

Belgrade, 22nd and 23rd November 2012

Victimology Society of Serbia organized the **Third Annual Conference** entitled *Victims and contemporary social context: theory, practice, and activism*, which took place in Belgrade on 22nd and 23rd November, 2012. The conference was held in the same year when the Society is celebrating its 15th anniversary.

This year, the Conference gathered over 80 participants from Serbia, the region (Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Slovenia), Western Europe (Great Britain, The Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Czech Republic, Belgium, Austria) and Israel. The Conference began with the opening ceremony on **22nd November 2012 at 9.30 a.m.** when the participants were addressed by:

- **Prof. dr Slobodan Savić**, President of the Victimology Society of Serbia
- **MSc Rodoljub Šabić**, Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection
- **Prof. dr Vesna Nikolić-Ristanović**, Director of Victimology Society of Serbia and President of the European Society of Criminology

The aim of the conference was to bring together experts, researchers and activists who deal both theoretically and practically and from the perspective of different disciplines with victims' issues in general and in particular with problems of realization of victims' rights in the contemporary social context. The conference enabled constructive discussion, overall exchange and integration of various experiences and knowledge. This seems particularly important in the further process of European integrations of Serbia. Namely, the acquisition of the candidate status for the membership in the EU puts new commitments and obligations before Serbia regarding victim support, which implies further enhancement of legislation and its harmonization with the legal heritage of the European Union. The acquisition of the candidate status also entails undertaking many new measures to ensure that victims of crime, war and other forms of suffering can exercise their rights and receive assistance, support and protection they need. These measures are also referred to in the recently adopted *EU Directive on establishing*

minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime. The Directive, presenting a legally binding document for all EU member states should ensure that, in all EU countries victims of crime are recognized and acknowledged, treated equally and without discrimination, with esteem and respect, as well as being compensated for their suffering, informed about their rights and granted equal access to victim support services.

During the conference, special attention was paid to the victimization surveys, which enable acquiring knowledge and information about the dark figure of crime, as well as to the impact of the *Council of Europe's Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence*, signed by Serbia in April 2012, on creating legislation and practice with the purpose of preventing all forms of gender-based violence and ensuring adequate protection of victims. Furthermore, in their presentations, the participants of the conference dealt with victims of crime from the perspective of both existing legal solutions and their practical implementation. The conference included presentations of research conducted in Serbia, the region, and worldwide. Attention was also paid to the following topics: women as victims of violence, especially domestic violence, sexual violence and trafficking; children as victims of violence, with a special focus on bullying and children who live and/or work on the street; the position of victims in criminal proceedings; protection of victims and the role of institutions; the role of independent state agencies and non-government organizations in providing support to victims; discrimination, with a special focus on discrimination of people with disability at the labor market; on line victimization etc.