



## **DRAFT MINUTES OF VICTIM SUPPORT EUROPE**

### **Annual General Meeting**

**Monday 28 November 2016 (14:00 - 18:00 am)**

Held in  
The Hotel, Boulevard de Waterloo 38  
1000 Brussels

#### **0. Attendees and apologies**

See list of attendees and apologies at the end.

The President opened the meeting and together with Board Member Leena-Kaisa made an introductory welcome to those present. As a point of order, the Agenda was revised and point 4. was proposed to be presented after point 2.

#### **1. Minutes of AGM May 2016**

The President presented the Draft Minutes from the previous AGM held in Utrecht, Netherlands in May 2016. The minutes were approved by the Members.

#### **2. Report of President**

The President presented the Activity report up to November 2016 to the Members and the Executive director Levent Altan presented the future plans for November and December 2016.

The President introduced the new VSE Secretariat Members: Irina Dragoman (Office manager) and Sanjin Buzo (Finance & Project officer) and set out future staffing plans including the plan to hire a new Project Manager in the coming months. The new role will reflect VSE's increases non-operating grant work and the agreed priority to diversify sources of income. The project manager will work on Project VOciare (implementation of the EU Victims Directive) and the World Bank Serbia Project as well as supporting the team in terms of core objectives under the EU operating grant.

#### **3. Presentation of new members**

Board Member Barbara Unterlerchner presented VSE's two newest associate members – the Mayor of London's office (UK) and Rete Dafne (IT). Each new member provide a short presentation of their organisation and work:

##### **Mayor of London (Brussels office)**

Bernardo Rodriguez presented the activities, duties, of the Mayor of London's local Brussels office and how the department functions. He explained that the Mayor has been responsible for drawing up the victims policy for London since 2011. In terms of the policy in general, the Mayor's office is responsible for victim services in London since 2014. It works together with agencies in London, which are supporting victims. The main duty of the Mayor of London

office in Brussels is to liaise on EU affairs. He also noted that London is seeing a change in the demand for services. Bernardo Rodriguez next set out key objectives for the Mayor of London's in the coming years:

**- Police and crime plan 2017 -2020**

- Publication of the police and crime plan in coming days.

**-Keeping children and young people safe**

**-Victim support**

- Requirement for a Victims commissioner for London
- Reviewing of the entire victim journey through the Criminal Justice System
- Domestic violence advocacy and service commissioning
- Restorative justice

**-Need help with**

- Keeping young people safe
  - How to increase civil society's engagement with the police
  - Campaigns to tackle violence against women and girls
  - How to measure performance – victim services
  - Cases of cities/regions pulling together for the victim services
- Press release from the mayor – £4 million extra to tackle the sexual violence.
  - In 8 years of activity, they registered 1583 victims who asked for support.

**Rete Dafne Association**

– Silvia Taravan presented the organisation activities.

She explained that Rete Dafne Association had just been founded and they became a VSE Member in May 2016. In September they had a first meeting in Torino with Helgard van Hullen and Bianca Biwer from Weisser Ring Germany, in order to improve knowledge and strategies on establishing a national network of victim support providers. They thanked to Weisser Ring representatives for this meeting. She also noted that they received support from organisations in Romania and Morocco.

Rete Dafne, Libra, I-Care, the Italian Ministry of Justice and local authorities were working together on a nationwide range services and on interoperability of services. Rete Dafne received an official mandate to coordinate the networking, accreditation, and mapping of existing services. They are ultimately aiming towards an Italian Network of Victim Support Services.

**3.1. Activities in the last period**

Following the new members presentation, a roundtable discussion ensued on focused mainly on each organisation's activities and accomplishments during the last period.

**Victim Support Europe:** Executive director Levent Altan talked about VSE's work on victims of terrorism & capacity building, and about future activities for 2016. Levent presented ideas for the Summer 2017 Training School which will be held in Portugal.

**Weisser Ring Germany** underlined the current political interest in the Victims Directive as well as presenting current work on training for deaf people. They informed members of their

support service provided through online chat and how it was increasingly used by groups that are often hard to reach such as men, and victims of sexual abuse and domestic violence.

