

## Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

27 August 2020 (15.00 – 18.00)

Held Online

| <b>KEY</b>                |             |                             |
|---------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------|
| João Lázaro               | <b>JL</b>   | President                   |
| Helgard van Hüllen        | <b>HVH</b>  | Vice President              |
| Geraldine Hanna           | <b>GH</b>   | Treasurer                   |
| Levent Altan              | <b>LA</b>   | Executive Director          |
| Aleksandra Ivankovic      | <b>AI</b>   | Deputy Director             |
| Ruth Shrimpling           | <b>RS</b>   | Policy Officer              |
| Léa Meindre-Chautrand     | <b>LMC</b>  | Policy Officer              |
| Ines Nunes de Freitas     | <b>INdF</b> | Project Officer             |
| Marina Kazakova           | <b>MK</b>   | Communications Officer      |
| Victor Jammers            | <b>VJ</b>   | Manager of Operations EUCVT |
| Keti Varoshlija-Botterman | <b>KVB</b>  | Administrative Assistant    |
| Jeannot Mersch            | <b>JM</b>   | President of FEVR           |
| Silvia Taravan            | <b>ST</b>   | Rete Dafne                  |
| Petra Klein               | <b>PK</b>   | Weisser Ring Germany        |
| Gábor Veisz               | <b>GV</b>   | Feher Gyuru Hungary         |

### 1. President's Welcome Speech

**JL:** Dear members, it is my pleasure to welcome you to our 2020 General Meeting. I would like to express gratitude to the whole team of VSE for their great work during the pandemic. Well done and thank you very much for your diligent work.

It has been a tough year, but we learned a lot. Right now, our victim support community is stronger than ever.

I would like to express our appreciation to all our members – frontline support workers! You are providing compassionate and collaborative care to victims. You are showing innovation and persistence to make sure frontline support doesn't stop. We are all working together, many of us remotely, to make sure that victims receive support. We are lending a hand and uplifting each other in new ways. We keep managing planned meetings and activities online, we run our projects without problems, we are busy with various awareness-raising efforts and advocacy work. For this and all more, I say thank you. We're grateful to our VSE family, for rising to the challenge in these unprecedented times.

This year was also a historic year for the European Commission and EU policy development overall. The Commission published two very important strategies: the gender equality strategy and the EU victims' rights strategy, plus a number of consultations. We welcome those developments and look forward to making those strategies a reality in practice in the years to come.

And now, as it has already become a tradition, I'd like to open the meeting by welcoming our new Head Office team members. Great to have all 4 of you joining our Head Office!

- Annelies Blondé – Project Assistant EU CVT
- Iris Lokerse – Policy Assistant
- Selma Rekik – Policy Assistant (intern)
- Solène Baudouin-Naneix – Volunteer

## 2. Minutes

**LA:** Moving on to the minutes of our General Meeting of 19 November 2019. I kindly ask you to look at them in the paperwork you have received and I will go through them page by page. Please interrupt me by raising a hand button if you would like to suggest a correction or to make a comment.

No comments/concerns. The minutes are approved.

## 3. Financial report

### 2019 Financial Report

- 1) Page 1 – Income: presentation of 2020 budget and comparison with 2019: income 2019 is € 665.481 which was a 5 % increase compared to 2018. OG made up 60 % of this income.
- 2) Page 2 – Expenditure: VSE expenditure is € 667.996 which is a 12 % increase on 2018.
- 3) Page 6 – Year End: we finished the year with a deficit of € 11.210. Following our audit this decrease has been adjusted to € 14.362. This adjustment is due from last year, which was already included in our financial report last year.

The resulting impact on our reserves is: Reserves at end of December 2019: € 195.610, which is equivalent to 5-6 months running cost.

Following 3 years of surplus due to big projects such as the World Bank, VSE planned to utilise reserves to cover part of our contribution to projects. This position is unsustainable in the long term so we must enact plans to ensure the generation of unrestricted income in the years ahead. Levent will speak about these proposals later in the meeting.

## **2019 Audit Report and annual accounts**

I am pleased to report that we received a clean and unqualified audit report from our auditors, Crowe, Callen, Pienne & Co. They report a balance sheet total at the end of 2019 of € 1.010.762 and a loss of € 14.362. They have provided reasonable assurance that as a whole the accounts are free from material misstatements whether due to fraud or error.

