

Newsletter

Newsletter Victim Support Europe

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Victim Support Europe Newsletter December 2009

From our President

I'm happy to introduce the second newsletter of this year with interesting news about the developments within Victim Support Europe and our member organizations.

In this newsletter you will read about some important meetings Victim Support Europe was involved in and it shows that Victim Support Europe is operating as an increasingly important partner on the European level.

In the period between April 2009 and today, I have again had the honor of representing Victim Support Europe on many occasions and to take part in important discussions on victims' rights in Europe. For the third time I had the opportunity to join the Justice Forum meetings in Brussels in September and November. In April VSE attended an important meeting with the Ministry of Justice in Stockholm, Sweden. As you all may know, Sweden has been President of the European Union during the second half of 2009. I also had the chance to attend two conferences in Stockholm, one on victim issues within the EU and one dealing with child victims.

In June our Annual Conference took place in Lisbon, together with the VinE project seminar. It has truly been a great success. During the AGM on Saturday the 27th of June major decisions were taken of which the approval of our new constitution has certainly been one of the most important ones.

In October a Turkish delegation of five

police officials paid a visit to the Netherlands to learn about our experiences with child victims. The 25th anniversary of Victim Support Scotland was celebrated on the 4th of November in Edinburgh and last but not least I had the chance to attend the 13th Symposium of the World Society of Victimology in Mito, Japan. By giving a presentation on the benefits of hosting the 14th Symposium in The Hague, The Netherlands, the Board of WSV has awarded us the bid. Victim Support Europe will, together with Intervict in Tilburg and The European Forum for restorative Justice in Leuven, organize the 2012 event. The conference will be a major operation, aiming to attract around 1000 participants, both academics and practitioners.

All these invitations and opportunities show that Victim Support Europe is well known and that partners have high expectations on us.

Unfortunately the European Commission did not give any European NGO, VSE included, the opportunity to apply for funding out of an Operating Grant this year.

VSE has applied for funding of its activities during the upcoming two years. We are confident that the Commission will approve these applications and will further support the work of Victim Support Europe.

Victim Support Europe is on the right track and moving fast and as President I am very satisfied about this progress and honored to chair this strong and important organization. Wishing you a merry Christmas and all the best for 2010.

Jaap Smit
President

General News

Meetings of the Executive Board

Since the publication of the last newsletter the Executive Board met three times to discuss major issues concerning Victim Support Europe:

- June 24 2009 Lisbon, Portugal
- October 8 & 9 Porto, Portugal
- November 26 & 27 Vienna, Austria

As you all know, several policy papers have been subject to change. The Membership Policy Paper has been finalized and the new constitution of Victim Support Europe has been approved by the AGM. Legal movement of the organization to Brussels has been considered a serious possibility for a long time. In November Frank and Sara paid a visit to Ms. C. Indekeu, Notary in Brussels, together with Mark Bertrand of the European Network of the Councils for the Judiciary. It is foreseen that legal movement to Brussels will become effective as of the first of April 2010. We will keep you all informed about progresses made.

From now on, the agenda of every Executive Board meeting will be published on the website (the login part of the website) a few weeks before the next meeting.

CEO meeting postponed

On the 26th of November a reminder was sent to you for the upcoming CEO meeting on the 8th of February 2010. During the last Board meeting however it was decided to postpone this event. This due to the fact that no certainty has been given yet by the EC about reimbursement of travel and accommodation costs.

The European Commission intends to organize an expert meeting on victims issue's at the end of February. This would give us the opportunity to join for a CEO meeting the day before or after this expert meeting. Costs of travel and accommodation would then be covered by

the EC. You will all be informed as soon as possible about the final decision of the EC regarding the expert meeting and the date of the event.

Should the EC decide not to organize an expert meeting the CEO meeting may take place later on in 2010.

Meeting Ministry of Justice in Stockholm, Sweden and Council Conclusions

Victim Support Europe and members of the Ministry of Justice in Sweden met on the 14th of April. During this meeting Victim Support Europe once again emphasized the importance of getting victim support issues into the Stockholm Programme and to revise the 2001 Framework Decision. On the 23rd of October the Council of Europe published its conclusions on " a strategy to ensure fulfillment of the rights of and improve support to persons who fall victim to crime in the European Union". The Council conclusions are a Swedish initiative. They raise the level of ambition by strengthening the rights of, and improving support to, people who are victims of crime in the EU; they also point the way for future work. "It is important to put the issue of victims of crime on the EU agenda. This is why Sweden has forged ahead and made it a priority issue during its Presidency. Today's decision is a very important step in the ongoing process" said Minister for Justice Beatrice Ask in a press release of the Government Offices of Sweden. The full text of the Council Conclusions can be found on: http://www.se2009.eu/polopoly_fs/1.20586!menu/standard/file/110726.pdf It is expected that the final Stockholm Programme will be adopted on the 14th of December 2009.

