



From the Editor

This year again we are looking forward to an event in the European Parliament (see save the date below) which will bring the attention to victims of crime. This is extremely necessary not only to highlight the need for the full legal implementation of the victims' directive but also to raise the awareness of all stakeholders. In this Newsletter you will find a lot of interesting reports on changes in some countries, but also a lot of information about ongoing projects. We would appreciate if our members could continue to keep us informed about their current and future projects so that we can all share information. Looking forward to seeing you at the event on 18 November.

*Helgard van Hüllen
Vice President of Victim Support Europe*

Save the date: VSE European Parliament event, 18 November 2014

On 18 November 2014 Victim Support Europe will hold a conference entitled "Victims of Crime Beyond 2015" in the European Parliament in Brussels from 13:00 to 14:30. The event will be hosted by Ana Gomes, MEP.

The purpose of this conference is to present [Victim Support Europe's strategy 2014-19](#) to the newly elected MEPs. It will also be the opportunity to raise the awareness about the importance of the full implementation of the Directive establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime by November 2015 as well as about the necessity to further strengthen victims' rights beyond 2015.

The confirmed speakers include Claude Moreas, MEP, Chair of the LIBE

Committee, Iratxe García Pérez, MEP, Chair of the FEMM Committee, Olimpia Monaco, Representative of the Italian EU Presidency and Inga Melnace, Representative of the upcoming Latvian EU Presidency. Please see the [draft programme](#).

If you are interested in attending, please contact [Hélène Heinrichs](#) by 30 October 2014 latest. If you don't have access to the European Parliament building, please also provide your full name, date of birth, nationality, place of residence and passport number in order for us to arrange a security pass for you.

We hope to see you on 18 November to discuss the future of victims' rights!

Report on Roundtable Discussion with international NGOs dealing with victims

The roundtable discussion "Victims of Crime in Europe: A broader NGO Perspective" was organised by Victim Support Europe on 8 September 2014 and was led by Victor Jammers, Executive Board Member of Victim Support Europe.

The JUSTICIA European Rights Network, Fair Trials International, Missing Children Europe, the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM) and the European Network Against Racism (ENAR) were represented.

The purpose of this roundtable was to bring together a group of representatives from international NGOs dealing with victims of crime in order to better get to know each other's work, to exchange ideas and to discuss possible areas of cooperation. The themes discussed were mainly focused on the Directive establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime and several potential areas of collaboration were identified. See [report](#).

Change in VSE Constitution regarding Membership

At Victim Support Europe's last General Meeting on 17 May 2014 in Warsaw, a constitutional change regarding membership was approved. From now on,

the number of associate and full members per European country is no longer limited. This will help Victim Support Europe to better adapt its policy to the reality of certain countries where, for example, there is no national but only a regional coordination of victim support services or where there is no organisation providing generic support but several organisations offering specialized services.

Recent developments at European level: EU Internal Security Strategy

On 29 September 2014 the Committee of the Regions hosted a conference on the EU Internal Security Strategy. This strategy was launched in 2010 and expires in 2014. The European Commission is now preparing a new Internal Security Strategy for the upcoming years. EU Commissioner for Home Affairs Cecilia Malmström opened the conference. Victim Support Europe was invited as a keynote speaker. Victor Jammers, member of the Executive Board, represented the organisation.

The EU Internal Security Strategy addresses issues like cybercrime, organised crime, human trafficking, migration, terrorism and radicalisation. Victim Support Europe sees the importance to prevent these types of crime and to identify the offenders and bring them to court. One of the main principles of the strategy is the citizen-centred approach. The strategy makes it clear that citizens have to be protected against security threats. And the strategy sees citizens as important co-producers of security. Victim Support Europe sees the relevance of this, but raised the question of what will be done if the protective measures fail. The strategy doesn't mention citizens as victims of crime. This issue should be included in the strategy the European Commission is now developing.

Victim Support Europe stressed the fact that victims of a crime need information as well as psychosocial, practical and legal support. The needs they have may vary from victim to victim. These needs have already been translated into rights in the EU directive establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime that was published on 25 October 2012. The directive gives victims of crime or their family members the right to information, the right to access victim support services, the right to support from victim support services, the rights to participate in criminal proceedings and the right to legal aid. According to Victim Support Europe, these rights are relevant for the issues that the strategy addresses and should be integrated in the new EU Internal Security Strategy.

