



**Victim Support**  
Europe



2019

# Annual report.



# WHO WE ARE

Victim Support Europe (VSE) is the leading European umbrella organisation advocating on behalf of all victims of crime, no matter what the crime, no matter who the victim.

VSE represents 59 national member organisations, annually providing support and information services to more than 2 million people affected by crime in 30 countries.

Founded in 1990, VSE has been working for almost 30 years towards a Europe, a world, where all victims are entitled to robust rights and services, whether the crime has been reported or not.

We work towards this mission through advocacy to improve EU and international laws, through research and knowledge development, and through capacity building at the national and local level.

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## 01.

FROM THE  
PRESIDENT

As expected, 2019 was an election year for the EU and turned out to be a very busy year for Victim Support Europe and our members. The elections were a major occasion to bring the European Union closer to its citizens and to support victims and victims' rights advocates' political involvement. Under the motto 'Making Victims' Rights a Reality', VSE members from around the EU, met with candidates, organised discussions, publicised opinions to call on the European Parliament candidates to build a Europe of equal protection, victims-centered justice and comprehensive support for all victims of crime, in alignment with our Manifesto.

VSE's head office supported members in drafting letters to MEP candidates and spread the messages of the VSE manifesto among key players at the national level. The manifesto was translated in many EU languages and was published on VSE's and

members' communication platforms. The mobilisation of the victim support community did not stop after the elections. Having analysed the results, VSE's policy team started establishing contacts with the newly elected Members of the European Parliament with the intention to introduce VSE and form a new interest group on victims' rights to ensure the channel for exchanges with victims is maintained.

We are glad that our EP elections campaign succeeded in mobilising our members at national level. We are also proud of the outcome of our lobby work: our members' main priorities - equality and non-discrimination, support and justice for all - are now on the agenda of the new Commission.

VSE will continue to work closely with the European Parliament and the new Commission on our strategic objectives.



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1. VSE's Vice President Helgard van Hüllen receiving the Silver Medal of the Bavarian Constitution

2. 21 August Commemoration

3. AGM Strasburg 2019

4. VSE's President João Lázaro at Victim Support Asia's first Annual Conference



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VSE 2019  
IN PICTURES

## 02.



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5. Ruth Shrimpling, VSE's policy Officer, at the European Parliament

6. Robby Simenon, victim of assault, participant of VSE's victims' rights campaign 2019

7. PREVICT Project Kick-Off Meeting

8. VSE at 'Words Are Stones' Conference presenting the 'Crime Is Crime' campaign

9. VSE's GM November 2019

10. A delegation of officials from South Korea on a sightseeing in Gent

11. VSE Annual Conference 2019 in Strasbourg

12. VSE hosted a delegation of officials from South Korea to attend a training programme

13. 11 March European Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Terrorism

14. Aleksandra Ivankovic, VSE's Deputy Director, at the Italian senate, speaking on how to ensure comprehensive support for victims of crime in Italy

15. VSE First-Ever Fundraising Gala



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16. Annual Conference 2019 in Starsbourg



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17. EU NGO Round Table 2019



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18. Facility Dogs presentation at VSE Annual Conference 2019



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19. VSE's Annual Conference 2019 held at The European Parliament in Strasbourg

20. VSE's Executive Director Levent Altan being interviewed by France24



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**VICTIMS OF TERRORISM**  
GATHERING IN NICE BRINGS TOGETHER VICTIMS OF ATTACKS



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21. A team of young artists-activists on an introduction tour at VSE



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22. VSE's Vice President Richard Olszewski at VSE Annual Conference 2019



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24. INVICTM Symposium 2019



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25. COE Tallinn



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26. VSE's Executive Director Levent Altan at RIKU's 25th Anniversary

# 03. OVERVIEW OF 2019

## THEMATIC PRIORITIES FOR THE YEAR

### Cybercrime

Ongoing priority: this year we have worked on the development of an international strategy to guide our actions, and training relevant to the members' needs.

### Terrorism

We continued strengthening our response network, engagements with world experts, published guidance and participated in new counter terrorism projects

### Hate crime

New focus on hate crimes. We started with clarifying victims' issues and the needs of members, and ran an awareness-raising campaign on hate speech 'Crime is Crime.

### Enforcement of rights

Making rights a reality: we publicised findings on the implementation of the Victims' Rights Directive, pressed for implementation by Member States and developed a clearer vision on what should constitute national victim services.

### Influencing the next 5 years: new Commission and Parliament

We developed materials to engage potential MEPs (VSE EU Elections Manifesto, translation of the Manifesto into EU languages, Joint EU NGO letters) and conducted specific calls for the new Commission and Parliament (e.g. Compensation, Helplines across Europe).

## OUR WORK FOR VICTIMS

This year we spent some time on improving the information provided to victims and how we connect them to national support organisations.

### Interactive Map

Launched an interactive map of victim services on VSE's website - it has the potential to help victims find the right services near them.

### Victim Referrals

Developed an online form for members to refer cross border victims; prepared for the launch of the Referral System in 2020.

### Victim Referrals

Improved VSE protocols in referring cross border victims, who contact us directly.

### Terrorism

Strengthened VSE terrorism response network.

### Victim Engagement

Listened to victims through increased victim interviews and testimonies, engagement in projects and campaigns.

## OUR WORK WITH MEMBERS

This year we aimed to improve the way we communicate and engage with members, and strengthen our programme of events for members.

### Intranet

In 2019, VSE developed a new intranet for its members, which will be functional mid-2020. During the year, VSE worked closely with APAV's IT Department and a web designer to build an effective referral system to allow VSE members send information on foreign victims to relevant VSE members

in another country. The system will be fully functional in 2020. The new Intranet will contain general and detailed information on our activities and our organisation. Members will have a greater understanding of our activities and how we work together.

## Events

Annual conference: Victim Recovery – A Road of Many Routes - Strasbourg 12-13 June (AGM 14 June).

## Staff Exchange

A chance for staff from our member organisations to learn about the work of another member (members visit each other).

## National Meetings

We endorsed meetings with national stakeholders in Croatia, Italy and Greece.

## Regional Meetings

We sponsored the second South East Europe regional meeting for support organisations.

## Workshops

Distance support, 116 006 helpline, data protection, supporting victims of online crime, training modules.

## Autumn Conference

November - Brussels.

