

# OZANAM NETWORK



## DECEMBER 2016

- PRESIDENT'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE
- COMMISSIONS : WORK IN PROGRESS
- CHALLENGES OF THE 12 TERRITORIAL VPS

# International General Council

## CHRISTMAS EDITION 2016

### Christmas Message from the President General – 2016

Dear Vincentians throughout the world,

It is with joy that I address a few words to you at this wonderful time of Christmas.

The birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ is one of the most appropriate times of the year to reflect in faith on the Vincentian path which we have followed in our Conferences, Councils and special works, and on the challenges which we face for the future. At this time of year, our attention turns to Baby Jesus who, in spite of all the adversity he and his family suffered, was at that moment born and “lived among us” (John 1:14), bringing us salvation and bearing witness to a path of holiness for us all. The family from Nazareth - Jesus, Mary and Joseph - in exile as emigrants in Egypt (Matthew 2: 13-15), were forced to abandon their homeland, their family and their friends, fleeing from King Herod’s implacable anger. They are an example of migrants who flee because of persecution or hunger. In the same way that Jesus suffered, so is today’s world full of deprivation, suffering, persecution and a lack of harmony. There are many individuals and families facing enormous difficulties in their lives; many of them have to leave their country in search of places of greater safety, and they need human solidarity and fraternal love from

all of us, especially from Vincentians who, with hope, welcome and serve some 30 million brothers and sisters around the world. It is essential to meditate on the living conditions of the poor and especially on the moral and ethical crisis which surrounds us, if we are to understand the challenges facing the Saint Vincent de Paul Society and the Vincentian Family in an intolerant world which is socially unjust, full of prejudice, discriminatory and, above all, not very Christian. It is not enough simply to provide help for the most immediate needs. “We must go further”, as Ozanam said, by deepening our action to identify the root of the ills which afflict our brothers and propose solutions and alternatives to reduce these problems. The very same Jesus who lived among the poor expects concrete and efficient action from us.

Therefore, let us take advantage of this Christmas time to evaluate our charity work. This reflection is essential, especially now, during the commemoration of 400 years of Vincentian charisma, with the motto “I was a stranger and you made me welcome” (Mt 25: 35). May this reflection motivate us to secure the relief of suffering for immigrants, so that they may find peace, love, respect and adequate shelter in our world which welcomes them.

May Our Lord Jesus Christ, who was born in Bethlehem, open the



hearts and minds of mankind so that we may bring the “light of Truth” to the whole world. May the spirit of Christmas become a reality in our lives and may Jesus be born and live forever in our hearts! This is the President General’s wish. May you all have a holy Christmas and may 2017 (“Bailly Year”) be filled with blessings and success. A fraternal greeting in Saint Vincent de Paul and in Blessed Antoine Frederic Ozanam, with the blessings of our Holy Mother, the Virgin Mary. Praised be Our Lord Jesus Christ!

**Renato Lima de Oliveira**  
16th President General

# CGI in Action : Commission's News

## COMMUNICATION



At the initiative of the General President, the Chairman of Communication, the Webmaster and the new Communication Officer, a global communication plan is now underway to increase communication and exchanges among countries, clarify the role of the CGI both internal and external and achieve greater visibility with new audiences. The Communication Department faces many challenges, the most important of them being the harmonization of the Graphical Chart: logo, colors, typography. It will bring coherence and increase our visibility around the world. Another important task is to create a "communication kit" to provide training and dedicated tools for National Councils, in order to help them with tips about promoting their activities, and communicating with members.

## TRAINING



At the initiative of the National Council of Lebanon and its National President, Ella Bitar, the International Training modules have been translated in Arabic. This work was made possible with the help of several Arab teachers who are also Vincentians and with the participation of the Father Antoine Douaihi CM, who is our editor in this language. The Arabic version will be available and downloadable very soon on the CGI's website. The Commission hopes that this effort will help our SSVP members in Arabic speaking countries and will encourage others countries to help in translating the modules in their local language. The Global Training is now available in French, English, Spanish, Portuguese and Arabic.