Free European 116006 number

On the 30th of November 2009 the Commission adopted a decision amending the "Decision 2007/116/EC" by reserving two additional numbers within the 116 numbering range: 116006 for help lines for victims of crime and 116117 for non-emergency medical on-call services.

Under the 116 Decision it is the national regulatory authorities within each Member State which are responsible for ensuring that the reserved numbers are available within their territory for the relevant services, for publicising their availability, for selecting the successful applicants and for assigning the numbers to them. Under the amending Decision the Member States have until 15 April 2010 to ensure that the competent national regulatory authority can assign the two new numbers.

The EC suggests that every member of VSE who wishes to be assigned the number 116006 should contact the national regulatory authorities in the relevant Member State to indicate their interest and ask about the selection procedures. An overview of all national regulatory authorities is attached to this newsletter.

For your reminder, the following countries already indicated to be interested in implementing the 116006 number: Austria, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Malta, Netherlands, Scotland and the UK.

In the application for an Action Grant, sent in at the beginning of October 2009, budget for research on the implementation has been taken asked for.

For more information, please contact Frank Hengeveld, Executive Officer VSE
f.hengeveld@victimsupporteurope.eu

Annual Conference Berlin, Germany

The next Annual Conference of Victim Support Europe will take place on the 27th and 28th of May 2010 in Berlin, Germany. The venue of the conference will be the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung in Berlin at the Tiergartenstrasse 35.

The key theme of the conference will be "Justice for victims in Europe". The Conference will provide a blend of practical, academic and policy issues of interest to victim service organizations and practitioners.

On Saturday morning, May 29 from 10:30 – 13:00, the Annual General Meeting will take place. A formal notification and additional documents will be sent to you during the month of December.

New members and applications

From the 1st of July the following organizations applied successfully for associate membership of Victim Support Europe:

Spain, Favide, a regional organization situated in Valencia. The organization deals with all kind of penal crimes and assists about 30.000 victims annually.

Republic of Ireland, Crime Victims Helpline, situated in Dublin. CVH is a government-funded National helpline service which provides support and information to victims of crime in the Republic of Ireland.

Republic of Ireland, The Commission for the Support of Victims of Crime, also based in Dublin. It is the main body in Ireland coordinating services for victims of crime in Ireland. It was established by the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform in March 2005 to provide oversight of services to victims of crime.

Republic of Ireland, Irish Tourist Assistance Service, based again in Dublin. The organization provides practical and emotional support to travelers and tourists affected by any crime.

It is a welcoming sign that more and more organizations are willing to become a member and are looking forward to a fruitful cooperation.

During the last few months VSE has been contacted by organizations from Italy, Poland, Croatia and Greece, all interested in becoming an associate member as well. We will keep you informed about any further developments

Should you want more information, please contact the Executive Officer,

f.hengeveld@victimsupporteurope.eu

13th Symposium of the World Society of Victimology

The World Society of Victimology held its 13th Symposium from August 23 until August 28 in Mito, Japan. Key note speakers at the conference were Johan Cels, who is the Current Representative of UNHCR in Japan; Rianne Letschert, Professor and Research Director at the International Victimology Institute in Tilburg, The Netherlands and Nils Christie, Professor of Criminology at the University of Oslo, Norway. Jaap Smit was invited to speak during the opening session on Sunday during which he once again stipulated the importance of the support to victims of crime and the work done by Victim Support Europe.

During the Board Meeting of WSV, Jaap Smit had the honour to apply for hosting the 2012 Symposium in The Hague, The Netherlands. WSV awarded us the bid, which will mean that Victim Support Europe will, together with Intervict Tilburg and the European Forum for Restorative Justice in Leuven, Belgium, organise the 2012 conference. Since a lot of (international justice) takes place in The Hague, this city has been chosen to become the host city. Justice in The Hague is mainly involved with judging offenders of crime so putting the victim on the agenda in The Hague may raise victim issues awareness. A major challenge!

