

**Press release regarding the signing of the financing contract for the project
“Protecting victims of crime”, financed by “Justice” Programme - Norwegian
Financial Mechanism 2014-2021**

The Romanian Ministry of Justice, through Mr. Mihai Pașca, Secretary of State, signed on January 28th, 2022 the financing contract for the project "Protecting victims of crime" with the Prosecutor's Office attached to the High Court of Cassation and Justice (POHCCJ),

The project is funded by the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021, within the “Justice” Programme, managed by Romanian Ministry of Justice as a Program Operator.

The project budget is 2,000,000 EUR, of which 85% is Norwegian grant, and 15% is national co-financing, and has a 27 months duration.

The project will be implemented by POHCCJ, as project leader, in partnership with the Romanian Ministry of Justice, through the Department for Crime Prevention , and also with the General Directorates of Social Assistance and Child Protection in Bucharest, districts 2 to 6, and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights - FRA.

The project’s objective is to strengthen the rule of law by ensuring an efficient, accessible and qualitative criminal justice system for children as victims of crime and for victims of hate crime, with a special focus on Roma population. Within the project, 35 rooms will be set up for the hearing of children victims of crime - 30 at the level of prosecutor's offices, and the others at the level of the five General Directorates of Social Assistance and Child Protection in Bucharest. These areas are much needed in Romania as they are vital for observing children's rights and for obtaining complete and useful testimonies, minimising as much as possible their trauma and risk of revictimization. The premises will offer the children an environment of safety and confidence during criminal proceedings whereas they will be provided with the necessary psychological support, considering the specifics of their age, their particularities of development, and abilities. The endowment with audio - video technique for recording the hearings will be also secured in order to avoid as much as possible the repeated interrogation of minors.

The main activities that will take place within the project are:

- carrying out thematic analyses of the existing situation and making recommendations for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the legal proceedings applied by prosecutors in the investigation of cases, taking also into account the challenges the Roma population faces;



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- elaboration of guidelines (identification, investigation and prosecution of hate crimes/ hearing of children victims of crime and investigation and prosecution of crimes against them);
- training of prosecutors and other professionals, etc.

We mention that by entering into force, on October 14th, 2016, of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Kingdom of Norway and the Government of Romania, the Ministry of Justice has been appointed Program Operator for the "Justice" Programme, financed by the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021. As such, the ministry manages a financial allocation of 57,294,118 EUR (85% Norwegian grant and 15% national co-financing) during 2018-2024.