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Victim Support Europe

NEWSLETTER N°4 DECEMBER 2012



- **Words from the President**
- **"Putting Victims' Rights into Practice" VSE Conference, Brussels**
- **CABVIS Closing Seminar, Lisbon**
- **Victim Support Europe General Meeting, Brussels**



"Putting Victims' Rights into Practice" Conference

The event which took place in the European Parliament was a huge success and counted with participants from across Europe and from many professional fields.



CABVIS Seminar

The Victim Support Europe project to build capacity for victims' practitioners draws to a close but with long-lasting results.

A few words from the President...

2012 has been a very successful year where Victim Support Europe has continued to strengthen our role as the voice of Victims in Europe. We have cooperated with the EU institutions, presidencies and partner agencies during the year and were delighted to see the EU Directive establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime enter into force in November 2012. Member states now have a three-year implementation period within which they must transpose the new rights into their national legislation. Victim Support Europe looks forward to working with member states and our European partners to assist in the implementation to ensure that the Directive improve victims' ability to access their rights in practice. With 2012 drawing to a close, we look forward to 2013 which presents many new opportunities on the horizon. With the overall focus on strengthening victim support services, we hope to assist in the development of our member organisations both in relation to organisational structure and advocacy for victims' rights in Europe and beyond. The European Commission's "Victim's Package" and the Budapest Roadmap also present many exciting prospects ahead with further attention being given to strengthening and promoting rights and services to victims of crime in Europe.

I wish you all a very peaceful holiday period and look forward to seeing you in 2013.

"PUTTING VICTIMS' RIGHT INTO PRACTICE"

CONFERENCE in Brussels 26th November

The Conference "*Putting Victims' Rights into Practice*", organised by Victim Support Europe and hosted by Alyn Smith MEP, took place in the European Parliament in Brussels on the 26th of November. With the new European directive on victims' rights published on the Official Journal of the European Union and formally adopted as law, the main purpose of this Conference was to discuss the next step: the implementation of the directive in the member states. For this purpose, varied speakers were invited to present their thoughts on how to take the rights of victims and shape them into practice. Officials from the European Commission, including the Director-General for Justice Françoise Le Bail (see [here](#) speech), the European Parliament rapporteur Teresa Jimenez-Becerril MEP, and experts from the Council and the EESC gave the attendants an insight on the views of these institutions regarding the next steps on making victims' rights a reality. Representatives from the Dutch and Polish Justice Ministries presented their government outlook on the implementation of the new EU directive in their respective countries. The Conference also featured a section devoted to the sharing of best practices where victim support practitioners from across Europe presented practical methods of implementing different rights of victims. This exciting event was complete with the sharing of the story of a brave woman who was a victim of stalking and who campaigned fiercely to change the law in Scotland. Overall, the event exceeded our optimistic expectations and managed to launch the debate on what to do next regarding the implementation of the new piece of legislation establishing minimum standards for victims' rights in Europe.

VICTIM SUPPORT EUROPE GENERAL MEETING

Brussels 27th November

On the 27th of November, Victim Support Europe member organisations gathered in Brussels for their annual general meeting. The event was a chance to ascertain the achievements of Victim Support Europe in 2012, but also for members to share the progress on victims' rights in their own countries, the successes of their work in the field and the challenges which are still present and prevent victims from accessing their rights. The presence of Victim Support Europe in Brussels is understood as imperative to the advocacy of the ever-improvement of victims' rights across Europe and to support member states in their implementation of the new EU directive establishing minimum standards on the support, protection and rights of victims of crime.

New events and opportunities to exchange knowledge and practices were put forward, including the next VSE Conference and Annual General Meeting which will take place in Edinburgh from 29th May to 1st June of 2013, and a Summer School in Bulgaria in September of 2013 for victim support organisations and other professionals who deal with crime victims. The next Annual General Meetings will take place in Poland (2014) and Denmark (2015) and will return to their original timeframe of the last week of May.

CABVIS CLOSING SEMINAR Lisbon, 27th-28th September

The Seminar "*Victims' Rights: a step forward*" was held in Lisbon, in Hotel Olissipo Oriente, on the 27th and 28th of September 2012. It featured around 200 participants and was the highlight of Project CABVIS. The inspiring speeches of the renowned guest speakers launched several thought-provoking discussions between all stakeholders present, which ranged from police officers to staff of European Union agencies, judicial practitioners, health professionals and victim support workers. The Seminar reflected the objectives of this project: to build the capacity of all professionals dealing directly with victims and to promote networking between agencies, leading ultimately to improved mutual cooperation.

CABVIS Project is about to reach to a close, but its effects will be long lasting. New materials were created, new opportunities emerged and cross-border issues were raised. All materials will be available on the new and improved Victim Support Europe's website, itself an outcome of this project. Training materials, leaflets for cross-border victims in more than 30 languages, an implementation handbook on the 116006 helpline and several national and one international Seminar, these are all achieved results, but more is yet to come. The new website will allow a greater dissemination of these materials and will make available those that have not yet been shared with the VSE member organisations and those that have been updated in the meantime. Many relevant stakeholders received the CABVIS leaflet for dissemination in the countries partners to the project, but many others can have access to it through the new website and through other fellow members of VSE that now have access to them, in the hope that more victims receive the provided information. The training manual was already successfully applied by the partner organisations but can now be used by other VSE members. They can make use of not only the complete training sessions designed but also of the basic background information which includes a general explanation of the new European directive on victims' rights. The handbook can be used by organisations to make a decision on how to proceed with their efforts to implement the 116006 helpline number and even to decide if they wish to do so.

The aim of the project was to build capacity among professionals who deal with victims of crime and that is only achievable if we continue to build partnerships, if we share best practices and lessons learnt, if we work together and concentrate information in comprehensive documents. Project CABVIS was a step further in this long path that Victim Support Europe and its members have to trail to achieve greater strength as an organisation and to create a fruitful legacy that can impact on victims' rights in Europe.



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