

**RENATE Annual Working Board meeting, 6-11 November, 2017.
St. Joseph's Retreat Centre,
Malta**



The RENATE Working Board members and staff, gathered at the Mount St. Joseph Retreat House, in Mosta, Malta. It was a week of facilitated review, reflection, sharing of best practice and bonding.

It was a week of work where daily Mass and specially/ prepared Liturgies served to give perspective and anchor us in our work.

Monday, 6th November, saw the opening of the week by means of a Welcome Forum, where members of the hierarchy, local NGOs and the Maltese Minister of Home Affairs and National Security presented on Human Trafficking and the local situation.

This was followed by an overview of Governance matters, covering the Internal Rules and their application to the new RENATE Board, which is due to assume in November, 2018. Governance matters were also on the agenda on Tuesday morning, when the role of the Board Members in RENATE and the role of RENATE to the board was discussed.



The Annual Finance and Written Reports were presented and ratified by the meeting on Monday afternoon and the day concluded with an overview of the RENATE 5-year Strategic Plan.

With 198 members and growing, building a comprehensive Database is a priority.

It is intended that the Database will be a source of individual member Profiles and will act as a reference point for membership, who will be better able to source specific project partners or supports as a result.

With RENATE membership at the EU Civil, Society Platform and commitment to applying for membership of the EU Council, the Working Board valued the updates from the representatives who reported fulsomely on the respective EU bodies.

The day was interspersed with group work and discussions, and everyone enjoyed the opportunity to participate in a Sacred Dance ritual.



Encounter with the local provision, is a central component of every RENATE international meeting. Wednesday, 8th November saw the Working Board visit the Open Centre for Refugees, before moving on to the Dar Merhba Bik Shelter, which is located in the grounds of and run by, the Good Shepherd Sisters, of which our host, Sr. Margaret Gonzi is a member. Apart from being struck by the sheer size of the shelter, it was the high-quality décor and resourcing which spoke volumes for the Congregation's commitment to the dignity of each and every person who passes through their doors. Of particular interest was the arrival of significant amounts of donated goods, during our visit to the Shelter. Clearly the Shelter is held in high regard and provides locals with the opportunity to share and contribute to helping others in need. St. Paul's Grotto, the Qawra and Bugibba Seaside were also fitted in to the day, which concluded with an enjoyable dinner at Ta' Maria restaurant.

Contributing to the overall RENAME mission, Campaigns such as St. Bakhita's Day (8 February) and the World Day against Trafficking in Persons (18 October) were showcased on Thursday, 11 November. Various RENAME members spoke about the initiatives under way in their respective countries. People enjoyed the opportunity to reflect on their activities and share best practice. Activities ranged from Prayer Services, direct action in shelters and on the streets, to creation of rubber bracelets with anti-human trafficking messages through to the UN Giftbox Campaign and national conferences.

Adherence to best practice in terms of Safeguarding is paramount to RENAME and its sponsors, who encouraged RENAME to produce its own Safeguarding Policy.

It was a palpably serious moment on Friday, 10th November when the seven Core Group members formally signed and sealed the RENAME Safeguarding Policy documents, witnessed by the members of the RENAME Working Board.



Collaboration is a central to RENAME's identity and the achievement of its mission. Securing sponsorship and financial support ensures the continued existence of RENAME. In planning for the future, RENAME is exploring the possibilities of securing funding by means of a professional fundraiser. Presentations by both the newly appointed fundraiser and the current benefactor, on Thursday 9th November, were a source of assurance to the Working Board members.



Members were particularly enthused about the prospects of enhanced organisational capacity arising from a review and update of the RENAME website. The Digital Transformation Strategy for RENAME will take place over a two-year period and we eagerly await the enhanced provision which will facilitate greater engagement by the wider public.

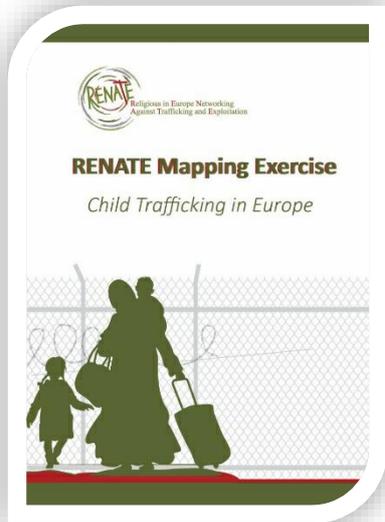
An instance of such enhanced provision, will be the creation of a Digital Prayer Space, a 'House of Prayer' which will enhance the participation of Contemplative Congregations in a ministry of prayer. This is an important action for RENAME this year, creating a communion amongst different congregations bearing witness to the Word.



The Digital Transformation will see the creation of an on-line library, emanating from the mandate arrived at the RENAME Assembly in Rome, November 2016. This on-line library will contain records of Reports/Resources/film etc. which can be accessible through a Members access code on the RENAME website. Currently we are gathering Film footage from the Members, in preparation for the RENAME Film Festival due to take place in Vienna

in 2020 and for further screening at the 3rd bi-annual RENAME Assembly scheduled to take place in Geneva, 2021. The importance of hearing about member's respective projects saw an adjustment to the week's agenda, in order to include introduction of new Board members; sharing of cross-cultural experiences and sharing of individual country reports. Creation of a sacred spiral, incorporating joined hands around a central fulchrum of people, helped release people's appreciation for being together over the week.





Seven RENAME members contributed to research on Child Trafficking in their individual countries. The research is due for completion in the coming weeks and an overview of the Executive Summary was presented to the Working Board.

Considerable work remains to be done before the final report is finalised but it is intended that the document will be a seminal piece of work which will inform RENAME's commitment to the prevention and ending of Child Trafficking, an ever-increasing phenomenon of contemporary times.

Anne Kelleher - Communications Person, RENAME