

EUCPN
EUROPEAN CRIME PREVENTION NETWORK

1. Project title

Speciální výslechové místnosti – Special Interrogation Rooms (SIR)

2. Main theme

Interrogation of special victims and particularly vulnerable victims as well as witnesses and perpetrators from the target group.

3. Project purpose and outcome (in two sentences)

- The purpose of this project is to support victims of crime, protect them from secondary victimization and systemic abuse, as well as support the interrogators and facilitate the judicial proceedings by providing high-quality audio-visual recordings. (All this to accommodate a growing need for such measures in the country.)
- The outcome of this project were so far 80 rooms with equipment and demonstration aids (anatomic puppets etc.) and further development and exchange of good practice and methodologies in identifying victims.

4. Project submitter (Member State), project leader(s) and project partner(s)

- Czech Republic
- The Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic
- Office of the Criminal Police Service and Investigation, Police Presidium of the Czech Republic

5. Links to the project's website or online reports/publications (preferably in English)

EN: https://youtu.be/4U_flk2VL9E

CZ: <https://www.policie.cz/clanek/kazda-obet-ma-pravo-na-citlivy-pristup.aspx>

CZ: <https://www.policie.cz/clanek/policejnimi-majaky-uctime-obeti-trestnych-cinu.aspx>

6. Short summary of the project (**max. 100 words**)

The main purpose of the Special Interrogation Rooms (SIR) is to avoid secondary victimization as they allow to conduct the interrogation in a more sensitive environment and with trained professionals. The setting allows the victim to better connect with the interrogator and available demonstration aids (eg. anatomic puppets) help victims to communicate what happened to them. The most important aspect is that all the necessary people are present in an adjacent observation room and can ask further questions through the interrogator. This means that the interrogation is less traumatic for the victim and as everything is thoroughly documented and recorded, the victim has to undergo the interrogation only once as in most cases the recording is accepted by the courts.

7. Project description

The main part of the project is the establishment of Special Interrogation Rooms to accommodate a growing need for a more supportive approach to particularly vulnerable victims as well as special victims. The rooms are equipped with high-tech enabling a smoother interrogation with only one person in the room with the interrogated (in some cases with a psychologist present as well) who can also enable a less traumatic cross-examination, as well as eliminate the need for a repeated interrogation as everything is recorded.

The art of the SIRs also includes equipment to facilitate the interrogation, such as demonstration aids - anatomic puppets for interviewing particularly vulnerable victims as well as other target groups and emotional puppets that are suitable for questioning smaller children, who can react to the expression and appearance of the puppet, making the questioning more acceptable for them.

However, this project also includes the creation of methodologies; A methodology for the identification of victims of crimes - a guide that will help police officers in the direct performance of their duties, in their decision-making about the identification of victims and in finding answers to questions that relate in particular to the needs and rights of the victims. A methodology for working with a particularly vulnerable victim. A methodology on how to use demonstration aids while interrogating child victims.

The initiative within this project to spread and exchange good practice in interrogation and victims assistance in criminal proceedings, furthermore led to

the realization of international seminars and the creation of a spot (an instructional video, which aim is to show the public that special interrogation rooms exist, that the Police of the Czech Republic (PCR) can identify particularly vulnerable victims and prevent their further victimization, and that the PCR can work professionally with victims, provide them with acute psychological help (crisis intervention) and forward them to specialized care.

8. Project objectives

Alleviating victimization of crime victims

Building and expanding the network of special interrogation rooms in relation to operations with the target group and thus contribute to:

- supporting and protecting of the interrogated
- supporting interrogators
- preventing secondary victimization
- preventing systemic abuse

As sub-objectives of the project:

- increasing the professionalization of the work of the relevant bodies
- increasing the efficiency of the work of the relevant bodies
- increasing the prestige of the work of the relevant bodies

9. Project outcome

80 Special Interrogation Rooms with equipment and demonstration aids.

The demonstration aids include anatomic puppets specifically developed for the facilitation of the interrogation in the SIRs. Individual SIRs may also include other demonstration aids such as emotional puppets.

Furthermore, this project was accompanied by the development of a methodology for the identification of victims of crimes and other methodologies for particularly vulnerable victims, including the use of demonstration aids.

Other things resulting from this project include the exchange of good practice in international seminars and the creation of a spot informing the general public about the practices of the Czech police when it comes to particularly vulnerable victims.

10. Start and end project, timescales and key milestone dates

First two SIRs in the Czech Republic – one at the Police regional headquarter in Prague and one in an orphanage in Ostrava – were built in 2004. Thanks to

their success, the government of the Czech Republic started in 2007 a project of building SIRs for children victims and witnesses of the Police of the Czech Republic. In 2010 was created an expert group with representatives from all regions in the Czech Republic. Their goal is to supervise the development of new SIRs and prepare and educate police criminal specialists that use the SIRs. In 2022, we have reached an impressive number of 80 SIRs all over the country.