## Supporting your work

We assisted Members with requests for support on national priorities e.g. law and policy advice on victims' rights, advocacy, strategic litigation, volunteering schemes

## Standards and Accreditation

This year, VSE continued to develop our Standards and Accreditation system. During 2018, it had been agreed that France victimes and Slachtofferhulp would undergo accreditation in 2019. However, France victimes was unable to engage in the process as the organisation was supporting a large number of victims, launching the 116006 helpline and extending the phone support service, working with the French Government on policy issues, and co-organising the annual VSE conference in June. Their accreditation has been postponed till a later date. Slachtofferhulp started the process, but due to their workload, were unable to complete the requirements on time, accreditation will be postponed till 2020. In 2020, we plan to further facilitate accreditation by creating an intranet-based self-assessment tool and by adapting the process to facilitate engagement with members, while still maintaining membership accreditation expectations.

## 21 August Campaign

International day for victims of terrorism.

## Multimedia work

Developed infographics, explainer video, new website, and interactive map.

## Videoing of events

Increased interviewing at, and videoing of, events, workshops, training events etc. to help circulate knowledge.

## PR campaigns to support our events

In 2019, we aimed to increase media coverage of our events, including the annual conference, autumn event, marking of important dates and commemorations (22 February, 21 August 2018). Marketing tools, such as revealing speaker line-ups and special guests in a creative way, carrying out victim interviews, inviting journalists and influencers to events, promoting feedback, etc. were used to attract opinion-makers and media to publicize or report about our events.

## OUR GLOBAL WORK

Whilst Europe remained VSE's priority, in an interconnected world with a global membership, VSE continued to promote victims' rights and helped improve services

## COMMUNICATIONS AND CAMPAIGNS

Communications work was increased this year

### 22 Feb Campaign

Making rights a reality – video interviews, explainer videos and visuals, involvement of members in campaigning.

### 21 July Campaign

Crime is Crime. Even Online - hate speech awareness raising campaign with collaboration of approximately 80 partners.

## United Nations

Increased work with the UN Victims' Advocate, the UNODC and the UN's Counter Terrorism office to promote rights for all victims and to support policies for victims of terrorism.

## European External Action Service

Developed co-operation priorities with the EU's foreign service. A future priority will be to join with the UN to work together on education for justice.

## Victim Support Asia

In 2018, VSE helped established its sister network – Victim Support Asia. This year we supported further development with the recruitment of new members and investigation on how to strengthen or establish national services.

## Terrorism

We will develop materials to engage potential MEPs (VSE EU Elections Manifesto, translation of the Manifesto into EU languages, Joint EU NGO letters) and conduct specific calls for the new Commission and Parliament (e.g. Compensation, Helplines across Europe).

## VSE Victims Statistics 2019

While Victim Support Europe's 2019 statistics provide information in numbers, behind them lie human stories: each number represents a person, a family, a community. We hope that governments, victim support services, health providers, civil society organisations, the media and others will use this data to advance victims' rights, to develop a comprehensive victim support system, keep communities safe, and protect the vulnerable.

This report involves 59 victim support services and highlights the many people affected by crime, who obtain their assistance.

While we cannot provide data on the exact number of people, who were affected by crime and received help, NGOs – such as those highlighted in the report – encourage victims to report crimes, find help and make their voices heard.

## VSE New Members 2019

We gained 5 New Members in 2019: a total of 59 members from 30 countries.

### NUMBER OF VICTIMS SUPPORTED BY VSE MEMBERS IN 2019:

# 2,080,525

VICTIMS OF CRIME

## VSE Publications and Events 2019

This year VSE published the following documents:

- Vociare Report, including 26 individual national reports and a synthesis report (in collaboration with partners)
- Review of compensation for victims of crime
- VSE's Annual Report on EU and ECHR caselaw on victims' issues
- Data Protection Paper
- National Victim Support Framework report
- Training Manual on Supporting Victims of Online Hate Speech

VSE held the following events:

- VSE Annual International Conference in Strasbourg
- VSE Annual Autumn Conference in Brussels
- Brussels-based EU NGO Round Table
- 4 Regional and National Meetings
- Centre of Excellence workshop
- 3 Staff Exchange Meetings
- Over 10 workshops and trainings

# 04. VSE 2019 FACTBOX



# OVERVIEW OF VICTIM SUPPORT EUROPE ACTIVITIES 2019

## 05.

Our accomplishments in 2019 included, but were not limited to:

- Developing knowledge, relationships, and partnerships
- Enhancing quality of victim support services
- Advancing upgrades in laws and policies
- Raising awareness of victims' issues
- Conducting projects
- Supporting coordination and delivery of cross-border services (supporting victims of terrorism)

Our activities focus on the needs of our members and victims, so we have various events that, together, offer a variety of measures to boost the victim support community's work. We follow a strategic plan that is based on the participation of our members (59 organisations in 30 countries).

These activities have a practical emphasis and reflect the progress made by VSE towards achieving the objectives of the current Strategic Plan (2016-2020).

### 5.1 Developing knowledge, relationships, and partnerships

#### 5.1.1 Developing knowledge

- **Remembering Victims of Terrorism: A Guidance Document**

Over the past 10 years, Europe has been the target of numerous terrorist threats and attacks, which have not only affected victims and their families, but have also affected society.

In the days after an attack, governments, communities and organisations are involved with the immediate needs of those affected. Spontaneous memorials, usually in the form of flowers and messages, often take place as people feel the need to come together in solidarity and recognition of the victims. However, plans to organise a formal commemoration of the attack and its victims will soon be developed: involving different

stakeholders with converging needs. This document looks to provide guidelines for the organisation of remembrance events and thus anticipate challenges that may arise for the organisers.

- **National Framework for Victim Support**

Based on our previous project work in 2019, VSE prepared a position paper for Members summarizing VSE's objectives with respect to National Framework for Victim Support Services. It includes a timeline for the development, general approach and structure of the paper. However, the document is only a first step in what will be a continuously developing body of work to help our members, and other stakeholders, put in place a system to ensure victims are appropriately supported in their recovery.



- **Report on the Implementation of the Victims' Rights Directive**

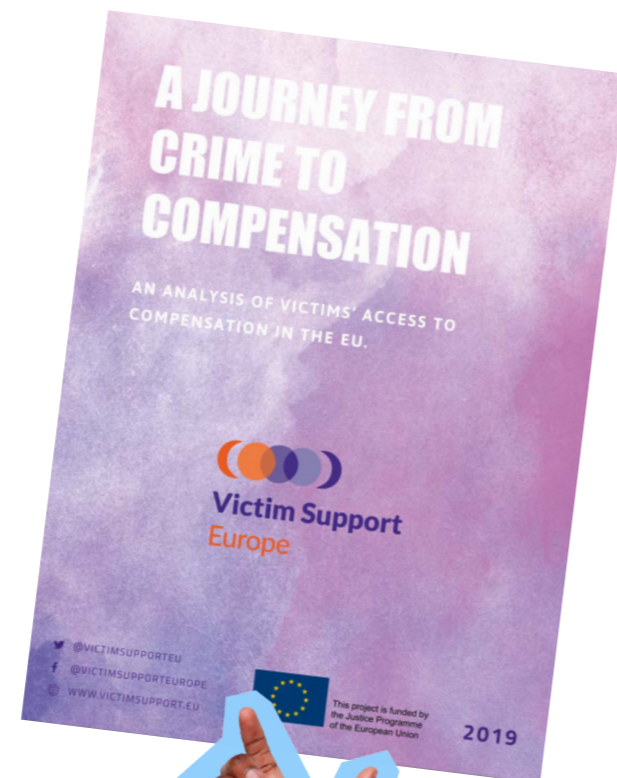
To encourage the implementation of Article 22 of the Victims' Rights Directive, VSE has looked at ways to ascertain what is required to protect victims from secondary or repeat victimization, intimidation, and retaliation during criminal proceedings. This report offers a roadmap for such measures.