## CIAD

CIAD has new Commission Members, since the election of Bro. Renato last June, including experienced SSVP members from various continents. The Commission is now composed of: Bertrand Ousset (France), Larry Tuomey (Ireland), Thomas Joseph Pandian (India), Pius Ehiagwina (Nigeria), Terry Wilson (USA), John Lee (Hong-Kong), Eduardo Tsukamoto (Brazil), Rose Mc Gowan (Ireland), and Ulrike Mattfeldt (Germany). This year, 1.178.852 € has already been allocated to development projects and disaster rehabilitations all over the world. In Lebanon, the grant from the donor who offered a huge donation to the Society last year has been recently renewed and a second phase including different activities will start over in December 2016.

## OMBUDSWOMAN



The role of Ombudsman, created by the 16th President General, is based on a fundamental legal principle similar to the role of a mediator who intervenes in situations of conflict among members of the SSVP throughout the world. The mediator is authorized to receive complaints, suggestions, constructive criticisms, affirmations or words of encouragement, and proposals that could improve the life of the Society. This role of "mediator" has been entrusted to Marie-Françoise Saliesani Payet, who explains *"it is not simply a matter of settling differences that could arise within Councils and Conferences, in order to avoid problems. It is important to convince our members that, in a fraternal and independent spirit, their point of view is always taken into account, even if the outcome they hope for is not possible."*

## YOUTH



The Youth Commission is developing many programs for the coming years that are based on three main points: Friendship, Youth and Charity. An annual reflection term for all National Councils will be held to encourage the Youth involvement in the SSVP. Several international videoconferences for the young people will take place next year. Formation and Spirituality for the young Vincentians and leadership are also important. Finally, we will be assigning an International Vincentian Youth Day for the SSVP Youth members.

## CANONIZATION



The Canonisation process, on-going since 1925, may be entering a new stage. The President General, Renato Lima de Oliveira, elected last June, has expressed his will to intensify the work involved in achieving the Canonisation of Blessed Frédéric Ozanam, during his term of office. After official recognition of a first miracle through the intercession of Ozanam (miraculous cure in Brazil - 1926) 2 new cases are being examined :

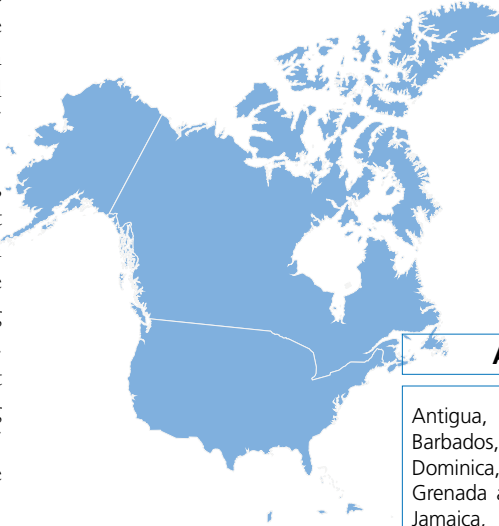
- 1- a Conference member in Portugal, who survived a cerebral haemorrhage and who now enjoys good health.
- 2- a Vincentian member in Brazil, who experienced a pregnancy with a high risk of anencephaly, but she prayed, her son is today full of life and perfect health.

# Structure Working

## America 1

America 1 covers parts of North America (USA, Canada...) and many islands of the Caribbean region, such as Bahamas, Antigua, Jamaica etc. Some quick news about the governance in America 1 area : a national election in Dominican Republic took place last October and Fausto Batista was unanimously reelected. In Trinidad and Tobago, Brother Rudolph Boneo is newly elected also. The National Council of USA is presently in the process of electing a new National President in September 2017. America 1 is developing many different projects of education, construction, formation and systemic change. For instance, a successful project of tricycles is still ongoing in Dominican Republic, as the fish project which is still underway in Haiti thanks to the collaborative effort of Canada. In Trinidad and Tobago, there are several long term projects including a new residence for children with aids/HIV. In Canada, the vincentians are producing a Video about a project called "North of Sixty" describing Canadian Vincentians assisting the Inuit People living in the Arctic. Edmund Keane, the ITVP of the region testifies about the future challenge of the project: "we hope to show this video in February 2017 at the United Nations. This a part of an effort to be a Voice of People marginalized". A Caribbean Regional Meeting is currently scheduled to take place approximately on July 13-16th 2017, in Jamaica.

