

## INCREASING THE SAFETY OF THE PROBATION COUNSELLORS ' ACTIVITY

WORKSHOP HELD IN BUCHAREST, 15-19 SEPTEMBER 2014

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you to our training session on the topic „Increasing the safety of the probation counsellors ' activity" on behalf of the Rule of Law Program South East Europe of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. I would like to express my thanks to the Romanian Ministry of Justice and in particular the National Probation Department for the excellent cooperation that we had when preparing the workshop that took place last week and this training session, I extend these thanks to the probation services in Croatia and the Republic of Moldova and I welcome the participants from all three countries..

(...)

Probations Officers play an important role in the criminal justice system by supervising offenders released from prison or sentenced to non-custodial sanctions such as community service. It is a demanding job. A probation officer needs excellent communication skills, especially with regard to listening. He must listen to and understand court orders about monitoring the offender 's activities. He must also listen to the offender, his employer and others involved in his life to find out whether he is in compliance . A probation officer needs the ability to help the offender understand what is expected from him in terms during the probation. He or she needs the ability to build relationships.

A probation officer must establish rapport with offenders to get them to open up and listen to direction. He or she must also maintain good relationships in the community, with the family of the offender, local service agencies, and other support systems that help the offender get back on his feet. The probation officer tries to help the offender get involved in activities and programs that encourage a crime-free lifestyle.

I am not telling you this because I believe that you do not know what you have to do in your job. I am telling you this because I want you to know that I know that you have a strenuous jobs that requires a high qualification and that you have a job that is very important to reach the objective of reducing the recidivism rate. You are important for community safety.

I also know that probation officers, while performing their duties, can be at risk of being hurt, injured, threatened and stressed. The perception of danger whether real or suspected has an effect on your life.

Therefore you must be able to assess the risk that an offender poses, to manage risk situations and to prevent conflict situations.

Although the probation systems in Romania, Croatia and the Republic of Moldova are organized and function differently, there is a

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common ground in terms of techniques and methods of response in case of conflict or risk situations. Therefore, the project is aiming at identifying the best practices in the participating countries and to set up common working procedures for probation officers.

As a German foundation we do of course also support the exchange of information, expertise and opinions between the countries in which we work and Germany.

I am therefore very happy that today Ms Karoline Roshdi has joined us today. Ms Roshdi works for the Institute for Psychology and Threat Management and will be in charge of the training on "Methods and techniques for the management of risk situations" today and tomorrow. The topics she will cover will be "prevention strategies in working with dangerous offenders or potential dangerous situations", "successful techniques and approaches in building a safe working environment and a safe professional relationship with beneficiaries", "verbal and non-verbal communication in dealing with dangerous offenders", and "methods and techniques in the management of risk situations".

I am convinced that this training session will be beneficial for your future work and I also believe that you will build up professional working relations and maybe friendship with your foreign colleagues.

Once again I thank all those who prepared this project and I wish us all a successful training session.