

Working Project delivered by the Child's Voice next to the European Commission.

HISTORY OF THE PROJET N°JLS/2005/AGIS/152 (2005-2007) submitted by The Child's Voice:

Willing to study and to evaluate the disorders relative to the assistance of the child victims of sexual violence, the Child's Voice decided to create in 1997, a multidisciplinary working group made up of childhood professionals: pedopsychiatrists, psychiatrists, pediatricians, social workers, magistrates, lawyers, association representatives, teachers.

This Group suggested starting from the following postulate: *"the child, victim of sexual violence or of any kind of bad treatments, is a child who is above all suffering before being considered a plaintiff child"*. According to this group of professionals, it is more appropriate to handle individual cases in a hospital centre, in a paediatric unit which is able to offer multi-disciplinary services of paediatricians, child psychiatrists, psychologists, police, magistrates, social worker

The working group suggested, within the framework of the application of the law dated June 17th, 1998 relative to «the prevention and repression of sexual offences as well as protection of minor victims " opening up Medical Judicial Units in an hospital environment for children victims of sexual violence.

In January 20th, 1999, Mrs Elizabeth Guigou, Minister of Justice at that time, inaugurated the first Office in Béziers.

Since then, many Units have been opened in St-Nazaire, Macon, Chalon sur Saône, Niort, Perpignan, Aix-en-Provence, Caen, Cherbourg, Angers and Béziers, Foix, Tulle, Monceau les Mines, Saint Malo, and additional projects, mostly in Paris area, are pending.

In each Unit, a protocol is signed between the Police, the territorial collectivities, the High Court, the public prosecutor's department, the Ministry of Education, the Associations of Help to Victims and the Bar.

Its goals consist in :

- Saving the child psychic traumas by limiting the penal procedure to the bare essential minimum for the expression of truth. To achieve it, the interview will be recorded by audio-visual means in order to save the child incessant repetitions about what he went through.
- Facilitating the child's expression through the help of a childhood professional next to the investigator.
- Considering the child as a child who is suffering prior to being a child who is making a complaint. He requires multidisciplinary assistance (medical, psychological and social) which guarantees him care and protection. Within this multidisciplinary, each person must stick to his own duty and his own skills.
- Appealing to the complementarity of skills to combine the understanding of the child's pain with the consideration of the investigation needs and the subsequent quest for the truth.

With the knowledge of this situation, the Child's Voice submitted, the 15th December 2004, to the European Commission a draft of project titled **"Situation analysis of the good practices in the field of the hearing of child victims of maltreatment in order to establish a European co-operation between the police and the legal system"**.

This two years project, accepted in July 2005, **will take place from December 2005 to December 2007.**