

VSE GENERAL MEETING

2nd December 2021, 14:00 – 17:15 Brussels time

Held: ONLINE

MINUTES

KEY		
Geraldine Hanna	GH	President
Petra Klein	PK	Vice-President
Carmen Rasquete	CR	Treasurer
Levent Altan	LA	Executive Director
Aleksandra Ivankovic	AI	Deputy Director
Léa Meindre-Chautrand	LMC	Policy Officer
Annelies Blondé	AB	Project Assistant
Ruth Shrimpling	RS	Senior Training and Knowledge Development Officer
Marina Kazakova	MK	Communications Officer
Keti Varoshlija-Botterman	KVB	Administrative Assistant
Iris Lokerse	IL	Policy Assistant
Sigal Haimov	SH	Consultant

Opening and welcome

GH opened the General Meeting by welcoming everyone and presenting VSE's priorities and strategy for the next years. GH outlined the recent launch of VSE Hub, Training Academy and the end of the EUCVT pilot project.

Minutes from previous meeting: members voted on the minutes from the last General Meeting organised on the 26th of May 2021. The minutes were approved.

Financial reporting: CR presented the financial report for 2021 activities. CR presented the total income (1,260,221 EUR), representing a 43% increase compared to 2020, largely due to AREV and EUCVT projects. The anticipated expenditure for 2021 is of 1,063,476 EUR, a 28% increase compared to 2020. CR highlighted that while some activities and events were cancelled due to the COVID-19

pandemic, VSE either adapted the events, e.g. increased their capacities, or carried out new activities with the underspent budget. On the Operating and Action Grants 2021, VSE achieved 89% of grand expenditure. VSE anticipates a surplus of 69 710 EUR for 2021. CR also noted that the European Commission just approved the new partnership agreement for the next 4 years and the next Operating Grant 2022.

CR and KVB proceeded to the vote for the **reappointment of the auditor** for another 3 year-contract. The decision has been made to appoint Callens, Pirenne, Theunissen & C° as statutory auditor, for period of 3 years up till the Annual General Meeting that will approve the annual accounts of 31 December 2023. Callens, Pirenne, Theunissen & C° decides to appoint Ken Snoeks as permanent representative. The fees have been determined to 3.350 EUR (excluding V.A.T.) for each year and can be adjusted on a yearly base in function of the cost of living.”

With all 14 full members voting in favour, the reappointment of the auditor was approved.

LA and KVB proceeded to the vote for the **appointment of a Proxy for EY Law**- law firm to proceed with the changes of the Board, Address, Audit etc. at the Court of Enterprises in Brussels and other entities on behalf of VSE.

With all 14 members voting in favour, the appointment of the Proxy was approved.

Overview of 2021 activities

MK gave an **overview of the activities VSE conducted in 2021**, based on VSE key objectives for 2021, expected results, conducted activities and outputs. The outputs for 2021 included:

- EU NGO Roundtable
- 1 Annual Conference and 1 Autumn Conference
- 2 members meetings
- 2 national meetings
- Staff exchange with 3 hosts
- 4 Executive Board Meetings
- 6 Management Team Meetings
- 2 policy papers
- 3 workshops
- 3 Centre of Excellence meetings
- 3 Information campaigns
- 1 Annual report
- 1 ECJ/ECHR report
- 4 newsletters

- 14 submissions to consultations and 3 surveys
- 1 Communication strategy for projects

AI gave an **overview of the projects conducted by VSE in 2021**. AI presented the VSE-led projects (such as FYDO, AREV or PREVICT), the projects with VSE as a project partner (such as CREST, PROTECT and Infovictims III) and the ongoing service contracts (such as ENABLE and the study for the evaluation of the Victims' Rights Directive). AI highlighted that 10 projects proposals are under examination under two funding programmes (Justice and Horizon Europe).

Presentation of new members

IL presented the five new VSE associate members, with the support of present representatives:

- Manus Legis (FR)
- SPAVO (CY)
- Victim Support Agency (MT)
- CAW Groep (BE)
- Centre for legal civic initiatives (AL)

Policy paper on Safe Justice

AB presented the concept and approach of the paper on Safe Justice, which will answer to the question 'How to ensure safe justice from a victims' perspective?'. The paper will follow the 'journey' approach and discuss barriers, challenges and solutions at each step of the journey, which was discussed during the workshop in the morning.

