



Victim Support
Europe

VICTIM
SUPPORT
EUROPE
**ANNUAL
REPORT**

2015

THE VOICE OF
VICTIMS IN EUROPE



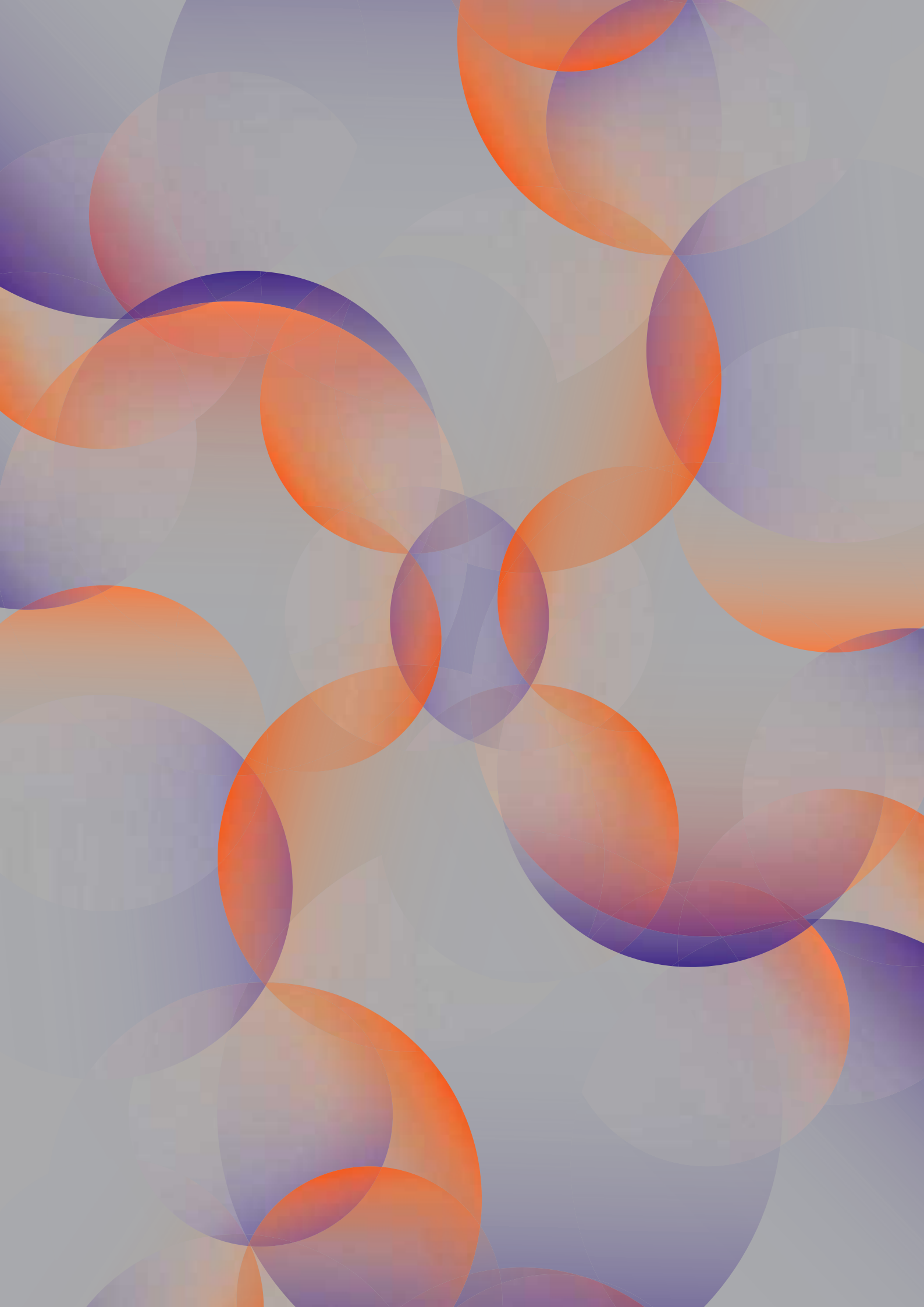
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Victim Support
Europe

INDEX

| | | |
|-------|---|----|
| 1 | FROM THE PRESIDENT - May 2016 | 3 |
| 2 | TREASURER'S REPORT | 5 |
| 3 | IN MEMORY OF DAVID MCKENNA | 6 |
| 4 | OVERVIEW OF VICTIM SUPPORT EUROPE ACTIVITIES 2015 | 7 |
| 4.1 | Strengthening Victim Services in Europe | 7 |
| 4.1.1 | Establishing national victim support services in EU Member States | 7 |
| 4.1.2 | Strengthening victim support organisations in EU Member States | 9 |
| 4.1.3 | Supporting victims across borders | 10 |
| 4.1.4 | Assessing training needs of practitioners | 10 |
| 4.1.5 | Minimum standards for victim support organisations | 10 |
| 4.1.6 | Project IVOR - Implementing Victim-Oriented Reform of the criminal justice system in the European Union | 11 |
| 4.1.7 | Project Infovictims II | 12 |
| 4.1.8 | Partnership in EU action grant proposal: Project T@LK | 12 |
| 4.2 | Implementing Victims' Rights in Europe | 13 |
| 4.2.1 | Supporting national implementation of the EU Victims Directive | 13 |
| 4.2.2 | Awareness raising campaign in the run-up to 16 November | 13 |
| 4.2.3 | VSE European Parliament Conference, 9 November, Brussels | 14 |
| 4.3 | Raising Awareness and Working Together | 15 |
| 4.3.1 | VSE Annual Conference and AGM, 13-15 May, Lisbon | 15 |
| 4.3.2 | European and international advocacy work | 15 |
| 4.3.3 | Newsletters | 16 |
| 4.3.4 | VSE in the Media | 16 |
| 4.4 | Strengthening VSE to deliver more and to better deliver | 17 |
| 4.4.1 | Building VSE's operational capacity | 17 |
| 4.4.2 | Growing VSE's membership, finances and activities | 17 |
| 4.4.3 | New website | 18 |
| 4.4.4 | Social media | 18 |
| 4.4.5 | Evaluating and improving our work | 18 |
| 4.5 | New Members | 19 |
| 4.5.1 | ACTEDO - Associate Member, Romania | 19 |
| 4.5.2 | Bijeli Prsten Hrvatske - Associate Member, Croatia | 19 |
| 4.5.3 | Supporting Justice - Associate Member, UK | 19 |
| 5 | LOOKING FORWARD TO 2016 | 20 |
| 6 | BALANCE SHEET (1 January 2015 to 31 December 2015) | 21 |
| 7 | EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS (from 10 November 2015 onwards) | 23 |
| 8 | SECRETARIAT | 23 |
| 9 | MEMBERS' LIST (status May 2016) | 24 |



1

FROM THE PRESIDENT

João Lázaro

May 2016



João Lázaro

2015 was an extraordinary year for VSE whilst also being marred by the very sad death of David McKenna who had been the President of Victim Support Europe (VSE) since 2010. We will all remember David as a wonderful leader of Victim Support Europe. He was a great friend to us all, a raconteur who would regale us with an endless list of stories and anecdotes that would leave us in tears of laughter one minute and in tears of sympathy the next for those whose rights he fought for. David will be fondly remembered by all of us and greatly missed. Despite this great loss, we have continued to deliver on all our priorities and commitments for 2015. Until our General Meeting on 10 November 2015 where new elections took place, Helgard van Hüllen and myself as the two Vice Presidents took over David's responsibilities.

In 2015 we have carried out a large number of activities to develop and strengthen our network, better represent victims across Europe, support implementation of victims' rights and develop the capacity of organisations and governments around Europe to deliver support for victims.

VSE carried out and participated in a number of projects that contribute to strengthen victim services around Europe. VSE developed an initial longlist of standards as a first step in the development of an accreditation system of victim support organisations. Experts were hired to realise a study on training needs assessment of professionals working with victims in EU member states in close consultation with VSE. This study will help to develop appropriate training and ensure the full implementation of the EU Directive on victims' rights. VSE also conducted a study on cross-border victims, highlighting challenges and the potential role for VSE in improving cross-border support in Europe. VSE contributed as a partner in several other projects on victims' rights and services around Europe.

In 2015 VSE strengthened collaboration and fostered connection between its members and with national and international organisations. VSE continued to facilitate knowledge exchange and cooperation between members through conferences, meetings

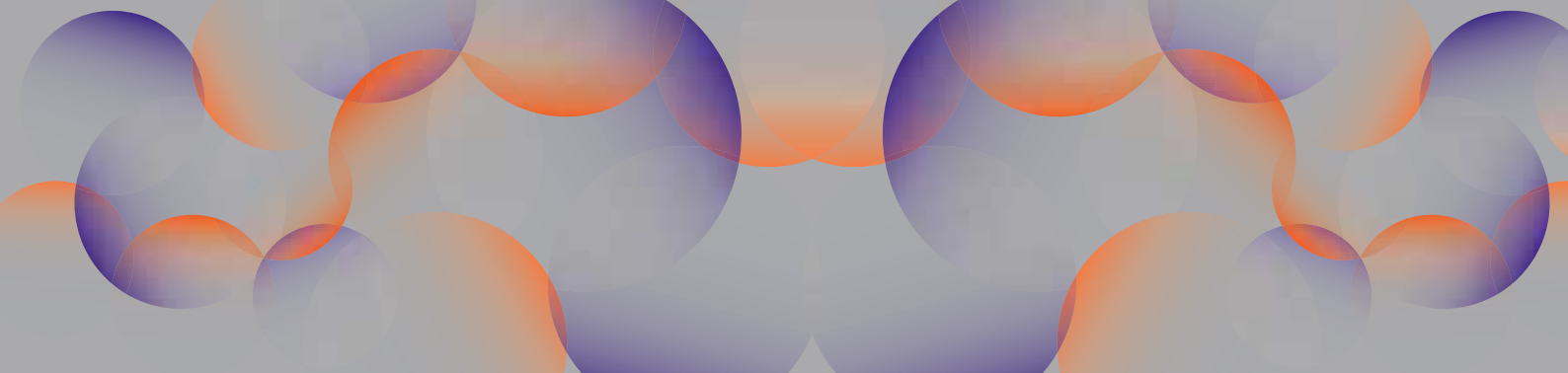
and workshops. We reinforced collaboration with a large number of international NGO networks and agencies involved in victim support, for instance by organising a well-attended roundtable. This resulted in a successful petition which was presented at VSE European Parliament event and sent to Member States on 16 November, deadline for the implementation of the EU Directive on victims' rights.

