



RELIGIOUS IN EUROPE NETWORKING AGAINST
TRAFFICKING AND EXPLOITATION

WINTER NEWSLETTER

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TECHNOLOGY, AI
AND HUMAN
TRAFFICKING**

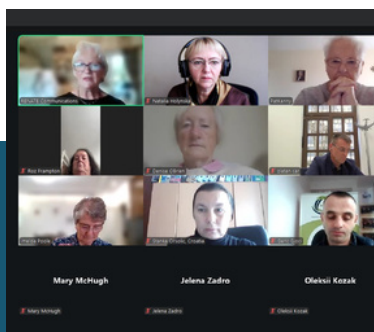
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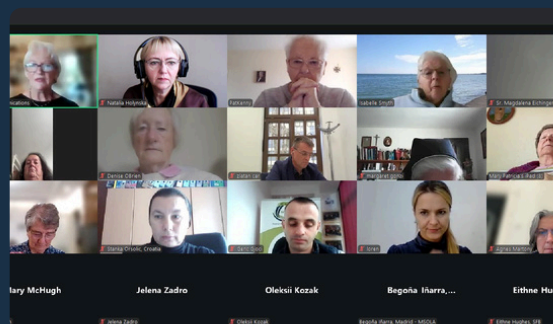
RENATE TRAINING: EXPLORING THE INTERSECTION OF TECHNOLOGY, AI AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING

From 3rd-5th November, RENATE members gathered for an in-depth training exploring one of the most urgent and complex issues of our time; the intersection between technology, artificial intelligence (AI) and human trafficking.

Hosted in collaboration with the Catholic University of Croatia, the training aimed to raise awareness of both the opportunities and the challenges that AI presents in our collective mission to combat human trafficking and exploitation.

Participants were guided through the evolution of technology and the rapid development of AI, gaining insight into how these tools are reshaping the context in which we work.

While AI holds enormous potential for positive change, it also opens new avenues for abuse.



Sessions also addressed the ethical and psychological dimensions of this digital landscape, including the manipulation and erosion of trust that can occur online, and the need for robust safeguarding and mental health supports for survivors.

The training concluded with a practical focus on how technology is used to target and exploit vulnerable women, particularly through prostitution advertising sites and the pornography industry, highlighting the urgent need for accountability, awareness, and systemic change.

Through shared expertise and collaboration, RENATE continues to strengthen its collective capacity to respond to these emerging threats with wisdom, compassion, and innovation.



SR. IMELDA POOLE (CJ) CALLS FOR STRONGER ACTION AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING

In a recent interview featured in ***The Tablet***, Sr. Imelda Poole (CJ) offered a powerful reflection on the growing challenges in the fight against human trafficking. Drawing on two decades of frontline experience in Albania and across Europe, she warned that today's laws are "no longer fit for purpose" as traffickers increasingly exploit new technologies, including AI, deep-fake images, and digital currencies.

Sr. Imelda emphasised that while many organisations continue to provide life-changing support, including RENATE and the Medaille Trust and its network of safe houses, the wider system meant to protect survivors is falling behind. She stressed the importance of long-term, trauma-informed care that helps individuals reclaim their dignity, safety, and independence.

Her message to communities was both urgent and hopeful: trafficking can only be confronted through collaboration, across countries, institutions, and local communities alike. She encouraged faith communities, schools, and parishes to stay



informed, look out for signs of exploitation, and support the ongoing work of anti-trafficking initiatives.

Sr Imelda's witness reminds us that this mission belongs to all of us, and that meaningful change begins with awareness, compassion, and collective action.

Reference:

Mac Donald, S. (2025). Laws "not fit for purpose" to fight trafficking, warns campaigner. The Tablet.



“THE ART OF HEALING” – A JOURNEY OF RECOVERY THROUGH ART BY CARITAS BAKHITA HOUSE



Earlier this November, Caritas Bakhita House, a safe house for survivors of human trafficking and exploitation in London, opened its doors for a heartfelt exhibition titled “The Art of Healing.”

The exhibition, held at the London Jesuit Centre (Mayfair), ran from 3–23 November and showcased an inspiring range of artwork created by the women staying at Bakhita House.

Through weekly art sessions led by the accomplished artist and printmaker John Bateson, guests created paintings, prints, handcrafted items like quilts and flags, each one offering a glimpse into their unique stories of struggle, resilience, and healing. Many of the pieces were accompanied by personal reflections, helping visitors understand not only the creative process, but also the therapeutic power of art in processing trauma and rebuilding life.

