



MEMBERSHIP OF VICTIM SUPPORT EUROPE

INFORMATION AND MEMBERSHIP CONDITIONS

INTRODUCTION

Victim Support Europe is an independent organisation that can highlight and address the challenges facing victims in the aftermath of crime. One of Victim Support Europe's many strengths lies in its unique position as the recognised umbrella organisation of major victim support services in Europe. The diversity of the membership is a key component, which gives Victim Support Europe an important influencing position in respect of the rights and needs of victims and witnesses of crime in Europe. The wide backgrounds and experiences of our member organisations also help to ensure that they can learn from each other to develop high quality services in the aftermath of crime.

The work of Victim Support Europe helps to ensure that:

- victims are given stronger rights in Member States throughout Europe
- victim issues have a higher profile and receive a greater priority on the European political agenda
- national victim support organisations enjoy higher status and credibility
- victim support organisations learn from each other, share best practice and cooperate which will increase the number of victims able to access quality support services in the aftermath of crime
- extended international cooperation will ensure improved referral mechanisms and service provision to cross-border victims

Our membership is continuing to grow which enables Victim Support Europe to represent the voice and needs of an ever larger number of victims of crime across Europe. Victim Support Europe, and our member organisations, work to ensure that all victims can access quality services and rights in the aftermath of crime, regardless of where they live or where the crime took place.

We provide the foundation for a brighter future for victims in Europe.
Join us!

Membership is open for Non Governmental Organisations providing or co-ordinating services for victims of crime. It is also open for organisations which are planning to develop services in countries where none at present exist. There are conditions a potential member is expected to meet.

Membership is limited to all 43 countries from the Council of Europe. A European victim support organisation can become a member if the organization:

- is a non governmental organization,
- is working nationally,
- is not focussed on a single issue, but offers general help to victims of crime,
- works with trained volunteers and/or professionals,
- works free of charge,
- does not discriminate against victims on grounds of age, sex, race, nationality or religion, or according to the type of crime which has been committed, unless it can demonstrate that another organisation already exists providing an effective service for the group of victims which has been excluded,
- does not engage in party political activities or express views on behalf of a political party,
- does not undertake campaigns concerning the sentencing of offenders, except where issues of compensation or other forms of reparation are concerned.

Membership is limited to a maximum of three victim support organisations per country. In case a second or third victim support organisation from a country wants to become a member of Victim Support Europe, the new member must be approved by the existing member(s).

FULL MEMBERSHIP

Full membership is open to European non governmental Victim Support organisations providing or overseeing a range of generic services of practical, psychological and emotional support to victims of crime on a national level. Such services must be available to all victims of crime. Consideration for full membership will be given to organisations operating at a sub state level that provide support services on a large scale to a significant group of people within the population or provide a substantial range of services.

Full membership is only open to non governmental Victim Support Organisations that operate in a European state as defined by the Council of Europe. Presently full membership is restricted to a maximum of three memberships in each European state. Victim Support Organisations interested in full membership are invited to contact VSE's secretary for more information and support.

CRITERIA FOR FULL MEMBERSHIP

Conditions of full membership include that the application organisation is:

- (a) An independent non governmental organisation
- (b) Provides a range of general services supporting victims of crime including the provision of practical and emotional support
- (c) Operates at a state or national level and provides or makes available support to a substantial group of the population
- (d) Provides services free of charge to the end service user
- (e) Ensures within the laws of their state that the confidentiality of the service user is respected and maintained in all its activities
- (f) Provides adequate training to all staff and volunteers working with or supporting victims of crime

- (g) Generally agree with and support the principles, policy, standards and good practice guidelines that may from time to time be agreed by Victim Support Europe.
- (h) Participate actively in the work of Victim Support Europe
- (i) Provide on a regular basis to VSE such reasonable information that may be requested to ensure that the conditions of membership continue to be met.
- (j) The full membership will be vested in the name of the member organization which should nominate two individuals to represent the organization at formal meetings of VSE, one of whom should be designated as the voting member.
- (k) Organisations in full membership must have a non discrimination policy at least in respect of age, sex, gender, nationality, religion and victims of crime.
- (l) Organisations in full membership when representing or working with VSE must not engage in party political activity or express views on behalf of a political party. Also they must not undertake campaigns concerning the sentencing of offenders with the exception being in relation to rights of victims.
- (m) Full membership is continuous on the basis of the payment of the appropriate membership fee, the provision from time to time of any reasonable information to ensure that the full membership criteria continues to be met.

APPLICATION PROCESS FOR FULL MEMBERSHIP

In considering an application for full membership it's essential to meet the criteria set out for full membership. In those European states with one or more member organisations, the applicant organisation will require to have the application signed and endorsed by the Chair, President, or other senior official of the existing organisations prior to submission. An application form can be downloaded at www.victimsupporteurope.eu or requested to the VSE Secretariat.

In European states where there are presently no full members of VSE, organisations should contact the VSE Secretariat to express an interest in becoming a full member. They will be able to give information and advice in the application process.

Usually the Executive Committee of VSE will appoint a member of the Committee to act as liaison between VSE and the applicant organisation. The application process can take between six to eight months. It will usually include some informal discussions with representatives of the applicant organisation followed by the submission of the application to VSE. A visit to the applicant member's organisation along with a presentation on its work may be appropriate. Such a visit is usually considered when an application for full membership is received from an organisation in a state that does not presently have a VSE full member organisation.