Throughout the year VSE was in very close contact with the European Commission and the European Parliament, highlighting problems regarding the implementation of the EU directive on victims' rights and other victims-related issues. VSE also offered support regarding the implementation of the EU Directive on victims' rights to its members and to other victims support organisations and assisted them in assessing and providing feedback to national government implementation plans.

VSE continued to raise awareness on victims' rights. VSE's Annual Conference and European Parliament event were some of many successful activities that contributed to EU-wide awareness-raising on the impact of crime and the needs of victims. By contributing to conferences across Europe VSE represented victims' interests in different fora for a variety of stakeholders. Also, awareness raising was fostered through the development of VSE presence and activity in (social) media. We organised a large social media campaign around 16 November to inform the public about the implementation deadline and mobilise them to call upon EU governments.

VSE worked hard to build the capacity of victim support organisations in European Member States that have weak or no victim support systems. We conducted a number of capacity building activities such as workshops and multi-stakeholder meetings to support the development of victim support in several EU countries.

To broaden VSE as a network promoting victims' rights and support in a sustainable manner we worked hard to strengthen our own capacity and the ways we deliver for members and victims. Our long standing commitment to broadening VSE's



membership and expertise whilst consolidating its financial stability saw an important boost through the adoption of a new membership policy and amendment of the VSE Constitution. Changes have been made widening the eligibility criteria to join VSE including through a new category of supporter members. A management policy was developed to ensure smooth management mechanisms for board and staff and a new funding strategy aimed to make VSE's income base broader and more sustainable. The results of the first external evaluation of VSE provided particularly encouraging conclusions on VSE's 2015 activities. We also extended our network with three new associate members from Croatia, Romania and the UK.

As part of the fundraising strategy and to improve services for members a new website and a user-friendly registration system for new members was developed. A separate platform was created hosting a new intranet in which knowledge exchange tools such as a database of publications on victims' issues, a contact database, fora and an area for questions can be accessed by members. VSE also supported cross-border victims by coordinating communication between member organisations and by referring victims to victim support organisations in their country, in particular in response to the two horrible terrorist attacks in France and following the German Wings crash.

I am very thankful to our members, our Executive Board and to Levent, An and H el ene, our staff members in Brussels, for their hard work over the year to deliver more and better services for victims in Europe. This report gives you details about all activities 2015 which I only briefly described above. We hope you will enjoy reading it and we look forward to 2016!

2

TREASURER'S REPORT

Helgard van Hüllen

Vice President and acting Treasurer



**Helgard van
Hüllen**

Our applications for a three-year Framework Partnership Agreement 2015-2017 and for an operating grant 2015 were approved at the end of June 2015 by the European Commission. This meant a delay in some of the planned work but as this report shows, we were still able to undertake all activities and it was a very successful year for VSE.

The outcome of the year is that, with the help of the special donations made by a number of VSE members for which I am very thankful, we have been able to create a surplus in the year of €43,588. Our available reserves position (accumulated profits) has improved to €141,621 which will help to give us future sustainability.

However, the increase in reserves has only been achieved due to the special donations mentioned above and therefore VSE is looking to identify future income streams through increased membership opportunities, commercial activities and fundraising. This forms part of our new three-year strategy and we are already making progress in this direction in 2016.

The main figures for 2015 are that the total operating income was €407,004, with total expenditure of €362,917, leaving a year-end profit of €43,588. Further detailed figures can be found in the attached short version of the balance sheet 2015.

The financial statements, as prepared and audited under Belgian law, show a healthy Audit Report. The General Meeting in May 2016 approved the Balance sheet 2015, including the assets, liabilities and income statement as audited by Mr Ken Snoeks (audit report dated 12 April 2016).

Additionally, I would like to thank our former Treasurer Jo Keaney who resigned from her position in 2015 as she left Victim Support England and Wales. Jo put in place an excellent financial management system which will very much simplify the work of the future Treasurer. I also take the opportunity to thank the office staff in Brussels and my fellow VSE Executive Board members for their hard work and support in 2015.

IN MEMORY OF DAVID MCKENNA

2015 was marked by the sad death of David McKenna who had been the President of Victim Support Europe (VSE) since 2010. At the General Meeting organised on 10 November 2015 in Brussels VSE members commemorated David by bringing together memories in the form of photos. David's tremendous work on behalf of all victims will always be remembered. VSE will continue to build on the momentum he created to speak out for victims and ensure they are supported and are protected in law and in practice.



VSE General Meeting, 10 November 2015, Brussels: commemoration of David McKenna

4

OVERVIEW OF VICTIM SUPPORT EUROPE ACTIVITIES 2015

4.1

Strengthening Victim Services in Europe

VSE has prioritised the establishment of national generic (serving all victims) victim support services across Europe as well the strengthening of existing services. In 2015, our focus, based on funding criteria, has been on Member States of the European Union.

4.1.1

Establishing national victim support services in EU Member States

VSE's commitment to victims includes the development of victim support services across Europe. In pursuit of this objective, VSE developed contacts with Lithuania, Romania, Italy, Cyprus and Greece to explore how we could support progress in those countries. The choice of these countries was based on the FRA report on victim support services¹ which identified eight EU Member

States where there is no general victim support service delivered nationwide (Romania, Lithuania, Italy, Cyprus, Bulgaria, Greece, Latvia and Slovenia).

In 2015, we conducted a number of capacity building activities to support the development of victim support in those Member States.



LI THUANI A

The Human Rights Monitoring Institute (HRMI) was identified as a potential partner for the development of general victim support services in Lithuania.

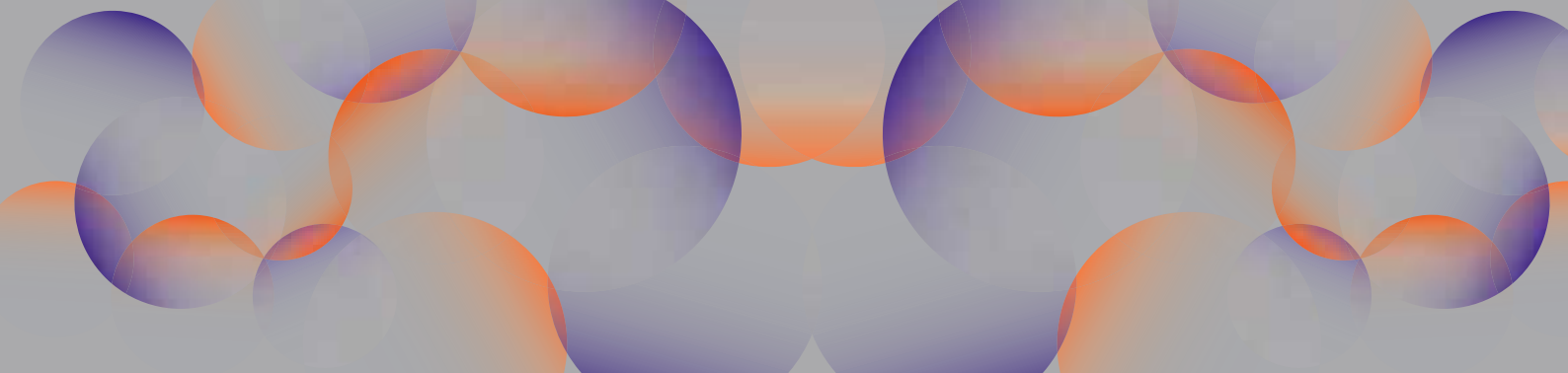
HRMI was founded in 2003 in Lithuania as a human rights watchdog organisation. Since its establishment HRMI has been advocating for full compliance of national laws, policies and practices with international human rights obligations and working to encourage people to exercise their rights. Over the years, HRMI activities evolved and expanded, leading to the development of new strategies and approaches that would not only promote legal changes but would also ensure that rights are real and effective in practice.

In partnership with HRMI, two meetings were held in Vilnius in September. The first reinforced our collaboration with HRMI and other NGOs – in

particular Caritas - with the general objective to establish national victim support services.

On the second day a workshop was held with 25 government representatives to raise their awareness of obligations to establish national victim support services, and explore options for government action. All Representatives showed a strong commitment to implementing the Directive and establishing support services. VSE has had ongoing contacts with HRMI since that meeting to chart progress, support analysis of implementing laws and seek further progress in terms of establishing victim support services.

In 2016 we will pursue the work started in Lithuania. In particular, we hope to support the expansion of support services by NGOs to different regions of Lithuania. We also hope to explore with the Government how they intend to establish or fund services and support them in that process.



ROMANIA

ACTEDO (“Equality and Human Rights Action Center”) was identified as a potential partner for the development of general victim support services in Romania.

ACTEDO was set up in 2013 in Romania with the mission to promote fundamental rights and gender equality and to act against human rights violations.

