

# Promoting Alternative Sanctions and Restorative Justice Measures

In June 2014 the Centre for Democracy Foundation, in partnership with the Victimology Society of Serbia, began implementation of a project entitled "Promoting Alternative sanctions and restorative justice measures".

The reason for implementing this project is the current state of the correctional institutions in Serbia. Over the past few years, these institutions have been overcrowded, which presents direct violation of the international standards. We believe that broader use of alternative sanctions, where the imposition of such measures is possible, would make the state and conditions in these institutions far better.

Targeted groups of this project are the Administration for Enforcement of Penal Sanctions, civil society organizations, judges, participants of the Judicial Academy, but also the decision makers and the representatives of the state institutions.

The main activities on the project:

Activity 1:

**Research on citizens' and policy makers' attitudes on alternative sanctions and restorative justice measures;** (conducted by the Victimology society of Serbia)

Activity 2:

**Workshops (2) for the civil society organizations, experts and the government representatives;** (conducted by the Center for Democracy Foundation and the Victimology society of Serbia)

Activity 3:

**Pilot programs for victims and offenders** (conducted by the Victimology Society of Serbia)

*The program for victims:*

The program will provide victims the following:

- Emotional support;
- Information about victims' rights;
- Support in contact with institutions;
- Information about restorative justice and process of mediation;
- Full information about the process of mediation and potential outcomes as well as information about the procedures for supervising the implementation of any agreement reached during mediation;
- Information about potential benefits including the recovery of autonomy and dignity of the victim;
- Information about potential risks and possibility of secondary victimization;
- Independent support to victims before, during and after mediation process including support in reaching a decision whether or not to take part in mediation.

*Program for the offenders:*

**Program for raising offenders' awareness about victims' needs and the empathy towards them**

The pilot program will be implemented in the Female prison in Pozarevac and will represent the first program which will include the principles of restorative justice. The program will be designed so that it can easily be adapted for implementation in correctional institutions for men.

The topics included in this program:

- Discussion about victims
- Discussion about victimization of people close to the offenders
- Discussion about personal experience of victimization
- Discussion about personal experience as offenders
- Simulation of victim-offender mediation with surrogate victims.

The aims of such a program for offenders are:

- Better understanding of the impact of a crime on the victim;
- Understanding consequences of criminal offense for victims, victim's families, themselves and their families;
- Acceptance of restorative principles and responsibility for the harm and suffering caused to the victim;
- Be familiar with the technique of victim-offender mediation;
- Reducing the number of recidivists;
- Better integration in the community;

Activity 4:

**Local Round tables (4) in Niš, Zrenjanin, Kragujevac and Leskovac;** (Conducted by the FCD and VDS)

Activity 5:

**National conference in Belgrade;** (conducted by the Center for Democracy Foundation and the Victimology Society of Serbia)

Activity 6:

**Media activities and advocacy campaign;** (conducted by the Center for Democracy Foundation and the Victimology Society of Serbia)

The project will last for 15 months, and it has been supported by the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic Serbia within the program „European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)“.