

Training war crime prosecutors

Fighting impunity in the former Yugoslav countries

An important contribution to enhancing the rule of law in the former Yugoslav countries is the Liaison: Prosecutors and Young Professionals project at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

The European Commission has been supporting this capacity-building and skills training concept since 2009. This was in answer to a request from prosecutors in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia, who needed to improve their capacities through closer integration with international counterparts at the Tribunal.

FROM THE HAGUE TO HOME

The current version of the project, which started in 2012, has two primary components. First, experienced national prosecutors from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia are integrated directly in the ICTY Office of the Prosecutor as “liaison prosecutors”. The liaison prosecutors provide evidence, knowledge and advice to their national colleagues, directly supporting war crimes prosecutions in their national courts. Second, young professionals are placed as interns in the ICTY Office of the Prosecutor. Together, the liaison prosecutors and interns have substantially developed their knowledge and skills, as well as assisted the investigation and prosecution of hundreds of cases of serious breaches of international humanitarian law, both in The Hague and at home.

One such intern in the Office of the Prosecutor is Darko Martincevic from Bosnia and Herzegovina shown with Bob Reid, the Chief of Operations, in the Office of the Prosecutor.

The feedback from the interns’ supervisors at the ICTY has been very positive. Young professionals show a high level of skills and the assistance they provide to the trial and appeals teams has helped speed up the whole process.

IMPACT

The project contributes to enhancing the knowledge and skills of prosecutors and professionals; increasing the application of international legal standards and best practice in the Western Balkans region; and increasing support for regional legal cooperation.



Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA)

Western Balkans

IPA – AN INVESTMENT IN EUROPE. AN INVESTMENT IN RULE OF LAW.

UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY

A former Intern in the Prosecutor's Office at ICTY, Ivana Martinović (pictured), an aspiring lawyer from Serbia, spent her internship working on the case of Goran Hadžić who is charged with war crimes and crimes against humanity in the early 1990s. Looking back at the experience she says: *"Working at the Tribunal alongside some of the most prominent lawyers from across the world was a unique opportunity and challenge for me. I feel that my experience in such a highly professional setting will shape my future career and it has provided me with invaluable skills which I could not have gained elsewhere."*

WAR CRIMES PROSECUTIONS

The European Commission's funding for national war crimes prosecutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia should result in an increase in the number of successfully prosecuted cases. The project, which will run to the end in 2014, with a possible extension to 2016, will continue to support the investigation and prosecution of the many remaining cases of war crimes that are still open in the former Yugoslav countries.

PROJECT DETAILS –

Joint EU and ICTY Training Project for National Prosecutors and Young Professionals from the former Yugoslavia

EU Budget:

EUR 1 million (over 28 months)

Contractor:

Office of the Prosecutor - International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia

Start date:

August 2012

End date:

December 2014

Results:

Better prosecution of war crimes; network of trained prosecutors; acceptance of international legal standards and best practice; improved regional legal cooperation.

Techniques:

On-the-job training for small groups of interns; structured networking between international and national prosecutors for sharing knowledge, skills and evidence.

