



## **Implementation of the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2012-2015) "Growing with Children's Rights" Good Practices and Initiatives**

### **Rescinded the Statute of Limitations Regarding Sex Offenses Committed Against the Child**

*Incest Trauma Centre – Belgrade, Serbia*

**Country(ies):** Serbia

**Title of practice:** Rescinded the Statute of Limitations regarding sex offenses committed against the child - one of the results of the Incest Trauma Centre - Belgrade, Serbia.

**Main scope/theme:**

- Child-friendly services and systems: child-friendly justice
- Eliminating violence against children: sexual violence

**Managing organization(s):** Incest Trauma Center – Belgrade, [www.incesttraumacentar.org.rs](http://www.incesttraumacentar.org.rs), contact person: Dusica Popadic / Ljiljana Bogavac, phone: 00 381 63 752 12 54, itcentar@EUnet.rs

**Brief description:** On April 8th, 2013, the Parliament of the Republic of Serbia adopted the Initiative of the Incest Trauma Centre - Belgrade regarding rescinding the Statute of Limitations in connection with the sex offenses against the child. The Initiative was recognised and supported by the Parliamentary Committee for Human and Minority Rights and Gender Equality, Women's Parliamentary Network, the Parliamentary Committee for the Rights of the Child, all caucuses, and the Government of Serbia (listed in the order of procedural steps). After the United Kingdom, the Republic of Serbia became the second country in Europe where there is no Statute of Limitations regarding sex offenses committed against children. This changed earlier legal practices where, according to the Serbian law, just six years after the last incident of sexual abuse, the child sexual assault survivor was losing every right to prosecute the offender. Now, the law recognises the long-term effects of sexual trauma in children and provides opportunity for survivors to prosecute offenders when feeling capable - with sufficient psychic strength and social power - to be as equal as possible participants in the criminal prosecution. In this way, the State became an ally in the recovery of survivors and sent out a clear message to offenders that there are no timeframes when it comes to being brought to justice. The Incest Trauma Centre - Belgrade (it recently marked its 20th anniversary being active in the field of Sexual Assault) has been the national partner of the Council of Europe, Strasbourg, officially appointed to lead the "1 IN 5" campaign against child sexual assault in the Republic of Serbia. The campaign "1 IN 5" in

Serbia is being implemented with the financial support of the European Union from the programme “European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights” for 2011.

**Timeframe:** November 2012-April 2013

**Type of activities:** Ongoing lobbying and campaigning that included workshops and consultations with parliamentarians.

**Results and outputs:** Brochure that includes factsheets and educational articles

**Target group(s):** Decision makers

**Success factor(s):** The Incest Trauma Centre - Belgrade is a trusted expert organisation in the field of sexual assault in Serbia. It has 20 years of working experience and co-operation with various stakeholders, and the Centre provides full disclosure of its previous practices and results.