International Territorial Vice-President:  
**Edmund Keane** (*United States*)



### AMERICA 1

Antigua, Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Canada, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada and Carriacou, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, United States



International Territorial Vice-President:  
**Maria del Carmen Guzman Soto** (*Guatemala*)

## America 2

America 2 covers nine countries : Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Cuba and Haiti. According to the ITVP of the area, Maria Del Carmen Guzman Soto, the main goal of the SSVP in America 2 is to "be the organization with the greatest human sense that looks after all kinds of needs and poverty, without discrimination, seeking human promotion through systemic change." The main activities of the SSVP Conferences and councils are : children's stay, housing rebuilding, helping sick people, emergency aid in case of natural disasters, honey and coffee production. The main challenge for America 2 is to increase the visibility of the Society in each country. The second objective is the global training. According to the VPTI, the priority is "to prepare documents of training for all members, to generate a global identity and consistency of the Society in this area".



### AMERICA 2

Haiti, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Cuba, Costa Rica, Panama, El Salvador, Nicaragua



# America 3

The America 3 region comprises 11 countries and 12 National Councils. The main projects for the coming years are to consolidate the Society in Suriname with the creation of new conferences, to support the creation of children and teenagers conferences, to raise funds to finance the structure of some National Councils of poor countries and finally to improve services and sharing best practices among countries. Another great challenge is to identify and make feasible projects to assist the poor people, especially in countries with fewer resources. The ITVP of the region give us his testimony : “Our greatest challenge is still to convert our weaknesses into strengths in the medium term. We have great differences between the countries of the region, which impacts the development of the SSVP in some parts of the continent. We have some National Councils that have a good structure and resources to develop the vincentian work. But, in other hand, some countries don’t have a good work structure.”

International Territorial Vice-President:  
**Julio César Marques de Lima** *(Brazil)*



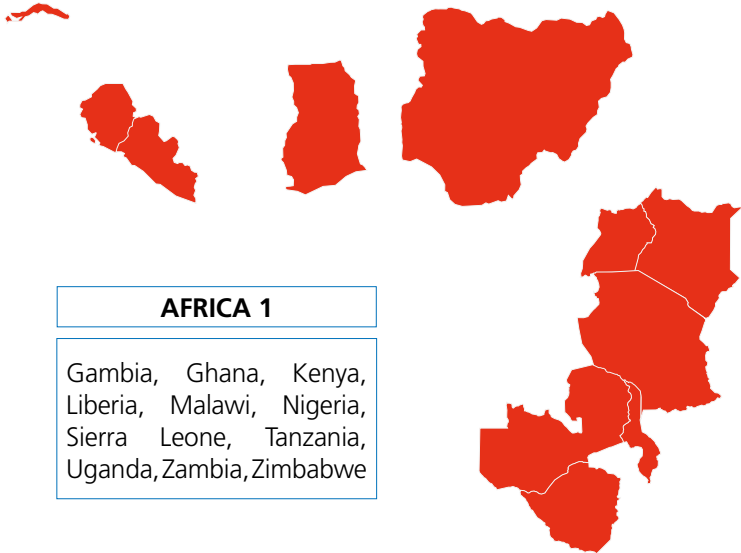
AMERICA 3		
Colombia,	Venezuela,	
Brazil,	Suriname,	Bolivia,
Ecuador,	Paraguay,	Peru,
Argentina,	Chile,	Uruguay



