

LEGAL PROGRAM

ACCESS TO JUSTICE: INTRODUCTION OF THE MODEL "LEGAL ASSISTANCE BUREAU"

Project Objectives

The project aims to bring about a change in the regulation and grant people the right to receive legal assistance.

Principal Aims of the Project:

- Data collection and analysis of the system for providing legal assistance by the officially appointed defense lawyers and attorneys;
- Qualitative and quantitative data accumulation and processing concerning the process of providing legal assistance in cases of defense provided by the state;
- Alternative model testing for providing legal assistance by the so-called *Legal Assistance Bureau*;
- Analyzing the advantages and disadvantages of the alternative methods for improving the quality of legal assistance and formulating a public policy by means of which an alternative can be applied;

Project Implementation Tools

In order to achieve the aims of the project a unique organization has been set up in the town of Veliko Tarnovo- *Legal Assistance Bureau*

Project Status

In progress

Project Development

The *Legal Assistance Bureau*, situated in the town of Veliko Tarnovo, provides legal assistance and promotes its optimization in Bulgaria. It has also brought about the collection of data by virtue of which a detailed analysis can be made as regards legal assistance, the minimum standards and the different levels of the defense provided by the lawyer, the required activities, etc.

Results

Throughout the calendar year 2005 The *Legal Assistance Bureau* commenced 535 legal proceedings, 251 of which being criminal cases, 71 inquests, 62 agreements with the prosecutor's office, etc. Since the establishment of The Legal Assistance Bureau, 1256 legal proceedings in total have begun.

The active participation of Open Society Institute – Sofia in the legal assistance reform in Bulgaria contributed considerably to The Legal Assistance Act, which came into force on January 1st 2006.

Experts and Partners

- Ministry of Justice
- National Legal Assistance Bureau
- Supreme Bar Council
- Bar Council of the town of Veliko Tarnovo
- Daniela Dokovska
- Yonko Grozev
- Professor Ekaterina Trendafilova

Funding

Open Society Institute – Sofia
Open Society Justice Initiative

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