ACTEDO’s activities are awareness-raising campaigns, advocacy, research, educational activities and community development actions. Since 2014 a Pro Bono Network for Human Rights has been established consisting of 40 Pro Bono lawyers. This is the first human rights clearinghouse established in Romania. It is designed to facilitate access to justice in cases of discrimination and human rights violations. The target groups are currently vulnerable groups (victims of domestic and sexual violence, Roma, persons with disabilities, HIV/AIDS positive persons, LGBT persons, institutionalised children, etc.) 30 requests for legal assistance were dealt with in the first 4 months of its existence. The intention is to widen the target groups to all

victims of crime and to work with other organizations to provide additional services.

Contacts were established with ACTEDO, which also applied for associate membership and became a VSE member officially on 1 June 2015. Following those contacts, ACTEDO began developing its own capacities to deliver wider victim support services to victims. Secondly, it created an informal network of organisations called the “Victims’ Support Group Romania”. 10 organisations from all over the country indicated an interest in joining the group.

Those organisations operate in different fields such as community safety and mediation, human rights, gender equality, Roma, LGBT rights, etc. In the future they have indicated an interest in a mix of advocacy for victims (pressure on the state to implement the EU Directive on Victims’ Rights) and a desire to deliver support to victims. ACTEDO has also made contacts with Members of the European Parliament to gain support for its work.

A kick-off meeting between the group and VSE will be held in 2016 as well as a meeting with the Romanian Government.



ITALY

In Italy, VSE has initiated contacts with both NGOs and the Government. VSE’s two associate members – i-Care and LIBRA are both committed to support the development of national services for victims. In October, VSE Vice President Sabina Bellucci attended a Conference on the

EU Directive on victims’ rights in Palermo and made further contacts with stakeholders. VSE also made contacts with the Italian Permanent Representation to Brussels and with the Ministry of Justice, with positive indications for follow up meeting in 2016.

Based on these contacts, a meeting with national stakeholders will be organised in 2016.



CYPRUS

Initial contact was made with Hope For Children, UNCRC Policy Center based in Cyprus. Hope For Children already runs several helplines (in conjunction with SPAVO – centre on domestic violence) and they are now interested in setting

up and running the 116 006 helpline for victims. They contacted VSE to see how we could help them with this objective. VSE supported them to get more information on the practical and financial organisation of the 116006 helpline. VSE will resume contacts with them in 2016 and will also look to establish contacts with the Government.



GREECE

Over the period of December 2014 and January 2015, VSE supported the European Anti-Violence Network based in Athens in their attempt to stop the Greek Government to closing all abused women’s support structures. The Greek Government finally decided not to close them.

VSE has made further contacts with the Government subsequently in the hopes to initiate discussions on developing victim support in Greece. It will continue these contacts in 2016 with the aim to set up more substantive meetings.

Strengthening victim support organisations in EU Member States

In 2015, VSE – in collaboration with its members – focused support and development efforts in Croatia, Estonia, Malta, Slovakia, Hungary and Spain. Initial possibilities for support were explored, with a workshop subsequently being held in Lisbon on EC funding and other potential sources of funding for NGOs from those countries.

The workshop was held in APAV's (Victim Support Portugal) headquarters and aimed at enhancing capacity relating to sustainability, future resilience and resource planning of member organisations. Representatives from Victim Support Malta, the Croatian Victim and Witness Support Service, the Office of Justice in Hungary, ACTEDO (Romania) and LIBRA Onlus (Italy) participated in the workshop. Our aim is to build



- From left to right: Siobhan Riley (DE), Martina Meliskova (CZ), Ana Senicnjak (HR), Levent Altan
- VSE General Meeting and Leaders Meeting, 10 November 2015, Brussels
- Workshop session during VSE Leaders Meeting, 10 November 2015, Brussels



on these initial contacts in 2016 to better understand the specific needs of those organisations and to develop a programme of support. This work will be strengthened through wider VSE work on training and standards.

More generally, in the last year, VSE has placed greater emphasis on supporting organisations applying for EU funding. Taking advantage of our experience and knowledge of EU funding processes, we supported members through information on funding, stimulating collaboration, and supporting applications and projects. Our support for members' projects continued through dissemination of activities and presentations during conferences.

VSE had regular contacts with members to support their work in addition to holding specific events. In November, Weisser Ring Germany and Victim Support Europe jointly organised a workshop on best practice in operating helplines for victims of crime. Organisations which run helplines in the Czech Republic, France, Sweden, Ireland, Denmark, Croatia, Portugal, Belgium and Germany came together in Mainz (Germany) to exchange standards and experiences. The main topics of the workshop included the organisation of the services, technical requirements and quality management.

Also in November, VSE organised a Leaders Meeting attended by 45 participants from 29 member organisations, (from 23 EU Member States). Two workshops focused on developing standards and accreditation for victims support organisations and on improving support for victims abroad. These meetings contributed to knowledge exchange and networking among our member organisations and to developing ideas on priorities for standards and cross-border working.

VSE worked on a number of core projects as well as collaborations on EU funded projects in 2015. We carried out policy analysis, needs assessments and provided substantive expertise and support in project development and the dissemination of activities for other organisations.



VSE General Meeting and Leaders Meeting, 10 November 2015, Brussels

4.1.3

Supporting victims across borders

VSE's study on cross-border victims highlighted challenges in providing cross-border victim support in Europe and the potential role for VSE. This was a major research and consultation exercise involving experts and organisations frequently dealing with cross-border victims, and a survey of EU and national organisations assisting victims and consular services actors (embassies and consulates). Major challenges, good practices, and possible solutions in supporting people who are victimised abroad were examined as well as the experiences of organisation in delivering support.

Furthermore, following both terrorist attacks in Paris in 2015, VSE provided co-ordination support to INAVEM to identify support organisations abroad and to inform organisations of rights established under French law for victims of terrorism. After the German Wings crash, we also coordinated communication between member organisations. In 2015 we received direct requests from 20 victims and we put them in touch with the relevant victim support organisations.

4.1.4

Assessing training needs of practitioners

VSE commissioned Leuven Institute of Criminology (Leuven University - KU Leuven) to carry out a study on the training needs of professionals that support and assist victims of crime. Over the course of two months Dr Rebecca Hayes and An Verelst from VSE led a desk review, qualitative interviews, and a quantitative survey with victim support agency professionals and justice professionals. A preliminary report was produced which forms the basis for future planning of VSE training events.

The study concluded that structured and formal training programmes were offered to varying levels and there could be benefits in developing training materials especially for vulnerable victims, and programmes for cross cultural issues or specific

groups e.g. hate crimes, cross border victims, non-native language victims, and victims of terrorism.

The importance of using a range of training techniques was also recognised including through e-learning. Development of more interactive programmes should therefore be considered for future work.

The value of collaborating across borders in the development and delivery of training was also raised. This could increase the efficiency of training programmes especially where resources are pooled. VSE could take an active role in bringing organisations together to support training partnerships. This would be particularly important given the lack of resources available for the development and delivery of training.

4.1.5

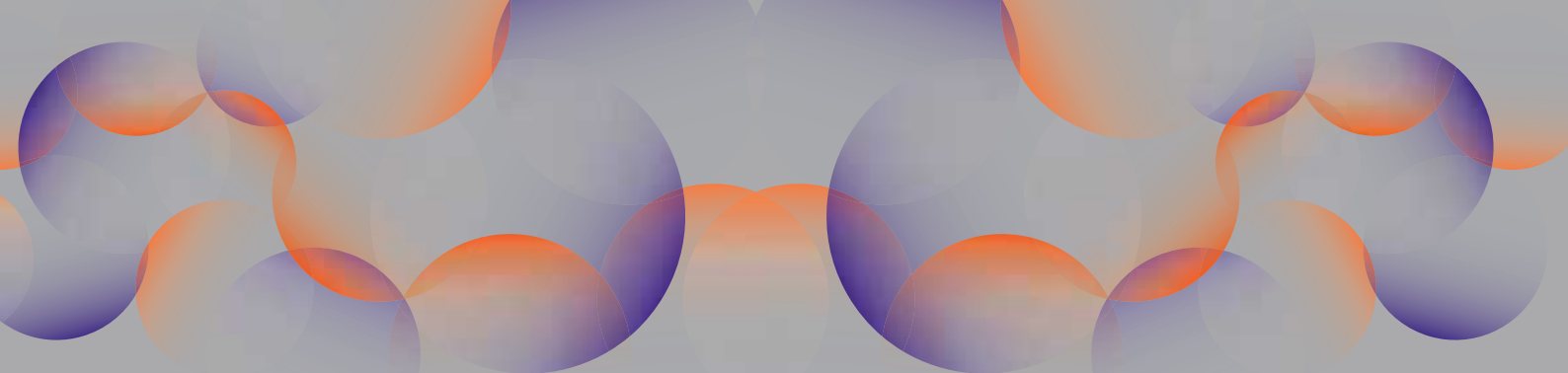
Minimum standards for victim support organisations

VSE considers the delivery of consistent and high quality victim support services across Europe as a priority. Many organisations follow their own internal standards whilst others are subject to government requirements or have implemented general international standards such as ISOs.

Recognising the lack of a single set of standards for VSE victim support members, we began the process in 2015 of developing such standards which could in time become part of a wider accreditation system. This would help ensure consistency in the quality of services and provide support to organisations to develop their own structures.

The overall aim of standards is to ensure that services meet the needs and expectations of their stakeholders i.e. end users and funders. To do this, it is proposed that standards should aim at ensuring:

- 1. High quality services:** Victims should receive the best service possible targeted to their needs;
- 2. Consistency in services:** Victims should receive the same level of service no matter where they are;
- 3. Integrity of services and trust in services:** Services should be trustworthy;
- 4. Effectiveness of services:** Services should achieve their objectives;
- 5. Efficiency of services:** Services should achieve their objectives for the least cost.