Policy paper on the National framework for Victim Support

LMC presented the concept and approach of the paper, which will look at defining each sector's role and involvement with victims and detail the coordination at the national level, based on the schematic previously produced by VSE.

Overview of VSE's 2022 Activities

LA presents an overview of key areas of VSE's work in 2022 which will follow the publication of new or revision of existing EU legislation. VSE has changed its way of working for next year, focusing on more activities in smaller groups instead of holding fewer bigger events. VSE has expanded its capability to run projects and participate in them and will continue to work on improving and optimizing the application process and use of results and other benefits associated with the projects. VSE is also improving its internal processes, including ethics and governance policies to ensure that

as we grow, we remain efficient, safe, and trustworthy as an organization. VSE has established thematic teams responsible for distinct focus areas.

LMC presents the work objectives of the Policy & Advocacy Team for 2022, which will revolve around the European Commission's work programme, including revision of the Victims' Rights Directive as well as the proposal for a Directive on gender-based violence. VSE is planning advocacy meetings with the EC and MEPs. Further, France will be taking up the presidency of the Council of the European Union in January, followed by the Czech Republic in July, and VSE will be working closely with its members in these countries. VSE will also form a consultative group with its member organisations interested in participating in it. Additionally, VSE will develop one major policy paper on the revision of the Victims' Rights Directive, accompanied by smaller papers on specific topics (to be discussed with MTM and the Board). LA added that VSE will continue engaging with international institutions beyond the EU to ensure its continued engagement beyond the EU.

Next, RS presents the new Training Academy at VSE. The brand-new Training Academy starts with Executive Director Levent Altan, Senior Training and Knowledge Development Officer Ruth Shrimpling, and Consultant Trainer, victim expert and therapist Dr. Sigal Haimov. SH proceeds to present the goals and missions of the VSE Training Academy, which include achieving a fundamental shift in knowledge, culture, and behaviour on victimisation issues, becoming a leading international training entity in victim-related training courses, improving services of those working with victims, and increasing knowledge on victim-related issues through immersive, collective learning, expert-led training, and long-lasting impact with continuous evaluation.

RS explains how these goals of the Training Academy will be achieved – through an online training platform utilising MOOCs, live events, webinars and podcasts, as well as through in-person training, in-house training for VSE staff, and peer-to-peer activities. Overall, the unique trait of the Training Academy is the privilege of its access to the world's leading experts in the field of victims' rights.

SH continues on to explain how the e-platform of the Training Academy, hosted by Weisser Ring, can be used by the VSE members for their own online training programmes. Each organisation can have their own area of the platform, with the language of the organisation as well as its visual identity. RS thanked everyone for their attention and invited VSE members to get in touch and participate in the Training Academy.

IL presents the work of the Capacity Building Team, including an overview of 2021 and an outlook for 2022. In 2021, the Centre of Excellence held 3 online meetings and 1 face-to-face workshop. National victim support meetings took place in 4 countries both online and face-to-face. Policy briefs and other documents were produced on the focus topics of VSE. In 2022, VSE will work on its Standards and accreditation to ensure that clear standards for the quality of victim support exist, along with improving the accreditation process for new members. Finally, in 2022, workshops and webinars will be more frequent and smaller scale to cover a larger amount of specific topics and gather more in-depth knowledge.

Next, MK presents the main Communications plans for 2022, specifically those related to the Operating Grant and to Projects. Communications activities related to projects include dissemination of project deliverables and event publicity (FYDO, AREV, CREST, PROTECT, etc.) Regarding operating grant, many events and publications are planned over the course of 2022, including the EU NGO Round Table, VSE Annual Conference in Malta (10-12 May), newsletters and annual report, and, finally, campaigning.

GH thanks everyone for their presentations and asks members whether have any questions. Since there are no questions, GH proceeds to invite PK for closing remarks.

PK starts off by mentioning it is her honour to close this year's GM. PK appreciates everyone work over the course of 2021, pointing out it could only be achieved through the hard work of our Executive Board Members, our team at the Brussels office as well as the support in various ways we constantly receive from our members. PK thanks everyone for their work and wishes GH all the best in leading VSE over the next years. AGM is thus concluded.