According to Karen Anstiss, Head of Bakhita House, these artistic moments are deeply transformative: they allow women to express experiences that are otherwise hard to put into words, while feeling safe and supported. Over its ten years of ministry (Caritas Bakhita House celebrated its 10th anniversary in mid-2025), the centre has welcomed women from dozens of countries, offering them holistic, long-term care that includes therapeutic activities, legal help, and a supportive community.

The “Art of Healing” exhibition is a powerful reminder to us all: healing is not just about survival. It is about transformation, and art has a profound role to play in that journey.

A JOYOUS MILESTONE: IBVM AND CJ SISTERS UNITE



**BECOMING
ONE**

We are delighted to celebrate a historic moment: on 4 November 2025, the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (IBVM, the Loreto Sisters) and the Congregation of Jesus (CJ) officially merged to become one congregation.

This union, held during a special Mass in Loyola, Spain, realises the long-standing dream of their foundress, Venerable Mary Ward, who envisioned her spiritual family as one body.

The newly unified congregation now includes about 1,800 sisters across more than 40 countries, continuing their shared mission in education, social justice, pastoral ministry, and more, under the name Congregation of Jesus (CJ).

TWENTY YEARS OF ACT TO PREVENT TRAFFICKING IN IRELAND (APT IRELAND): REFLECTING ON A JOURNEY TO PREVENT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

This year marks the 20th anniversary of APT Ireland, a faith-based, volunteer-led initiative dedicated to preventing human trafficking, especially the trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation. Formed under the auspices of AMRI (Association of Leaders of Missionaries and Religious of Ireland), APT has spent two decades raising awareness, educating communities, collaborating with statutory agencies, and keeping the issue of modern slavery in public view.

As we gathered to celebrate this milestone, we reflected on how far the movement has come and how much work remains.



APT recognises that Ireland's main legislative framework is still the Criminal Law (Human Trafficking) Act 2008, which implements EU and UN obligations to criminalise trafficking for sexual and other forms of exploitation. Although this legislation has been consolidated and strengthened by national systems of victim identification, accommodation and inter-agency cooperation, laws alone are not enough. Awareness, education, and strong communities are essential, and this is where APT's role is vital.

From its earliest days, APT has been a faith-grounded force in the fight against trafficking, uniting religious congregations, missionary societies, and committed volunteers. Its major contributions include:

Education in schools: The cAPTives programme for Transition Year and 5th Year students, offering video modules, teacher support, and a Cyber Safety module developed with CyberSafeIreland.

Health care awareness: APT helped launch a nationwide awareness campaign in 2025 and recently brought trafficking awareness to parishes in Dublin during Advent.

Cross-sector collaboration: APT continues to link statutory bodies, voluntary organisations, religious communities, and local groups, promoting a coordinated national response. These efforts have helped move trafficking from a hidden issue to a recognised public concern that demands collective responsibility.

The 20th anniversary gathering brought together educators, religious leaders, social workers, health professionals, and advocates. It also acknowledged APT's role in inspiring RENATE in 2009 and later Talitha Kum. Contributions from MECPATHS Ireland, RENATE, HSCEHT, AMRI, and national media, including The Tablet, highlighted the breadth of APT's partnerships.



Looking Ahead

As APT marks 20 years, its key priorities are clear:

- Expand educational programmes, especially cAPTives.
- Respond to digital exploitation with updated awareness and prevention strategies.
- Strengthen collaboration across statutory, religious, academic, media, and community sectors.

APT remains committed to vigilance, compassion, and solidarity. Trafficking thrives in isolation and invisibility, but through education and collective action we can challenge demand and protect the vulnerable. On this anniversary, we honour the sisters, volunteers, educators, social workers, and advocates whose dedication has kept trafficking in public awareness. As exploitation becomes more hidden and complex, APT Ireland's mission is more urgent than ever. May the coming years bring deeper awareness, stronger prevention, and renewed solidarity with all victims of trafficking.

Brian O Toole

APT Ireland, RENATE Working Board Representative for Ireland

RENAME AT THE ROME CONFERENCE: MARKING 25 YEARS OF THE PALERMO PROTOCOL

Our Communications and Secretary Officer, Anne Kelleher, recently represented Renate at the Rome Conference Against Human Trafficking, which marked the 25th anniversary of the Palermo Protocol – A Call to Action.

The conference brought together international experts, policymakers, law enforcement, and faith-based organisations to reflect on progress made and the urgent challenges that remain in combating human trafficking.

By means of verbal presentations, 40 eminent speakers from across Europe & the United States (including the Honourable Pamela Bondi, Attorney General, United States of America Department of Justice) each addressed practices, challenges in improving global efforts to combat human trafficking. Speakers highlighted the factors driving trafficking today, emphasizing that global conflict has created a crisis of displacement, with 117 million people worldwide currently displaced, facing heightened vulnerability and urgent needs.

