

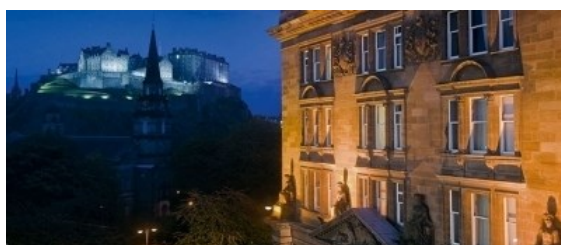
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# **Victim Support Europe**

NEWSLETTER N°1 MARCH 2013



- **Invitation from the President**
- **VSE Annual Conference "Supporting victims of crime in Europe", Edinburgh**
- **Berlin workshop on victims' rights**
- **Ongoing VSE projects**



## **"Supporting victims of crime in Europe" Conference**

Victim Support Europe will hold its 2013 Annual Conference in Edinburgh at the end of



## **Regional Workshop in Berlin**

Weisser Ring Germany hosts a regional workshop on victims'

## Invitation from our President...

I am delighted to invite you all to Victim Support Europe Annual Conference 2013 "Supporting Victims of Crime in Europe" which will take place in Edinburgh from 29 May to 1 June 2013.

It will be an exciting opportunity for practitioners, criminal justice professionals, academics, EU officials and member states representatives to come together and share their knowledge and experience in victims of crime in Europe.

All information regarding registration and programme as well as practical information can be found on the conference website at: [www.vseconference.org](http://www.vseconference.org).

*We hope to see you in Edinburgh for this exciting event!*

## **VSE Annual Conference "SUPPORTING VICTIMS OF CRIME IN EUROPE - THE EU DIRECTIVE" Edinburgh 29th May - 1st June**

Victim Support Europe will hold its 2013 Annual Conference in Edinburgh at the Waldorf Caledonian Hotel on 29th May - 1st June. The Conference "Supporting Victims of Crime in Europe - The EU Directive" will focus on six main areas of victim support:

1. Victims' Rights
2. Cross-border Victimisation
3. Human Trafficking
4. New Approaches to Victim Support
5. Support Services
6. New Types of Victimisation

Each of these topics will have workshops with presenters covering a broad spectrum of experiences, including the European Commission, the Fundamental Rights Agency, victim support organisations, university centres, the European Forum for Restorative Justice, Eurojust and experts from the United States. The Opening Ceremony will count with the presence of the Minister for Justice, Equality and Defense of the Republic of Ireland, and with the Cabinet Secretary for Justice of Scotland. On the plenary sessions of the Conference, we will have the opportunity to hear the perspective of the European Parliament, the European Commission, victim support leaders, and international guests. The full programme can be found [here](#).

Besides the rich and enlightening content of our Conference programme, Victim Support Europe has arranged for several social activities which we hope will make for a truly welcoming and unforgettable experience in Edinburgh. On the first day participants are able to choose to visit one of three sites in Edinburgh: the victim support services in Scotland, the witness services, or the Scottish Parliament. The study visits will be followed by a pre-Conference reception at the Edinburgh City Council. On the second day, and after a productive exchange of knowledge and practical experience on victims' rights, the Scottish Government will host a reception at the Edinburgh Castle, a majestic site with amazing views of the city. On Friday evening, we invite our speakers and participants to join us at the closing dinner at the magnificent Signet Library, the perfect spot to end what we hope will be a most

interesting event.

On the Saturday morning, 1st June, Victim Support Europe will hold its Annual General Meeting and invites all of its members to join and participate in this important annual exchange.

## **Regional Workshop in Berlin**

### **28 February - 1 March 2013**

Weisser Ring Germany hosted a two-day workshop in Berlin which had the participation of twenty representatives from national victim support organisations from neighbouring countries. Participants came from Hungary, Poland, Croatia, Denmark, Austria and Germany to engage in a lively debate on victims' rights and to discuss possible improvements for crime victims in Europe. One of the aims of this workshop was also to discuss how neighbouring countries can improve their cooperation in relation to victims, particularly cross-border victims.

Axel Voss, Member of the European Parliament and of the International Advisory Board of Weisser Ring Germany, lectured on the legislative process in the European Parliament. The workshop also counted with the presence of Ingrid Bellander-Todino from the European Commission. The leader of the Victims' Team of the European Commission engaged with victim support professionals in a discussion on the necessary steps to implement the new victims' rights inscribed in the EU directive into their own legal and practical assistance to victims. Dr Helgard van Hüllen, Vice-President of Weisser Ring and member of the Executive Board of Victim Support Europe, stressed the need to cooperate at the European level on victims' issues, precisely to ensure that the new EU directive on victims' rights approved in November 2012 is not forgotten.