International Territorial Vice-Président:  
**Patrick Ebhojie** *(Nigeria)*

# Africa 1

Africa 1 covers parts of West Africa and parts of East Africa, spanning over twelve countries. One of the first urgent challenges is to visit Liberia and Tanzania to re-establish and strengthen the Society there. In Tanzania, there seems to be no National Council Board elected. There is urgent need to visit and rectify this situation. The second urgent challenge is to harmonize the Society in Cameroon. This country operates with two languages (English and French speaking). Furthermore, the two National Councils have been merged : much efforts and diplomacy are needed in order to achieve one strong united indivisible National Council. As regards the emergency projects, a recent earthquake in Tanzania left many families devastated and homeless. CIAD sent initial emergency relief of 3000 € to assist the people in affected areas. There is an acute need for close supervision and documentation. According to the ITVP, Godwin Patrick Ebhojie, a comprehensive report of this disaster is required by the CGI so to help determine the further steps to be taken. A visit to Tanzania is also therefore imminent.

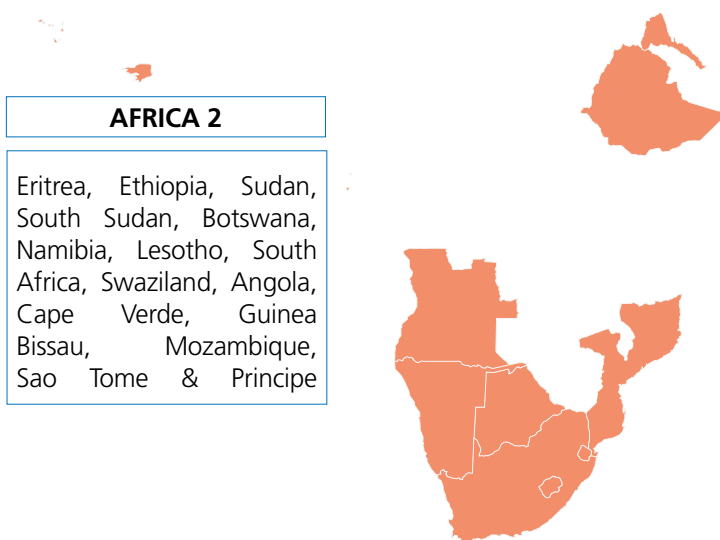


AFRICA 1		
Gambia,	Ghana,	Kenya,
Liberia,	Malawi,	Nigeria,
Sierra Leone,	Tanzania,	
Uganda,	Zambia,	Zimbabwe

## Africa 2

Africa 2 is an example of interesting parts of the SSVP, not only for its sociolinguistic diversity, but regarding with all the challenges faced. Africa 2 covers 14 countries split into three zones: the first zone covers Ethiopia, Eritrea, Northern Sudan and South Sudan; the second zone covers South Africa, Lesotho, Namibia, Swaziland and Botswana, and the third zone covers Angola, Cape Verde, Mozambique, São Tome and Principe. Recently, Africa 2 has been very active and has undertaken many solidarity initiatives and emergency projects, especially in South Sudan and Uganda, on behalf of the populations affected by the war, as well as in Angola and Mozambique for victims of hunger and drought. In this area, CIAD supports many assistance and emergency aid projects: for example, Uganda is facing a constant influx of refugees from several neighboring countries and SSVP is giving them regular assistance in the camps. In the coming year, regular meetings will take place to bring together the coordinators and National Presidents in each zone: zone 1 will meet in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) in March 2017, zone 2 will meet in Gaborone (Botswana) in April, and zone 3 will meet in Luanda (Angola) in May. A regional coordinators' meeting will be held in October 2017 in Gaborone. Visits will be planned through the territory, giving priority to: Cape Verde, Lesotho, and South Sudan.