Austria

General Assembly approves new key recommendations for victims

In October, the General Assembly of Weisser Ring Austria approved a catalogue of key recommendations to improve victims' rights in Austria: state compensation to victims should include financing therapy costs not only for victims but also for witnesses of violent crimes and extend the term for application for compensation for assistance from 6 month to 12 months for example for loss of earnings, etc. In criminal proceedings the right to be questioned indirectly during the preliminary proceedings by the parties and their legal representatives should be extended to all victims of violent crimes. The right to receive compensation in advance by the state should be accorded in a more effective way. According to the right provided in the criminal proceedings for victims of violent crimes to receive free psychosocial and juridical support, in the support in the civil proceeding should be extended to juridical support (key recommendations see www.weisser-ring.at, News, Aktuelle Informationen, Forderungsprogramm).

Competence Centre Victim Support of Weisser Ring organized seminar on practical implementation of the „2nd Act on the Protection against Violence“ (BGBl. I 2009/40)

Many representatives of victim support organisations attended the seminar organised to analyse the new legislation which came into effect on 1st June 2009 and discussed the implication on the work of victim support organisations.

Victim Support and University for Children

In cooperation with the Institute for Criminal Law of the University in Vienna the Competence Centre Victim Support of Weisser Ring organized a special course for children of 8 - 12 years. More than 30 children participated in the information programme on crime, trauma, rights of victims and victim support.

Public Campaign for Helpline „Opfer-Notruf 0800 112 112“

„Traces of crime“, the new poster-campaign for the national free toll 24 h/day helpline for victims of crimes shows a fingerprint or bloodstains hiding the faces of victims. Opfer-Notruf 0800 112 112 is financed by the Federal Ministry of Justice.

England and Wales

Straw announces new National Victims Service

The Government has announced plans for the launch of a new National Victims Service which will give one-to-one care and support to victims and their families.

The service, which will initially be offered to families affected by murder and manslaughter but is then set to be extended it to all victims of crime, was announced by Justice Secretary Jack Straw during the recent Labour Party conference.

And in recognition of the central role we will play in providing this extra support to families, Victim Support will be given additional government funding of £2m this year, while a further £8.5m should be available to fund the initiative in the next financial year.

Gillian Guy, Victim Support's Chief Executive, said: "This is welcome news. Victim Support can now deepen the help we provide for the thousands of people affected by homicide each year. When

people's lives fall apart, we will work with others to make sure they get the support they need".

"Jack Straw is right to see the voluntary sector as central in delivering the ambition of a new Victims Service".

"We are already considering what the service will look like and the ways in which agencies and voluntary sector organisations will need to work together to make sure families of murder and manslaughter victims get the support they need and deserve".

"We look forward to a closer partnership as we extend our services for all victims of crime in the months and years ahead."

Announcing the new service, Mr Straw said: "Losing a loved one is a traumatic and life-changing experience. It is therefore imperative that effective support systems are created to help bereaved families through this terrible time".

"Over the past ten years a solid platform of support for victims of crime has been built. But now it is time to go even further. The Victims Service will achieve this by providing one-to-one care and support for victims – in the same way that the probation services provides end-to-end management of offenders."

The Netherlands

New legislation on strengthening the position of victims within criminal proceedings.

In 2010 a new legislation will become effective within the Netherlands. By introducing this new legislation victims within the Netherlands will for the first time in history have a legal position within the criminal proceedings. Part of this legislation deals with the financial compensation of victims of crime.

Eight months after the final decision of the court the victim will receive the full amount of coverage from the government. Other parts of the legislation covers the rights of getting information about releasing an offender and about the right to speech before court.

25th Anniversary of Victim Support Netherlands

On Wednesday the 30th of September the 25th Anniversary of Victim Support Netherlands was celebrated at the Beatrix Theatre in Utrecht. More than 1200 volunteers, employees and external guests joined a wonderful event. We had the honour to welcome the Prime Minister of the Netherlands, Mr. J.P. Balkenende. In his speech, Mr. Balkenende gave his compliments to all volunteers and staff of the Dutch Victim Support organisation for doing such an important job. A book on the history of 25 years of Victim Support Europe, conducted by Mrs. Sonja Leferink, was handed over to the Prime Minister. Throughout the day and during the reception several participants from members of Victim Support Europe joined the celebration. A very inspiring event for all of us.