New Information Leaflet for Victims of Crime on Cruise Ships

Our Associate Member the International Cruise Victims Association (ICV) has published a new leaflet highlighting cruise safety tips for EU passengers. The leaflet includes information to know before leaving port as well as practical tips for victims or witnesses of crime on cruise ships. For more information on ICV, please review their [website](#). This worldwide group provides support to victims of crimes on cruise ships.

The leaflet can be downloaded [here](#).

News from our member organisations

WEISSER RING

Austria

Weisser Ring: Psychosocial and legal assistance for detained crime victims in Austria

The legal status of crime victims has constantly been improved in past parliamentary terms in Austria, especially in the course of criminal proceedings. The possibility to provide psychosocial and legal assistance by victim support organisations is one central instrument. The background to this provision, implemented into the Code of Criminal Procedure in 2006, is the fact that violent and sexual offences, as well as the violent death of a close relative, may lead to tremendous shock or trauma. Psychosocial and legal assistance shall ensure a safe participation of vulnerable victims and the prevention of secondary victimisation throughout the criminal justice process. The precondition for psychosocial and legal assistance requires the necessity to protect the victims' procedural rights. Since August 2013, detention centres are obligated to inform victim support organisations about incidents of violent or sexual offences, if the victims approve of the data transfer. Supported by the Weisser Ring Austria, detained persons do now have access to psychosocial and legal assistance. This new

development is one step towards more transparency within closed institutions and the entitlement of every individual to victims' rights regardless of previously committed offences.



Bulgaria

SVCCC Foundation

SVCCC Foundation provides general services to victims of crime in Bulgaria. SVCCC Foundation is financed by Governmental support funds, projects and donations.

Its main office is in Sofia and it has branches in Plovdiv, Blagoevgrad, Varna and Burgas.

Recently SVCCC has been working on a project with Samilia Foundation (Belgium) for re-socializing and job-adaptation of victims of trafficking and has been awarded a grant in cooperation with LIBRA association and IESCUM (Italy) for a European project on "Alternatives to imprisonment: identification and exchange of good practices", which is currently in development.



Czech Republic

Bily Kruh Bezpeci

Bily kruh bezpeci (BKB) is going to open the 116 006 helpline for victims of crime in the Czech Republic. BKB received a grant from the Open Society Fund Praha - Norwegian funds supporting projects on fight against (domestic) violence - in July 2014. The project called "First aid to persons at risk / affected by (domestic) violence" is mainly focused on starting a free-of-charge helpline for victims of crime.

The Czech Telecommunication Office has given BKB the permission to use the European harmonized number 116 006. The decision was final on 29 July 2014, and the right to use the number lasts until 31 December 2018. In EU countries the telephone number 116 006 is reserved only for toll-free telephone assistance to victims of crime. It belongs to the category of so-

called numbers with social value like for example helplines for children, for missing children, etc. The European harmonized number 116 006 currently operates in Germany, Austria, Belgium, France, Denmark, Croatia and Ireland. The Czech Republic will be joining these countries from 1.1.2015, when BKB will open the toll-free helpline for victims of crime based on collect call which means that the line operator in each country must provide funds to pay phone charges.



Croatia

Croatian Victim and Witness Support Service

In July Victim and Witness Support Service Croatia (VWSS) celebrated one year of the National Call Centre for Victims of Crime and Misdemeanours. At the event, VWSS reflected on the past year and shared the National Call Center's statistics with media representatives and other guests.

During the first year of work the National Call Center received 2421 calls from victims, witnesses, victims' family members and other citizens in need of help. The support was provided by 67 trained volunteers who generously donate their time, knowledge and effort to victims, witnesses and their families without any compensation.

The most important part of the event was a ceremony during which certificates of appreciation were given to volunteers who contributed to the development of the National Call Centre as a special recognition and an award ceremony pronouncing the volunteer of the year.

VWSS Croatia is currently working on informing the general public about the services of the National Call Centre through advertisements in public transportation in Zagreb and is continuing with victim and witness support activities through the National Call Centre and offices in Vukovar and Osijek.



Udruga
za
pomoć
žrtvama
kaznenih
djela

UDRUGA BIJELI KRUG HRVATSKE

Croatia

Bijeli Krug Hrvatske (White Circle Croatia)

In 2014 the Association *White Circle Croatia* is implementing the project *"Information and assistance available to everyone!"* for which financial support of the Ministry of Justice and local government has been received. This project is a continuation of previous activities of *White Circle Croatia* as a provider of legal services and psycho-social support to victims.

The purpose of this project is to provide access to legal aid to victims of criminal matters in rural and island regions of Split-Dalmatia County, informing them about their rights in criminal procedure, assembling reports and representing victims in front of the legal authorities.