**Victim Support Finland** informed Members that they have started its national 116 006 helpline in 2016. This is the ninth operational 116006 helpline. They also discussed their Online support service and highlighted the fact that people are becoming more used to it and that, as with Germany, they are seeing it used by groups who are less frequent clients e.g. young victims.

**Weisser Ring Austria** focused on an important topic in Austria at present - hate crime and hate speech. She said the gender based hate speech is very much increasing and Weisser Ring is trying to address this from a victim's perspective. They have also started a 1.5 year project with Human Rights Institute. One part of this project is to develop a legal analysis about gender based on cybercrime. They will carry out surveys and expert interviews. Subsequently, they will develop training manuals and curricula for all kind of stakeholders, newspapers and social media.

**Supporting Justice (UK)** presented their recently launched Victim's choice quality mark which is a self-assessment accreditation process. A range of standards have been developed and an innovative approach has been taken which takes of priorities for delivery and enables adaption according to the size of the organisation. This compares with other processes which tend to be more focused on governance and training and may not be so well suited to smaller organisations. They are ready to support VSE's standards and accreditation process and are happy to provide members with more information on their quality mark.

**Victim Support Northern Ireland** noted that the organisation is entering an exciting period. In particular, ongoing negotiations for the Good Friday agreement regarding the 30000 murdered people during the Troubles will result in a decision in the next week on how to deal with the past, and the victims of the past. It is likely there will be pensions for the surviving spouses.

On a separate point, VS NI has appointed two independent sexual violence experts examine support for victims of sexual violence. With the outcome being taken straight to the Ministry. Finally additional funding on a voice of victims of the past will be available. It will focus on lobbying on behalf of victims – access to ministers, the Church etc.

Despite this, VS NI pointed out that 25% of its core budget had been cut and it had to shrink from 6 hubs to 2 hubs. They have therefore focused their services, put bias more on IT, and have cut travel budgets. VSNI would be very interested in collaborating with organisations experienced in Post-conflict societies.

**White Ring Hungary (Akos)** presented its very successful conference with the Hungarian government. They had an interactive exhibition with 125 participants including Victims of Human Trafficking and sexual abuse. In 2016 the organisation started to trainings for students in elementary school and for police officers. However, 2016 also saw the lowest number of meetings between police officers and victims. WRH trained officers on how to deal with the victims and to make them more responsive to victims needs and requests. They used for this training psychological cases, in order to raise awareness towards victims special needs.

**Bily Kruh Bezpeci (CZ)** informed members that their organisation had carried out research about the accessibility and quality of services in their country. CZ is one of the few countries where victims of crime can apply more easily for state compensation. It also noted that the

Parliament is working on amendments for victim support. Their organisation is looking for a new base of financial support, first from crowdfunding. The aim is to increase direct support to victims. In 2017 they will have a new campaign on the topic of rape. They have dedicated their activities towards rape in particular where victims can find help.

**APAV (PT) informed members that they have finished lobby and advocacy on national implementation laws, and have concluded that the Government transposed the amendments in an unsatisfactory way. On separate issues, they will launch a technical online magazine, they have obtained a new certification for their training centre and have now a specialised team in supporting children and youngsters, victims of sexual abuse. There are 4 staff members for each project at APAV. They also pointed out that they are now started to work on victim impact statement and they have recently signed an MoU with the general prosecutor office. Finally, they presented a new APAV EU project on Hate Crime and asked the Members if they have a specific legislation on hate crime in their countries.**

**Croatian Victim and Witness Support Service** informed members that the Ministry of Justice and 5 NGOs have received lottery fund, in counties where there are no generic victim support offices for support. They conducted education activities for police, social welfare centres, and for mental health centres.

