



# OPSIDIANET

Offenders with **Psych-Social** and **Intellectual**  
**Disabilities: Identification, Assessment of**  
**Needs and Equal Treatment**





# Why?

The vulnerable situation of persons with psycho-social and intellectual disabilities is not always properly assessed and taken into account when such persons are suspected or accused of committing a crime. This is often due to the lack of knowledge on the part of law enforcement and judicial authorities how to identify the vulnerabilities of such persons, what are the most appropriate ways to communicate with them and how to provide them with adequate opportunities to exercise their rights.



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## How?

By identifying gaps in national legislations and practices that prevent suspects and accused with psycho-social or intellectual disabilities to effectively benefit from the full scope of their rights, developing tools to enable judicial and law enforcement authorities to properly identify and safeguard the rights such persons, and delivering a series of trainings to facilitate and promote the use of these tools in criminal proceedings.



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# Who?

First-line practitioners from criminal justice and law enforcement authorities (judges, prosecutors, investigators, police officers) involved in the investigation and prosecution of criminal offences, other professionals involved in criminal proceedings (criminal lawyers, human rights activists), civil society and research organisations, academics and the general public.



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**“It is not unusual for defendants to appear in court without any indication that they might have mental health conditions, learning disabilities or other conditions that require support. There are a number of reasons for this including the defendant themselves being unaware that they have a particular condition or because their condition has not been diagnosed. Many people with mental health conditions and learning disabilities are uncomfortable about disclosing their condition and will try to hide their support needs. This is often due to the stigma associated with such conditions, or fear of ridicule or that more punitive sanctions might be imposed.”**

**The Prison Reform Trust / Rethink Mental Illness**  
**Mental health and learning disabilities in the criminal courts**

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# Mission

People with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities happen to come into sight of the law-enforcement and justice authorities. Their disability often deprives them from exercising their rights on an equal basis with all other suspects and accused. Within this project, we are determined to find which factors hinder their equal treatment in and to propose how institutions can neutralise it.

In other words our mission is to make sure people with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities exercise their rights within a criminal investigation.



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# Who are we?



Center for the Study  
of Democracy

Bulgaria



Droit au Droit – Right  
to Law

Belgium



Centre for European  
Constitutional Law

Greece



Associazione  
Comunità Papa  
Giovanni XXIII

Italy



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# Concept

## Work packages

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Management and coordination

Research and analysis

Design and development

Education and training

Dissemination and outreach

## Objectives

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Effectively manage and coordinate the project

Identify and assess what is in place and what are the gaps

Design an identification methodology and a manual for criminal justice authorities

Improve the capacity of first-line practitioners

Disseminate the project results to the relevant audiences



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# Research and analysis

Mapping the situation of suspects and accused with psycho-social or intellectual disabilities in the context of criminal proceedings in the project countries

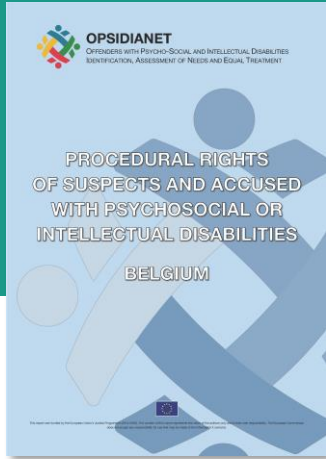
Examine the scientific findings and observations on the procedural rights of suspects and accused with psycho-social or intellectual disabilities

Identify promising practices on how to address the special needs of suspects and accused with psycho-social or intellectual disabilities

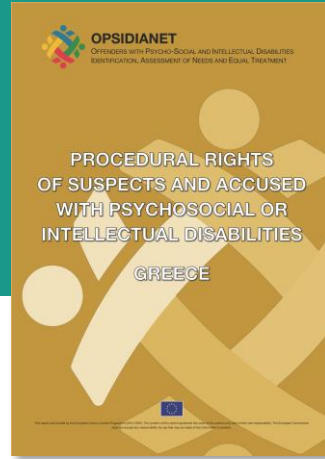


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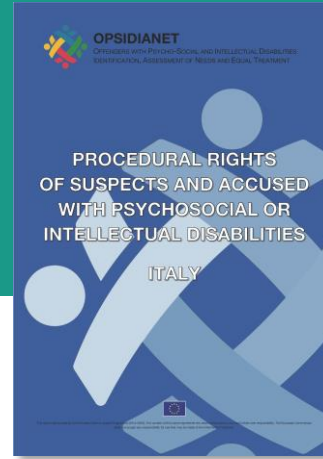
# Research and analysis