- **A Journey from Crime to Compensation**

In November 2019, Victim Support Europe published a Europe-wide analysis of victims' access to compensation, entitled: 'A Journey from Crime to Compensation'. Using victims' statements and the first-hand experience of support organisations, the research investigated the challenges faced by victims when applying for compensation within the EU and analysed the practical transposition of the 2004 Compensation Directive, and its relationship with the EU Victims Directive. This paper has given us an understanding of the obstacles facing victims when applying for, and obtaining, compensation. Furthermore, it has allowed the authors to identify good practices in supporting victims with their compensation claims, and to articulate practical recommendations for future action.

- **ECJ/ECHR case law reports**

VSE regularly monitors CJEU and ECHR case law to identify judgments relevant to the field of victims' rights. 19 cases were identified as relevant and a report was prepared on the case law, detailing the facts and the legal reasoning. The report was available to members, with whom VSE worked to identify strategically important national case law, through the VSE intranet.



## 5.1.2 Developing collaborations and partnerships

- **I. Working with the EU institutions:**

While the work of the EU institutions might seem remote to many citizens, decisions taken by the European Union have a direct impact on victims' lives.

In the past year, VSE has expanded and intensified its advocacy at the EU level and key partners include: the European Commission, European Parliament, European Economic Social Committee, The European Committee of the Regions, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, European Institute of Gender Equality, EEAS, Europol, Eurojust, CEPOL.

Our initiatives had led to VSE being awarded a consultative status with the Council of Europe, with whom we are collaborating on a range of projects. This is an important recognition of VSE and our activities.

### Cooperation with the Council of Europe

The Council of Europe (CoE) is the largest European intergovernmental organisation, whose principal mandate is to safeguard the human rights of all European citizens. The European Court of Human Rights, the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance are some of its associations.

In 2019, after several years of relationship building, VSE officially became a member of the CoE's Conference of International NGOs – a rather exclusive club of civil society organisations that aim to influence the CoE's through advocacy, policy and litigation.

As a result of this cooperation, in 2019, VSE representatives were invited to speak at a workshop, organised by the Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH) under the aegis of the French Presidency of the Committee of Ministers, on the Protection of Victims of Terrorist Acts.

## • II. International engagements

In addition to advocacy within the European Union, VSE works with organisations around the world to promote victims' rights and to encourage victim support.

### VSE and the United Nations

VSE has nurtured close relations with various parts of the United Nations, including:

1. The UNODC: we actively support the revision of the UN manual on the implementation of the Basic Principles of Justice.

2. UN Counter Terrorism Office: we engage with a group of experts to develop a good practices manual on supporting victims of terrorism in the Middle East and Africa, and a similar manual for Asia.

3. UN's first Victims' Advocate – Jane Connors: we support the Advocate's work through participation in her working group.

### Expert Workshop on Victims' Rights Organised by the Office of the Victims' Rights Advocate in New York

In May 2019, the Executive Director of Victim Support Europe Levent Altan participated in an Expert Workshop on Victims Rights initiated by the Office of the Victims' Rights Advocate. The event brought together leading experts, victims' rights lawyers and practitioners to discuss principal elements of a victim-centred approach in reporting violations and investigations, in victims' assistance and support, in protection for victims and witnesses as well as in communications and follow-up with victims.

The event took place in the context of United Nations effort to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse.

The meeting was an opportunity to explore how VSE can support the Victims' Rights Advocate's agenda and to exchange ideas that will hopefully lead to actual projects.

### Victim Support Asia (VSA)

Following the establishment of Victim Support Asia in 2018, VSE has continued to assist VSA in bringing together organisations and institutions working for victims in Asia. The President of Victim Support Europe, João Lázaro, spoke at the opening of the 1st International Conference For Victim Support Asia.

The aims of the conference were straightforward: to learn from other



participants; to hear about difficulties faced, to discover solutions and new practices.

### VSE's and VSA's response to Sri Lanka attacks

Recently, terrorist attacks across the world have been on the increase. There are many kinds of terrorism, but all are devastating to victims and their families.

Victim Support Europe works tirelessly to provide those affected by a terrorist attack with appropriate information and resources. Our response to the Sri Lanka terrorist attacks, on 21 April 2019, was coordinated through Victim Support Asia.

- **VSE emailed the Terrorism Response Network with information on the attack and asking members for details on potential victims;**
- **FBI response: at least 2 deceased Americans;**
- **VSA contacted the Sri Lanka National Authority for Protection of Victims of Crime and Witnesses;**
- **The Belgian coordinator for Victims of Terrorism contacted VSE to offer any necessary support**



### INVICTM – International Network Supporting Victims of Terrorism and Mass Violence

Every year, INVICTM – International Network Supporting Victims of Terrorism and Mass Violence, holds its international symposium on Supporting Victims of Terrorism, which precedes VSE's Annual Conference.

For the third consecutive occasion, we were honoured to represent victims of terrorism at the INVICTM International Symposium in Strasbourg. The theme of this year's symposium was 'International Cooperation – Working Together to Better Support Victims of Terrorism and Mass Violence'.

The keynote speech was delivered by Mokhtar Naghchband, brother of Kamal Naghchband, a father-of-three who fled violence in Afghanistan only to be killed in the 2018 Strasbourg Christmas market attack.

We must ensure that the views and needs of victims of terrorism are not forgotten, their welfare must be at the heart of our efforts.





EU NGO Round Table



be.safe cybercrime project

• **III. VSE's collaboration with European NGOs**

**EU NGO Round Table**

This year, VSE collaborated with many international NGO networks and agencies involved in victim support, which included organizing a well-attended roundtable discussion. The roundtable connected those sharing a common commitment to victims of crime in Europe and identified means for future partnerships between the EC and NGOs, at both European and national levels.

In 2019, for the fifth year, leading NGOs from EU Member States, whose aim is to improve services for victims of crime, gathered at EU Commission to share good practices and to discuss challenges in the field of victims' rights.

