

EU Centre of expertise for victims of terrorism

In the past years, terrorism continued to constitute a major threat to security in the European Union. The European Commission is committed to ensuring that victims of terrorism can fully rely on their rights independently where in the EU the terrorist attack takes place. The EU has adopted a solid set of rules on victims' rights including particular provisions on rights of victims of terrorism that respond more directly to their specific needs. In this regard, a good preparation on how to deal with victims of terrorism before any attack takes place is of a vital importance.

What is the EU Centre of expertise for victims of terrorism?

The European Commission set up the EU Centre of expertise for victims of terrorism (the EU Centre) in January 2020 to offer expertise, guidance and support to national authorities and victim support organisations.

The EU Centre will help to ensure that the EU rules on victims of terrorism are correctly applied. It will promote exchange of best practices and sharing of expertise among the practitioners and specialists across borders. It will not provide for direct help and assistance to particular victims of terrorism, but it will help to ensure that national structures offer professional assistance and support to victims of terrorism in every EU country.

The EU Centre is a pilot project that will last for two years.

Who is involved?

The EU Centre is set up and run by the European Commission who is assisted by a consortium of victim support associations led by Victim Support Europe. The Association française des Victimes du Terrorisme, the Fondation Lenval and ARQ National Psychotrauma Centre are partners in the consortium. The consortium will execute the tasks of the EU Centre on behalf of the Commission. It should be also noted that the European Network on Victims' Rights - a platform of national experts from EU Member States dealing with victims' rights - has an important role when it comes to steering and supporting the activities of the EU Centre.

What the EU Centre does?

- **Training and handbooks**

The EU Centre will offer training programmes for national authorities and victim support organisations of the Member States. The trainings will focus on practical, legal and psychological issues related to victims of terrorism. They will be accompanied by handbooks with useful information on the rights, needs and support of victims of terrorism.

The EU Centre will ensure that in every EU Member State there are relevant people specifically trained on the needs and rights of victims of terrorism. The specifically trained staff will be encouraged to continue the trainings at the local level in every Member State to continue spreading the knowledge.

- **Hub of expertise**

The EU Centre will offer a platform for national authorities and victim support organisations in the Member States. The EU Centre will also set up a platform to exchange knowledge and experience on rights of victims of terrorism. In particular, those who have already helped victims of terrorism can share their knowledge with their colleagues in the EU countries not directly affected by terrorist attacks. The EU Centre

will also ensure more effective responses for persons who suffered from a terrorist attack in an EU country where they don't usually live by promoting better flow of information across borders.

The EU Centre will also build a database of experts in different fields like:

- Psycho-trauma experts specifically trained to deal with post-traumatic syndrome characteristic to victims of terrorism;
- Psychologists, lawyers, victim support organisations and first responders.

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