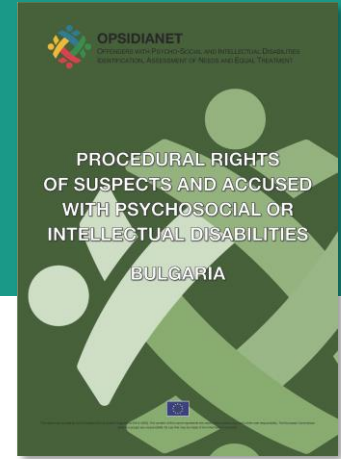
Country report  
Belgium



Country report  
Greece



Country report  
Italy

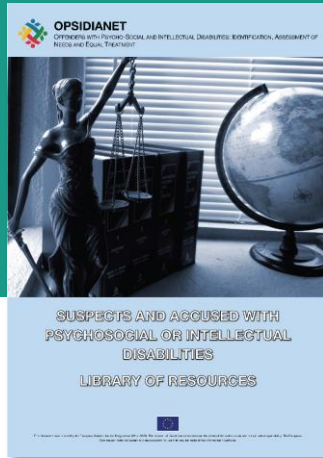


Country report  
Bulgaria



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# Research and analysis



Suspects and Accused with Psychosocial or Intellectual Disabilities: Library of Resources



Vulnerable Offenders: The Rights of Suspects and Accused with Psychosocial and Intellectual Disabilities



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# Design and development

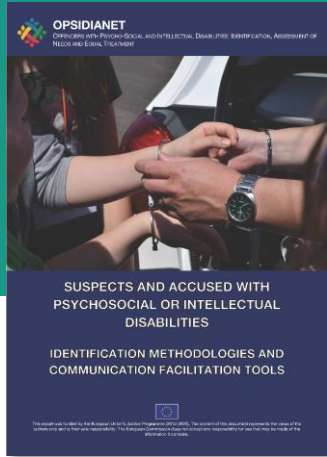
Review existing methodologies for the identification of psycho-social and intellectual disabilities as well as practical tools facilitating the communication with such persons

Develop a methodology with a set of methods and techniques enabling first-line practitioners to identify signs of psycho-social or intellectual disability

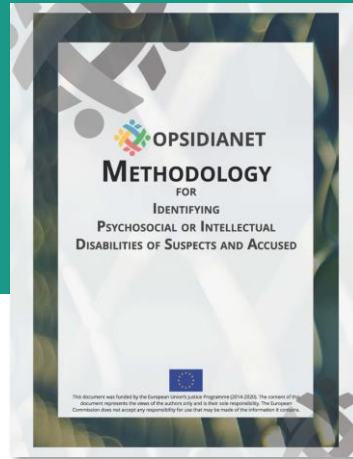
Develop a manual with practical guidelines for first-line practitioners



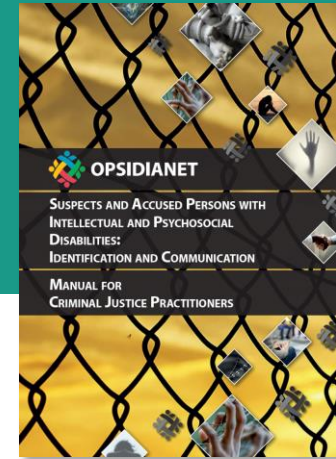
# Design and development



Identification Methodologies  
and Participation Facilitation  
Tools



Methodology for Identifying  
Psychosocial or Intellectual  
Disabilities of Suspects and Accused



Manual for Criminal Justice  
Practitioners



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# Education and training

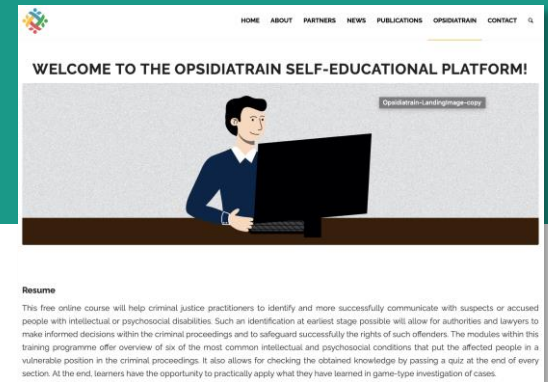
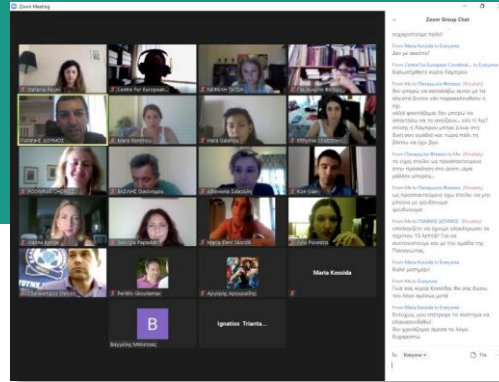
Training seminars in each participating country to improve the knowledge and skills of first-line practitioners

Online training programme delivering in an interactive and self-education format the relevant knowledge and skills to first-line practitioners and enabling users to test their level of achievement



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# Education and training



In-person training seminar  
in Bulgaria

Online training seminar in  
Greece

OPSIDIAttrain  
online programme



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# Dissemination and outreach

Stakeholder identification

Visual identity

Newsletter

Online publicity

Conference



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# Dissemination and outreach



OPSIDIANET  
Logo



OPSIDIANET  
Newsletter



OPSIDIANET  
Website



OPSIDIANET e-  
Conference



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# Tell us what you think!



<https://opsidianet.eu>

<https://www.facebook.com/OPSIDIANET>



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