International Territorial Vice-President:  
**Ilidio Fernando Manhique** (*Mozambique*)

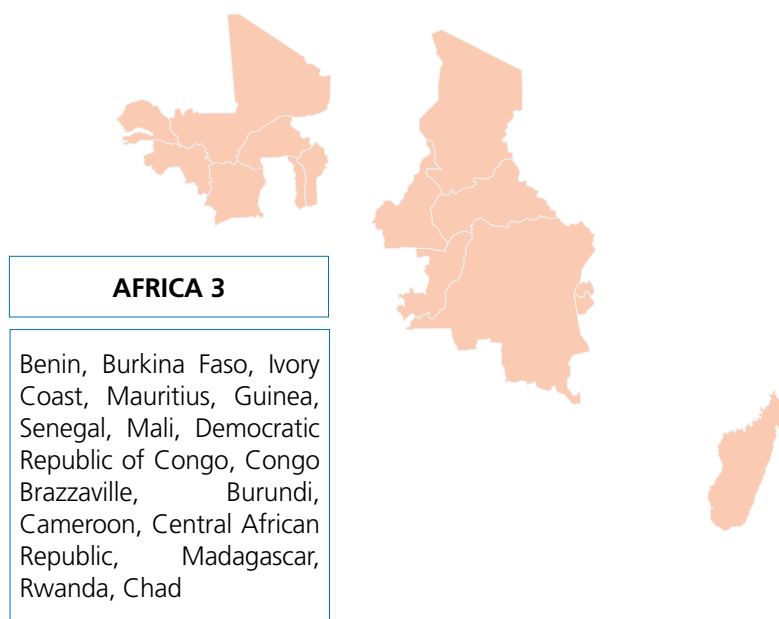


International Territorial Vice-President:  
**Liévin Andangha Muamba** (*Dem. Rep of Congo*)



## Africa 3

The countries included in Africa 3 are the french speaking countries of West Africa, countries of Central Africa and Islands of the Indian Ocean. Liévin Andhangha, the International Territorial Vice-President of this area, drew up an assessment of the situation. All countries are francophone, excepted Cameroon and Rwanda where part of the population speaks English, and Madagascar where Malagasy is spoken. There are many refugees and displaced population in this region, because of recent wars and political conflicts, especially in Rwanda, Burundi, Central African Republic, Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Chad and Burkina Faso. Some areas also face pre-election or post-electoral disorders, in addition to the presence of the Islamic State and extremist groups (for example, Boko Haram). The first main challenge is to strengthen the implementation of the SSVP in Gabon. Another challenge, among others, is to encourage the National Councils to create self-sufficient and systemic projects with a long-term social impact (especially on climatic changes and natural disaster subject) instead of depending on emergency aid sent after disasters.



# Middle East

The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul has been present in Lebanon since 1860, in Syria (1863), in Iraq (2007), in Egypt, in Algeria and Jordan (1957), Palestine and Israel.

War, tension, and the increase of fanaticism and extremism at the beginning of the 21st century, have all disrupted the activities of the SSVP. The development of the Society has been slowed down because of those previous factors. Furthermore, new forms of poverty are appearing and the members of the SSVP in Lebanon need to adjust to them.

The main difficulty for the Society is the political situation in this area : dictatorship, unstable states, Islamic States etc. Despite of the situation, the SSVP will continue to fight against poverty and will implement a global strategic plan for the years coming:

- Update of all the Councils, members, structure, visiting the countries to get more information, training and development
- Strengthening all the National Councils, their organization and spirituality
- Create networks of friendship and solidarity among all the members
- Developing SSVP in other countries and aid and emergency projects



International Territorial Vice-President:  
**Ella Bitar** (*Lebanon*)



## MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

Lebanon, Palestine, Syria,  
Israel, Jordan, Egypt, Bahrein,  
Algeria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia

# Asia 1



International Territorial Vice-President  
**Johnson Varguese** (*India*)



