**Philip Morris report**

*Sep. 2016 - Sep. 2017*

*Attorneys Pro Bono*

The year 2017 showed that all the hard work of attorneys in previous years paid off. The systemic work on eradicating homelessness in Slovakia was finished after a period of over three years. The ample recognition that the lawyers received and the positive changes that the novelization of insolvency legislation brought did not, however, discourage our efforts to pursue our goals further.

**Systemic help in the homelessness problem in Slovakia**

On the 17th of March 2017, the insolvency legislation was amended to make the process and access to the personal bankruptcy easier. Under the new law, also the NINA (No Income No Assets) group of people is able to get rid of their debts either via debt-repayment calendars or declaration of personal bankruptcy. The process is administered by the Centre for legal help, which is currently overwhelmed by the number of requests. The waiting time for the first consultation is currently about 4-5 months, which significantly slows down the process of debt settlement.

Therefore, on the 27th of April 2017 we arranged a meeting with the Centre for legal help, the aim of which was to set up cooperation between the Centre and the Attorneys Pro Bono. Results of the meeting were presented to the attorneys and NGOs at the training that the Pontis foundation organised on the 28th of April. The training was attended by 26 people, 9 of which were lawyers and the rest consisted of social workers from 10 different NGOs. The main aim was to educate both groups in the changes that the new legislation brought as well as to bring the groups together in the hope of future pro bono cooperation.





The program Attorneys Pro Bono has been among the top 5 finalists for the cooperation on the homelessness matter at the European Pro Bono Awards in Amsterdam in November 2016. The Pontis foundation represented the attorneys at the venue. In April 2017, the project was awarded with an honorable mention at the Via Bona awards.

<http://www.nadaciapontis.sk/clanok/co-v-praxi-znamena-zmena-podmienok-osobneho-bankrotu/2274>

<http://www.nadaciapontis.sk/clanok/advokati-bezplatne-pomahaju-hladat-sposoby-oddlzenia-pre-ludi-bez-domova/2084>

<http://www.nadaciapontis.sk/clanok/precitajte-si-o-advokatoch-v-novom-casopise-zodpovedne-podnikanie/2276>

**Pro Bono Legal Clinic for Homeless People**

4 clients are currently receiving legal support while 2 attorneys are actively engaged in the clinic. Based on the experiences from the previous year, we decided to assign attorneys for each NGO as compared to previously the attorneys working for different NGOs based on the order of the clients. This allows the relationship between both subjects to grow deeper, making the attorneys more involved in the work with homeless. Next month we are meeting with more attorneys to discuss this model and assign the remaining 2 NGOs their own attorney.

In order to maximise the help that the NGOs receive, we created a g-drive document, in which templates of useful documents are saved for the use of other NGOs. This is being used regularly and new documents are added by the NGOs.

**Legal Pro Bono Clinic of the NGO Sector**

We have opened the Legal Pro Bono Clinic of the NGO Sector two times since September 2016 until June 2017. Both times, this involved an initiation meeting of the lawyers and NGOs, a student meeting on which we presented the cases, the group work itself and the

final presentations of the students. Altogether 25 students have been working on real cases of 10 NGOs. Among others, Depaul Slovakia (one of the biggest NGOs working with homeless people) received a legal statement on the rights of the organisation and its clients, who are often indebted to the health insurance providers. The clients are regularly declined basic health service, they are mistreated and the organisation has no capacities or means to keep the clients in their premises and offer professional health care. The statement is available for download for other NGOs as well.



We thank you for your support and hope it will enable yet other new useful cooperation between NGOs and lawyers!