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“The Crystal Scales of Justice” Prize

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2009 Edition

Application form

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Entry form

(Please note that this file - without the attachments –
once completed should not exceed 6 pages)

To be returned to the European Commission or Council of Europe by 1 March 2009	
Crystal Scales of Justice European Commission DG Justice, Freedom and Security Unit E1 B-1049 BRUXELLES E-mail: jls-justiceforum@ec.europa.eu Fax: (32) 22.97.95.88	CEPEJ Secretariat – Crystal Scales of Justice Competition, Directorate General of Human Rights and Legal Affairs, Council of Europe, F -67075 STRASBOURG Cedex Fax: (33) 3.90.21.50.33 E-mail: cepej@coe.int

1. Details of applicant (institution/organisation)

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3. Scheme submitted

Title: Mentor Scheme

Date of introduction: February 2004

4. Please attach to the entry form, preferably in English or in French or, where this is not possible, in one of the other official languages of the European Union:

a. A description of the scheme (*maximum 1 page*)

The Mentor Scheme is implemented by the Association for Probation and Mediation in Justice (SPJ) in co-operation with the Czech Probation and Mediation Service (CPMS).

The scheme is intended for members of the **Romany minority** who have received and serve alternative sentence (e.g. community service sentence, conditional sentence with supervision). Aim of the scheme is to encourage clients to fulfill obligations related to serving the alternative sentence (measure) and to lower risks of re-offending and social exclusion. The scheme improves effective work with clients as it increases their legal awareness and ability to make informed decisions. The Mentor method is based on the inclusion of community in the process of offenders' social reintegration.

The mentoring service is **provided by Romany mentor**: an adult from the Romany community who has expressed an interest in helping other Roma. Mentors work as intermediaries between the CPMS and the client. He/She is at least 18 years of age, has no criminal record, and completed the Mentor training course.

Most common mentors' tasks:

- Encouraging clients to fulfill obligations related to serving the alternative sentence (measure).
- Giving information about obligations ensuing from the sentence (measure) imposed and about the consequences of failing to fulfill them.
- House calls to clients.
- Assisting and supporting clients in their search for jobs, homes etc.
- Accompanying clients to the CPMS centre.
- Assisting clients in communicating with the authorities.
- Assisting in settling debts (e.g. through repayment schedules).
- Helping the CPMS to understand the Romany community.
- Co-operation with community service providers.

Mentors receive a monthly group supervision to discuss cases and solve possible difficulties.

Close cooperation between the mentor and the probation officer is essential for the delivery of the community sentence/measure. CPMS officers choose suitable clients and they cooperate with mentors during the whole case. The CPMS staff evaluate effectiveness of mentor interventions and whole Mentor Scheme (standard evidence is used to track and increase impact of the program). Mentor Scheme is unique service that uses potential of the Romany minority to solve crime.

The Mentor Scheme has been tested in several regions of the Czech Republic. 52 mentors have been trained and they collaborated with 18 regional centers of CPMS by the end of year 2008. 573 clients used the scheme and the intervention was successful in 265 cases.

b. A description of the effects of the scheme on the workings of the court (*maximum 1 page*)

The Mentor Scheme has a positive impact in field of crime prevention and social integration of Romany minority because of its primary focus in lowering risk of social exclusion and re-offending of CPMS's clients. The mentor work increases the client's social skills and boosts the client's self-confidence and social orientation. The mentor service is influential to whole community - it increases trust in relevant authorities, increases socio-economic standard of families and increases quality of family social ties.

The scheme improves cooperation between CPMS, bodies active in criminal proceeding and other authorities while working with members of Romany minority.

Probation officers provide data about client's involvement in the Mentor Scheme to other experts and authorities such as courts, public prosecutors and social curators. Bodies active in criminal proceeding co-operate with mentors during pre-trial proceedings in cases of juvenile and adult clients in some of regions of the Czech Republic. Mentors also collaborate with community service providers.

The mentors' input in pre-trial proceedings is not only about initial contact and proposing possible approaches, but also about taking the initiative to actively address criminal behavior and, subsequently, living up to the agreed arrangements (to earn money for paying for damages etc.). The Mentor scheme increases effective implementation of community service sanctions (measures) in cases of clients with Romany background. Collaboration of mentors and justice authorities proved as beneficial, particularly their participation in multidisciplinary teams (judges, public prosecutors, Police and other experts) for juvenile offenders proved as beneficial. In 2008 an individual probation program Mentor for juveniles has been imposed and successfully served for first time. The program has been approved by the Minister of Justice and added to the list of probation programs administered by the Czech Ministry of Justice pursuant to Act No. 218/2003 Coll.