As a first step an extensive desk review has been conducted to identify standards, guidelines, quality assurance mechanisms and accreditation systems applied around the world by organisations providing victim support and other services, such as NGOs in other sectors for instance, refugee services provision, psychosocial care provision and International organisations and accreditation companies.

This resulted in an initial long list of standards which were categorised and discussed amongst members. The basic categorisations covered:

ORGANISATIONAL STANDARDS

1. Planning our work
2. Managing our organisation
3. Building a network and partnerships
4. Managing our staff and volunteers

SERVICE STANDARDS

1. The scope of our service
2. The services we provide
3. How we manage our data
4. Monitoring and evaluation

The list of standards will be shortened and developed in more detail before being agreed in 2016.

4.1.6

Project IVOR - Implementing Victim-Oriented Reform of the criminal justice system in the European Union

The Portuguese Association for Victim Support (APAV) in partnership with Tilburg University (The Netherlands), University of Leuven (Belgium) and Victim Support Europe carried out this project between 2014 and 2015 on victim support systems.

A preliminary analysis of victim assistance models was developed for the EU Member States and the social and juridical realities for victims of crime was assessed. Recent developments on victim assistance models in the EU were explored with a particular focus on the definition of victim, victim support, restorative justice, victims resident in another EU Member State, individual needs assessment and vulnerable groups, training and cooperation. The project also allowed a greater understanding of how victim-oriented reform in diverse countries in Europe could succeed.

VSE presented a series of recommendations on improving victim systems. In particular, it was emphasised that the lack of national, generic victim support organisations needs to be addressed including ensuring that funding is in place and that referral mechanisms help ensure victims reach the support they need.

Information provision, which is a crucial conduit to rights, needs greater focus. Information must be provided in an easily understood form, through a range of media, and processes should be formalised for this. Failures to inform victims of the release of an offender from detention should be examined as this

information – and the way it is provided to victims – can have an important impact on them.

On protection measures, difficulties remain in determining which victims require protection based on individual assessments. Whilst laws are being put in place, they need to function in practice and must cover all victims rather than just specific groups. Concerns that decisions on providing measures don't take into account assessments must also be addressed.

Training and co-ordination is core to changing cultures and delivering services in an effective and efficient manner. There continues to be a lack of focus in both these areas. In particular, training programmes must be developed and practitioners required or encouraged to attend as appropriate.

Overall, there continues to be a lack of research and knowledge on the way rights are implemented and accessed. Greater support for research is needed to ensure effective oversight and development of new policies and laws. The full recommendations can be found in the IVOR report¹¹.

4.1.7

Project Infovictims II

One of the major obstacles still faced by victims of crime all over Europe is the lack of information and access to it in an easy and clear fashion. Arising from these concerns, a number of victim support organisations developed the original Project Infovictims (October 2011 - September 2013). At the conclusion of the project, Vice-President of the European Commission Viviane Reding defined Project Infovictims as a best practice to be followed in other States.

Subsequently, other Member States indicated their interest in adapting these materials to their own situation. This is how Project Infovictims II, promoted by APAV, came to life.

The project started in April 2014 with the partnership of Victim Support Europe, Weisser Ring Germany, Weisser Ring Austria, Victim Support Scotland, Subvenia Victima (Polish Victim Support Network), the Portuguese Public Safety Police and the Portuguese Directorate-General of Justice Administration. Project Infovictims II aimed to increase the information available to victims of crime in the criminal justice system, their rights and the ways to exercise them in Portugal, Germany, Poland and the United Kingdom. The project ended in April 2016 with the seminar "Infovictims: innovation in promoting victims' rights", which took place in Porto.

4.1.8

Partnership in EU action grant proposal: Project T@LK

APAV began the two year long Project T@LK in January 2015 supported by VSE as an associate partner. The project will raise knowledge on the potential for online support for victims of crime. It will help ensure services adapt to victims needs and become more accessible to those who cannot reach traditional forms of service.

Research will be carried out on existing online support methods and tools, and on their benefits and drawbacks. Following consultations a handbook on online support to victims of crime will be developed as well as an online direct support tool in four countries (Portugal, Malta, Lithuania and Finland).

4.2

Implementing Victims' Rights in Europe

A core part of VSE's work is to ensure that laws and standards are implemented and applied in practice in all European Countries. VSE offered support regarding the implementation of the EU Directive on victims' rights to its members and to other organisations and assisted them in assessing national government plans to implement the Directive.

4.2.1

Partnership in EU action grant proposal: Project T@LK

- VSE assisted Victim Support Finland on the implementation of Article 22 of the EU Directive on Victims' Rights by providing examples from the Dutch Ministry of Justice on how it resolved similar problems on individual assessments;
- VSE supported INAVEM France with respect to funding of services. INAVEM was supporting the development of a legislative bill whereby victim support services could be funded through additional fines on criminals. VSE gathered and provided evidence from around the EU and the world on the existence of such systems, how they were put in place and their advantages and difficulties;
- VSE provided Weisser Ring Austria with information and best practices on access to victim support and referral systems;
- VSE gave direct input into submissions provided by the Irish Victims' Rights Alliance on the draft Irish implementing law. An article-by-article legal analysis of the Irish legal text was provided indicating where provisions were not compliant with the Directive, where provisions might be compliant but could be improved and where provisions should be backed by implementing regulations / secondary legislation and effective implementing policies;
- VSE provided the Danish Parliament with information on the process of the implementation of the Directive in the EU.

4.2.2

Awareness raising campaign in the run-up to 16 November

In the run-up to the implementation deadline of the Victims' Directive (16 November 2015), VSE conducted a large awareness raising campaign to reach National EU governments and European policy makers to ensure that rights become a reality for all victims of crime.

Together with our members and our wider network we:

Created a thunderclap: through this crowdspeaking platform organisations, individuals and politicians joined us to 'RaiseTheirVoiceFor#VictimsRights' through the following message: "75 million victims of crime in EU per year. EU Victims law must be implemented. Raise your voice for #VictimsRights <http://thndr.me/PluGRu>";

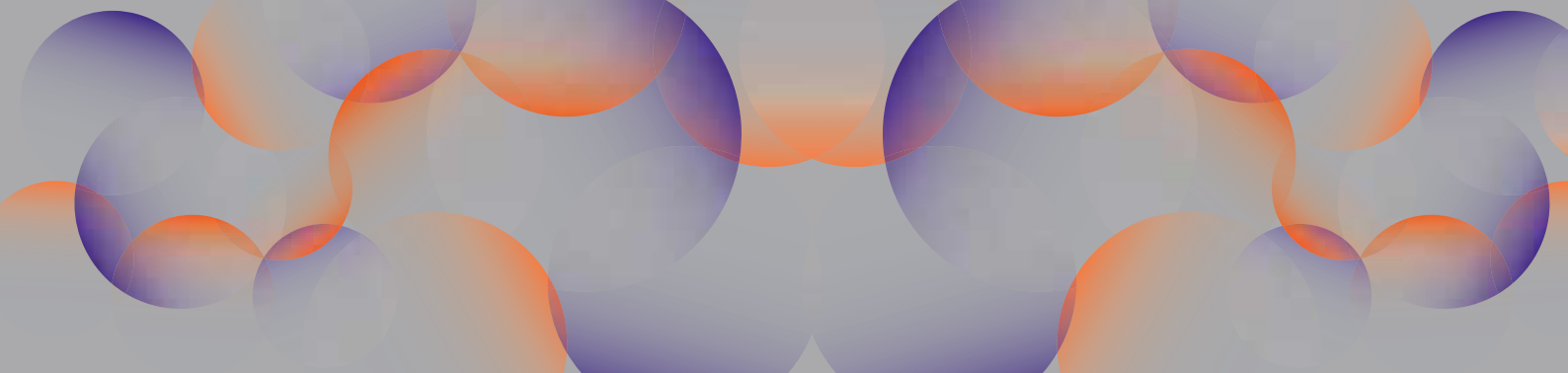
The message was launched simultaneously on the Facebook and Twitter accounts of all 172 supporters reaching 268.018 people at once. The launch of the

Thunderclap marked the implementation deadline of the Victims' Directive, the moment from which citizens can invoke these rights directly before the national courts. Through retweets and shares we reached over 300.000 people from all over the world calling with us for implementation of EU law for all victims of crime;

Created the #VictimsRights hashtag on Twitter to raise the profile of victims of crime through twitter, facebook, tumblr or other social media;

Contacted all Members of the European Parliament to encourage them to speak out and help ensure that the EU Victims Directive is fully implemented in their countries;

Contacted national governments to remind them of their obligations and to ask them what they are doing to improve rights and support for victims.



VSE also initiated a petition signed by 15 European NGO networks representing hundreds of organisations and millions of people around Europe. The petition was presented at VSE's European Parliament event on 9 November and was sent to Member States on 16 November.

VSE also supported a written declaration on victims initiated by MEP Tomáš Zdechovský and launched at the EP event on 9 November. This Written Declaration was sent to all permanent representations of EU governments in Brussels.



Petition initiated by VSE and signed by 15 NGO networks



VSE European Parliament event, 9 November. João Lázaro and MEP Teresa Jiménez-Becerril standing next to the written declaration initiated by MEP Tomáš Zdechovský

4.2.3

VSE European Parliament Conference, 9 November, Brussels



VSE European Parliament event, 9 November, Brussels. From left to right: João Lázaro, Teresa Jiménez-Becerril, V ra Jourová, Axel Voss

In November, VSE organised the conference "Putting victims' rights into practice: where are we?" in the European Parliament. The event was hosted by Teresa Jiménez-Becerril Barrio, MEP and co-hosted by Axel Voss, MEP. It focused on how the Victims' Directive can meet the needs of victims, what problems victims are facing and what governments must do to ensure victims have access to their rights. V ra Jourová, EU Commissioner for Justice spoke about the expectations and the challenges that arise from the new EU rules on victims' rights.