## ASIA 1

Bangladesh, India, Nepal,  
Pakistan, Sri Lanka

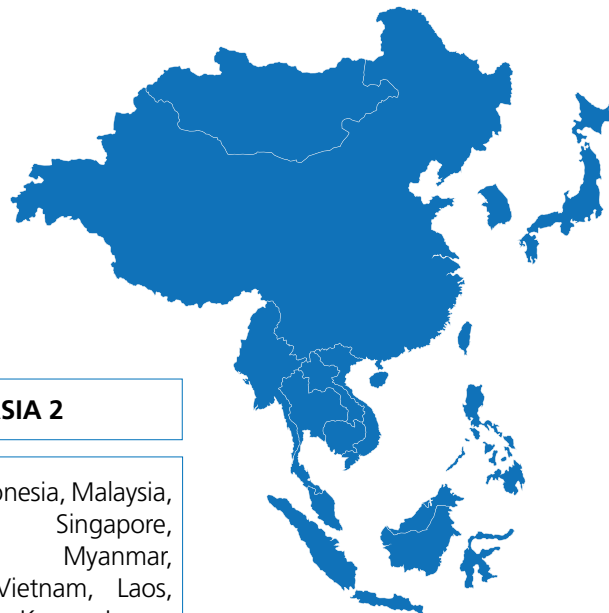
The countries included in Asia 1 are India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The global objective concerning Asia 1 for the coming years is to organize regular meetings with the leaders of SSVP in order to strengthen the Society by discussing the various activities and the ways the Society works in different countries. The priority of Asia 1 is to strengthen the existing structure of SSVP Nepal and ensure the implementation of the Partnership Agreement with Caritas Nepal. The goal is to continue to finance rehabilitation projects for the families affected by the earthquake in 2015. The second main objective is to assist the SSVP in Bangladesh to elect the new National President and to encourage the SSVP in Bangladesh to undertake more activities. Finally, the region's leaders plans to organize formation and training programs in all the countries in the region in a number of phases.

## Asia 2

The Asia 2 Region covers 16 countries with various races and cultures. This area zone will have to face many challenges in the years to come. First of all, according to Thomas Than (ITVP), the main challenge is spirituality: “the challenge is for our very faithful members to be deeply imbued with Vincentian Spirituality so as to enhance our service to our Friends-In-Need (FINs)”. This region also suffers numerous natural calamities every year, from typhoons, massive flooding, mudslides, to volcanic eruptions, earthquakes and occasionally devastating tsunamis. So the Society is actively engaged in many ongoing rehabilitation and self-help livelihood projects, similar to those in the Philippines. One challenge is to continue to support the «*Building Homes, Rebuilding Lives*» program and the «*Assist A Student*» education scholarships in the Philippines. Another challenge is to foster unity and solidarity among the members and countries in Asia 2. The Society organizes a regional meeting every 3 years. In addition to that, the countries also meet at PANASCO (Pan Asian Congress) which comprise 33 countries including those from the Asia 1 and Oceania regions.



International Territorial Vice-President:  
**Thomas Than** (*Singapore*)



### ASIA 2

Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, Hong-Kong, Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Macau, Mongolia

## Oceania



International Territorial Vice-President:  
**Frank Brassil** (*Australia*)

Oceania includes Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, Fiji, Tonga, Micronesia, Kiribati, Cook Islands, Timor Leste and the Solomon Islands. This territory made of ocean presents many challenges of communication. The main objective for the zone is to support and sustain the work of the Society, the development of Conferences and the recruitment of new members across the region. This will be based on sharing resources such as training and spirituality as much as possible while supporting and sustaining the capacity of Conferences to adapt and work with their local communities. According to the ITVP of Oceania : “this is the key advantage of the Vincentian way : think globally, act locally and always be inspired with love of God and love of humanity.”



### OCEANIA

Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, New Zealand, Micronesia, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, Western Solomon Islands, Samoa, Tonga, Timor Leste.



# Europe 1

Europe 1 is divided in three groups: Anglophone countries (England&Wales, Ireland, Scotland), German speaking Countries (Austria, Belgium, Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland, South Tyrol), and Latin Countries (Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Portugal, Spain) and others countries (Gibraltar, Turkey, Malta). Coordination Meetings of ITVP with the Coordinators are held as necessary. The next meeting will be held as soon as the new Coordinator of Group 3 is nominated, probably in early 2017. This meeting will include:

- Information's exchange on the situation in the different Councils and Conferences
- Planning of the next Regional Meeting.