Portugal

Prize "APAV 2000inove" for APAV's volunteers, interns and employees

Bearing in mind the Plan 2000inove and the European Year of Creativity and Innovation APAV is launching a challenge to its permanent staff and volunteers. This prize aims to reward the best idea for a new internal procedure or development, demonstrating innovation and creativity. The prized ideas will assist APAV in carrying out its primary mission: victim support.

For more information:
nunocatarino@apav.pt

New leaflets

APAV just released its new leaflets dedicated to family and friends victims of murder. With an improved content and image, we aim to better reach these victims, giving them hints on what to do in such a difficult process. In fact the murder of someone is surely one of the most traumatic deaths, not only for the victims but also for family members and friends. The loss felt may lead to intense suffering and cause significant changes in the personal, family and social lives. It may awake extreme negative reactions, such as fear, anger, shock and horror. This is why it is important the adjustment to a new reality and to have a specialized support from aware and trained professionals, who know how to answer to the commotion of mourning with safety, confidence, care and hope in the abilities of the individual to overcome the pain of loss.

For more information: apav.sede@apav.pt

Project CURE

APAV is currently a partner in the Children in the Union - Rights and Empowerment (CURE), which is a project run by the Crime Victim Compensation and Support Authority from Sweden and which addresses the specific needs of child victims. The overarching objective of the project is to raise awareness of the problems of the child victim in the criminal justice system and the measures taken in the EU Member States aimed at the child victim.

On 3 and 4 of December the conference Children in the Union – Rights and Empowerment, CURE took place in Stockholm, Sweden. The goals of the conference mirrored the twofold approach of the CURE-project. They were to gain an understanding of the legal position of the child victim in the criminal justice procedure and to present best practices which may facilitate the position of child victims.

At the conference the situation in the Member States were discussed with a view to come up with conclusions on how to avoid secondary victimisation of child victims. The outcome of the discussions also serve as a basis for future recommendations directed to the European Commission. The conference was not open to the general public and was directed primarily to ministries of justice and professionals in the criminal justice system.

Project May I Help You?

A non-resident person, who is victim of a crime in a foreign country, might feel even more vulnerable than if the crime takes place in the country of residence. The language and culture differences can become a serious obstacle when searching for help and support after the crimes occurs.

Project May I Help You? – co-financed by the European Commission under the General Programme "Prevention and Fight Against Crime 2008" - continues its activities aiming to improve the information and support given to persons who are victims of a crime in another Member State.

On the 13 of January 2010 it will be held in Lisbon the workshop "Prevention and support of tourists". This workshop will be an opportunity to gather experts from different areas and discuss important issues such as the prevention, investigation and support concerning the tourists' victims of crime.

Every professional that develops work in this area is more than welcome in Lisbon. To access the draft programme and for more information, please contact: carlaamaral@apav.pt

Russia

September 2009 Project "Protect the childhood"

Ngo Soprotivlenie has initiated and conducted in seven federal districts of

Russia seminars for employees of the law enforcement forces on the methodology of investigation and prevention of crimes against minors.

This project is going on together with the Public Chamber and with the Investigative Committee of the Office of Public Prosecutor of Russian Federation.

These methodical lectures will accumulate the efforts of law enforcement agencies and the Russian civil society institutions in the protection of minors. The first seminars successfully started in Yekaterinburg, St. Petersburg. Upcoming seminars will be held in Novosibirsk, Rostov, Nizhny Novgorod in November and December 2009.

July –November 2009 Educational projects

Our specialists have completed work on two new text books:

1. "Basic life support" (OBZh) for students in primary and secondary schools. The book is focused on the study of theory and practice safe behavior and protection of rights in everyday life and in various dangerous and emergency situations for children.
2. A new book "Victimology" for law high schools and universities. The idea of the book is to turn legal and ethical aspects toward the protection of the victim rights.

September 2009

Soprotivlenie has participated on several important international conferences: Conference of Council of Europe "What future for human rights and the democratic ideal in Europe" in Paris
The 3rd international conference Keeping Children and Young People Safe Online in Warsaw
Conference of OSCE ODIHR: Human Dimension Implementation Meeting.

Trafficking in human beings in Warsaw Conference "Child and justice" organized by Unicef and French Embassy in Russian Federation in Moscow.

October 2009

On October the 14th Olga Kostina participated at a session of inter-commission working group concerning the childhood and youth, which took place at the Public Chamber. The main objective was to make the plan of activity of group till the end of 2009 and to make the list of priorities. Olga Kostina has formulated three basic directions of work of inter-commission group. It is control and support of child care centers on all country, the analysis of orphan organizations and child protection against violence, including toughening of punishments for crimes against children and reforming of the Criminal Code.