Participants: Confederation of European Probation, European Forum for Restorative Justice, Inclusion Europe, End FGM European Network, PICUM, European Disability Forum, TGEU Transgender Europe, Mental Health Europe, European Commission, and VSE.

**Joint Efforts**

With our NGO partners, in the EU, we work on creating a common advocacy language and to use common resources, including joint events, statements, and campaigns-in-collaboration with the following aims:

- 1) raise awareness on EU priorities in victims' rights, highlighting critical gaps
- 2) provide evidence on the impact of the practical implementation of victims' rights in all EU member States.

**Development of stronger links with European NGOs and other organisations.**

In October 2019, VSE participated at the final event of the be.safe cybercrime project. be.safe is an initiative launched by 'Inclusion Europe', together with project partners from the Czech Republic, North Macedonia, Poland and Portugal, which aims to tackle cybercrime by providing guidance on how to use the internet safely. VSE's contribution is the 'Crime is crime. Even online' campaign.

In September 2019, VSE was invited to The Hague by REDRESS and Fair Trials. The two-day meeting brought together stakeholders from 15 EU Member States, the topic for discussion was the rights of victims of violent crime that took place in pre-trial and immigration detention centres.

In May 2019, the University of Ferrara's Law Department held a day of presentations and discussions on 15th anniversary of the implementation of the Palermo Convention. VSE, the only NGO invited, delivered a presentation entitled 'The Obligations of Prevention, Protection and Assistance to Victims of Crime', which identified the gaps between the requirements of the Convention, and the support and protection measures victims of crime access in reality.

La Strada International partnered with VSE, PICUM and COMPAS to focus on the access to compensation for migrant workers. On completion of the project, a roundtable event was given at the European Commission and co-hosted by Domènec Ruiz Devesa, Victim Support Europe, La Strada International and PICUM. The event aimed to:

- a) Engage with returning and newly elected MEPS, and key institutional actors on the critical barriers to accessing compensation and unpaid wages for migrant workers, who are subject to exploitation and violence, including human trafficking.
- b) Discuss concrete measures to be implemented by the new European Parliament and European Commission, including specific recommendations from the Special Adviser on compensation for victims of crime.



## 5.2 Enhancing quality of victim support services

### 5.2.1 Workshops and Training

VSE and its network have a wealth of experience and expertise in victims' rights knowledge building. The overall objective of VSE's work is to strengthen the organisational capacity of its membership, and others who work with victims.

VSE supports the development of knowledge through the delivery of specific training events, workshops, lectures and presentations.

Such events include the Centre of Excellence workshop organised by VSE and the Social Insurance Board in Tallinn,

Estonia. A hate crime training session to promote an understanding of the needs of victims and how hate crime is tackled online was developed and conducted by VSE, part of which – on tools to help victims in the aftermath of a crime – was developed by Twitter. VSE delivered three workshops during our Annual Conference on: compensation for victims; GDPR and victims support; and on national victim support services. VSE hosted a delegation from South Korea for a three-day training workshop on European victim support, which included presentations from VSE staff and external partners, a visit to the Deinze police station and their victim support unit, a visit to the Ghent hospital 24/7 Care Centre for victims of Sexual Assault, and finally a visit of a 24/7 Crisis Center for Victims in Ghent.



A hate crime training session by VSE and Twitter



Delegation from South Korea

### 5.2.2 Standard-Setting

Our pioneering work on standards and accreditation has taken a different form in 2019. The accreditation approach, trialed with Bijeli krug in 2018, was found to be unsuitable for our larger members due for accreditation in 2019. It was therefore decided, at this early stage, to test other methods and create a self-verification

platform – where members can align their work with our standards, prior to allocating VSE resources to field missions and external verification. In 2019, France victimes (FR) and Slachtofferhulp (NL) committed to self-verification, with the aim of completing the accreditation process in 2020.



### 5.2.3 Developing centres of excellence across the EU

As VSE members are located in different countries and interact with different groups of victims, they have a variety of experiences and challenges to share. The Centre of Excellence is a forum for members to exchange knowledge, experience, and practices on issues related to 116 helplines and distance support.

This year's annual Centre of Excellence Workshop was co-organised by VSE and the Social Insurance Board, a new Estonian member, in Tallinn. The workshop allowed in-depth discussion on:

- Performance of the 116006 helpline
- Development of a position paper
- Virtual and Augmented Reality methods of support
- GDPR and victim support

#### 4 priorities were identified in 2019:

- Outreach and awareness raising,
- Cross border victims,
- Victims with disabilities,
- Data collection and protection.

### 5.2.4 Enhancing membership services

In 2019, we worked to improve the level of quality and accessibility of member-oriented services. VSE members can now access a range of benefits designed to enhance knowledge exchange, visibility, networking, and information sharing.

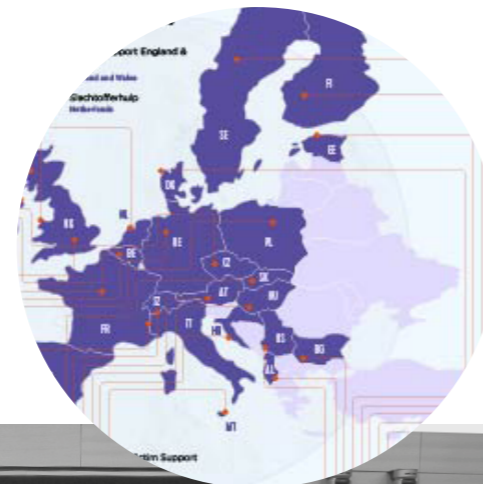
The new intranet system, to be launched in 2020, continues to be developed and will improve information sharing facilities for our members. The VSE website was expanded

in 2019, giving more space to members for article submissions. Our quarterly newsletter gives victims, members, and partners an opportunity to air views and share news.

VSE has a new approach to managing collaborative work on its digital platforms. From 2019, each VSE campaign will feature its own microsite and each annual conference will have its own website with a unified payment system.

### 5.2.5 Assistance of the development of victim support in EU member states

Throughout 2019, we continued to strengthen contacts within countries across Europe. While context requires a particular approach to improve victim support services in a specific country, some problems are common to all.



Enhancing membership services



- **Regional Knowledge Exchange Event**

Victim Support Europe organises an annual Regional Knowledge Exchange Event, offering a unique opportunity for victim support practitioners to promote dialogue with the broader public and to receive knowledge on improving victim support services in their countries.

Our selection criteria is based on (nominally) shared legal traditions and (to a lesser extent) cultural values, but we keep in mind that those invited have problems in delivering generic nation-wide services to victims and in implementing the Victims' Rights Directive. Common challenges resulting from increased incidences of cross-border victimization provide a platform for our present and future planning.