The application accompanied, if necessary, by a short report and recommendation is then submitted for consideration by the Executive Committee which meets four times each year.

Successful applicant organisations will become members on receipt of the payment of the appropriate membership fee.

BENEFITS OF FULL MEMBERSHIP:

1. Members play a strategically important role in developing and innovating new policy and practice at a pan European level.
2. VSE has formal accredited consultation status with the European Union and the United Nations.
3. Access to some of the most renowned and recognised victim service experts in the EU and the world.
4. Opportunities to participate in European projects to develop policy and best practice in victim practice.
5. Regular opportunities to attend conferences, seminars and specialised training events.
6. Participation in VSE's annual conference and general meeting with the right for up to four observers to take part in the conference.
7. Membership of a diverse network of national organisations providing services to victims of crime across Europe
8. Access to the full members area of the VSE web site (under development)
9. Quarterly VSE Newsletters that provide comprehensive updates on developments of member organizations throughout Europe. Also provides important information about the work of VSE at a European and international level.

10. The licensed use of the VSE logo on letterheads and publications
11. European wide recognition of prestige and standards in the work of your national organisation.
12. An identified support person usually a member of the Executive Committee
13. Support when required for your organizations work at home and abroad.
14. Access to reports briefings and publications specially prepared for members.
15. In addition members may vote at Annual General Meetings including policy resolutions and elections to VSE's Executive Committee. Members may also be elected to the Executive Committee and other forums of VSE
16. A certificate of full membership of VSE is provided.
17. Each new full member organisation will receive a Welcome and Induction Pack (under development) containing membership information, policy statements, appropriate publications and copies of VSE Constitution and procedures.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

VSE recognises the important and valuable work undertaken by state level governmental bodies, academic institutions and other governmental and non governmental organisations operating with a European and international focus. Equally importantly throughout Europe there are many victim support organisations that may not meet the criteria for full membership of VSE. Such organisations may have a legitimate interest in contributing too and benefiting from the work of VSE. To enable more effective networking, sharing of experience, information and best practice VSE has recently introduced an associate membership scheme.

Bodies such as those outlined above are now able to make application for associate membership of VSE. Up to three entities in each European state may be afforded associate membership status. An application form can be obtained from the Secretary, or from the VSE website at www.victimsupporteurope.eu

CRITERIA FOR ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

The criteria for membership includes that the applicant organisation should:

- (a) Support broadly the aims and objectives of VSE
- (b) Be in a relevant field of work associated with victims of crime
- (c) Be interested in improving the position of victims of crime
- (d) Applicants within Europe should have their application endorsed and countersigned by at least one full Victim Support Europe member organisation from the state in which the applicant's organisation is constituted or legally defined.
- (e) In European states where no full membership organisation exists the application should be accompanied by at least one letter of support from a recognised public body or non governmental organisation or other such entity as may from time to time be defined by VSE.

- (f) Only formally constituted organisations can become associate members. Such organisations may be non governmental, governmental, academic, educational or victim support organisations operating nationally, regionally or locally.
- (g) Only organisations registered and operating in a European country as defined by the Council of Europe can be admitted to associate membership.
- (h) Associate members may attend and speak at annual general meeting of VSE but have no voting rights.
- (i) For the present in any European country there can be no more than three organisations in associate member at any one time
- (j) Associate membership is continuous on the basis of the payment of the appropriate membership fee, the provision from time to time of any reasonable information to ensure that associate membership criteria continues to be met. Finally that the associate members continues to support broadly the aims and objectives of VSE

APPLICATION PROCESS FOR ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

In European states where there are presently no full members of VSE, organisations should contact the VSE Secretariat to express an interest in becoming an associate member. The Secretariat will be able to give information and advice to assist the applicant organisation.

Usually the Executive Committee of VSE will appoint a member of the Committee to act as liaison between VSE and the applicant organisation. The application process will usually include some informal discussions with representatives of the applicant organisation followed by the submission of the application to VSE. A visit to the applicant member's organization may appropriate. Such a visit is usually considered when an application for

associate membership is received from an organisation in a state that does not presently have a VSE full member organisation.

The application accompanied if necessary by a short report and recommendation is then submitted for consideration by the Executive Committee which meets four times each year.

Successful applicant organisations will become associate members on receipt of the payment of the appropriate membership fee.

BENEFITS OF ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP:

1. Associate members can play a strategically important role in developing and innovating new policy and practice at a pan European and international level.
2. VSE has formal accredited consultation status with the European Union and the United Nations.
3. Access to some of the most renowned and recognised victim service experts in the EU and the world.
4. Opportunities to participate in European projects to develop policy and best practice in victim practice.
5. Regular opportunities to attend conferences, seminars and specialised training events.
6. Membership of a diverse network of national organisations providing services to victims of crime across Europe
7. The licensed use of the VSE associate membership logo on letterheads and publications
8. Enhanced European recognition of prestige and standards in the work of associate members organisation.

9. Access to VSE staff resources as appropriate
10. Access to reports briefings and publications specially prepared for members
11. Quarterly VSE Newsletters that provide comprehensive updates on developments of member organisations throughout Europe. Also provides important information about the work of VSE at a European and international level.
12. A certificate of associate membership of VSE is provided.
13. Each new associate member organisation will receive a Welcome and Induction Pack (under development) containing membership information, policy statements, appropriate publications and copies of VSE Constitution and procedures.