Through the project *White Circle Croatia's* services are to be made available to as many beneficiaries as possible and in particular to people who are not well informed about their rights or for whom it is impossible to go to a city to seek for help because of their difficult financial situation.

Besides the two partner organizations, the *Legal Aid Clinic of Faculty of Law in Split* and *association Srma - Sinj*, the local authorities of Supetar and Sinj are also involved in the project and give their full support.

Croatia

Independant Sector for Victim and Witness Support, Ministry of Justice

The Independent Sector for Victim and Witness Support has the leading role in institutionalization of victim/witness support within the judiciary and the role of managing the strategic development of the system in the Republic of Croatia.

Since 2013 there have been two new services for victims implemented by the Ministry of Justice:



- After 1st of July 2013, since Croatia joined the European Union, the Independent Sector for Victim and Witness Support started processing the requests for compensation according the Crime Victims Compensation Act.

According to the mentioned Act, victims of crime with elements of violence intentionally committed on the Croatian territory have the right to claim financial compensation for the cost of medical treatment, loss of earnings, loss of statutory maintenance for close blood relative of a deceased victim and funeral expenses.

The procedure starts with filling out an official form that should be sent to the Ministry of Justice. More information can be found [here](#).

- Since 1st of February 2013, the Independent Sector for Victim and Witness Support has started providing information to victims of criminal offences against sexual freedom, life and body, with elements of violence and war crimes about the release of the offender from the prison.

Victims are provided on the phone with basic information about the date of release of the offender. Also emotional support and referrals to other relevant services are provided.



Finland

Rikosuhripaivystys Suomessa

Anti-stalking legislation was finally enacted in Finland on 1.1.2014. According to the law a person is guilty of stalking if he/she repeatedly threatens, follows, monitors, contacts or in some other way stalks another person in such a way that it is likely to cause fear or anxiety to him/her. Stalking is an indictable offence which may be sentenced to a fine or up to two years in prison.

The chapter of sexual crimes in the Finnish penal code was changed from 1.9.2014. The main changes relate to expanding the concept of rape so that also those criminal acts which were formerly considered as milder rape will now be punished as rape. This will mean e.g. that if violence is used, the

case should always be processed as rape. If the victim is under 18, the case will automatically be considered as aggravated rape.

From 1.5.2014 onwards a new law on examining the criminal background of volunteers working with children entered into force. This means practically that volunteer organisations will be able to receive a criminal record of persons who apply for volunteering with children. The consent of the volunteer is needed for the process.

Germany



Weisser Ring: 5th Anniversary of the German Helpline for Victims of Crime

In 2009, the German helpline for victims of crime was established, presenting a unique concept among the European counterparts: operating the helpline exclusively with voluntary counsellors. Together with 23 specially selected and trained pioneers, WEISSER RING Germany implemented this brilliant idea. Personal dedication and unbridled optimism has made the German helpline what it is today. Continually improved competence of the counsellors acquired through their experience and continued training has resulted in steadily increasing quality, which is reflected in their work. Currently, 65 counsellors assist every week more than 350 callers who are seeking help.

As a sign of appreciation for the committed work of all contributors to the German helpline, WEISSER RING organised a festive ceremony. The national chairwoman Roswitha Müller-Piepenkötter paid tribute to the pioneer counsellors – of whom ten are still active for the helpline – and Dr. Helgard van Hüllen emphasised the unique position of the German helpline for victims of crime. All counsellors took part in a wonderful party accompanied by live music and a theatre spectacle put on by actors who are well known through the telephone training sessions. We look forward to a promising future!



Italy

I-CARE - Associazione Italiana di Supporto Vittimologico

Clinical observation by professionals dealing with sexual abuse highlights several often overlooked situations in which women and teenagers expose themselves to risks apparently unaware and often repeatedly. Actually, several factors, both sociocultural and psychological, concur in bringing about such situations. Among these, it is possible that Asperger syndrome could play a role in exposing women and teenagers to risk situations. Asperger individuals display a social knowledge deficit and a remarkable social naivety in sharp contrast to their normal intellectual and academic abilities. In order to raise the awareness about this issue, the Associazione Italiana di Supporto Vittimologico, I-CARE, is organizing a workshop for its own operators and for other institutions like police and social workers who are often in touch with abuse victims.