The 2019 regional exchange focused on South-East Europe and was held in Croatia - with the support of our Croatian members and the Croatian Ministry of Justice. The event brought together 24 participants, VSE members and others, from nine countries (Slovenia, Romania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary, Albania, Serbia, Croatia, Greece, and Italy).

- **National Meeting**

As in 2018, allied to the organization of the event in Croatia, it was important to assist Croatian victim support organisations in improving their services, especially because of the inequality of service provision across the country. Prior to the regional meeting, a national event was held that brought together over 30 representatives of 20 Croatian organisations. These include participants from the Government, local authorities, and numerous NGOs involved in the provision of victim support.

- **Staff Exchange**

The VSE Staff Exchange programme is an outstanding opportunity for employees of our member organisations to exchange practices, network, and gain knowledge. By bringing staff together we encourage victim support partnerships and improve understanding of how victim support services function in different countries.

In 2019, we coordinated and supported staff exchange opportunities for 5 member organisations and was hosted by Slachtofferhulp (NL) and APAV (PT). These networking activities proved extremely successful and we look forward to developing these and other ways to support your professional collaboration.

## 5.3

**Advance upgrades in laws and policies**

**VSE regularly lobbies European and International Institutions to influence regulations and policies related to victims' rights. We have formal consultative status with the UN's ECOSOC Committee and the Council of Europe, and we work closely with the European Commission, the European Parliament, and various EU Agencies such as the Fundamental Rights Agency.**



VSE remains the European leader in matters related to victims' needs and victims' rights. This has resulted in VSE being asked to partner with others on projects involving: compensation, terrorism, cybercrime and hate crime, e-evidence, etc.

Specific activities included:

**DG-Justice:**

monthly consultations with the DG representatives to discuss, in addition to internal matters, new topics as identified by VSE, compliance and implementation problems related to the EU Victims' Rights Directive, etc.

**DG-Home:**

engagement on confiscation of criminal assets, cybercrime, e-evidence, and child sexual exploitation.

**The EEAS:**

follow-up work for the Good Human Rights Stories initiative and discussion on future strategic cooperation.

**European Parliament:**

VSE supported individual MEPs on victims' issues, the development of reports relevant to victims' rights, in addition to supporting the work of the LIBE and FEMM Committees as well as the Special Committee on Terrorism (TERR).

**Europol:**

VSE explored opportunities on liaising with Europol, specifically its cybercrime unit, which resulted in Europol participation in VSE’s campaign ‘Crime Is Crime. Even Online’.

**FRA:**

VSE continued cooperation with the FRA, including consultation on their work programme, being interviewed by the FRA to help define priorities in the field of victims’ rights, and inviting FRA’s representatives to speak at VSE-led events.

**The United Nations:**

VSE currently supports the UN in developing a paper on good practices for supporting victims of terrorism in Asia, which is to be published in 2020. VSE also supported the UN on its international day for victims of terrorism, by endorsing the campaign for the day.

**5.4 Raising awareness of victims’ issues**

All VSE’s campaigns are based on our ongoing review and analysis of needs and opportunities within the victim support community in Europe. VSE’s five-year strategic framework, approved by the membership, guides the priorities and direction of our campaign work.

Our 2019 communications strategy highlighted the following objectives: raising awareness of victims’ issues; sharing knowledge with national organisations and strengthening VSE collective capability (developing partnerships, organising networking events, recruiting new members).

The increased communication effort resulted in:



**A High-Level Meeting on the Future of Victims’ Rights**

VSE participated in a high-level meeting on the future of victims’ rights at the European Commission - DG HOME in November. This event brought together national experts on victims’ rights, MEPs, representatives of the Fundamental Rights Agency, the European Institute for Gender Equality and representatives of civil society. The discussion focused on the current situation of victims’ rights in individual Member States of the Union.

Levent Altan presented the findings of our recently completed project ‘VOCIARE: Victims of Crime Implementation Analyses of Rights in Europe’, highlighting the following shortcomings:

- 1.** None of the Articles of the EU Victims’ Rights Directive are fully and satisfactorily implemented for all victims across the EU;
- 2.** There is no single country that offers full implementation of the entirety of the Directive to all victims on their territory;
- 3.** There still is a few countries in which there a complete absence of generic victim support services is being registered, while in few more, the support is fragmented and hardly available.





- **Campaigns**

- **4 social media campaigns:**

- 22 February: 10-day social media campaign 'Making Victims' Rights a Reality' in recognition of the European Day for Victims of Crime;
- 11 & 22 March: one-day campaigns honouring victims of terrorism;
- March – May: pre-EU Elections campaign
- 22 July – 5 November: 'Crime is crime. Even Online' awareness-raising campaign on online hate speech.

- **44 short videos for the above-mentioned campaigns.**

- **VSE Manifesto for the 2019 European Parliament elections**

Our 2019 European Parliament election manifesto laid out, for interested voters, victims' rights advocates, current and candidate MEPs, what we perceive should be the EU's key priorities in victims' rights for the next Parliamentary term. The manifesto outlined 5 salient points from our 5-year road map on victims' rights.

Member organisations used the manifesto while carrying out their election campaignings, thus allowing our manifesto to be promoted in numerous EU languages. A huge 'thank you' to all who worked so hard on this campaign!

The above activities resulted in: increased website traffic (over 2000 visitors per month); raised widespread awareness in Facebook (over 45,000 people reached), 700 new organic likes of VSE's Facebook page; tripled reach and impressions on Twitter account (over 25,000 impressions); and tripled views on the YouTube channel.

- **Events and representation**

- **VSE Annual Conference**

The 2019 annual conference was held in Strasbourg, France, in cooperation with France Victimes on 12 and 13 June. The conference theme was: 'Victim Recovery: A Road Of Many Routes'; there were four plenary sessions and 15 workshops. The conference took place under the high patronage of M. Emmanuel MACRON, President of the French Republic at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, attracting high-profile speakers and media attention.

A conference highlight was the participation by LOL, France's 1st courthouse support dog. Lol enabled a child victim, who had previously refused to speak to law enforcement officials to feel comfortable enough to do so. Together with A&P Sommer Foundation and Courthouse Dogs Foundation, Lol, a Labrador, took part in the workshop 'Supporting dogs for crime victims: adapting North American models to France and Facility Dogs'.

The conference was attended by some 200 participants from over 20 countries and was generally deemed a success by the participants. For more information about the conference and its content, please go to: <http://2019.vse-conference.eu/>

Portuguese Representation to the European Union. 15 speakers, from victims to policy makers, tech companies and practitioners, provided a comprehensive analysis of the challenges on implementing victims' rights in the EU. Over 100 delegates from 24 countries attended the event.

