienced exploitation without realising it was trafficking or that they were entitled to help.

“Sometimes, attentiveness during that very first conversation can be a survivor's first step toward protection and recovery.” Ihor Trydub



Tetiana Stawnychy highlighted a key priority: continuous, person-centred support from the border to integration in a new community, so that no one was left to navigate this transition alone.

SPAIN

9 NOVEMBER 2026

Amaranta Foundation Celebrates 20 Years, Spain



The Amaranta Solidarity Foundation of the Adorers Sisters celebrated its 20th anniversary with a special event at Tajamar School in Madrid, bringing together public institutions, social organisations, partner companies, volunteers, the Board of Trustees, Adorers Sisters and women taking part in the Foundation's programmes.



Volunteers prepared the catering, took photographs, designed commemorative jewellery and baked the anniversary cake. The celebration opened with a flamenco performance full of grace, passion and beauty, and ended with everyone sharing the moment of blowing out the candles.

Since 2006, the Foundation had supported thousands of women, young women and girls affected by prostitution, trafficking, gender-based violence and other forms of exploitation and exclusion, helping them rebuild their lives, gain independence and access their rights.

One of the most emotional moments was the tribute to the women who had been part of the Foundation's journey, thanking them for their trust, courage and determination. Looking ahead, the Foundation committed to giving particular attention to new forms of exploitation linked to digital technologies and migration.

“Twenty years walking together. Twenty years defending rights. Twenty years creating opportunities.”

NETHERLANDS

EARLY NOVEMBER 2026

RENATE Core Group Retreat in Eindhoven, NL



In early November, the RENATE Core Group gathered in Eindhoven for a retreat and meetings centred on the theme of deception.

Together they explored self-deception, deception by traffickers and by states, and deception in Scripture, alongside the challenges posed by artificial intelligence and deepfakes. Discussions considered how deception enables trafficking and how it could be challenged, including the potential to train AI to help counter exploitation.

The retreat also offered space for prayer, creativity, and reflection on RENATE's purpose as a faith-based organisation. Recognising that the network could not be everywhere or respond to every need, the group took time for honest discernment about capacity and how to offer an effective witness and a meaningful presence to those we serve.

The Core Group recognised the strength of the network and explored ways to deepen its connections, strengthen collaboration and draw more fully on members' experience and gifts. Ongoing projects were reviewed, and priorities and funding requirements considered for the coming year and beyond.