## **2020 – Mid-year Finance Position**

- 1) Page 1 – Income: Total income is € 882.008, an increase of 33 % income compared to 2019 – largely due to the EU Centre of Expertise contract.
- 2) Page 2 – Expenditure: VSE expenditure is anticipated to increase by 6 % compared to 2019. In monetary terms this equates to € 789.955 in 2020 compared with € 667.996 in 2019.
- 3) Page 3 – Underspend: We anticipate that we will only spend 77 % of the total 202 budget. The underspend is primarily due to the cancellation of face-to-face events and travel for VSE staff. Money that would have been spent on organising the annual conference and covering travel and subsistence will not be spent for those purposes. The underspend from ongoing action grants could be moved to be spent in the following year until the end of the grant. We would expect to use almost all the budgets from our projects assuming restrictions are not in place in 2021.
- 4) Page 4 – End of year situation (anticipated): VSE intend to spend 95 % of the grant as per normal practice, which will mean using the current underspend in the OG of € 125.000 on alternative deliverables. This will result in VSE predicting a € 26.828 deficit, assuming no additional unrestricted income. We do have some outstanding project applications which may reduce the deficit slightly.

It is the intention to use the underspend in the OG due to Covid as an opportunity to invest in the future and increase our income generating capabilities.

**KVB:** We are moving on to voting for the approval of the financial report and annual accounts. According to VSE's constitution, each full member shall have one sole vote. Associate and supporter members shall have no vote. Today, 15 full members out of 17 are represented, which means a quorum is met.

In order for the financial report and the annual accounts to be approved, they must receive a majority of votes from those present and eligible to vote today. The majority today is 8.

The financial report and annual accounts are approved.

## **4. VSE Activity Report 2019**

**MK:** Victim Support Europe has delivered another strong year of performance in 2019 to strengthen our position as a leader in the victim support community of the EU. We achieved significant milestones, getting to 59 member organisations from around the world, helping over 2 million victims of crime a year. Our 29<sup>th</sup> consecutive year of positive performance growth! We also achieved numerous accolades as a great place to work. We would like to thank our board, our management team and our members in 30 countries for making victim support better each and every day.

As expected, 2019 was an election year for the EU and turned out to be a very busy year for VSE and our members. The elections were a major occasion to bring the EU 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, victim-centred 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.

We are glad that our EP elections campaign succeeded in mobilising our members at the 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.

### **Thematic priorities for the year**

Our thematic priorities for the year 2019 were cybercrime, terrorism, hate crime, enforcement of rights, and influencing the next 5 years: new Commission and Parliament.

### **Our work for victims**

In 2019 we spent some time on improving the information provided to victims and how we connect them to national support organisations.

#### *Interactive map*

We 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*

We developed an online form for members to refer cross-border victims; prepared for the launch of the referral system in 2020.

### **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.

#### *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.

### **Communications and campaigns**

Our communications work increased this year. We ran three campaigns:

- *22 February Campaign: Making rights a reality*
- *21 July Campaign: Crime is crime. Even online – Hate speech awareness raising campaign with collaboration of approximately 80 partners.*
- *21 August Campaign: International day for victims of terrorism*

### **Our activities in 2019**

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)

To wrap it up, 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.

We will publish our annual report 2019 on all our social media websites and on our intranet. Thank you very much. I would like to give the floor to Ruth, who is going to present our new members.

### **Presentation of new members**

**RS:** Thank you Marina. I'll do a brief overview of our membership so far this year. With the current pandemic and its effect on the financial situation of many service providers, 2020 has seen a slightly slower uptake on membership in comparison with this same time last year. Nevertheless, we already have welcomed 1 new associate member, and have another 7 applications currently underway. Concerning the 7 applicant members, there are 5 victim support organisations, 1 academic institution and 1 European network. These applicant members are from the Czech Republic, Belgium, Lithuania, Albania and Iran. We will keep you up-to-date on their progress and hopefully be welcoming them in our membership soon.

Now it is my pleasure to welcome our new member, the European Federation of Road Traffic Victims. This brings our total membership to 60 organisations across 30 countries, compared with 42 members in 2015. We look forward to working together with FEVR to advance the rights of victims of road traffic crimes in the EU and beyond. I'd like to give the floor now to their president, Jeannot Mersch.

