



Religious in Europe Networking  
Against Trafficking and Exploitation

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## REPORT

### RENA TE Training on Labour Trafficking & Migration

2<sup>nd</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> November, 2014

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Comuna Snagov, Romania

## Executive Summary

A week-long training programme on **Labour Trafficking and Migration** took place in Romania from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> November 2014, funded by the RENATE sponsors.

This was part of RENATE's ongoing commitment to research, skills and information-sharing throughout the Network, in support of its vision to work to end Human Trafficking and exploitation.

Forty members of RENATE – religious and their co-workers – gathered at the Carmelite Monastery Conference and Retreat Centre, Snagov, near Bucharest to learn about the issue as well as to reflect and strengthen the bonds that support the Network.

Sr. Imelda Poole, President of RENATE presented an image of the *Nautilus* during her introductory remarks, as a comparable example of how RENATE continues to evolve. Just as the *Nautilus* continues to grow by means of growing a new shell on the back of previous shells, so too does RENATE develop. Deepening, evolving and building upon the foundations and previous work of others.

A comprehensive programme was prepared, covering the following;

1. Migration & Forced Labour across Europe.
2. Labour Exploitation/ Trafficking for Forced labour.
3. Profile of Victims of Trafficking; E.U. Estimated Figures and Statistics.
4. Identification of Victims of Trafficking- Formal & Informal; Pro-active Identification.
5. Trans-national Mechanisms of Identification & Referral; Exchange of Sensitive Information.
6. Social Inclusion & Re-integration of Victims of Trafficking; Personalised Care Intervention.
7. Victims of Trafficking / Witness co-ordination programme.
8. Multi-disciplinary and Multi-agency Co-operation.
9. Prevention Initiatives.
10. Trafficking for Forced Labour with a Focus on Identification, Referral, Protection & Assistance provided to Victims of Trafficking; Co-operation.
11. Meeting with Victims of Trafficking at the ***Reaching Out shelter***.

In addition to training in the above areas, stimulating learning took place at the hour-long 'Market Place' meetings each evening. Each 'Market station' provided opportunities for members to share resources, skills and knowledge of work at local level with each other. This time meant that best practices were shared in work done to combat human trafficking and care for victims.

Our host Sr. Adina Balan, with the assistance of her colleagues, Sr. Inocentia and Mrs. Petruta, engaged a team of professionals – Mr. Bogdan Budeanu, Migration Specialist, Romanian Border Police; Mr. Florinel Ionescu, Migration and Labour Trafficking Specialist; Ms. Gina-Maria Stoian, ADPARE, Romania – who specialise in the area of Labour Trafficking and Migration, to lead the training sessions.



The specific presentations provided by the trainers, are accessible on the members area of the RENATE website, with the substance of the training and interactions forming the body of the Report.

Mass was celebrated at the start of each day. The Liturgy was prepared by Sr. Gabriela Korn.

Daily Theological Reflections, available on the Members' area of the RENATE website, were led by Sr. Juliet Ory.

For the *Reaching Out Shelter*, the members travelled to meet with Mrs. Jana Matei, Director of the programme. Along with a 'cultural' tour of Bucharest, this was one of the special highlights of the training programme. Members met Mrs. Jana Matei and young women victims of trafficking who are being rehabilitated at the 'shelter.' Mrs. Matei's commitment and care for these young women is striking. Clearly, her positive encouragement and support of them has empowering impact as they are gradually finding their confidence and recovering their self-esteem.



Training with specialists, accompanied by interactive learning, sharing best practises and the opportunities to tell one's story ensured a positive working environment for the week.

Each working day commenced with Theological Reflections, prepared by Sr. Juliet Ory. This focus for the work of RENATE followed the methodology of '*The Pastoral Cycle.*' Through these reflections, members were invited to "... bring a faith perspective to the realities we look at in order to work for social justice." (Rev. Fr. James Hug, SJ) Members reflected on the perennial questions "*What are we doing?*" and "*What more can we do for systemic justice for victims of human trafficking?*"

Specific presentations, provided by the trainers, are accessible on the Members' area of the RENATE website, a general overview follows.

End Executive Summary

## Introduction

Each day began with morning Mass in the Oratory, with English-speaking priests from the local community, sharing the Liturgies. These were quiet, intimate gatherings to start our days.

However, it was the morning Theological Reflections prepared by Sr. Juliet Ory, which opened our work-meetings each day, that steadied and anchored us as we were about to engage in the work of the day ahead. She skilfully guided us in prayerful reflections on the dignity of the human person and the call to give service to those vulnerable and in greater need. This anchored us for the work of the day ahead and gave a very clear context for our ministry.

