

### **Eastern Europe: Luna Capalla's visit, 2013**

In October, Luna Capalla visited Romania, Albania, Poland and the Czech Republic. Her mission was to explore what the sisters in these countries are doing regarding human trafficking as well as visiting some of our own grantees' sites. On her return to the States, she was able to participate in a conference in Boston on photovoltaic energy. She will be presenting her full report to the Board during the meeting. Luna's report follows.

In October 2013, I went to Eastern Europe on a fact finding mission to learn about the work of sisters involved in anti-human trafficking projects and to find out how the FFS could help make their ministries more effective and efficient. The countries I visited were Romania, Poland, Czech Republic and Albania. The sisters I met were members of a network organization called RENATE (Religious in Europe Networking Against Trafficking and Exploitation). RENATE, which means "reborn" (Latin-*renatus*), was established in 2009 and includes religious from 16 countries throughout Eastern, Central and Western Europe. Sr. Imelda Poole IBVM, who is the president of RENATE, is based in Albania.

The three main objectives of RENATE are:

- 1) to develop awareness raising programs against the growing demand of human trafficking, and to use all forms of modern technology and communications in this work
- 2) networking and sharing resources, skills and knowledge to support the members in their daily work and to build capacity for this task
- 3) to research and implement actions against the growing demand for such abuse in the countries of origin and destination.

It is interesting to note that I arrived during the month when the whole of Europe promotes Anti-Trafficking Day on October 18. This day is an opportunity to raise awareness about the need for better policies aimed at preventing and combating modern-day slavery, which is much greater today than it was in the 19th century. Modern-day slavery includes child trafficking, forced labor, domestic servitude and trafficking for sexual exploitation. The most common forms of human trafficking across Europe are sexual exploitation and forced labor. Nearly 70% of the victims are female and the average age of a victim is 12 years old. Of the estimated 27 million modern-day slaves around the world, more than 12 million are found in Europe.

Since the fall of communism, human trafficking has become the fastest growing form of organized crime with an estimated \$32 billion-a-year global industry. California Attorney General, Kamala D. Harris, states: "After drug trafficking, human trafficking is the world's second most profitable criminal enterprise, a status it shares with illegal arms trafficking."

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNDOC) has identified countries around the world as places of origin, transit or destination for human trafficking activities. Regions that are main “origin” areas are Africa, Asia, Central and Eastern European countries, former Eastern bloc and Soviet Union countries, Latin America and the Caribbean. The highest origin countries are Albania, Belarus, Bulgaria, China, Lithuania, Nigeria, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Thailand and Ukraine. Main destination areas are Western Europe, Western Africa, Asia, Arab Nations and North America. The highest destination countries are Belgium, Germany, Greece, Israel, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Thailand, Turkey, and USA. *Luna Capalla*