Most common cases in which is the scheme used:

The CPMS requests mentoring assistance for clients:

- who have **difficulty co-operating** with the CPMS or fail to respond to the CPMS' call altogether. In such cases, clients may have alternative sentences or measures changed to imprisonment. Therefore, the mentoring service is seen as the client's last resort, allowing him/her to get an explanation of what might happen and how he/she could avert the situation (listed as "type A clients" in statistics, see encl. no.2) from someone with the same language and cultural background.
- with established contact with a probation officer who have **difficulty complying with the alternative sentence** rules or other conditions set by the court or public prosecutor (listed as "type B clients" in statistics).
- who do co-operate but **face a very high risk of social exclusion**. This includes, for instance, long-term unemployed clients, clients residing in socially excluded areas, etc. (listed as "type C clients" in statistics).

CPMS staff also use mentors when supervision by a probation officer is imposed under Act No. 218/2003 Coll. (Juvenile Justice Act).

- c. Any possible future additions which might improve the results of the scheme
(*maximum 1 page*)

Mentor Scheme is a key activity of Association for Probation and Mediation in Justice. SPJ has been developing the Scheme for several years. It has potential to be used in other countries (see assistance to Bulgarian Crime Prevention Fund, paragraph 6) and for other target groups such as ex-prisoners, unemployed or families where a child could be send to institutional care.

SPJ connects mentoring with other programs such as motivation and re-socialization programs, re-qualification trainings etc. One result of this tendency is the Reintegration Program Plus that supports social and economical reintegration of prisoners to be released and ex-prisoners. Another result is Empowering of Family Project where the Mentor program is used for Romany minority families from which a child could be send to institutional care.

SPJ prepares new databases to monitor cases, interventions and its effectiveness of clients of CPMS as well as Social Care Department for Children.

- d. Any documents, press articles, evidence from members of the public etc. relating to the scheme (*with a brief summary in English or French*)

1. <http://www.mentoring.spj.cz> (incl. summary in English and actual statistics)
2. Statistics (in English)
3. Case Studies (in English)
4. ESF Stories: story no. 9: System of Mentoring in Criminal Justice, page 117 (English summary)
5. Conclusions of Opportunity project conference (in English)
6. The National Report about Social Care Strategies and Social Inclusion 2006-2008 (in Czech) – fragment of the Report relevant to the Mentor Scheme; the report states that the Mentor Scheme is the most effective program supported by the Czech Probation and Mediation Service

5. Does the scheme have the support of the competent public authorities in your country? If so, please give details.

The Mentor Scheme was evaluated by the Czech Probation and Mediation Service as a very supportive and beneficial service for offenders' reintegration. CPMS is closely cooperating with the Association for Probation and Mediation in Justice during delivery of the scheme. The National Report about Social Care Strategies and Social Inclusion 2006-2008 (see encl. no. 6) prepared by the Ministry of Social Affairs states that the Mentor Scheme is the most effective program supported by the Czech Probation and Mediation Service. Justice Minister Jiří Pospíšil strongly supports this scheme that could be probably financed by the Ministry of Justice in near future (this possibility is being discussed now).

6. Do you believe the scheme to be usable in other courts in European states? Give your reasons.

SPJ believes that the Mentor Scheme is to be usable in other (not only) European countries. The basic concept of mentoring service adapted to the conditions of the Czech Republic was inspired by the experience of the Danish Department of Prisons and Probation.

Use of Mentor Scheme in other countries was discussed at the conference entitled "Between Prison and Community" held by Opportunity project (aimed at employing people released from prison). Experience of Roma Mentors in the Czech Republic and Black Mentoring Scheme in the UK has been compared at this event (see incl. no. 5). SPJ provided its know-how incl. training and assistance to Bulgarian Crime Prevention Fund - IGA (http://iga-bg.org/new/page_iga.php?page=news) that runs a project to establish Romany mentoring in Bulgaria.

I, Dagmar Doubravová representing the aforementioned institution/organisation, declare that I am aware of the rules of the competition, with which I undertake to comply.

**Done at Prague, Czech Republic
On (date) 27th February 2009**

Signed



**Sdružení pro probaci a mediaci
v justici, o.s.
(SPJ)**

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