This European Parliament event, which was full to capacity, was part of our campaign to raise awareness about the implementation deadline of the EU Victims' Directive.

4.3

Raising Awareness and Working Together

4.3.1

VSE Annual Conference and AGM, 13-15 May, Lisbon



- VSE Annual Conference 2015, 13-14 May Lisbon, Plenary session
- VSE Annual Conference 2015, 13-14 May Lisbon, VSE Vice President Helgard van Hulle's speech
- VSE Annual Conference 2015, 13-14 May Lisbon, workshop session

On 13-14 May VSE organised its Annual Conference "Victims of Crime in Europe: The Future is Now" (25th Conference of Victim Annual Support Europe and commemorative event of the 25 Years of APAV) in Lisbon at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

The aim of the conference was to explore, from the perspective of victims and practitioners, the development of victims' rights over the last 25 years, and challenges and best practices in implementing those rights.

The conference focused in particular on rights to protection, support services, information, and participation in criminal proceedings including the cost to the victim of those proceedings. The conference also explored safeguards in restorative justice services and assistance for vulnerable victims.

The conference received a high profile including speeches by Senior Portuguese and international speakers including the Portuguese Minister of Justice, MEP Tomás Zdechovsky, Undersecretary of Justice of the Spanish Government and Undersecretary of State of the Polish Ministry of Justice.

In total 236 participants attended the event coming from a professions such as victim support, the criminal justice system, the security forces, NGOs, Protection of Children and Youth Commissions, and Employment and Social Security.

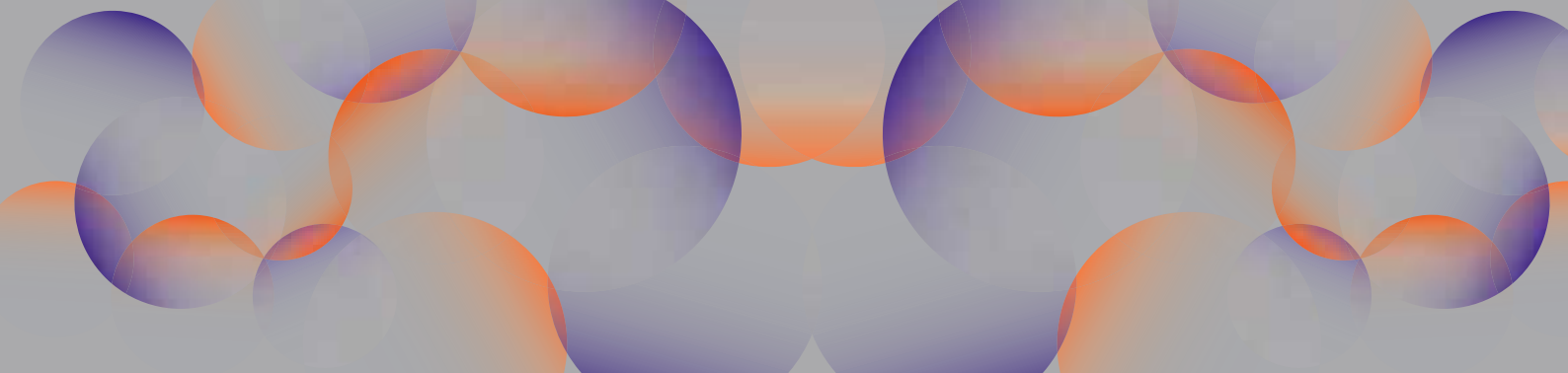
4.3.2

European and international advocacy work

Throughout the year, VSE held and attended a large number of advocacy meetings with European and international agencies and organisations working with victims of crime. These organisations included EU institutions and agencies such as the European Commission and in particular DG Justice, the European Parliament, EESC (European Economic and Social Committee), FRA (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights), EIGE (European Institute for Gender Equality), the Council of Europe and the RAN (EC Radicalisation Awareness Network). These meetings offered important opportunities to promote victims' rights and best practices, raise awareness of

challenges and priorities and explore opportunities for collaboration and development of new policies.

VSE also worked closely with over 20 European NGOs through meetings, project applications, policy development and advocacy work. In particular, it strengthened collaborations started in 2014 by organising a second European roundtable on victims' rights. The event was a great success with 17 organisations attending on behalf of diverse communities such as LGBT persons, victims of female genital mutilation, missing children, undocumented migrants. The event was also



Meeting with Commissioner Věra Jourová, 2 October, Brussels. From left to right: An Verelst, Levent Altan, Helgard van Hüllen, Věra Jourová, Sabrina Bellucci, Marketa Vitoušová, João Lázaro

attended by the FRA and the European Commission – DG Justice. Discussions covered priorities for the different organisations in the field of victims’ rights, problems and new ways of working together. Follow up meetings have been planned for 2016 in addition to bilateral co-operation.

In October, VSE representatives met Commissioner Věra Jourová to update the Commissioner on key priorities and concerns within the victims’ field, including with respect to implementing the EU Victims’ Directive. The event was highly successful with Commissioner Jourová confirming her commitment to victims’ issues and to maintaining the policy momentum.

4.3.3

Newsletters

In 2015 we produced and widely disseminated 4 Newsletters (31 March, 29 June, 27 October and 4 December) including many updates on VSE work and

4.3.4

VSE in the Media

VSE’s Executive Director, Levent Altan, was interviewed by a range of media over the year including by BBC Radio Oxford as well as by other European, British and Irish publications and radio programmes. Several press articles were also published about the VSE Annual conference.

VSE maintained strong international relations in 2015 in particular through VOICI (Victim of Crime International) which VSE jointly founded. Regular contact calls were held including with NOVA (US National Organization for Victim Assistance), Victim Support Services of Korea, Canadian Ombudsman for Victims, Victim Support Germany and Victim Support England and Wales, DISHA India, and Commissioner of Victims’ Rights, New South Wales (Australia). Members supported each other’s policy and advocacy work in particular by providing details of practices in their own countries.

A fundamental aspect of VSE’s work is to promote, around Europe, victims’ rights, raise awareness of the impact of victimisation and how practitioners and policy makers can improve laws and services for victims.

To this end VSE attended a total of 26 European conferences, including seven organised by EU Institutions and agencies. VSE was invited to speak on victims’ issues at thirteen of these meetings. These conferences covered topics as diverse as an experts’ meeting on the Victims’ Rights Directive, through to meetings on victims of terrorism, hate crime, rights of the child, elder abuse, radicalisation, individual assessment of victims, human rights and transitional justice, victims of car incidents, etc.

Through these meetings VSE further strengthened its relationship and cooperation with national governments, victim support organisations and other stakeholders to make sure that victims’ rights are kept high on the national and European agenda and that the Directive 2012/29/EU is implemented in practice across all EU Member States.

activities, a large number of news items from VSE members from across Europe as well as updates on ongoing projects.

VSE published an article about the progress of the implementation of Directive 2012/29/EU in the European Parliament Magazine in the 16 November issue.

Throughout the year VSE members and other organisations reported on VSE events on their websites and in their newsletters.

4.4

Strengthening VSE to deliver more and to better deliver

Our commitment to victims and our members has seen VSE carrying out extensive foundational work in 2015 to better deliver now and in the years to come. We have increased our staff, improved organisational structures and established new social media capabilities as well as delivered new services and projects.

4.4.1

Building VSE's operational capacity

VSE's Annual General Meeting took place in May in Lisbon following its annual conference. VSE activities for the year were reported followed by agreement on a new membership policy, the discharge of the Executive Board of its responsibility regarding the Annual Accounts 2014, and the election of a new board member (see below).

VSE strengthened its Executive Board in 2015. Joao Lazaro, who together with Helgard van Hüllen had taken over the President's responsibilities in his absence, was elected as President of VSE. He is supported by Helgard van Hüllen and Sabrina Belucci as Vice Presidents.

In addition, three new Executive Board members were appointed: Mark Castle (CEO of Victim Support England and Wales), Livija Planin (President of White Ring Croatia) and Barbara Unterlerchner (Weisser Ring Austria) were elected Executive Board Member. Eight countries are now represented on the VSE Board (PT, DE, FR, NL, FI, AT, HR, UK).

In July 2015 we also welcomed An Verelst as our newest Staff Member. An is VSE's full time Policy Officer and is responsible for the development of VSE policies, research and monitoring of victims.



From left to right: An Verelst, Policy Officer, Levent Altan, Executive Director and Helene Heinrichs, Administrative Officer

An is a clinical psychologist and worked as a trauma psychologist in the war-affected region of Northern Uganda. She also set up and managed a victim support organisation offering psychosocial support for children and families affected by war-related violence in Eastern Congo. She obtained her PhD in Educational Sciences after conducting research on the psychological and social consequences in adolescent victims of sexual violence in (post)conflict settings.

4.4.2

Growing VSE's membership, finances and activities

For 25 years VSE's strength has been its diverse membership which has represented the most knowledgeable practitioners in the field of victim support. Our members have supported VSE's growth through expertise and financial support.