On the first day, the **Migration Specialist of the Romanian Border Police, Mr. Bogdan Budeanu** commenced the training by outlining in detail the asylum procedure in Romania for persons in need of protection. While border officials have very definite parameters, they have a positive responsibility to identify people who wish to seek asylum, but issues of access and understanding prove to be problematic due to language limitations.

The geographical location of Romania and the pathways of travel into the country were clearly illustrated as six countries- and as many languages- border it – Bulgaria, Serbia, Hungary, Ukraine and Moldova, in addition to the Black Sea which acts as an additional access point. Mr. Budeanu shared the challenges for border control to manage diplomatic communications with bordering countries, some of which are not EU member states. He spoke favourably about cross-border co-operation and co-ordination at European as well as Global levels.



It was acknowledged that while many asylum-seekers come through Romania, mainly as a transit route to cross ‘illegally’ into western European countries, the main concern is about those migrants originating from countries where severe violations of Human Rights are a daily occurrence when such victims are entitled to international protection and support. Thus, frequent monitoring of Human Rights situations in neighbouring countries is a pre-condition for the professional handling of certain situations. He showed photo-slides of migrants from more Eastern and African countries to illustrate the difficulties facing Romanian border police

He informed the conference on how the Romanian legislatures have grown in their awareness and actions, confidently ruling against smugglers. Yet, there are challenges to be faced due to some legal loopholes of International Agreements. One example given is an agreement between Romania and Honduras allowing a period of 90 days without visa requirements. Often, after the 90 days, migrants ‘abscond’ or use Romania as a transit route to other places. In addition, Romanian law enforcement officials are often unclear as to the reflection period required for an Asylum-seeker, thus causing additional worries for all concerned.

While Mr. Budeanu made clear distinction between *trafficking* and *smuggling*, acknowledging that a very fine line exists between them, he stressed that often distinguishing between these two creates difficulty for the legal system. Based on her particular experiences, one participant shared her understanding of the distinction between both terms, explaining that *smuggling* applies to those

willing to be moved from place to place; while *trafficking* applies to people who are forced, coerced, taken without consent.

Mr. Budeanu, referred to the International and EU legal instruments, *The Palermo Protocol (2000)*; *The Dublin Regulation (2013)* and *Council of Europe Directives*. He also said that while Romanian border police have good co-operation with *Europol* there is little communication with *Interpol*.

The training session took us through the techniques and nuances of pro-active and re-active investigations of trafficking cases, in addition to recognising the skills required to devise a Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Investigation Team. The following summary of skills were listed:

1. Questioning skills (particularly any evidence of appropriate questioning capacities, such as sensitivity to questioning of vulnerable victims vs. different questioning skills required when interrogating perpetrators.
2. Active listening skills.
3. Observation skills e.g. the ability to recognise and respond to distress, anxiety, fear.
4. Ability to develop rapport with victims- showing empathy, patience, acknowledging harm - yet remaining professional.

Mr. Budeanu stressed the different roles of the various groups involved in human trafficking work. Between police work (detection and prosecution) and psychologists, health-care providers, social workers, NGOs.

Much discussion and interaction took place during Mr. Budeanu's presentations, with participants sharing reasons as to why victims of smuggling will seldom admit to being victims of trafficking because of the associated shame for them.

Considerable concerns were expressed at the lack of awareness on both the victims' part and on the part of border police, regarding the particulars of making an application for asylum. Participants also shared their experiences that led them to believe that many victims were actually unaware of the value of the Reflection Period, so anxious are victims to simply secure status. It was clear that the participants grew in their understanding of the particular circumstances of Romania and the complexity of difficulties to be considered. Finding similarities in the issues of trafficking immediately engaged us in our task at hand and set a tone of active engagement for the remainder of the week. Participants shared their individual stories, their working experiences and examples of best practice. All were agreed in understanding why asylum seekers were willing to try anything in order to escape from difficult circumstances in Romania where the monthly allowance is a mere 23 Euro in comparison with the possibility of receiving a weekly allowance of the equivalent of 35 Euro per week in the United Kingdom.

The remainder of the week's training was facilitated by both Ms. Gina-Maria Stoian and Mr. Florinel Ionescu, experts in the fields of trans-national Labour Trafficking and Migration.