**Victim Support England & Wales indicated that they expect the government to introduce a new victims law and noted that on the last 24 months, the British Government has made significant changes regarding the victims sector, in particular with respect to the localisation of funding .**

**4. Report of Treasurer**

The Treasurer presented the Financial Report up to September 2016, and the OG 2017 budget 2017 as well as a forecast budget for 2017 which included the VOciare and World Bank projects. The World Bank project would increase VSE income. The Treasurer recommended that VSE develop a Reserve Policy.

**5. VSE Strategy 2016 – 2020**

Having developed a four year draft strategy over the course of the year, Executive director Levent Altan presented a short summary of New VSE Strategy 2016-2020 main objectives. The Executive director moderated the vote for the new VSE Strategy which resulted in a unanimous positive vote of the 11 members present thus approving the New Strategy.

**6. Any other business**

- The Annual Conference will be held in Dublin in 2017.
- It was noted that the Annual Conference 2018 could take place in Sweden. The Swedish team explained that their organisation has 5 new staff members. They have volunteers who could support for the conference organisation.

## **List of attendees:**

### **Full Members**

**João Lázaro**, President of Victim Support Europe - Associação Portuguesa de Apoio à Vítima (Portugal)  
**Helgard van Hüllen**, Vice President of Victim Support Europe – Weisser Ring (Germany)  
**Brendan Loughran** – Treasurer of Victim Support Europe - Victim Support Northern Ireland (UK)  
**Leena-Kaisa Åberg**, VSE Executive Board Member - Rikosuhripaivystys Suomessa (Finland)  
**Barbara Unterlerchner** – VSE Executive Board Member - Weisser Ring (Austria)  
**Mark Castle**, VSE Executive Board Member - Victim Support England and Wales (UK)  
**Kurt De Backer** – Steunpunt Algemeen Welzijnswerk (Belgium)  
**Victor Jammers**, Slachtofferhulp Nederland (NL)  
**Marketa Vitousova** - Bily Kruh Bezpeci (Czech Republic)  
**Petra Vitousa** – Bily Kruh Bezpeci (Czech Republic)  
**Else Marie Buck** - Offerrådgivningen (Denmark)  
**Barbara Wüsten** - Weisser Ring (Germany)  
**Bianca Biwer** - Weisser Ring (Germany)  
**Petra Klein** - Weisser Ring (Germany)  
**Rachel Almaida** - Victim Support England and Wales (UK)  
**Ákos Harmath** - Fehér Gyűrű (Hungary)  
**Laszló Peter Fűgedi** - Fehér Gyűrű (Hungary)  
**Laszló Olah** - Fehér Gyűrű (Hungary)  
**Carmen Rasquete**, APAV (Portugal)  
**Maria Yanshina** – Soprotivlenye (Russia)  
**Eva Larsson** - Victim Support (Sweden)  
**Fredrik Mellqvist** - Victim Support (Sweden)  
**Roberta Lepre** – Victim Support (Malta)

### **Associate members**

**Lisa Kennedy** – ITAS (Ireland)  
**Joan Deane** – AdVIC (Ireland)  
**Silvia Taravan** – Rete Dafne Onlus (Italy)  
**José Miguel Ayllón** - ANVDV (Spain)  
**Aniella Monika Ferenczi** – Victim Support Unit Department of Justice Services (Hungary)  
**Ana Šeničnjak** – Victim and Witness Support Service (Croatia)  
**Martina Bajto** – Ministry of Justice Independent Service for Victim and Witness Support (Croatia)  
**Rhiannon Evans** - Supporting Justice (UK)  
**Michele Lee Puckhaber** – Crime Victims Helpline (Ireland)  
**Bernardo Rodriguez** – Mayour of London (UK)

### **Staff**

**Levent Altan**, VSE Executive Director (VSE office Brussels, Belgium)  
**An Verelst**, VSE Policy Officer (VSE office Brussels, Belgium)  
**Irina Dragoman**, VSE Office Manager (VSE office Brussels, Belgium)  
**Sanjin Buzo**, VSE project & Finance Officer (VSE office Brussels, Belgium)  
**Rita Bhandari**, Volunteer (VSE office Brussels, Belgium)  
**Luis Bispo**, Volunteer (VSE office Brussels, Belgium)