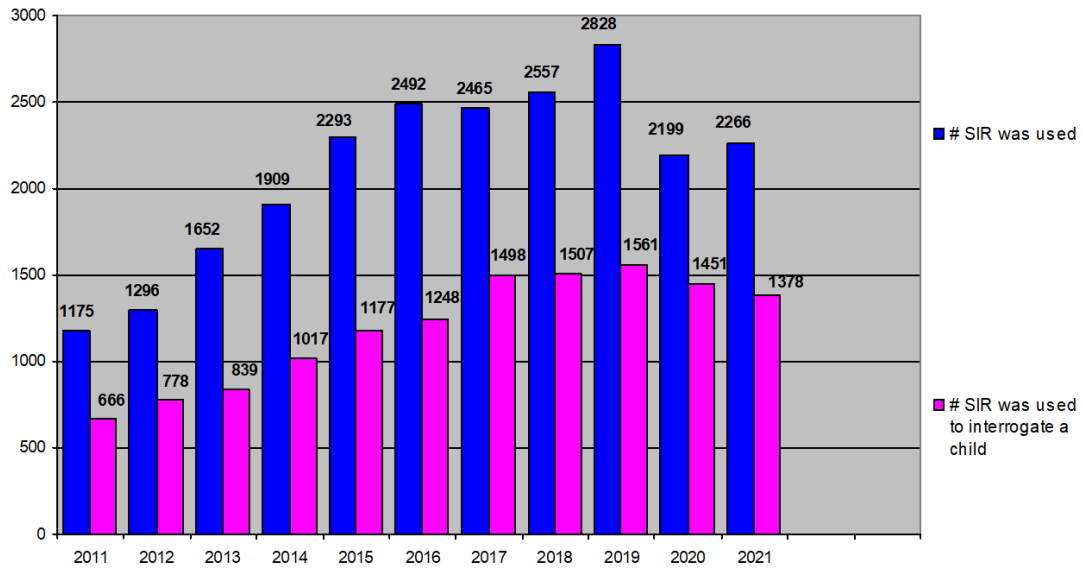
11. Funding (total budget and type of funding (e.g. ISEC, EUCPN Fund,...))

Since 2007, the project of building special interrogation rooms has been primarily financed with the funds from the Ministry of the Interior - through the Crime Prevention Departmental Program of the Ministry of the Interior and the Subsidy Program for the Prevention of Crime at Local Level. Additional funding came also from European funds and the Police of the Czech Republic. In case of a project from the Subsidy Program for the Prevention of Crime at Local Level there is a mandatory (min. 10%) participation of the promoter of the project (region, city, municipality). In addition to building SIRs, there is also an emphasis on their modernization as high-quality audio and video technology is necessary. The total amount for the construction and modernization of the SIRs since 2007 from the financial resources of the Ministry of the Interior exceeds 18 million CZK (roughly 750 000 EUR).

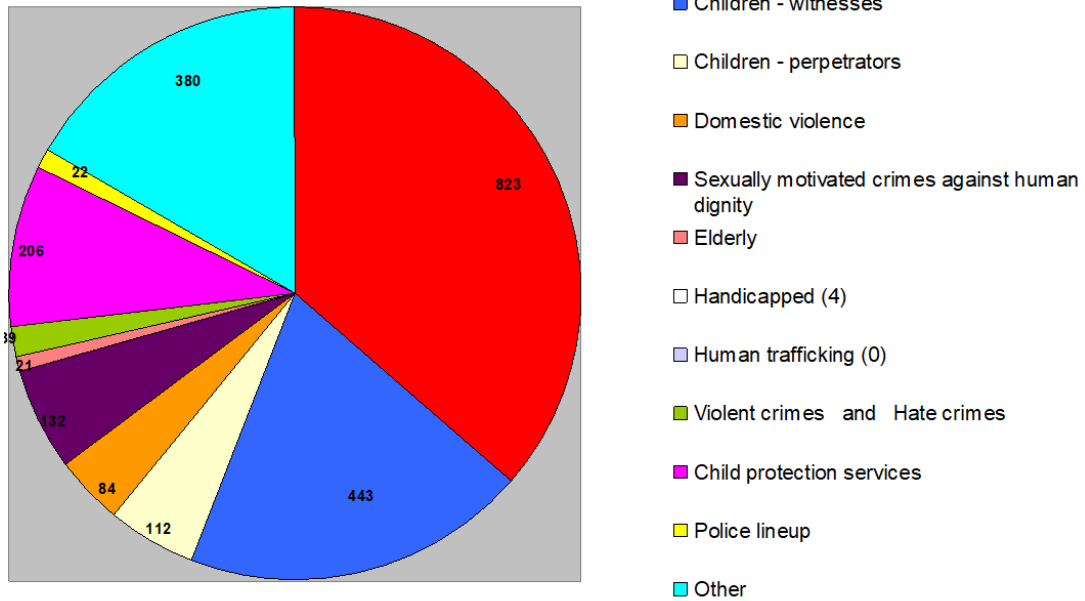
12. Evaluation

From what we've heard from the interrogators, the Special Interrogation Rooms help them to establish a better relationship with the interrogated. The interrogation is less traumatic as many elements that could contribute to secondary victimization have been eliminated – such as repeated interrogations that now can be substituted with the audio/visual recording of the interrogation in the SIR. Another important aspect is that the victim does not have to face multiple people (eg. a victim of gang rape does not have to face a group of men – lawyers etc. as the cross-examination is conducted through the one interrogator in the room with the victim who receives questions from the lawyers and other parties that are watching the interrogation from an adjacent observation room.

How many times were the Special Interrogation Rooms (SIR) used between 2011 and 2021



What were the SIRs used for in 2021



In case this project should be implemented in other Member States, it should be adjusted accordingly as it is prepared in the legal environment of the Czech Republic.

13. Contact details project

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