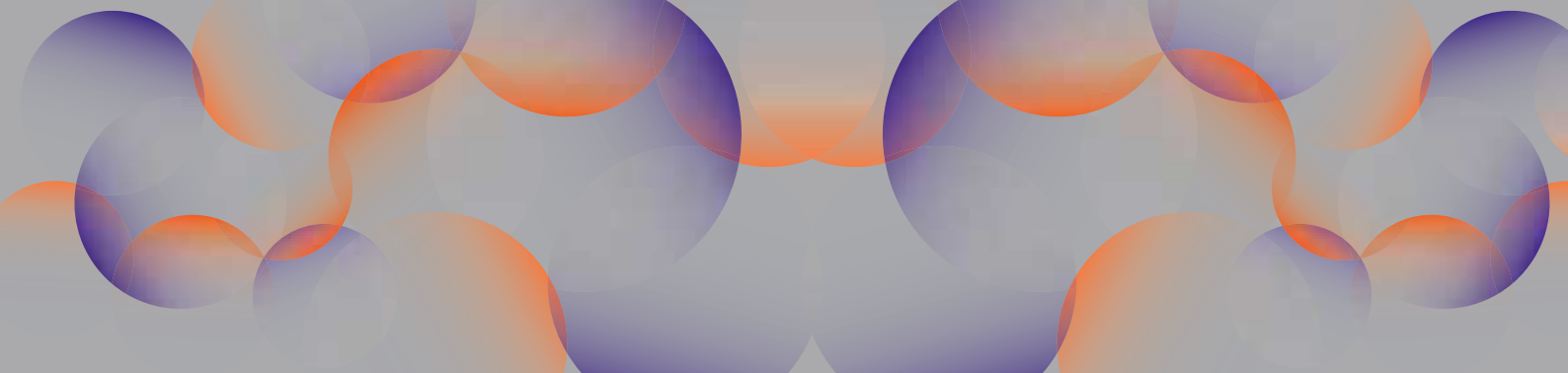
In 2015, VSE has built on this heritage to create an organisation even wealthier in expertise and diversity whilst more financially secure. We have modernised our membership policy and now accept associate members and supporters from anywhere in the world as well as individuals. Supporter members may also be profit making companies. Full membership remains limited to European NGOs delivering victims support services.

This policy will allow the network to grow and better represent the voice of victims in Europe and beyond

whilst protecting its core business and ethos. It will also provide better financial sustainability for VSE.

In 2015 VSE also approved a new fundraising strategy. The Strategy recognises the difficult funding environment which VSE faces and seeks to diversify VSE's income by strengthening its ability to obtain funding through projects, donors, corporate sponsors, membership fees and services. This will reduce risks from a loss or reduction in any one source whilst freeing VSE to carry out a wider range of activities which fit with its existing and future strategies.

The strategy resulted in the new membership policy as well as an updated website with new services for Members. Through the site and wider contacts, we will better explain our work and achievements making VSE more attractive to potential members, donors and sponsors.



In 2015, our efforts led to corporate sponsorship from ICF International” and from “3M Electronic Monitoring” for the Annual Conference. Similarly, we joined a number of schemes to provide better access to reduced cost or free services as well as to increase our exposure to potential donors.

An important future source of income will be through international projects. In 2015, VSE’s Constitution was changed allowing VSE to participate in projects on a contract basis. That immediately generated new opportunities which bore fruit in 2016.

2015 also saw VSE participate in many more project applications for EU calls for proposals. Efforts early in 2015 to build partnerships resulted in many more organisations requesting VSE’s involvement in their projects. VSE will continue this progress with the aim of developing internal capacity to submit and run its own international projects. Over time, VSE will develop a rolling programme of projects which we aim to fund through European and international programmes as well as through donations and sponsorship.

4.4.3

New website

In 2015 we created a new website and intranet platform to improve the site’s appearance, functionality and accessibility. The site will increase VSE’s visibility and better connect with victims of crime, providing more and up-to-date information.

The new website has active content and links to our social

media pages. It has a user-friendly registration system for new members as well as a separate platform hosting a totally new intranet in which knowledge exchange tools such as a database of publications on victims’ issues, a contact database (under development), fora on different topics and an area for questions can be accessed by members.

4.4.4

Social media

In 2015, VSE established for the first time several social media accounts for Twitter, Facebook, Youtube and Pinterest. We gained over 300 followers on Twitter in 2015 sending around 1000 tweets on

victims’ issues. We have set up numerous playlists on YouTube showing victims’ rights related videos (with 71 videos added in 2015). We posted 72 pins on Pinterest linking to articles, videos and publications.

4.4.5

Evaluating and improving our work

For the first time VSE hired an external evaluator, Logframe, to monitor and assess our activities for efficiency and effectiveness, and to determine the quality of our products and our implementation processes. The evaluation takes place over three years (2015-2017) and is an important step in VSE’s evolution, ensuring that we recognise our successes, learn from mistakes and understand how to improve in the future.

The main conclusions from the 2015 external evaluation have been very positive, highlighting that the organisation has a high level of efficiency and success in delivering its work programme. We have closely followed strategic planning and successfully articulated these plans with operational objectives. Importantly, foundational work in 2015 puts VSE in a good position to achieve its objectives in the future.

Our organisational structure and Human Resources are adequate for our current mission and objectives, but we are now looking at improving these to take into account increasing opportunities and the growth of the organisation. Similarly,

communications between VSE staff and Board members with our members has been positively assessed, though we continue to look for ways to improve. In particular, VSE has in place mechanisms for monitoring its work but we have not informed members enough about this work. This will be important in the future to retain the confidence of members.

Our relationship with some parts of the European Commission is very strong – in particular with our core DG - Justice. However, it has been recognised that these links aren’t uniform across all Commission DGs and we will work in 2016 to strengthen our contacts. Nevertheless, the evaluation confirmed that the importance of VSE’s mission and work appears to be recognised by the relevant European Commission DGs.

Overall 2015 has seen VSE build a strong foundation to increase and stabilise its future income. The recommendations made by Logframe in 2015 are now being taken into account to improve our work and the efficiency of our activities for 2016 and beyond.

4.5

New Members

In 2015, three applications for associate membership were approved by the Executive Board. These new members are ACTEDO (Associate Member, Romania), Bijeli Prsten Hrvatske (Associate Member, Croatia) and Supporting Justice (Associate Member, UK).

4.5.1

ACTEDO - Associate Member, Romania



ACTEDO
Equality and Human Rights
Action Centre

ACTEDO is our first member in Romania. ACTEDO is an NGO which was established in 2013 and whose mission is to promote fundamental rights and gender equality and to ACT against human rights violations. To this purpose, ACTEDO engages in advocacy, research, educational and community development activities, aiming to raise awareness, increase active participation and facilitate access to justice for all.

4.5.2

Bijeli Prsten Hrvatske - Associate Member, Croatia



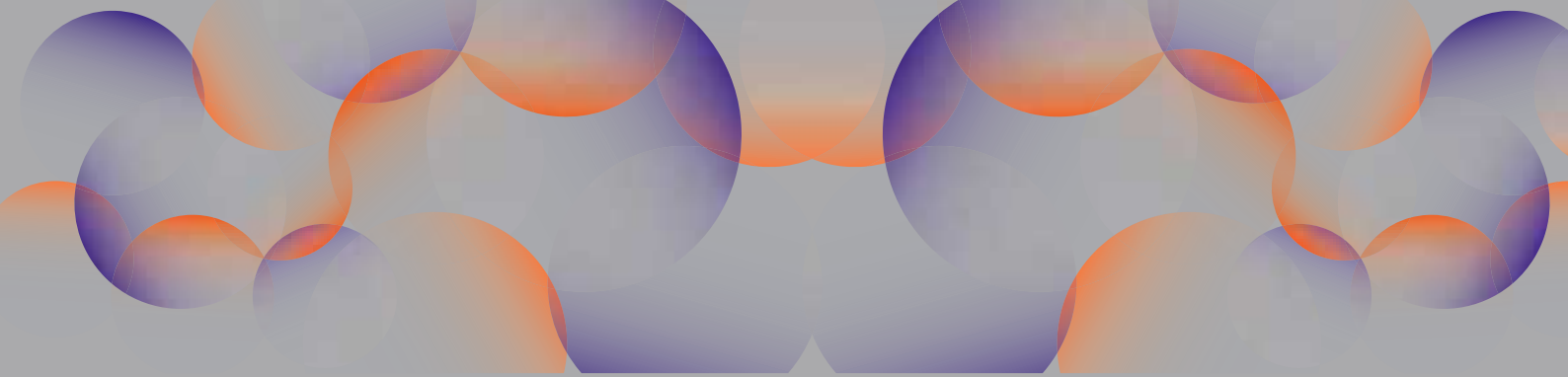
Bijeli Prsten Hrvatske is our fourth member in Croatia next to one full member and two other associate members. Bijeli Prsten Hrvatske is an NGO which was established end of 2013 and which offers legal and psychological support to victims of all types of crime in the region of Slavonija and Baranja.