The Netherlands

Slachtofferhulp Nederland: Plane Crash in Ukraine

On 17 July 2014, flight MH17 of Malaysia Airlines crashed in Ukraine. Nearly 300 passengers and staff on board were killed, of which 196 were from the Netherlands. Slachtofferhulp Nederland is involved in the support of the next of kin of the victims. The families of at least 168 Dutch victims and 23 victims from other countries are being supported. Slachtofferhulp Nederland is helping the families of the victims in the different problems they are facing: psychosocial, practical and legal. Thanks to the contacts Slachtofferhulp Nederland has with other members of Victim Support Europe, fast cooperation could be established. Notably with Victim Support England and Wales, Victim Support Scotland and Weisser Ring Germany.

On 18 July, the day after the crash, a website was

launched for the next of kin of the victims. This website provided information on relevant aspects, like psychosocial and practical consequences. The website was rapidly further improved. Within a week e.g. a separate part was available only accessible for next of kin where they could share their grief and ask questions. By 22 August an English version of the website was available. Slachtofferhulp Nederland is hosting this [website](#).

Slachtofferhulp Nederland noticed that a few weeks after the crash, the criminal investigation and the investigation into the causes of the crime were well organised and internationally coordinated. Support for the victims of the crash however has largely been depending on the initiatives taken by one organisation (in this case Slachtofferhulp Nederland) that has been using its network (Victim Support Europe and personal contacts overseas) to inform and support the next of kin of the victims. There is room for improvement in this. It might be argued that this is an exceptional case, and in a way it is. But the plane crash could have been a crash between international trains, a ferry that sunk at sea, a form of cyber crime, a terrorist attack or a natural or man-made disaster with victims from many different countries. Governments and the European Union should take action in this.



Portugal

Portuguese Association for Victim Support - APAV

On the 24th of September, APAV launched the website www.abcjustica.pt, the main outcome of the [Project ABC Justice](#) - co-financed by the Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF), United States Embassy. This new and innovative resource aims to inform youngsters aged between 12 and 17 about the functioning of the Portuguese criminal justice system and the rights of victims of crime. Several themes are covered using a simple approach, with uncomplicated and child-friendly language. The rights of victims of crime within the context of the criminal justice system and the ways and resources to get them are explained.

Youngsters are also provided with an overview of the different phases of the criminal proceedings as well as with the role of the most relevant figures that work or participate in the criminal justice system.

Currently the website is only available in Portuguese, but an English version will soon be presented to enable foreign youngsters to jump on board for a trip into the world of the criminal justice system. Feel free to join us on a [visit](#)!

On 18 September in Lisbon APAV promoted the Seminar Right to Quality Services for Victims of Crime. The event was the final conference of Project Right to Quality Services, co-financed by the European Commission under the Criminal Justice Programme.

The Seminar counted with the presence of several national and international experts, who offered their perspectives on cross-cutting issues such as, among others, risk assessment and individual assessment of victims in order to identify their specific needs of protection, impact assessment in the 3rd sector and Right to Quality Services in the 3rd sector as well as the compared experience of victim support in Europe.

The Seminar Right to Quality Services was also a fantastic opportunity for exchanging best practices and experiences on organisational quality certification and its great importance for delivering services who really meet victims' needs.

APAV is one of the partners of Project POEMS, a research project promoted by INTERVICT that aims to map the existing legislation and assess the impact of protection orders in the European Member States. The project is co-financed by the European Commission under Daphne III Programme.

After analyzing 27 national reports on the existing protection orders in each Member State, the research team has progressed on writing the analytical chapters of the report that will be the most important final output of this project.

Interviews to 15 victims in each partner country have raised important questions and conclusions on the efficiency of the protection orders currently

in place. This information is also being processed to be included in the report. All the results of the project will be soon presented in a one day Conference that shall take place in Lisbon on the 28th November. Please see more information about the event [here](#).

Following the success of project Infovictims, APAV is currently managing its sequel, project Infovictims II - co-financed by the European Commission under the Criminal Justice Programme - that shall improve the existing tool and extend and adapt them to new countries. Scotland, Poland, Germany, Portugal and Austria are the countries that form this partnership. After a first meeting to establish the necessary steps to undertake, a second partners' meeting is already scheduled for the beginning of December, where results of the first improvements and adaptations of the [Infovictims website](#) will be presented and discussed.

APAV is promoting the Project PROTEUS - co-financed by the European Commission under the Programme Prevention and Fight against Crime - which addresses a striking new concern in terms of victim support: cybercrime. In particular, this project focuses on identity fraud and identity theft and its final goal is to develop a procedures handbook to be used as a training tool to better equip victim support workers and therefore promote more acute responses to the problems faced by these victims. The project partners includes the General Inspectorate of the Romanian Police (Romania), the Pärnus Center of Gender Based Violence (Estonia), the Spanish Public Prosecution Office (Spain), the Portuguese Public Prosecution Office (Portugal) and the Portuguese Judiciary Police (Portugal). In November the first of two workshops planned under this project will be hold in Bucharest, Romania. The topic this first workshop will focus on Phishing and the use of the banking system for money laundering.