- **VSE Autumn Conference and Members' meeting**

VSE organised an Autumn Conference intended to bring together victim support organisations and EU policy makers in Brussels. As previously, this event hoped to raise awareness on victims' rights and services.

This year's theme was "Victims' Rights: Time to Act", an opportunity to discuss the current implementation status of the EU Victims' Directive, and to map the common areas for improvement in all Member States. The conference was hosted by the

The Members' Meeting was held on 19 November, in Brussels, again at the Portuguese Representation to the EU and brought together 80 members participants. VSE Policy Officer, Ruth Shrimpling, conducted a workshop on supporting victims of hate crimes.

Livija Plancic was re-elected to VSE's Executive Board.



## 5.5 Projects

**2019 saw a continuation with our project work. Again, we aimed to engage only in projects, which are in line with our strategic priorities and which ensure better services and the implementation of rights for victims of crimes. We remain committed to working, whenever possible, with member organisations, however we always welcome external partners, whose participation and expertise can contribute to the success of our efforts.**

Last year, we worked to advance the implementation of the Victims' Rights Directive through two important projects, funded by the European Commission: (1) VOciare: Victims of Crime Implementation Analysis of Rights in Europe and (2) VICTORIA - Best Practices in Victims' Support: Referrals, Information, Individual Assessment project.

### • Project VOciare

2019 saw the successful completion of the VOciare project. This was a collaborative team effort by 21 partners from around the EU.

VOciare revealed the toughest challenges EU Member States face in implementing the directive. Reports from 26 EU countries tracked how individual Member States apply the Victims' Rights Directive, 7 years after it was launched.

Ultimately, these findings will provide opportunities to review, at national and EU-level, the enactment – or not – of victims' rights, and what improvements can be carried out.

The project findings will be the basis for our 2020 'One Voice - One Cause' campaign to raise awareness on victims' rights.

### • Project VICTORIA

VICTORIA, launched in September 2017, aims to improve individual assessment, information, and referral for victims in Italy, Lithuania, Portugal and Romania, has been overseen by the Vilnius Institute for Advanced Studies - VILIAS, a long-standing Lithuanian, VSE partner. The project solutions rely on international best practices, so VSE is leading a group, which aims to collect and analyse these practices, to facilitate their replication in other legal environments.

The 2019 VICTORIA project partners met in Mantova, Italy to present practical tools that foster pre-identified best practices on referral, individual support needs assessment, and provision of information.

This meeting was followed by the Italian national seminar and Victim Support Europe presented findings on the best European practices for referral, individual support needs assessment, and provision of information.

The project will be completed by the spring of 2020.

### • Project PREVICT

In August 2019, Victim Support Europe hosted a kickoff meeting for PREVICT. The project focuses on analysing best practices in victim information campaigns and on the development of a toolkit for the evaluation of communication activities.

#### **The project will contribute towards:**

- better information for victims' on their rights and the support available to them;
- better understanding of how to provide information to victims in an effective and inclusive manner;
- measuring the impact of information provision on victims of crimes.

## 5.6 Terrorism

Since 2015, VSE has been developing specialist knowledge in the field of victims of terrorism. Starting with our support for France Victimes, after the Paris attacks in 2015, VSE carried out measures to ensure that policies, laws and services at the national, European and international level meet the needs of victims of terrorism. Below we set out activities carried out by VSE in this field.



- **I. Support for Victims of Terrorism**

- a) **VSE Terrorism Response Network**

Since 2015, VSE, through its Terrorism Response Network, has reacted to over 20 terrorist incidents, including attacks in France, Germany, Spain, UK, Sweden, Finland, Russia, Turkey, USA, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh. VSE responds to any large scale assault that may involve European citizens.

In 2019, VSE responded to:

- Christchurch mosque shootings
- Utrecht tram shooting

- b) **Supporting the memory of victims of terrorism**

The 11 March (the European Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Terrorism), the 22 March (the anniversary of the Brussels attacks of 2016) and the 21 August (the International Day of Remembrance of

and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism) are commemorated annually by VSE. The 22 March is a particularly poignant date as VSE is based in Brussels and its office is 500 meters from one of the two sites targeted by the bombers.

In 2019, VSE produced guidelines for events to commemorate victims of a terrorist attack.

- **II. Law and Policy Development**

VSE works extensively with national governments, the EU, and the UN on the development of victims' rights policies.

- 1. **At the European level**

- EU Centre of Expertise for Victims of Terrorism**

In December 2019, Victim Support Europe (VSE) was appointed to run the European Commission's Centre of Expertise for Victims of Terrorism.

The Centre will be a hub for guidance, expertise, and support regarding victims of terrorism. Its establishment reflects the priority given by the European Union to victims of violence, and demonstrates commitment to partnerships between the EU, Member States, civil society, the private sector, and victims themselves.

Victim Support Europe will run the centre with its partners Arq Impact, Fondation Lenval, and the AFVT, in co-operation with ICFI and Ecorys, and with the support of other VSE members.

**2. At the International level**

**UN – Handbook of Good Practices – Asia**

During 2019, VSE worked with the UN in the development of a follow-up paper on good practices supporting victims of terrorism in Asia. We anticipate the report will be published in 2020.

**International Seminar on Victims of Terrorism in Madrid**

In May 2019, the Spanish Ministry of Interior organised a seminar on victims of terrorism in Madrid, Spain. From its experience of terrorist attacks, Spain has managed to turn national grief into positive learning: specific laws should apply to victims of

terrorism, as the victims are symbols of a democratic State. The Spanish Ministry of Interior has established a Directorate General for victims of terrorism, and its goal is to comprehensively support victims of terrorism – and their relatives – in a comprehensive manner in terms of processing, care, and material and financial assistance. A current project involves victims of terrorism speaking about their experiences to young people, in educational settings, to raise awareness of the potential of terrorist attacks and to educate them on past events.

The Madrid seminar featured three roundtable presentations on: (1) assistance and support to victims of terrorism in Directive (EU) 2017/541; (2) long term psychological needs of victims of terrorism; (3) care of cross-border victims.



**The VIII International Congress For Victims Of Terrorism, Nice (France)**

The VIII International Congress for Victims of Terrorism (CIVT) was held in Nice (France) on November 21st – 23rd 2019, in partnership with the City of Nice, under the High Patronage of Mr Emmanuel Macron, President of the French Republic.

VSE’s Executive Director Levent Altan took part in the panel discussion on dealing with victims of terrorism and the role of the states.

The congress was a moment where victims and experts from all around the world gathered to make propositions and be in a positive attitude toward reconstruction.