## **VSE as a Partner**

### **Ongoing and recently-finished projects**

#### **INFOVICTIMS - Portuguese Association for Victim Support (ongoing)**

One of the worst obstacles that victims of crime still face across Europe is the lack of information available to them. This may lead to a general unawareness on how to exercise their rights, but also to further ordeals and secondary victimisation due to common lack of knowledge of police and judicial authorities regarding victim rights, needs and interests. It was with the intention of addressing these shortcomings that the Project Infovictims, co-financed by the Criminal Justice Programme of the European Union, was designed. This project aims to contribute to the increase of information given to the victims of crime concerning the criminal justice system, their rights and the ways to exercise them in different partner countries (Portugal, Czech Republic, Austria). One aim is to directly improve the quality and quantity of the information provided to crime victims, by creating and producing a set of materials that makes information more available and easy to understand, namely a website and leaflets, both containing relevant information about the criminal justice system and victims' rights. Another aim is to raise the awareness of the judicial operators and the police forces to the duty to inform, and to the need to ensure that the victim fully understands their rights and that their needs, interests and expectations are taken into account. For this, we will develop awareness-raising kits to disseminate amongst judicial operators and police forces, with the aim to call their attention to the importance of providing clear, complete and accurate information to victims of crime. We will also develop meetings with key persons from the judicial and police authorities, to highlight the importance of the duty to inform the victims of crime of their needs. APAV's transnational partners on Infovictims are Victim Support Europe, Brottsoffermyndigheten/ Crime Victim Compensation and Support Authority

(Sweden), Weisser Ring Austria (Austria), Bíli Kru Bezpeci (Czech Republic).

### **STRENGTHENING CRIME PREVENTION IN EU MEMBER STATES - Victim Support Malta (project finalized)**

One of the aims of this Project was to held a seminar on crime prevention in Malta. This seminar, organised in January, had the purpose of gathering participants coming from various EU member states whose interest focuses around the concept of crime prevention. This project gave the participants coming from various member states the opportunity to establish cooperation on crime prevention at the European level, despite different perspectives they have on the issue. During the seminar, participants were involved in informal workshops with the aim of encouraging active participation from the audience. Another aim of this project was for the participants to establish a strong relationship, and this was done, inter alia, by the sharing and identification of best practices and of developing recommendations. More importantly perhaps, this project formed the basis for future cooperation between the participants, since it also entailed the setting up of a website where participants can access information on the subject matter, and the establishing of an online forum, which will both be the basis of future cooperation in the field of crime prevention.

### **SUBSTANTIAL SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS: Towards a Holistic Response to Crime - Latvia and Beyond - PROVIDUS (project finalized)**

The Centre for Public Policy – PROVIDUS has just finished a two-year European Project on “Substantial Support for Victims: Towards a Holistic Response to Crime. Latvia and beyond”. Victim Support Europe was very pleased to be a partner in this project, giving input as research advisor throughout the activities developed within the project . The overall objective of the project was to prevent victimisation by enhancing support for victims and fostering a more holistic and healing response to crime, where the victim, offender and society are equally acknowledged. More specifically, the project aimed to provide research-based strategic and policy recommendations for development of good policies that address victims' needs, and response to crime in a balanced, restorative way; to provide information and support to victims of crime; to enhance understanding about the benefits of a restorative response towards victims' needs among law enforcement agencies, media and society at large, and to improve cooperation and networking among state agencies and NGOs working with victims of crime within Latvia and beyond. The final Conference of the Project – “Supporting Victims of Crime in Latvia - Incorporating an EU dimension” took place in Riga, Latvia on 21-22 February, 2013.

## **Disclaimer**

This is the first Newsletter in 2013. You will receive three more this year on a regular basis. Any comments or suggestions for improvement are welcome.

This Newsletter does not have contributions from our members. But we would very much appreciate if you could send us news from your organisation / country for the next Newsletter in June. We would like to receive your report till mid of May.

*Helgard van Hüllen*

[About Victim Support Europe](#)

Victim Support Europe is an umbrella organisation which currently counts with 32 national and regional victim support organisations throughout Europe.

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