Serbia

Victimology Society of Serbia

The Victimology Society of Serbia is organizing its fifth annual conference *Victims' protection: international law, national legislation and practice*, which will be held in Belgrade on 27th and 28th November 2014.

[Visit website](#)

New partner in Italy: Victim Support Centre of the Province of Mantua

The Victim Support Centre of the Province of Mantua (CSV) has been managed by [LIBRA](#) since 2012. The Centre guarantees free legal, emotional and social support to victims of any type of crime. The Centre methodology is based on an empowerment approach, for which the strengthening of self-determination ability of victims is capital. Self-determination ability is possible thanks to several meetings with the operators, specifically trained in psychological, emphatic, criminological and victimological skills.

LIBRA is currently co-beneficiary and representative partner for the city of Mantua in the European Project coordinated by Province of Livorno, "Vis Network. Victim Supporting Project: a network to support and aid crime victims". The project has the overall objective of supporting victims of crimes facilitating the implementation of minimum standards of rights, support and protection according to the main EU Directives. Please see more information on the project [website](#).

LIBRA is also managing a project financed by Region Lombardy, that aims to promote the protection and the support of victims of organized crime. Within this project LIBRA organized a conference "Chi sono le vittime della mafia? Imprese, Istituzioni e Cittadini" that took place on 27th September 2014 in Sabbioneta.

List of ongoing Projects

- [Infovictims II](#), promoted by APAV (Portugal); partners: Victim Support

Scotland, Subvenia Victima (Poland), Weisser Ring Austria, Weisser Ring Germany, Victim Support Europe

- [IVOR](#) - *Implementing Victim-Oriented Reform of the criminal justice system in the European Union*, promoted by APAV (Portugal); partners: Tilburg University (The Netherlands), Leuven University (Belgium), Victim Support Europe

- *Re-socializing and job-adaptation of victims of trafficking*, SVCCC Foundation (Bulgaria) involved together with Samilia Foundation (Belgium)

- *Alternatives to imprisonment: identification and exchange of good practices*, SVCCC Foundation (Bulgaria) involved together with LIBRA association and IESCUM (Italy)

- *First aid to persons at risk / affected by (domestic) violence*, promoted by Bily Kruh Bezpeci (Czech Republic)

- *Information and assistance available to everyone!*, promoted by White Circle Croatia

- [ABC Justice](#), promoted by APAV (Portugal)

- [POEMS](#), promoted by INTERVICT, APAV (Portugal) involved as a partner

- *PROTEUS*, promoted by APAV (Portugal); partners: General Inspectorate of the Romanian Police (Romania), Pärnus Center of Gender Based Violence (Estonia), Spanish Public Prosecution Office (Spain), Portuguese Public Prosecution Office (Portugal), Portuguese Judiciary Police (Portugal)

- [Vis Network. Victim Supporting Project: a network to support and aid crime victims](#), promoted by the Province of Livorno (Italy); LIBRA association (Italy) involved as a partner

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- Conference ***Implementing and Enforcing the Victims' Rights Directive in the European Union***. This event will take place on **14 November** in **Dublin** and is organised by the Victims' Rights Alliance.

[See more information](#)

- Victim Support Europe will hold an event entitled ***Victims of Crime beyond 2015*** in the European Parliament in **Brussels** on **18 November** from 13:00 to 14:30.

[See more information](#)

- The Victimology Society of Serbia is organizing its fifth annual conference ***Victims' protection: international law, national legislation and practice***, which will be held in **Belgrade** on **27 and 28 November 2014**.

[Visit website](#)

- POEMS Project Final Conference will take place on 28 November 2014 in Lisbon: ***Protection Orders in the European Member States: Where do we go from here?***

[Visit website](#)

- The ***15th International Symposium of the World Society of Victimology*** will be held in **Perth**, Western Australia at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre on the **5-9 July 2015**.

[Visit website](#)

Editor: Helgard van Hüllen
Contributor: Hélène Heinrichs

[About Victim Support Europe](#)

Victim Support Europe is an umbrella organisation which currently consists of 37 national and regional victim support organisations in 25 countries.

Contact to Victim Support Europe:
+32 2 231 01 12 | info@victimsupporteurope.eu
www.victimsupporteurope.eu