Radio program « The Right for Protection»

A one-hour program «The Right for Protection» is a live program devoted to the social and legal protection. The program invites professional lawyers, psychologists, representatives of the law-enforcement bodies, judicial, legislative and executive branches of power as well as public personalities.

Ilmira Malikova – a general director of Sopotivlenie and a moderator of the radio program " The Right for Protection" took part at the competition of journalistic work "Contemporary slavery in the mirror of the media", which was co-sponsored the International Organization for Migration (IOM). She became a winner of the nomination of the best Radio of Program.

November 2008

16 November – a round table discussion "Childhood without violence: right to protection". The one day conference was

devoted to the 20 anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The aim of the conference is to raise awareness among the political, expert and public with regard to children's rights, particularly the right to protection against violence.

The one day conference has brought together representatives from the education sector, NGO's, law enforcement forces, Russian Parliament .

30 November - the third ceremony of the annual award "Vybor" (Choice) for civil courage in resisting the crime. The award was established by Sopotivlenie and NTV TV-company in 2007. The purpose of founding the awards is to raise awareness and to draw public attention to the problem of fighting against criminality and to express the public gratitude to all those Russian citizens that were brave enough to resist the crime.

Scotland

Justice legislation

Victim Support Scotland continues to take an active part in the development of criminal and social justice legislation. For example, during the end of October we gave oral evidence to the Scottish Parliament's Justice Committee regarding the use and funding of community sentences.

Victim Support Scotland and SACRO, an organisation working with offenders to promote community safety across Scotland by reducing conflict and offending, has been working in partnership to develop a balanced restorative justice approach, mainly focusing on the needs of the victim. The project report has been sent to the Scottish government and a bid will be submitted to pilot it throughout Scotland.

Serbia

Trafficking of men in Serbia

The book "Trafficking of men in Serbia" edited by Vesna Nikolić-Ristanović, was published by Victimology Society of Serbia. This book represents a research report about the trafficking of men in Serbia, as a result of the 2-year study conducted by the VDS. English edition of the book is in preparation.

During the last years in Serbia, as well as in the entire world the number of identified male victims of human trafficking is growing, therefore the mentioned research and the book represent valuable resources for the design of the mechanisms for a more adequate opposition to the phenomena, prevention, help and protection of the victims.

Research

The Victimology Society of Serbia has worked, as part of the project *Towards a comprehensive system to end violence against women in Vojvodina*, (north part of Serbia), on the following research in the year 2009:

1. Research of the features and the prevalence of domestic violence in Vojvodina

The data was collected in the period: 1st of May – 1st of July 2009. This study was conducted on the sample of 516 adult women from the territory of Vojvodina.

2. Inquiry of the universal informational-documentation database of practices, services and capacities in the area of protection from the violence against women in Vojvodina

Data collection was done in the period: 1st of April – 31st of May 2009. This research was conducted on the sample of 44 centers for social work, 70 medical institutions, 30 NGOs, 3 info counters and 7 police directorates on the territory of Vojvodina.

3. Examination of the previous practice of evidence in the field of domestic violence
The data was gathered in the period: 15th of June – 15th of July 2009. This analysis was conducted on the sample of 28 centers for social work, 4 medical institutions, 9 NGOs and 7 police directorates on the territory of Vojvodina.

Victimology Society of Serbia commenced implementation of the project titled *Monitoring of referral mechanism and system of protection of women victims of human trafficking in Serbia* April 2009.

The aim of the project is to improve procedures and institutionalize anti-trafficking mechanisms in Serbia, particularly in regard to victims' protection.

The central part of the project is related to the monitoring/research into the existing anti-trafficking mechanism in Serbia and its assessment, while the survey-based research presents its basis. It consists from several activities, including interviews with state officials, representatives of NGOs and IOs, and women victims of human trafficking, and monitoring of implementation of referral system through direct observation of the activities of the Agency for coordination of protection on victims of trafficking and the police.

Colofon

The Victim Support Europe newsletter exists to inform all Victim Support Europe members about recent developments, research, documents for collective use and training materials.

Victim Support Europe members have the opportunity to contribute to this newsletter as follows: every member organization appoints one contact person. This contact person compiles information for the newsletter and communicates this to the editor.

This contact person is also responsible for spreading the newsletter through his or her own victim support organization after he or she received the newsletter.

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