Ms. Stoian and Mr. Ionescu shared their experiences and learnings from working with victims – migrants, vulnerable to the misery, abuse and exploitation which lie at the heart of trafficking. They also work with government officials, politicians, trade-union movements, NGOs, business leaders, agriculture representatives, emergency workers, public servants and survivors.



One could hear the familiar call from Pope Francis for the Church to *'go out into the streets'* as the trainers presented PowerPoint presentations, video-clips and personal testimonies, to emphasise that it is the job of all to make a difference to the lives of those caught in labour trafficking and exploitation, and to join the struggle against it.

The principles of Catholic Social Teaching continued to echo throughout the remaining days in Snagov as Ms. Stoian and Mr. Ionescu shared their experiences and stories, encouraging discernment and pro-active work in combatting human trafficking.

They pointed to the gender differentiation in trafficking. Men are generally exploited for labour whereas women for domestic servitude or sex. The other alarming factor is the trafficking of minors.

Ms. Stoian told the story of two minors, sisters, held on a farm for more than eight years, working without respite and sleeping with the farm animals.

She also referred to the *'Cinderella'* case in the UK (2012) where a Romanian girl aged seven was trafficked to London to work as a slave. UK members shared the particulars of the case, resulting on police *crack-downs* on trafficking. The story also led to greater awareness amongst the general public as to what can be going on 'beneath their very eyes.'

Such was the engagement by all, that time was spent between trainers and members discussing the profile of the 'Roma' as witnessed by the members in their work. The trainers shared that often Romanian people are considered as 'Roma' by other EU countries. However, trainers emphasised the importance of making the distinction between them 'Roma' and Romanian. Both groups have a distinctive history and background. 'Roma' originally came from the Indian subcontinent. When they arrived in Europe in about the 13<sup>th</sup> century, they were thought to be from Egypt – hence the word 'Gypsy.' There are 'Roma' communities living in many European countries, including Romania, Albania, Bulgaria, Slovakia. They speak Romany languages comprising many dialects whereas in Romania they speak Romanian. 'Roma' people are often subject to prejudices, biases and discrimination, sometimes skewing decision-making in relation to their welfare.

Often, some victims of labour trafficking come from dysfunctional families. They may have aspirations that model themselves on the lifestyle of film stars or highly-paid footballers. Seeking work that will improve their economic condition makes them prey to traffickers who lure them into false jobs through fake advertisements. Participants shared examples of how they helped young girls to be more discerning. One shared an example of following up the address of a promised job only to find that the actual address was from a disused building in a run-down area near to waste ground! The promised 'job' turned out to be a trap to lure the unsuspecting job-seeker into a life of slavery.

Romania is a victim of its past. After the fall of the communist regime, some parents left their children with other family members or adults as they left the country seeking employment. This often led to abuse of children.

Today, social media can be a force for good as well as a means of exploitation. Campaigns and initiatives on social media sites can have a proactive impact, creating heightened awareness of the issue. Art works in particular are permanent fixtures which communicate memories and messages.

The following were mentioned: [www.thenoproject.org](http://www.thenoproject.org) campaign, incorporating Art4freedom.

Run for Freedom project: [www.thefreedomtour.ro](http://www.thefreedomtour.ro)

Short films such as *"Not my Life"*, *"The Journey"*, *"The Fragile"*, *"Call and Response"*, *"Now You Know"* were also noted.

## **Feedback from discussions groups exploring possibilities and logistics of running a “Freedom Tour” bus in one’s own country**

Group 5. Preferred to spend resources on front-line workers and actually wondered at the effectiveness of the tour as an awareness-raising initiative. A member of the group cautioned that in our eagerness to raise awareness and produce resources for circulation, we may unwittingly be actually advertising for human trafficking. She shared the example of ‘teaching’ one group of students to ‘train’ another group, but didn’t take into account their socio-economic differences – between the trainer and the trainee – which made the experiment fail.

Group 4. Suggested the possibility of the tour as an awareness-raising activity for the forthcoming Day of Prayer – Saint Josephine Bakhita – on 8 February 2015. This group shared that they sought to understand the reasons why people migrated in the first place; what happens to migrants who decide to stay in the migrant countries of choice and are there integration programmes for migrants? The group suggested that the integration of migrants might perhaps be a more effective use of resources.

Group 3. Were very positively disposed towards the ‘Freedom Tour Bus’ concept and referred to the drama production ‘Diablo’ currently on tour in Ireland, as an excellent awareness-raising method, quite shocking in ways that provoke people to respond.

Group 2. This group also responded positively to the concept. One member shared her plans for an awareness-raising activity with religious communities in Croatia.