**CONGRESS’ GOAL:  
To make the voice of  
the victims heard.**

- HELP victims of terrorism around the world to make their voices heard and to express their opinions to civil society, public authorities, institutions and media;

- RAISING AWARENESS of national, local and international public authorities to the cause and needs of victims of terrorism in the emergency and in the long term;
- DEVELOP local, national and international networks of victims of terrorism and enable them to share their experiences.

**III. Networks and Training**

Developing responses and policies on victims of terrorism requires extensive cooperation and coordination. VSE has developed a network of global experts in this field and, with the support of this network, has not only developed its own policies, but has also carried out training and capacity building initiatives.

**1. INVICTM Activities**

In 2016, VSE helped establish an informal group of experts on terrorism consisting of individuals from civil society, governments, independent authorities, academic institutions, and law enforcement.

**Monthly Conference Calls**

The group holds monthly conference calls to discuss members’ activities and their latest developments, which are critical to establishing international responses to

terrorist acts as well as assisting in the development of VSE policies.

**INVICTM International Symposium**

Since 2017, INVICTM has held an annual international symposium of victims of terrorism alongside VSE's Annual Conference. These are invitation-only events, bringing together practitioners from victims' field to discuss the challenges of meeting the needs of victims of terrorism and to identify solutions. The theme of 2019's symposium was 'International Cooperation - Working Together to Better Support Victims of Terrorism and Mass Violence' and focused on cooperation between cross border services. The symposium provides a forum to share knowledge, experiences and expertise with the aim of enhancing international partnerships and improving support for victims of terrorism.

The Leadership in Counter Terrorism Alumni Association (LinCT-AA) is a non-profit affiliate of the International Leadership in Counter Terrorism (LinCT) Program, whose principle purpose to promote personal and professional development, networking, exchange of good practice and global thinking of Counter Terrorism Professionals from both law enforcement and intelligence agencies. The Association works with key academic research centres and leading contemporary professionals in the field to continually develop successful and sustainable partnerships for the benefit of communities across the world.

Each year the Association hosts a reunion of members, associates and affiliates, in partnership with some of the world's largest private sector organisations.



In 2019, VSE's Executive Director, Levent Altan, was invited to speak on the victims' panel, presenting an update on cross-border victims of terrorism.

**2. Leadership in Counter Terrorism Conference ( <https://www.linct-aa.org/> )**



# 06. NEW MEMBERS

VSE has continued to engage with organisations, which work to promote victims' rights in, and beyond, the EU. A total of 5 members have joined in 2019, bringing our membership to 59 organisations across 30 countries, compared with 42 members in 2015. The increase in new members is the result of VSE's continuous efforts to improve our services to existing and potential new members.

**NATAL**  
(Israel)

**Federation for Victim Assistance**  
(Ireland)

**Associazione Spondé**  
(Italy)

**Humanitarian Law Centre**  
(Serbia)

**Olivier Lauwers**  
(Belgium)

# 07. EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

- Executive Board members (from 25 May 2019 onwards)



**President**

**João Lázaro**

President of the 'Associação Portuguesa de Apoio à Vítima' (APAV), Portugal.  
Vice President