Medaille Trust Celebrates 20 Years, UK

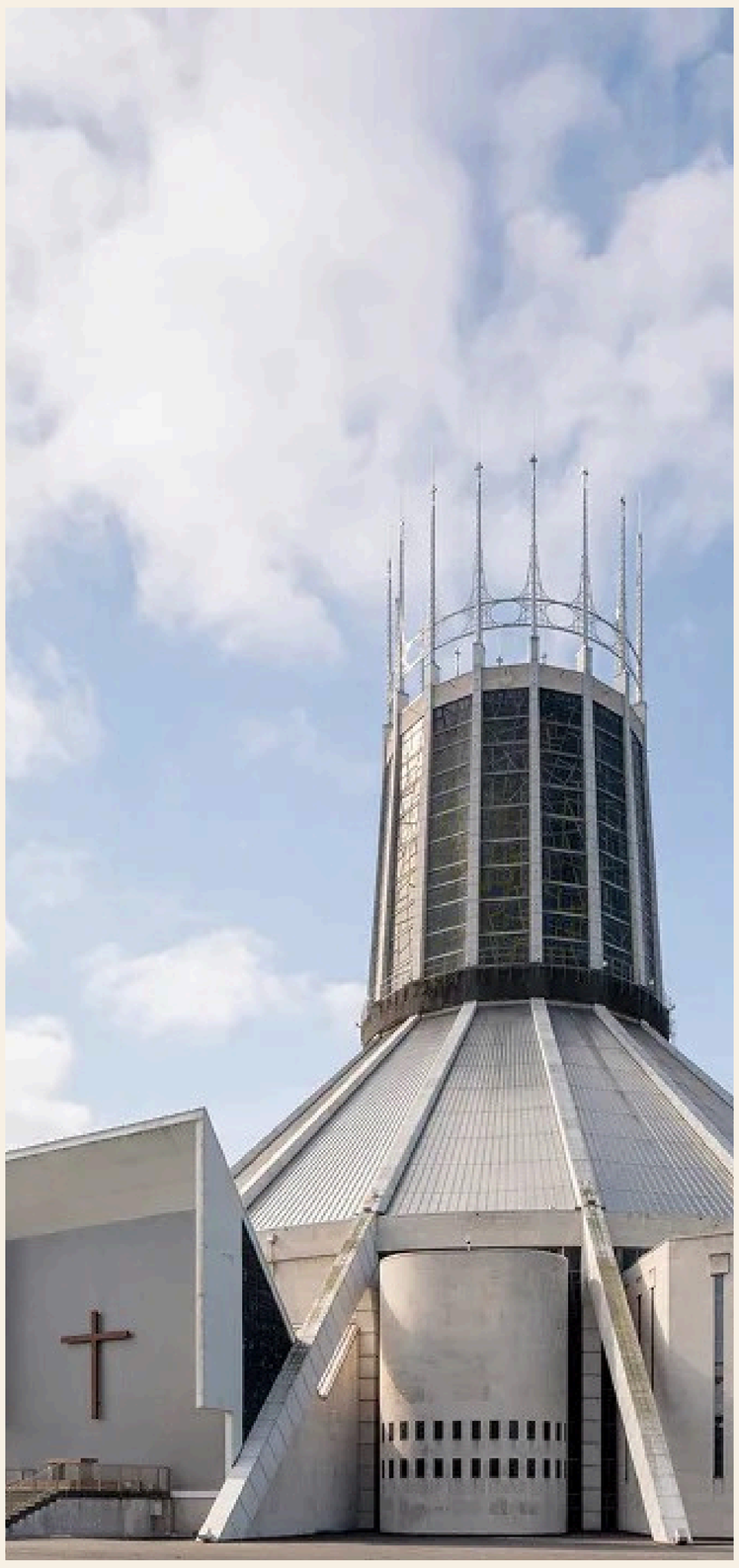


Medaille Trust celebrated 20 years of restoration and support for survivors of trafficking and modern slavery with a Mass and reception at Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral.

The charity was founded in 2006 by Sr Ann Teresa, SSJA, with the support of Catholic Religious. It began by offering hospitality and a safe house for vulnerable women in street prostitution in Southampton. Twenty years on, it had grown into a national charity supporting more than 700 people a year through ten safe houses, five community projects, a criminal justice programme helping victims pursue their exploiters, and a prevention project in Albania.

The day included a Mass presided by the Archbishop of Liverpool, John Sherrington, and a display of artworks produced by survivors. Archbishop Sherrington thanked staff and volunteers for their commitment to justice and spoke of the importance of accompaniment on “the journey from victim to survivor, the rediscovery of light in a dark life, freedom in despair, and love where there was only oppression.”

“Over the last 20 years, Medaille has helped thousands of survivors find safety, rebuild their lives and move towards lasting freedom. As we begin our next chapter, our ambition is to ensure every survivor has the opportunity to build a future of safety and dignity.”
Dani Wardman, CEO



IRELAND

9 NOVEMBER 2026

Twenty Years of APT: Human Trafficking in the Digital Age, Ireland



Act to Prevent Trafficking (APT) marked its 20th anniversary with a conference on “Human Trafficking in the Digital Age”, held at the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission in Dublin on 10th November 2026.

APT was founded in December 2005 by religious congregations and missionary societies in Ireland. Its members have worked since then to raise awareness of trafficking and to prevent it. They helped to establish the Department of Justice’s Anti-Trafficking Unit, brought the cAPTives awareness programme into schools, and worked with healthcare professionals to identify victims.

The first session set out clearly what still needed to be addressed in Ireland to prevent trafficking, protect victims and combat this crime. Three speakers addressed it:

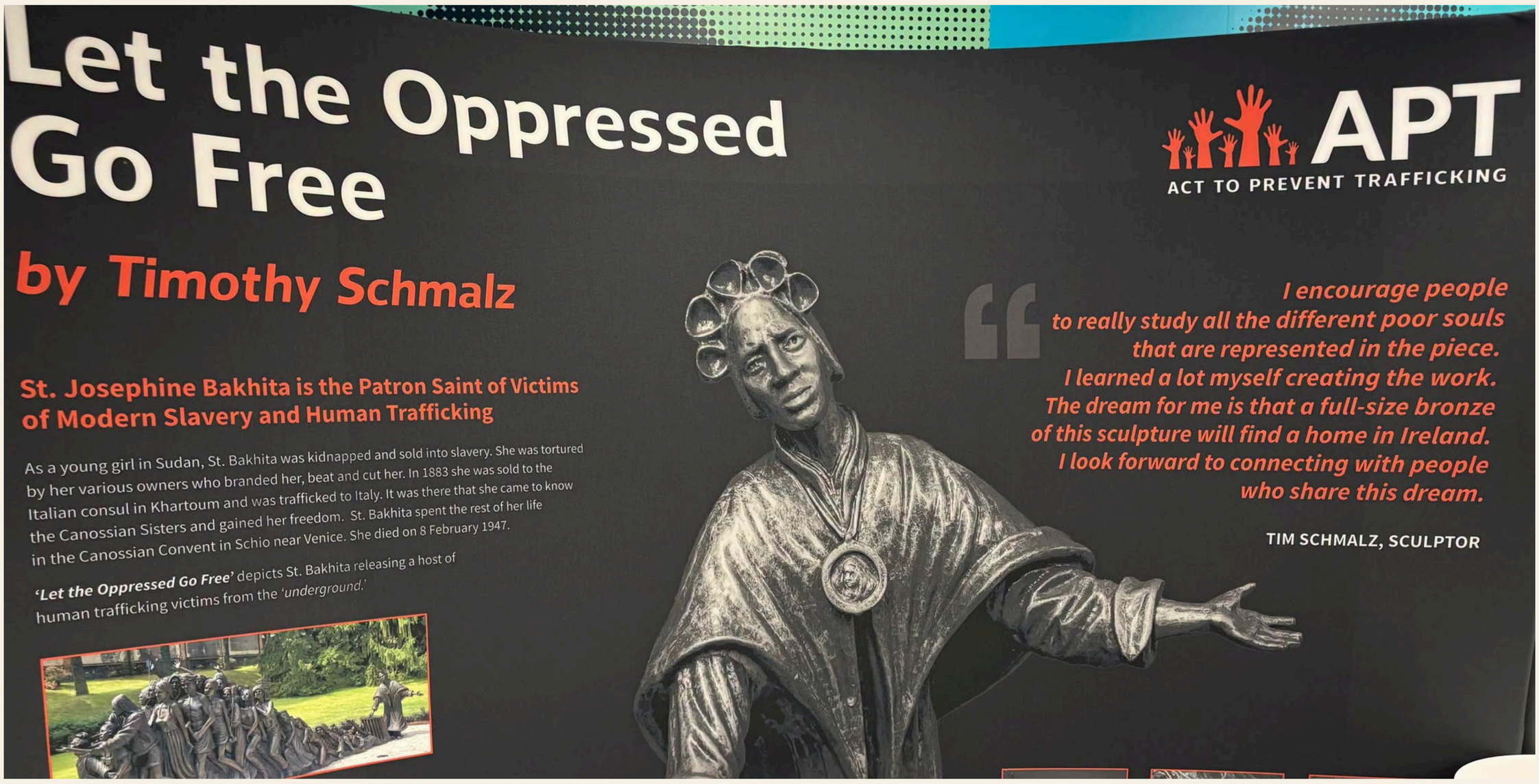
- Mr Liam Herrick, Chief Commissioner of IHREC and Ireland’s National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings
- Detective Chief Superintendent Watters of the Garda National Protective Services Bureau (GNPSB)
- Antonetta Kennedy, Chair of the HSCEHT Group



IRELAND

9 NOVEMBER 2026

Twenty Years of APT: Human Trafficking in the Digital Age, Ireland



Archbishop Eamon Martin, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, gave the keynote address. He estimated that 50 million people were living in slavery worldwide. He drew on Pope Leo XIV's encyclical Magnifica Humanitas, which named the new forms of slavery:



- "cyber-slavery", in which people were lured into online fraud and drug smuggling
- the extraction and control of personal data
- victims coerced into becoming perpetrators

The encyclical called for transparent technology supply chains and for platforms, authorities and civil society to work together. The Archbishop warned that technology was advancing faster than our commitment to protect human dignity. He reflected on St Josephine Bakhita, and on St Patrick, who was himself trafficked as a teenager.

Congratulations to everyone at APT on twenty years of faithful, courageous work. RENATE is proud to have grown from the same roots.

We warmly welcome you to read the report in full **here**, and watch the video address from Sr. Abby Avelino MM, International Coordinator of Talitha Kum (UISG) **here.**
(Password to accsess is PyZo+1DB).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND NEWSLETTERS

- TALITHA KUM ANNUAL REPORT 2025
- CHILD TRAFFICKING IN IRELAND INCLUDING ICT FACILITATED CHILD TRAFFICKING REPORT
- UNTOC COP 13 REPORT
- THE SAINT BAKHITA SONG COMPETITION
- SOLWODI NEWLSETTER NO.150
- APT CONFERENCE 2026 REPORT
- VIDEO ADDRESS BY SR ABBY AVELINO MM

  (PASSWORD PYZO+1DB)

OUR THANKS TO THE CONRAD N. HILTON FOUNDATION

RENATE IS PROUDLY SPONSORED BY THE CONRAD N. HILTON FUND FOR SISTERS. THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT!

CONRAD N. HILTON FOUNDATION

RENATE
RELIGIOUS IN EUROPE NETWORKING AGAINST TRAFFICKING AND EXPLOITATION

STAY TUNED.

CONTACTS & SOCIALS:

communications@renate-europe.net

www.facebook.com/renateurope

www.instagram.com/renate_europe

@renateeurope.bsky.social

Newsletter Content Compilation:
Sorcha Mallen

Graphic Design:
Sorcha Mallen

Newsletter Proof Editor:
Anne Kelleher