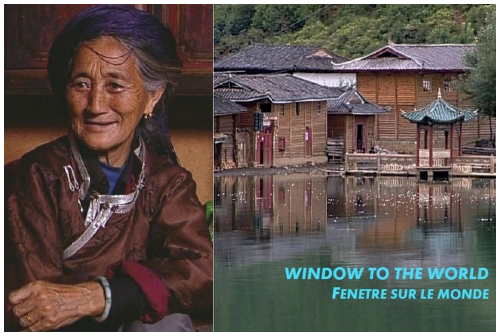

POLAND: AT THE BORDER OF SLAVERY

Director(s): Philippe DEMENET

Justina, a 20-year-old Polish woman, has fallen victim to a new form of slave trade. For the first time, she openly faces the camera to tell of the hell she lived through in a brothel near Bremen.
Germany is the first target of a 'trade' that was thought to belong to a bye-gone age. Tens of thousands of girls are locked up, beaten, under-nourished and forced into prostitution there. Justina's story and that of another victim, Cristina, leaves no room for doubt on the subject. They are Polish, Ukrainian, Byelorussian, Russian or Romanian. They fall into the trap of bogus job adverts, promise of marriage or they are simply drugged, then abducted to be sold like cattle for a few thousand DM... German police manages to free about one thousand of them a year. But they treat them just like illegal immigrants; they are expulsed immediately. Very few women accept to testify against their torturers (Germans, Turks, Polish, Russian, Yugoslavs...) in exchange for a simple "suspension" of their expulsion. After the Wall of Shame, the "border of shame"? Powerless, the border guards at Frankfurt on the Oder see many of these fugitives passing through; they just want to go home. The victims are the only ones who pay a price! Justina is today barred from entering the Schengen space whereas her kidnappers, who have been released, openly threaten her. For them, a lot of money is at stake, risks are minimal. And as long as the average salary in the Ukraine is USD 30, there will always be thousands who want to become a "baby sitter" or a "barmaid" in Western Europe! Poland is pivotal to this new slave trade: 10 000 Polish girls are shipped off to the West each year whereas 15 000 Ukrainians, Romanians, Bulgarians or Byelorussians are sent through Poland. As for the Polish police - they close their eyes.
Victim aid organisations such as "La Strada" in Warsaw can do but little. The real culprits - those who pull the strings and their clients - are in the West, in the Europe of Human Rights...

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