**Helgard van Hüllen**

Vice-President of Weisser Ring Germany



**Vice President**

**Richard Olszewski**

President of France Victimes

- Executive Board members



**Geraldine Hanna**

Treasurer



**Leena-Kaisa Åberg**

CEO of Victim Support Finland



**Livija Plančić**

President of White Circle Croatia



**Gábor Veisz**

Member of Fehér Gyűrű Közhasznú Egyesület/White Ring Association



**Olga Kostina**

Founder and Chair of Victim Support Foundation Russia



**Tobias Koertner**

Team leader for victim support at Weisser Ring Austria

# 08. HEAD OFFICE



**Levent Altan**  
Executive Director



**Aleksandra Ivankovic**  
Deputy Director



**Mazen Alsiufi**  
Finance Officer



**Marina Kazakova**  
Communications Officer



**Ruth Mary Shrimpling**  
Policy Officer



**Léa Meindre-Chautrand**  
Policy Officer



**Inês Nunes de Freitas**  
Project Officer



**Keti Varoschlija Botterman**  
Administrative Assistant



**Oleksandra (Sasha) Boychenko**  
Researcher



**An Verelst**  
Volunteer



**Pamela Dalby**  
Volunteer



ONE VOICE ONE CAUSE

2020

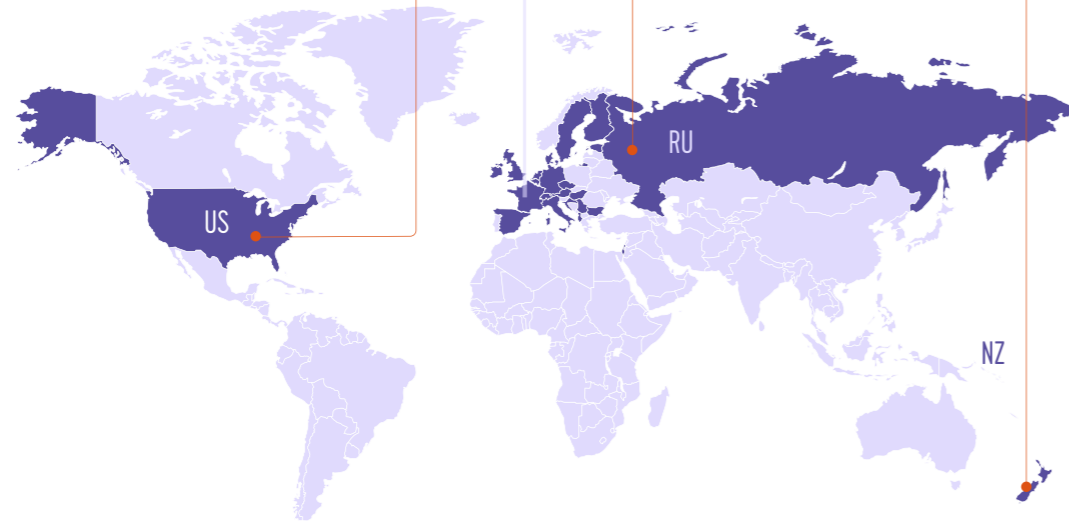
#ONEVOICEONECAUSE

2019

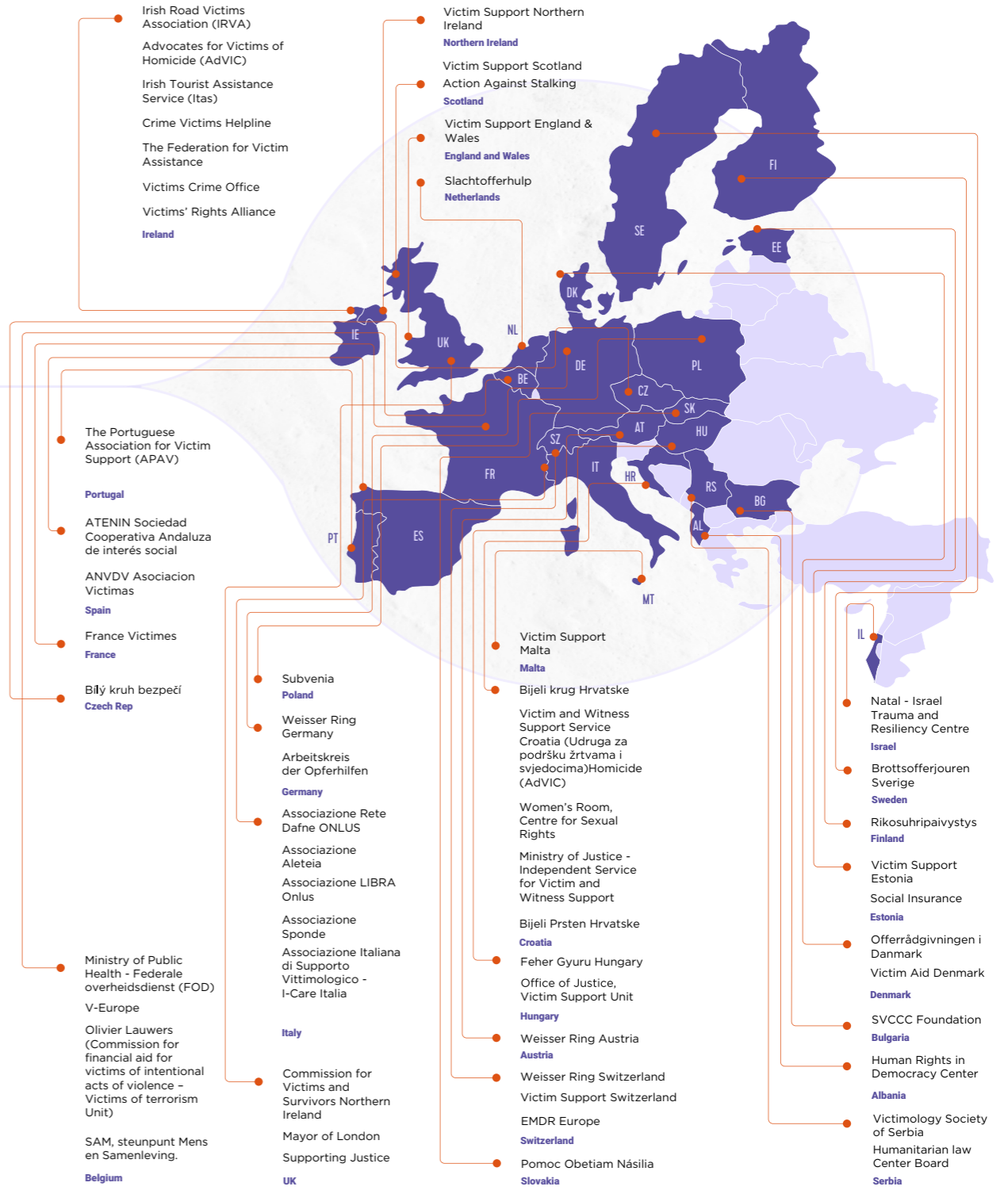
# MEMBERS MAP

Victim Support Europe is a community of 59 organisations who help over 2 million victims of crime a year and who campaign for a world where victims' rights are enjoyed by all.

Our vision is a Europe in a world where the needs of all victims of crime are fully met through effective rights and high quality services.



- International Cruise Victims Association, INC  
USA
- Victim Support Foundation (VSF Russia)  
Russia
- Victim Support New Zealand  
New Zealand



With Financial support from the Justice Programme of the European Union



## 10.

TREASURER'S  
REPORT

2019 has proven to be another successful year for Victim Support Europe. As per our strategic objective to increase our financial resilience, we have continued to diversify our income sources resulting in a 5% increase in income in 2019 compared to 2018.



The diversity of the income has been achieved in particular, through seven projects – six action grants - Vociare, VICToRIIA, Previct, CREST, Counteract, IMUHVCS and one tender - EIPA compensation project. Income increase was achieved through the existing Vociare and Victorlla grants and the successful adoption of two new grants (PREVICT and CREST). These projects have been carefully pursued to support VSE's financial integrity whilst developing victims' rights and services across Europe, in line with VSE's priorities.

In 2019, VSE made specific investment decisions which allowed us to grow the organisation through efficient use of EU funds and VSE reserves. These investments will put the organisation in a strong position in the coming years.

As result of this approach, VSE total income in 2019 was of €665,081 whilst total expenditure was €676,291. This result in a year-end deficit of €11,210 which represents just 1.6% of the total income. Our available reserves position decreased as a result to €195,610, in line with our plans to utilise reserves as appropriate to support the delivery of our strategic objectives.

This approach ensured that by the end of 2019, we were able to accomplish our strategic objectives of sustainable growth whilst diversifying our income sources with minimum use of our reserves. Income continues to be drawn through an EU operating grant, member registrations, projects and donations.

The financial statements, as prepared and audited under Belgian law, show an unqualified Audit Report. The General Meeting in 27th August 2020 approved the financial report 2019 and the audit report 2019 as audited by VSE's statutory auditor Crowe Horwath Callens Pirenne & Co (audit report dated 20 August 2020).

This places us in an extremely strong position to continue our carefully planned growth in 2020 enabling additional improvements in VSE's operations and the delivery of new services.

## 11.

CLOSING  
THOUGHTS

In the past year, we continued to push for the implementation of the EU Victims' Rights. The research we have carried out across Europe – in the Vociare Project – shows that the greatest problem we face today is the gap between legal rights and the reality that victims face. We also actively promoted our awareness-raising campaigns on victims' rights and we are now trying to build synergies between the EU and the civil society to work on victims issues.

Our work only has value to the extent that it creates meaningful improvement in the lives of the victims. We know that millions of victims continue to face terrible hardship and pain every single year – not just as a result of the crime itself, but from the way our societies, systems and professions treat them or fail to support them.

The scope of victimization today demands a dramatically greater response than is currently available and drives our desire to grow as an organization. We're inspired to be connected to all those providing support and information to all victims of crime and terrorism.

We can proudly say that we have been successful in the progress we've made in improving victims' rights, support and

services. This could only be achieved through the hard work of our Executive Board Members, our team at the Head office as well as the support we receive from our Members.

Let us start this new decade by seizing the initiative and making sure it is a decade of action for victims.

**Every voice makes  
a difference, every action  
builds momentum and  
pressure for change.**

# VICTIM SUPPORT EUROPE

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