Group 1. Responded positively to the potential of the tour as an awareness raising activity.

The workshop concluded with the view that awareness-raising activities are worthwhile provided they provoke awareness and action in the struggle against human trafficking.

### **The Evening Market-Place**

Informal/semi-formal opportunities to share best practice were arranged on two nights, where delegates gathered to showcase their work and share ideas.

All the member organisations of RENATE present at the training event in Snagov, came prepared to present and participate at the Marketplace, which added immeasurably to the overall training experience and engage in the sharing of best practice.

Participants shared booklets, fliers, banners, fund-raising and awareness-raising materials in addition to the wealth of shared vision, exemplified in the conversations about specific work and practices relevant to human trafficking and exploitation.

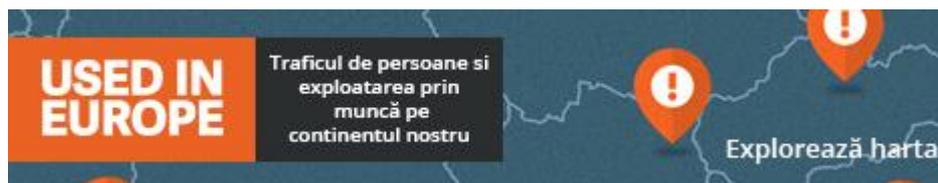
Although the days were long, everyone made time to join in at the Marketplace late into the nights. Apart from the opportunities to learn about the various member organisations of RENATE, all appreciated the Marketplace as an opportunity to network in a deeper way and to forge greater understandings as well as build solid mutual supports for each other. It is much easier to call upon a friend and colleague once that deeper personal connection has been established.

## **The Local Situation**

Ms. Stoian spoke about difficulties in anti-trafficking work, citing lack of government funds and few or no NGOs in the country. She spoke of her own NGO, ADPARE – the Association for Developing Alternative Practices for Re-Integration and Education – which relies on independent sponsorship. This work supports victims to adapt to the requirements of independent living.



She outlined ADPARE's operational work including long-term assistance, assertive community management and integration programmes. These can be hampered by interests between State-owned companies that conduct internal labour trafficking.



## **Mid-way feedback from participants regarding the working training to date:**

- Most looked forward to the Case Studies on labour trafficking that were to follow on Thursday (next day).
- Some participants requested explanations to help distinguish between labour exploitation and sex exploitation, i.e. the similarities as well as the differences, plus the areas of overlap.
- The question was raised about overly-restrictive immigration laws and the impact of this on human trafficking.
- A question was asked in relation to the infringement of women's human rights, trafficked for labour but when rejecting this exploitation, become victims of sex abuse as punishment.
- The role governments play in facilitating labour trafficking, through their eagerness to secure big conglomerates at whatever cost to the workforce.
- Concern for transparency between conglomerates and the supply-chain of labourers.

## **Trafficking of persons – Forced Labour Recruitment on the Internet – Case Studies**

The ease of setting up bogus employment agencies has led to numerous bogus traders on the internet. People with language limitations as well as those vulnerable to such advertising, are easily lured with the false promises of employment and wages. It is often difficult to distinguish the bogus from the authentic.

Delegates attending the training shared the following case studies, for example, the plight of more than fifteen hundred migrant workers enslaved by a large lumber company in the Czech Republic and featured in "The Tree Workers' Case" directed by Daniela Agostini. Another shared the horrendous stories of neglect, deprivation and exploitation of migrant workers from North Africa into Spain.

Please see [www.theguardian.com/environment/video/2011/feb/07/food-spain-migrants](http://www.theguardian.com/environment/video/2011/feb/07/food-spain-migrants)

The plight of Vietnamese, trafficked into Germany was a further source of discussion. Despite the apparent availability of work, Vietnamese are still vulnerable to highly skilled & convincing traffickers in their hopes of a better life in Germany.

Discussions concluded that it is essential to get to the source of trafficking, however complex that may be.

Caution was also expressed around the veracity of the published statistical data on human trafficking. Most believe the numbers are far greater than those actually recorded.

Proceeding with extreme caution and vigilance is best practice. Useful information for the group is EURES, the European Commission jobs Network is a bona fide site for advertising authentic jobs.

### **Identification of Victims of Trafficking**

Mr. Ionescu shared his personal view that sexually exploited people are suffering more in comparison with victims of labour trafficking. In particular, he believes the worst victims are those with special needs, who find it difficult to recover from trauma and can be damaged long-term.

