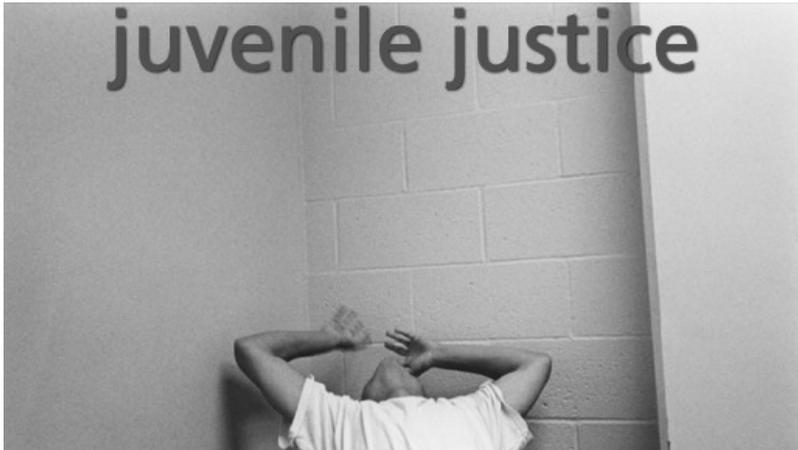




STRENGTHENING THE LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY OF THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM IN THE FIELD OF JUVENILE JUSTICE



Bulgaria ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on April 11, 1991. In recent years, the country made efforts to improve prevention and adjust its juvenile justice system. In 2004 the Juvenile Delinquency Act was revised but the country still did not comply fully with international standards in the policies and legislation for care and protection of children. In 2011 a National Concept on Justice for Children was adopted and in 2013 a Road map for its implementation entered into force. Despite the various steps and efforts to reform the juvenile justice system in Bulgaria, it is still on the way of being transformed to a child friendly one. Yet, the reform of the juvenile justice system is extremely necessary with regard to guaranteeing the rights of the child.

The project aims to overcome the shortcomings in the field of juvenile justice and is in line with the Government's plan for the reform of the juvenile justice system in Bulgaria. It follows the relevant recommendations to Bulgaria by the UNCRC. It also pursues elements underlined in the National Concept on Justice for Children, the Road map and the respective National Action Plan.

OBJECTIVE OF THE SWISS SUPPORT

The overall objective of the project is to strengthen the legal and institutional capacity of the judicial system in the field of justice for children and to secure child friendly justice procedures by:

- Adoption of legal provisions for the effective enforcement of the International and European standards in the area of child friendly justice;
- Increasing the knowledge and capacity of justice officials and law enforcement authorities on the correct implementation of the UN and International standards related to child friendly justice;
- Undertaking preparative actions for the institutionalization of blue rooms (Special room designated for a video interrogation for children);
- Developing policy instruments for setting up juvenile courts.

RESULTS AND OUTCOMES

The main results of the project include:

- Elaborated gap analysis of national legislation and need assessment of the Juvenile Justice System on compliance with European and international standards (together with Swiss experts);
- Cost analysis of the financial implications of the legislative reforms;
- 5 pilot juvenile courts;
- Conducted review of international best practices for implementing juvenile chambers;
- 12 blue rooms set up, equipped and opened;
- Elaborated guidelines for setting up pilot courts and juvenile chambers within district courts;

- Conducted study visits to France and Switzerland;
- 123 justice officials and practitioners in pilot courts trained by Swiss experts during 5 seminars on implementing European and international standards and Bulgarian relevant legislation;
- Elaborated proposal for new Juvenile Justice Act;
- Elaborated Manual on juvenile justice (on- and offline).

ACTIVITIES

In order to reach the project objectives, the following implementation activities are carried out:

- Elaboration of a gap analysis on the conformity of the Bulgarian legislative framework with international standards and conventions in juvenile justice;
- Creation of an on-line training module and a manual for practitioners in juvenile justice;
- Formulation of a strategy for setting up juvenile chambers within the Bulgarian legal context and practice;
- Formulation of a strategy for setting up specialized juvenile courts;
- Development of training modules for judges, prosecutors and practitioners in juvenile justice;
- Training of judges and other practitioners in juvenile justice;
- Setting up of pilot juvenile chambers;
- Expert study visit to France, to the World Congress on Juvenile Justice in Geneva and to Switzerland.

KEY INFORMATION ON THE PROJECT

FOCUS AREA

Juvenile justice

COUNTRY

Bulgaria

GOALS

To ensure that all children who have come in contact with the justice system in Bulgaria as perpetrators, victims or witnesses of crime or for any other reasons are treated in line with European and international standards;

EXPECTED RESULTS

5 Pilot juvenile courts and 12 blue rooms set up and equipped;
Justice officials, practitioners trained on implementing European and international standards;
System guarantying continuous multi-disciplinary training;
Strategy and Action Plan for implementation of suggested legal and structural amendments in juvenile justice;

TARGET GROUP

- Magistrates and law enforcement officials working in the field of juvenile justice
- Children and young people (victims or perpetrators of crimes)

EXECUTING AGENCY

Ministry of Justice

PARTNERS

- International Institute for the Rights of Children (IDE)
- Swiss magistrates

BUDGET

CHF 859'292
(Swiss contribution CHF 709'292)

DURATION

2012-2018

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<http://www.swiss-contribution.bg/>