4.5.3

Supporting Justice - Associate Member, UK



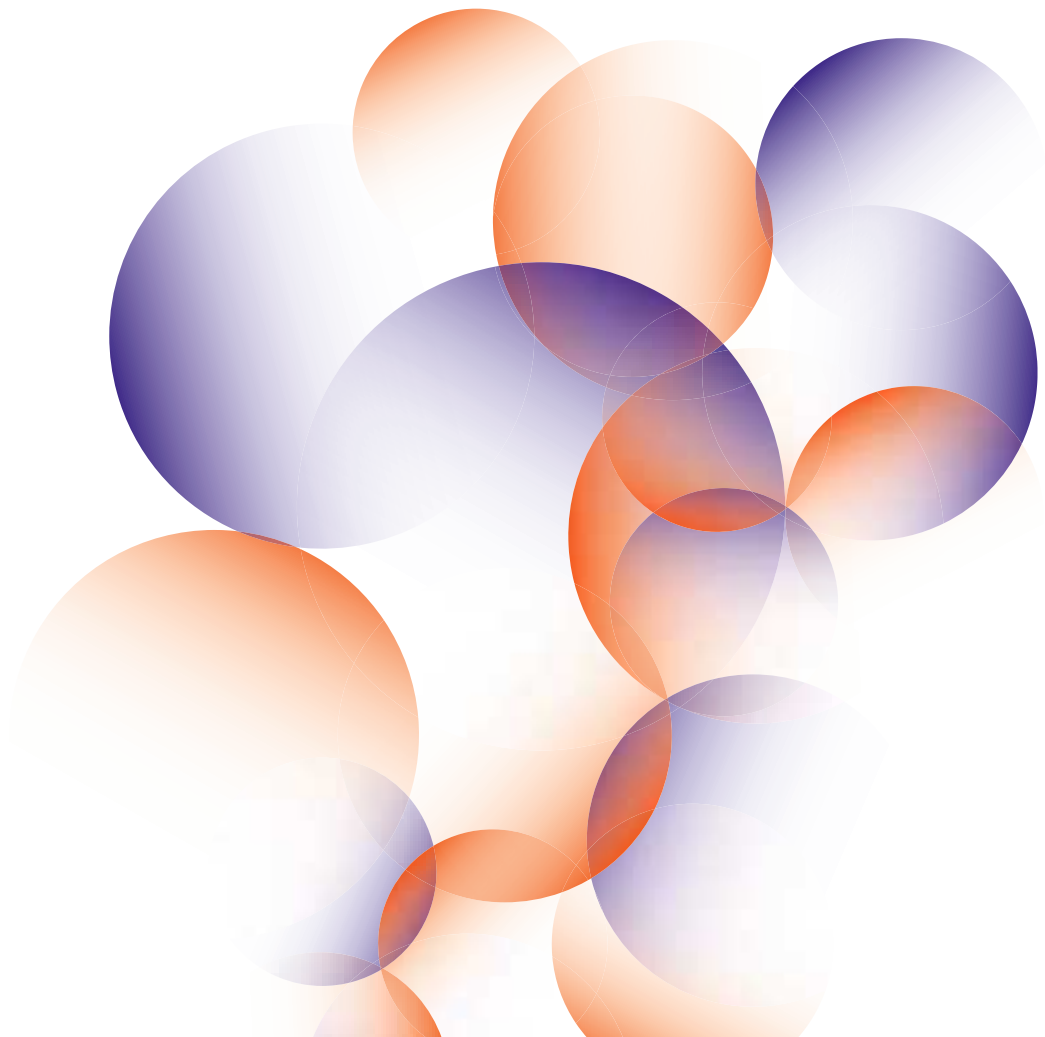
Supporting Justice is our first associate member in the UK where we have three full members. Supporting Justice is a Community Interest Company. They work mainly in the criminal justice arena specialising in issues affecting victims and witnesses. Supporting Justice's vision is to help make the justice and social sectors work more effectively for everyone. They offer guidance and advice to help achieve the best outcomes for those affected by crime.



5

LOOKING FORWARD TO 2016

In 2016 we will continue to work on the objectives of our Framework Partnership Agreement 2015-2017, which include supporting the development of victim support in EU Member States where there are no generic victim support services as well as the further development of existing victim support organisations in identified EU Member States, supporting the implementation of the EU Directive on victims' rights in relation to cross-border victimisation, working on the development of a system of accreditation of victim support service providers, developing state-of-the-art training tools for victim support, further improving the operational capacity of VSE and continuing to represent wider victim interests and stakeholders.



6

BALANCE SHEET

1 January 2015 to 31 December 2015

| | Code | 2015 | | 2014 | |
|--|--------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------|--|
| | | 01/01/2015 - 31/12/2015 | 01/01/2014 - 31/12/2014 | | |
| ASSETS | | | | | |
| FIXED ASSETS | 20/28 | 4.936,01 | | 4.936,01 | |
| Financial fixed assets (explanation 4.1.3/4.2.1) | 28 | 4.936,01 | | 4.936,01 | |
| CURRENT ASSETS | 29/58 | 267.278,61 | | 233.957,50 | |
| Amounts receivable within one year | 40/41 | 32.429,11 | | 4.144,33 | |
| Trade debtors | 40 | 4.583,39 | | 4.144,33 | |
| Other amounts receivable | 41 | 27.845,72 | | | |
| Current investments (explanation 4.2.1) | 50/53 | | | | |
| Cash at bank and in hand | 54/58 | 232.346,45 | | 226.938,79 | |
| Deferred charges and accrued income | 490/1 | 2.503,05 | | 2.874,38 | |
| GL accounts not in the standard Belgian schema | AXX | | | | |
| TOTAL ASSETS | 20/58 | 272.214,62 | | 238.893,51 | |
| EQUITY AND LIABILITIES | | | | | |
| CAPITAL AND RESERVES | 10/15 | 179.647,10 | | 136.059,06 | |
| Association Funds | 10 | 38.026,03 | | 38.026,03 | |
| Opening equity | 100 | 38.026,03 | | 38.026,03 | |
| Accumulated profits (losses) | (+)/(-) 14 | 141.621,07 | | 98.033,03 | |
| AMOUNTS PAYABLE | 17/49 | 92.567,52 | | 102.834,45 | |
| Amounts payable within one year (explanation 4.4) | 42/48 | 92.317,52 | | 102.634,45 | |
| Trade debts | 44 | 68.653,62 | | 67.049,67 | |
| Suppliers | 440/4 | 68.653,62 | | 67.049,67 | |
| Taxes, remuneration and social security | 45 | 23.663,90 | | 7.838,96 | |
| Taxes | 450/3 | 0,00 | | 0,00 | |
| Remuneration and social security | 454/9 | 23.663,90 | | 7.838,96 | |
| Miscellaneous amounts payable | 48 | 0,00 | | 27.745,82 | |
| Debentures and matured coupons and cash deposit | 480/8 | | | | |
| Miscellaneous interest-bearing amounts payable | 4890 | 0,00 | | 27.745,82 | |
| Miscellaneous non interest-bearing amounts payable or with an abnormally low interest rate | 4891 | | | | |
| Accruals and deferred income | 492/3 | 250,00 | | 200,00 | |
| GL accounts not in the standard Belgian schema | BXX | | | | |
| TOTAL LIABILITIES | 10/49 | 272.214,62 | | 238.893,51 | |
| INCOME STATEMENT | | | | | |
| Operating income and charges | | | | | |
| Gross operating margin | (+)/(-) 9900 | 242.133,00 | | 152.687,33 | |
| Operating income | 70/74 | 407.004,00 | | 287.636,65 | |
| Turnover | 70 | | | | |
| Contributions, gifts, legacies and grants | 73 | 406.380,52 | | 279.546,41 | |
| Raw materials, consumables, services and other goods | 60/61 | 164.871,00 | | 134.949,32 | |
| Remuneration, social security costs and pensions (explanation 4.5) | (+)/(-) 62 | 198.046,58 | | 75.283,65 | |

| | | | |
|--|---------|------|-----------|
| Depreciation of and other amounts written off formation expenses, intangible and tangible fixed assets | 630 | | 1.100,29 |
| Operating profit [loss] | (+)/(-) | 9901 | 44.086,42 |
| Financial income (explanation 4.5) | 75 | | 295,64 |
| Financial charges (explanation 4.5) | 65 | | 794,18 |
| Gain (loss) on ordinary activities before taxes | (+)/(-) | 9902 | 43.587,88 |
| Extraordinary income | 76 | | 0,16 |
| Extraordinary charges | 66 | | 1.070,17 |
| GL accounts not in the standard Belgian schema | WXX | | -6,61 |
| Gain (loss) of the period | (+)/(-) | 9904 | 43.588,04 |

7

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

(from 10 November 2015 onwards)



PRESIDENT

João Lázaro
President of Associação Portuguesa de Apoio à Vítima (APAV), Portugal



VICE PRESIDENTS

Helgard van Hüllen
Vice-President of Weisser Ring Germany



Sabrina Bellucci
Executive Director of INAVEM, France



TREASURER

Brendan Loughran
Chair of The Board of Victim Support Northern Ireland



EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

Victor Jammers
Member of the Board of Directors of Slachtoerhulp Nederland, The Netherlands



Leena-Kaisa Åberg
CEO of Victim Support Finland



Barbara Unterlerchner
Weisser Ring Austria



Livi ja Planci c
President of White Circle Croatia



Mark Castle
CEO of Victim Support England and Wales, UK

8

SECRETARIAT



Levent Altan
Executive Director



Hélène Heinrichs
Administrative Officer



An Verelst
Policy Officer

MEMBERS' LIST

(status May 2016)



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BULGARIA

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Ministry of Justice - Independent Service for Victim and Witness Support

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Bijeli Prsten Hrvatske

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Weisser Ring

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(full member)

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Office of Justice, Victim Support Unit

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 Website: www.crimevictims helpline.ie

Irish Tourist Assistance Service

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Website: www.itas.ie

Victims of Crime Office

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Website: www.victimsofcrimeoffice.ie/en/vco

Victims' Rights Alliance

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Victimology Society of Serbia

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SVK-OHG - Swiss Liaison Centre Committee for the Victims of Crime Act

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Victim Support Scotland

(full member)
15/23 Hardwell Close - Edinburgh, EH8 9RX
Email: info@victimsupportscotland.org.uk
Tel: +44 131 668 4486
Website: www.victimsupportscotland.org.uk

Supporting Justice

(associate member)
9 Devonshire Square, Third Floor - London, EC2M 7YD
Email: sam.maxwellsmith@supportingjustice.org.uk
Tel: +44 208 004 1577
Website: www.supportingjustice.org.uk

Commission for Victims and Survivors Northern Ireland

(associate member)
Equality House, 7-9 Shaftesbury Square - Belfast, BT2 7DP
Email: commission@cvsni.org
Tel: +44 289 031 1000
Website: www.cvsni.org



