

**CONCLUSIONS AND RECCOMENDATIONS OF THE FIRST ANNUAL  
CONFERENCE OF THE VICTIMOLOGY SOCIETY OF SERBIA  
11<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> November 2010**

**Conclusions:**

- Serbia has done a lot in terms of legal reforms and harmonization of national legislation with international and European standards during the last few years.
- Criminal court policies and running of the criminal proceedings in cases of domestic violence showed a number of shortcomings.
- In the health care system the quality of medical care for the victims by far exceeds the quality of the collection of medical evidence of physical injuries, because of which the offender is often not adequately punished.
- Previous trainings of experts of different profiles were not systematic and comprehensive.
- There is a lack of cooperation between state bodies, institutions and organizations in providing victim support and conducting research.
- There is a scarcity of records about victims, victim services, the capacities of the victim support services, and the services and programs they offer.
- There is a deficit of attention on war victims' needs at all levels.

**Recommendations:**

- Further work on improvement of existing legal provisions, their mutual harmonization and alignment with the provisions of international documents and EU legislation is needed.
  - A proposal to the Ministry of Justice that the term 'victim' enters the draft of the new Code of Criminal Procedure, to recognize the victims' right to appeal the verdict and to re-enter provisions about forbidding to ask victims and witnesses certain questions was sent from the conference.
  - It is necessary to continue the improvement of the Draft of the Law on Social Protection and the Draft of the Code of Criminal Procedure, in terms of regulation of NGOs' position regarding the provision of victim support.
- Conditions for the application of existing legislation in practice have to be created and the implementation of the existing legislation needs to be improved.
  - Providing resources for the implementation of the Law on Social Protection through the adoption of minimum service standards and by creating guidelines and protocols for treatment and training of professionals.
  - Establishing mechanisms for monitoring the quality of assistance and support provided to victims within the social welfare system.
  - The introduction of standardized protocols for examination of victims of violence.
  - Better application of specific provisions of the Law on Juvenile Offenders and Criminal Protection of Juveniles relating to the protection of minors as injured parties in criminal proceedings.
  - Establishing accountability of state authorities for not acting according to laws and by-laws.
- It is necessary to further develop and organize trainings for social and health workers, police officers, prosecutors, judges, NGO activists, media and others who are likely to

- come into contact with victims, so that the trainings with their quality should guarantee the improvement of the professionals' relationship towards the victims.
- The development of a model of cooperation between state bodies and NGOs at national, local, regional, EU and the international level is required, particularly in providing assistance and protection to victims, conducting research, developing new programs, education, development of educational curricula, textbooks, etc.
  - It is essential that public authorities comply with the provisions of the Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance and to allow researchers an access to information relevant to their research.
  - It is necessary to develop system solutions and a holistic approach, including the approach to crime victims and victims of war, allowing maximum use of existing capacities and experiences of other countries, institutions, NGOs, researchers, educational institutions, and recognition, social visibility, support and appropriate treatment of all those who are injured/endangered.
  - Improvement of the protection of victims before, during and after the trial, as well as protection from secondary victimization.
    - To move the witness (physically) from the center of the courtroom (to the side).
    - To make possible for victims and witnesses to sit during their testimony, and to make sure that the defendants are not sitting behind them.
    - Better provision of information to the victims about their rights.
    - Provide victim support from the moment a person becomes a victim of crime regardless of whether and when the case will be prosecuted.
    - Avoid hierarchical and exclusionary attitude toward victims.
    - Developing a network of witness support services in the courts with a central service that would coordinate the operation of other services, carry out the supervision, train employees, volunteers, make standards, etc.
  - An equal access to all the victims and breaking down prejudices on the ideal and the non-ideal victims is needed.
  - It is necessary to develop records about victims, victim services, capacity of organizations, available services and programs, etc. as a basis for developing programs for victims, research, evaluations, planning and other activities.
  - NGOs that are providing victim support have to be identified and incorporated into the system of social and legal protection equally with the government agencies.
  - A body (organization) where the victims of war could get all the necessary information regarding their rights should be established.
  - Development of a strategy of lobbying for funding the services for victims, gender budgeting, etc. is needed.