While acknowledging that sex and labour exploitation have similar traits, it is helpful to understand the locus of exploitation i.e. in the case of labour exploitation, victims are usually found directly in the markets such as the forests, mines, fields, farms, clothes factories. Whereas victims of sex trafficking can be found in cafes, bars, on the street, in brothels, clubs or elsewhere.

Appearance and age-profile are other identifiers. The physical appearance of labour victims appear unkempt and dishevelled, poorly dressed, often unclean and carrying all their possessions in a disposable plastic bag.

Discrepancy between State authorities vis-à-vis NGOs is often the case when criteria is applied for identification of victims of human trafficking. State authorities view victims as a helpful means by which criminals may be prosecuted. NGOs view victims from the perspective of care, support and protection.

A reference point and practical tool for labour trafficking and migration considerations can be accessed at [www.fei.gouv.fr](http://www.fei.gouv.fr)

### **Visit to Reaching Out Shelter**

Mid-way through the training programme, the group visited the *Reaching out Shelter*. Mrs. Jana Matei, the director of the shelter, welcomed us along with the young women at the shelter. This was a truly inspiring visit, where we saw faith in action, through the commitment of the director and her staff.

The values of love, respect, fairness, equality and forgiveness were clearly in evidence at the shelter. RENATE members enjoyed warm drinks and cakes baked on the premises especially for the visit.

The support offered to the young women (all bar one under the age of 18) as they re-integrate into society following ordeals as victims of sex and labour exploitation, was acknowledged by all who visited. The group learned and shared a lot through discussions about the particulars of upskilling the girls so they could live independently; the extent of local community support – if any – for the shelter as well as the practicalities of funding and staffing the shelter. More importantly was the concern for building up the girls' self-confidence and self-esteem, which seemed to be fragile but growing as a result of the support of the shelter.

The return bus journey to Snagov – although late at night – was absolutely 'alive' with animated conversations about the shelter and elsewhere amongst the RENATE community and the sharing of knowledge, ideas and best practice.

## **Conclusion**

The witness of so many women and men working to end human trafficking and exploitation was most uplifting and transformative for all. While it was hugely beneficial to have had the expertise of those directly involved in a local context, it was invaluable to have had the opportunities to share, network, build rapport and support each other because we were all gathered together in the one place over a substantial period of time.

We prayed together. We worked together. We learned together. Being together with a common purpose and ministry goes a very long way towards cultivating a sense of belonging to a larger body which in turn has a greater impact on the victims of trafficking and exploitation. We know that we are not alone but we do need the opportunities to come together in a structured and meaningful way, in order to sustain each other in our work, as much as to learn and build upon existing experiences.

Comments from participants such as 'RENATE is a kaleidoscope of passions and charisms that add to the variety and sharing,' as well as, 'Our perspectives on human trafficking have been widened and challenged' and 'There is a big wound in society... Let each of us be a small patch to heal the wound,' illustrate the extent of value which the participants placed upon the entire experience at Snagov.

A successful training programme is not achieved without much work before and during the week's session. Thanks to Sr. Adina Balan and her colleagues Sr. Inocentia and Mrs. Petruta for this preparation and assistance throughout the week.

Thanks to Sr. Juliet Ory, for inspiration and sustenance for our whole beings through daily Theological Reflection.

Thanks to the training team – Mr. Florinel Ionescu, Ms. Gina-Maria Stoian, Mr. Bogdan Budeanu and to Mrs. Jana Matei for hosting our visit to the shelter for young women.

Gratitude to Sr. Iva and Sr. Justina who were present throughout the programme, providing a photographic legacy which will add to the archive of the training time together.

Thanks also to Sr. Gabriela Korn for preparing liturgies, to Ana Stakaj for caringly looking after us, ensuring there were drinks and snacks for nightly 'leisure' time, and to all the participants attending the training.

Sincere thanks to our sponsors, whose support sustains us in our ministry.

Final words of thanks are extended to the Carmelite Congregation at Snagov, who graciously hosted the conference with generosity and care.



The introduction to the Opening Liturgy was a timely reminder...

“We have travelled from many different parts of Europe to come together today to begin our Training. We turn to God in prayer to ask for guidance, wisdom and support, so that all we build is set down on firm foundations; so that we can engage in meaningful discussion, seek new paths, grow closer as a group and nurture the bonds of community.”

Each day, time was taken to be aware of God’s presence in the group as we prayed especially for the host country and its people of Romania. We extend our prayers to cover all those less fortunate than ourselves and give thanks for the blessings bestowed upon us through our work together as RENATE.

Anne Kelleher,

RENATE Communications Person

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