**JM:** Thank you Ruth. We are very happy to be the 60<sup>th</sup> member. Of course I would have liked to come to Berlin this year, but unfortunately we cannot do it because of Covid. It's great to be with you now in this virtual meeting. Those who don't know me, I am a bereaved father and we lost a daughter 27 years ago who was killed by a driver on her way to school. I am the president of FEVR since 2010. We met several times with VSE and we think we have a stronger voice for victims, in this case of road traffic crime, and our aims are to be the voice of road traffic victims in Europe and we want to work to protect the interests of these victims. We also want to reduce the number of these victims, and we are working to reduce the dangers on the roads. We only have full members who are victims, most are volunteers like myself, but we also have associate members and friends to enlarge our membership. Our members are from different national victim associations. Of course there is a lack of justice for many victims of crime, so we also want to share our knowledge and our experiences. All victims of crime need SIR: Support, Information, and Respect. We are looking forward to working more closely with VSE. Since 25 years we've had the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims. It is very important to road traffic victims to show that the numbers are still too high, but also to ask for more prevention. You can find more information on our webpage: [www.fevr.org](http://www.fevr.org). Together we will all be stronger. Thank you.

## **5. Brief update on VSE work 2020**

### **Growth and change**

I wanted to spend some time talking about the growth of VSE and how we're changing and have been changing over the last 8 months in 2020. We've continued to grow both in terms of the number of people in the office but also the way in which we are delivering our work. We have a new office, which is amazing. We also have many more people – we now have 16 people working for VSE in different capacities. We have VSE employees, contractors, interns, and volunteers. That's allowing us to do a lot of things in different ways. We're delivering the core work as always, but we're doing more and more projects where we're really getting into specific areas where we're trying to develop more detailed products. We're also able to establish different specialisms: Léa is our advocacy officer now on top of her other policy work, we have a membership officer, we have whole different and improved approach, we have proof readers, project officers, communications officers, we also have an IT and security contractor. Obviously there are more administrative burdens as we are growing.

We're also able to focus on specific types of crime. We have different areas that we've prioritised, such as terrorism, gender-based violence, cybercrime, and hate crime. We don't necessarily have a strong background in those areas, so different colleagues are specialising in those areas and developing their knowledge and expertise. We now have in place a permanent volunteering and internship program, which has been extremely successful. We've been able to do all of this in a very remote manner. We're operating across Europe, but as a team. Not only are we doing more, we're more efficient in the way we deliver work, as our average daily costs have reduced with around 35 % compared to 2017.

The way we deliver is also through our members, and I think we're starting to get better at collaborating with all of you and making the most of all of your extensive expertise and experience. We greatly appreciate your availability to your input into our work, that really gives a lot more credibility and quality to our work. This is how we're able to do more and be more efficient. As we go forward, we're trying to develop more in-depth, detailed knowledge in the different areas. We also want to make sure that we're working and communicating with all of you in a much more relevant and clear manner, so that we're delivering more value for you, supporting the work that you do.

We also want to improve our advocacy. We've had significant success this year, but we want to be much more proactive in the way we do this. We want to make sure that as we grow, we are sufficiently able to connect both EU priorities, European priorities, and international priorities. We are getting better in our communications with victims.

## **COVID**

COVID has had a huge impact on all of us; it has shown us that we are resilient, together. Working together has enabled us to perform and deliver everything we need to. We have tried to support all of you to the extent that we can; we have produced the resource kits, thanks to Natal we carried out a web exchange, and we continue to be ready to support you in your work. A lot can be achieved very well online; we are expanding our work online. Unfortunately, this year we had to cancel our Berlin conference, but we will hold an annual conference this year in November. It will be online and it's focused on new technologies. We do intend to hold next year's conference in Berlin in partnership with Weisser Ring.

We are now in the process of launching a tender for an online training platform. Our intention is to be able to deliver extensive training programs online. We hope to make this tool useable and available to members over time. We believe that this will become a significant income source and we're looking at different ways in which we can commercialise our work and start offering our services to large enterprises. Thank you to Charly and APAV who did huge amounts of work to deliver the intranet. Now we're able to give much more information, but also implement those functions we were trying to do before. The referral system is operating successfully. We're looking into how we can expand the system to allow for referrals with trusted non-members. We'll also be launching a new website in the next couple of months. There's a whole range of activities that we haven't been able to deliver face-to-face for members. We want to deliver these this year and looking into ways to do that.

