

PROJECT FACTSHEET

Bosnia and Herzegovina January 2017

INSTITUTE FOR FORENSIC PSYCHIATRY SOKOLAC – THE FIRST OF ITS KIND IN BIH



FULLY EQUIPPED INSTITUTE TO ACCOMMODATE 200 PATIENTS

In 2010, the Government of Republika Srpska established the Institute for Forensic Psychiatry Sokolac in the reconstructed former military hospital Sokolac. The Government of Switzerland provided funding for the reconstruction of the military hospital into the Institute, as well as for the purchasing of necessary medical and non-medical equipment. Additionally, the initial training of the Institute's staff was also provided. The total investment for the Institute was well over 6 million KM.

Although people with mental disorders committing crimes have the right to adequate psychiatric treatment in secured institutions, there were no such institutions in BiH. Thus, the establishment of an institution for psychiatric treatment in custody was an urgent need. In 2014, as the first institution of this type in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the "Institute for Forensic Psychiatry Sokolac" was opened.

The effects of the war in BiH can be felt even today, especially the effects it had on the mental health of the population. A significant part of the population in BiH suffers from mental health problems. In the post-war situation the stress induced consequences vary – from homicides, an increased rate of suicides, to various other types of violence. According to the international human rights conventions, individuals who have committed crimes and suffer from mental health problems have to receive adequate psychiatric treatment in secured institutions. However, in BiH there were no institutions which could treat these individuals. Unfortunately, they had to be sent to ordinary prisons and could not receive much needed psychiatric treatment, or they would even be left at large and frequently commit new crimes.

The purpose of the intervention was to ensure the highly needed support to the recovery and re-socialization of people with mental health problems who committed crimes. As the only one of its type on the territory of BiH, the Institute for Forensic Psychiatry Sokolac became operational in 2014. The Institute can accommodate 200 patients from the whole country, based on the security measures imposed by the courts. The Institute runs across a space of 7.800m², with a work therapy area, medical specialist offices, and other contents required by strict criteria. According to the latest reports there are over 160 individuals in BiH, who would become users of the Institute.

CONNECTING THE HEALTH AND JUDICIAL SECTORS

The Institute for Forensic Psychiatry Sokolac is registered as a tertiary-level health care institution, where the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare of RS is responsible to oversee the Institute's medical operations. However, Ministries of Justice of the state, entity, cantons and District of Brcko are responsible to cover the running costs of the Institute by paying for accommodation, food and treatment of patients sent to the Institute by the decision of their respective courts. The overall funding, treatment of patients and related security

costs are stipulated within an Agreement signed by the Council of Ministers of BiH, the Government of Federation of BiH, the Government of Republika Srpska, and the Government of the Brcko District. Other than improving the conditions for the recovery of prisoners and meeting human rights standards, the project serves as a good example of cooperation between the health and judicial sectors at the state level in BiH. Furthermore, it can be seen as a rather unique contribution to building bridges between the two entities.

THE PROJECT IN BRIEF

NAME:

Inception of the Institute for Forensic Psychiatry Sokolac

DOMAIN:

Health

THEME:

Health, Judiciary, Human Rights

LAND/REGION:

Bosnia and Herzegovina

PARTNERS:

Ministry of Justice of BiH
Ministry of Justice of Federation of BiH
Ministry of Health of Federation of BiH
Ministry of Justice of Republika Srpska
Government of Brcko District

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER:

Ministry of Health and Social Welfare of Republika Srpska

STARTING POINT / BACKGROUND

INFORMATION:

According to the international human rights conventions, individuals who suffer from mental health problems and have committed crimes must be provided with an adequate psychiatric treatment in secured institutions. In BiH, an institution of this type did not exist, thus these individuals were sent to ordinary prisons without access to treatment, or even left at large where they have frequently committed new crimes.

PROJECT OBJECTIVE:

The aim of the project is to ensure support to recovery and re-socialization of people with mental health problems who committed crimes. Furthermore, the project strengthens the related cooperation of the health and judicial sectors in BiH.

TARGET GROUP:

Individuals with mental health problems who have committed crimes and could not receive necessary psychiatric treatments while in custody.

COSTS:

CHF 1'344'000

DURATION:

01.10.2012 – 31.03.2017

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND CONTACT DETAILS

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