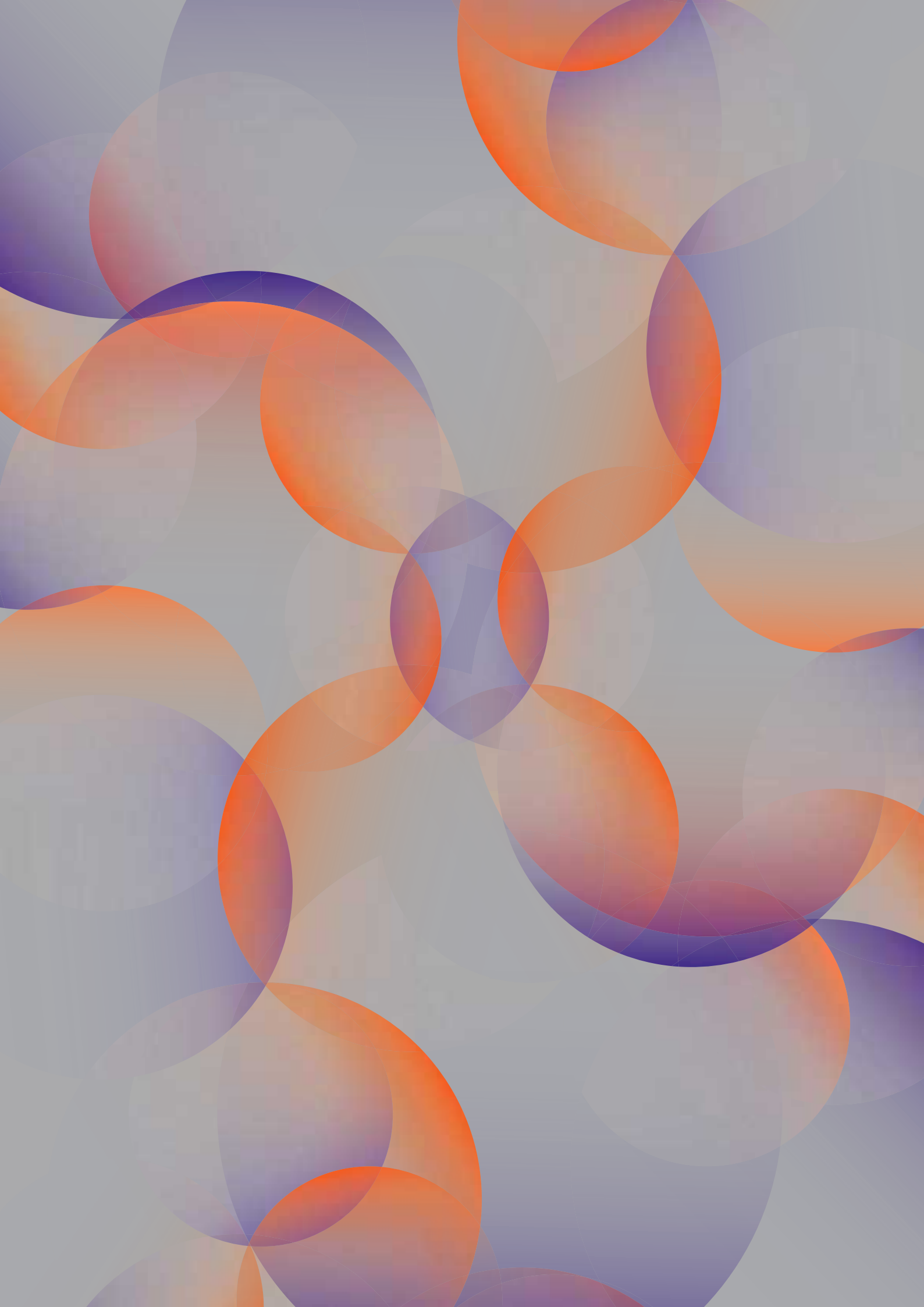
ICV - International Cruise Victims Association

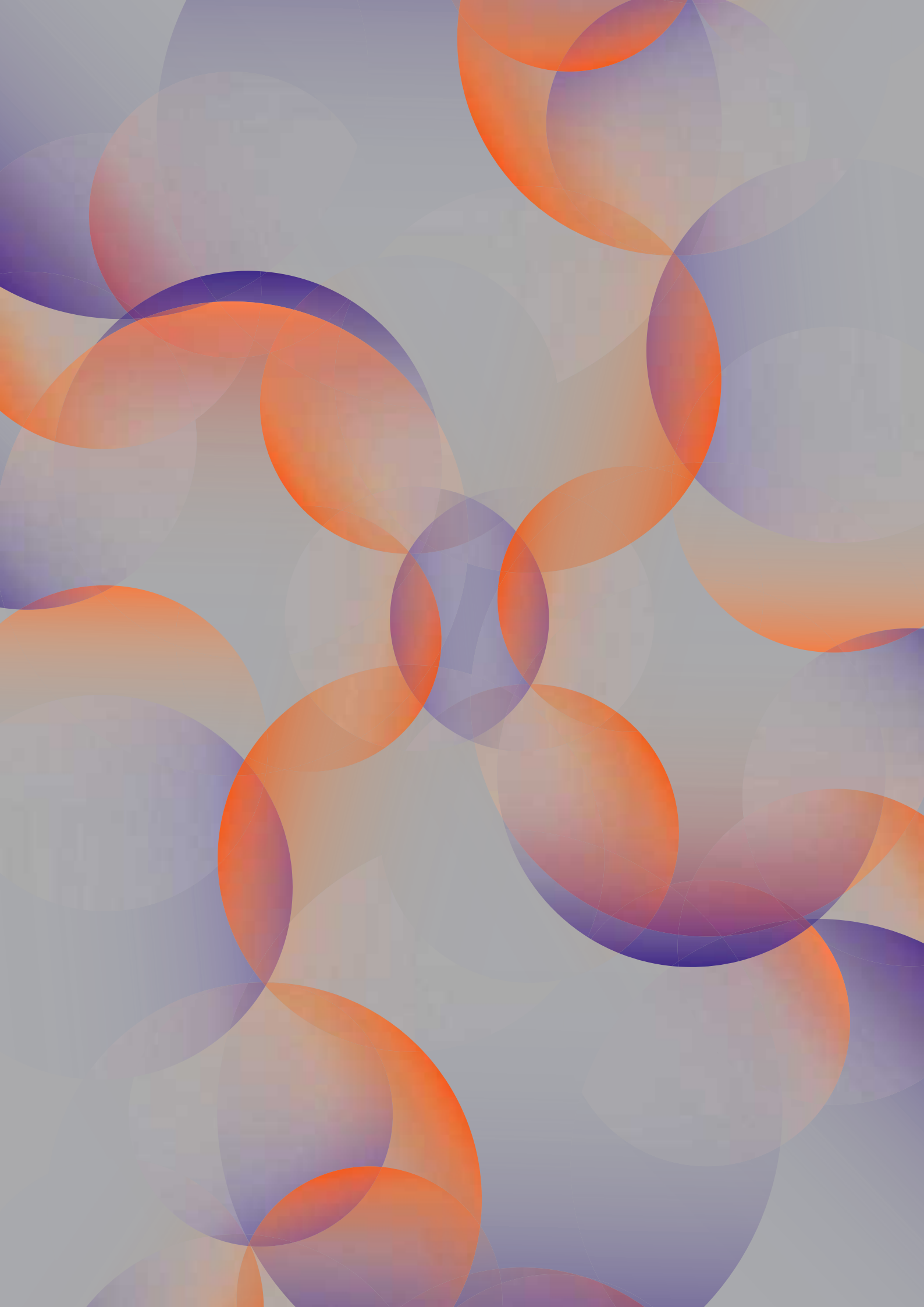
(associate member)
5521 North Camelback Canyon Drive - Phoenix, AZ 85018
Email: kcarver17@cox.net
Tel: 00 1 602 852 5896
Website: www.internationalcruisevictims.org

VSE's partnerships and networks

Throughout the year VSE had meetings with a large number of organisations and authorities on victims of crime issues. Some of those we have worked with are listed below. VSE would like to warmly acknowledge the commitment and co-operation of all our partners and thank them for their continuing efforts on behalf of all victims of crime.

- AGE Platform
- Amber Alert Europe (The European Child Rescue Alert & Police Network on Missing Children)
- Child Helpline International
- CEP (Confederation of European Probation)
- EDF (European Disability Forum)
- EFRJ (European Forum for Restorative Justice)
- ENAR (European Network against Racism)
- ENVR (European Network on Victims' Rights)
- End FGM European Network
- FEVR (European Federation of road traffic victims)
- ILGA Europe (European Region of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association)
- Inclusion Europe
- INTERVICT (International Victimology Institute Tilburg)
- JUSTICIA Network
- Missing Children Europe
- PICUM (Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants)
- Schadfonds Nederland
- SOS Catastrophe (The European Disaster Victims Network)
- TGEU (Transgender Europe)
- WAVE (Women Against Violence Europe)
- FRA (EU Agency for Fundamental Rights)
- The European Commission – DG Justice
- The European Parliament
- The EESC (European and Economic Social Committee)
- The EIGE (European Institute for Gender Equality)
- VOICI (Victim of Crime International) of which VSE supported the further development. In particular VSE helped to develop VOICI membership policy
- NOVA - US National Organization for Victim Assistance
- Victim Support Services of Korea
- Canadian Ombudsman for Victims





Footnotes

ⁱ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2014). Victims of Crime in the EU: The extent and nature of support for victims. Luxembourg: Publications of the European Union.

ⁱⁱ APAV - Associação Portuguesa de Apoio à Vítima (2016). IVOR Report: Implementing Victim-Oriented Reform of the criminal justice system in the European Union. <http://www.apav.pt/ivor/images/ivor/PDFs/IVOR-Repot-WebVersion.pdf>

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