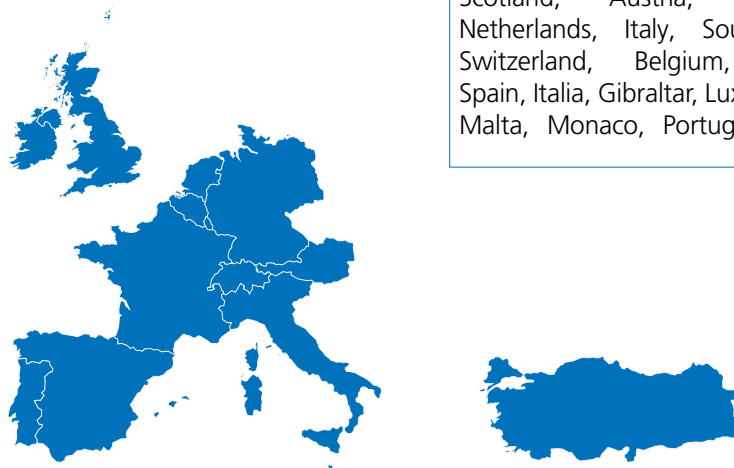
One of the main challenges in this area zone is to clarify some situations in sereral countries, since the situation is dubious. If necessary and possible, assistance to those National Council has to be provided.

International Territorial Vice-President:  
**Laszlo Könczol** (*Germany*)



## EUROPE 1

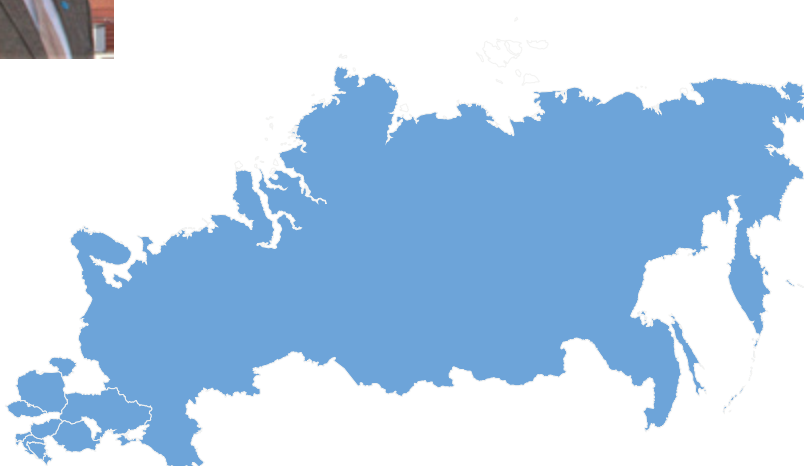
England and Wales, Ireland, Scotland, Austria, Germany, Netherlands, Italy, South Tyrol, Switzerland, Belgium, France, Spain, Italia, Gibraltar, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Portugal, Turkey



# Europe 2



International Territorial Vice-President:  
**Ervin Tigla** (*Romania*)



## EUROPE 2

Ukraine, Russia, Lituania, Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania

The Europe 2 region is not an simple region: it covers the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, which have lived for almost half a century under the Communist and atheistic system. In addition, a good part of these countries are predominantly Orthodox. Erwin Tigla, ITVP for this region gives us his testimony: “during the Communist period, it was impossible to organize Vincentian activities in Romania. Finally, with the breakdown of Communism, the time has come to start grass roots Vincentian work. It is not easy to start from zero. We are beginning a new period with full of confidence and we hope that the Vincentian spirit will continue to lead our Europe 2 group. We want to develop new projects. In 2017, the first meeting with the two coordinators will be an opportunity to find new ways all together.”



MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR !

- CGI TEAM

THIS INFORMATION LETTER IS EDITED BY THE GENERAL INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE SOCIETY OF SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL.

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