The event was also a significant opportunity for networking. Anne met with fellow Renate colleagues and other key figures in the anti-trafficking movement, including Ms. Martina Liebsch of the Working Group Against Human Trafficking at the Migration Commission of the German Bishops' Conference. Discussions at the conference spanned a broad range of topics, from domestic violence and cyber harassment to the demand that fuels trafficking and the practical implementation of anti-trafficking directives across Europe.

High-profile speakers included Francis Fitzgerald, former Minister for Human Rights and Deputy Prime Minister of Ireland, and Chief Superintendent Colm Noonan of An Garda Síochána, alongside representatives from INTERPOL. A strong focus of the conference was the critical role of faith-based organizations, reinforcing their unique contribution to supporting survivors and coordinating collaborative efforts to prevent trafficking. Anne contributed Renate's perspective on the importance of faith-based organizations in anti-trafficking work, echoing the urgent call to action shared by other speakers.



RENATE WINTER PRAYER SERVICE: REFLECTION, CONNECTION AND RENEWED ENERGY

On 11th December, members of the RENATE network came together for a Winter Prayer Service that offered space for reflection, connection, and renewed energy as the year draws to a close. The gathering brought representatives from across the network into conversation and prayer, creating an opportunity to pause and take stock of the work unfolding over the past year.

A key part of the evening was hearing updates from representatives of each of the RENATE task groups. These contributions gave a rounded overview of the wide range of work being carried out across the network and helped to strengthen connections between individual working groups. Listening to one another's experiences and priorities proved both informative and rejuvenating, reminding us of the collective impact of our shared efforts.



The meeting was grounded in prayer and carefully held by the House of Prayer Task Group, whose work is central to the identity of RENATE. Their ongoing commitment to organising quarterly prayer services continues to provide a strong spiritual foundation for the network, creating space for reflection, solidarity, and shared intention.

The evening served as a timely reminder of the strength of the network, the value of gathering together, and the shared commitment that continues to sustain RENATE's work.



DIGITAL SYMPOSIUM 'HUMAN TRAFFICKING ABROAD: WHEN VICTIMS COME TO GERMANY'

Caritas Germany and IN VIA Germany held their annual symposium on human trafficking on November 4 and 11. This year it focused on persons who became victims of human trafficking before arriving in Germany.

The first digital session addressed individuals who had been victims of human trafficking in their country of origin or in a transit country and are now seeking asylum in Germany. The second session focused on victims of criminal offenses that have been newly included in the revised EU human trafficking directive: exploitation of surrogacy, forced marriage and illegal adoption.

The speakers and the participants discussed available support services and residence law implications for victims. They are hopeful that especially with the inclusion of forced marriage there will be a better protection of victims of human trafficking seeking asylum. Key challenges highlighted were identifying victims and the need for raising awareness, especially regarding the new forms of exploitation.

You can find the documentation here: <https://www.invia-deutschland.de/fachliches/veroeffentlichungen/migration/> (in German)



SR. KLÁRA MARIE'S (SCSC) POWERFUL INTERVIEW WITH BRÁNA

RENATE is honoured to share a deeply moving and inspiring interview with Sr. Klára Marie Stráníková, SCSC, originally published in the Czech Christian magazine BRÁNA (December 2025). In this thoughtful conversation, Sr. Klára opens her heart about her life's calling, from a non-believing upbringing into decades of ministry among women in prostitution and her work as a prison chaplain in Prague.

Sr. Klára's story is an invitation into compassion, dignity and hope. She reflects on how a simple Christmas-time encounter with sacred music became the beginning of her spiritual journey, and how that journey led her into the red-light streets of Italy and the nightclubs of the Czech Republic to walk alongside women often overlooked and misunderstood. Through grace, prayer, and deep respect for the dignity of every person, Sr. Klára shares both the challenges and beautiful moments that have shaped her ministry.



The BRÁNA interview also brings to life Sr. Klára's reflections on mercy, human dignity, and the transformative power of God's love, especially poignant as we approach the Christmas season. Her testimony reminds us that every person, regardless of circumstance, carries inherent worth and that welcome and accompaniment can open doors of freedom and new life.

Read the article [here](#).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND NEWSLETTERS

SOLWODI December Newsletter

Talitha Kum Annual Report

2025 Trafficking in Person's Report

Caritas Ukraine Annual Report

Fragile Life, Stories from Survivors, Caritas Ukraine

Contre la Traite des Êtres Humains November Newsletter

OUR THANKS TO THE CONRAD N. HILTON FOUNDATION

RENATE IS PROUDLY SPONSORED BY THE
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Amen

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