

Description of the program objectives

With the objective of doing a feasibility study on the creation of Medical and Judicial Units (MJU) in 5 partner countries (England, Italy, Poland, Romania and Belgium) the Child's Voice has proposed this program with the aim of improving the condition of the hearing of child victims of sexual violence and ill-treatment.

Three International Meetings will be organized between the seven associations that will take part in the AGIS program (Paris, London and Florence). The program will end with an International Conference, in Paris, in November/December 2007.

The concrete results foreseen are:

- Realization of a situation analysis allowing a better comprehension of the laws, judicial systems and politics of the partner countries in the field concerned (distributed by means of a publication and a CD rom).
- Dynamic creation of MJUs in the partner's countries.
- The setting up of cooperation protocols between judicial, police and medical authorities.
- The creation of a European platform in the subject area of child hearings and taking into account the child's evidence.
- Proposal for the harmonization of European texts.

The subject of analysis leads to a lot of problems stemming from the fundamental meaning that a child victim is a suffering child before being a litigant child. The assumption of his responsibility and his interview in a police department doesn't allow him to gain confidence and easily express himself. Furthermore, the hearing is often not recorded and this makes the child keep on repeating and living all the suffering that he has already been through and this is a new form of trauma because "repeating means living again".

Finally, in each of the partners' countries the practices concerning the child hearing are different. There is no cooperation between the European countries. Neither are they often informed of their neighbors' practices.

With the knowledge of this situation, the first aim of this program is to undertake a situation analysis of the procedures, methodology of the hearing and good practices in the partner countries concerning the hearing of the child victim and to identify, on one hand, what there is in common and on the other hand, what value there would be in sharing practices.

This project will last two years and it will involve the participation of 6 partners and 117 beneficiaries (police, justice, childhood professionals, medical services ...).

The languages used are French and English.

GENERAL OBJECTIVE:

Protection of the underage victims of mistreatment during the inquiry and the judicial procedures.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT:

- Undertaking the situation analysis of the policies (laws and practices) in the partner countries concerning the hearing of child victims of sexual offences.
- Creation of a European model of procedures for the hearing of a child victim by imposing the co-operation of the police and judicial system in all the partner countries.

MEANS EMPLOYED:

- Identification of the laws and practices in force in the partner countries (Does the child get a hearing? Where does the hearing take place? Who interviews the child? Under which conditions? Is the hearing recorded (tape or video)...?).
- Organization of international meetings to exchange experiences and the existing good practices.
- Evaluation of the impact and quality of these methods in order to fit the national models of co-operation to other European countries and to improve the existing ones.
- Suggestions to elaborate co-operation protocols between the police and the legal system.
- Organizing a final conference to communicate and diffuse the results of the project.

EXPECTED RESULTS:

- A better understanding of the politics employed and sustained in the European countries
- An improvement in the legal handling of child victims of mistreatment and/or sexual offences.
- Putting in place "European" Units for children victims.

METHODOLOGY:

- A census taken by each partner of the laws and practices adopted in their country.
- A census taken by the co-coordinator of the project (la Voix De l'Enfant) of the European and international laws related to the subject matter.
- Creation of a steering committee of experts in each of the partner countries. This committee will meet to carry out research and put in place the cooperation protocol. It will send summaries of the meetings and all work carried out to the coordinator.
- The coordinator will prepare a general summary based on results received from the above mentioned documents.
- Organization of 3 international Meetings allowing the partners and experts to exchange ideas on the research and draw up a cooperation protocol.
- Organization of a Final Conference.