We intend to keep growing, we've got some of those financial issues to resolve and the training mechanisms will be one way of resolving that. We're increasing our connections globally and getting new opportunities. I'm going to stop there, let's watch Inês' video on projects.

**INdF:** Presents herself as VSE's project officer. VSE has 5 ongoing projects and 1 tender. The first one is the Crest project, it's a project on terrorism. The project deadline is 2022, but our main deliverable is due in August 2021. We also have Previct, and due to Covid-19 we are going to prepare an amendment for this project. We also have the Maltese training project. It was delayed due to Covid-19, but we are going to deliver our training online in September. Counteract, on preventing and combatting online radicalisation, had an amendment for 4 extra months. For InHere, we already delivered our main deliverables, even though the project ran for another year. Finally, our very own EU Centre of Expertise for Victims of Terrorism. This is it for our ongoing

projects, however, we have 3 submitted projects where we are waiting for a reply or already received a positive reply. I'm talking about the FYDO project, it's a great pleasure to announce that VSE is leading this project on facility dogs. We believe that if all goes well, we may be signing the grant agreement later this year. We are partners in the Infovictims project, the leading partner is APAV. Lastly, Protect, an Erasmus+ project in which we are partners, and we are still waiting for news. At this moment, we are partners in a new 2020 project, it will be submitted today. I would also like to let you know about other projects on the internet. We have a new section, it's called 'open calls', and we are going to be looking regularly for new open calls and tenders to share with our members. We are going to keep this folder updated.

**AI:** I would like to focus on 3 issues. Firstly, our planning for 2020-2021 for standards and accreditation. In 2017 we adopted the approach for standards and accreditation for full members. We have been working to have as many of our members as possible accredited. On our intranet you can see all 9 of VSE's standards, each standard has a link to a guidance document. There is also a link to a self-assessment.

Not only are we GDPR compliant, we also make sure that victims' privacy is fully protected. This year we are preparing a paper which will provide guidance to our members in terms of the protection of victims' data through victim support systems. We want to avoid instances of secondary victimisation as much as possible. We have already presented the paper to the executive board, and the management team has been supporting us in finalising the paper, which we hope to have finalised in the next few weeks.

I will also give a brief insight into another piece of our work, the 116006 position paper. This is a position paper, which means that we will put it on a vote during our next general meeting in November 2020. This will be a document that will set out some of the basic criteria in setting up a 116006 helpline. This is our shared position as VSE to the outside world. Léa has mostly been in charge of drafting the paper; she already compiled a first draft. We had a working group of volunteers from the organisations supporting us in this endeavour. We will share the draft paper with our members for comments and contributions.

**RS:** VSE has 3 internal strategies underway: one on compensation, one on hate crime, and one on cybercrime. These strategies are a way for VSE to be able to focus our future work in these 3 topics and it gives us guidance on where any future action needs to lie. Starting with **cybercrime**, we see that every real world crime has an online counterpart. However, law enforcement remain 1 step behind the technologies, which advance faster than legislation. For victims, this means that in many cases the police are powerless, which means that they are often left without the same level of protection as victims of physical crimes. In our cybercrime strategy, VSE seeks to explore the best possibilities in advocacy, research, and campaigning, in order to promote the protection, support, and access to justice for these particular victims of online crime.

VSE's strategy on **hate crime** seeks to address the lack of protection and support for this growing victim group. Hate crime is increasing globally, fueled by an increase in right-wing politics, economic regression, and an increase in online hate forums, which perpetuate a culture of intolerance and violence. We have begun with a research assignment, looking into needs of hate crime victims, gaps in legislation, and the options to create European partnerships working on this topic. We recently joined the EStAR network, a project operated by ODIHR and the OSCE, which creates a network of experts working on the theme of hate crime.



As far as our **compensation** strategy is concerned, we're looking to build upon the work that we did in 2018 and last year, including our policy paper 'A journey from crime to compensation'. We want to deliver real actions for victims of crime seeking compensation.

**VJ:** VSE developed its terrorism response network. If someone becomes a victim of a terrorist attack in Europe, their contact details can be easily transferred from the member state where the attack happened, to a VSE member in the country of residence. Europe has to become a better place for victims of terrorism. That's why VSE leads a project with 5 partners, for the development of the EU Centre of Expertise for Victims of Terrorism (EUCVT). We are writing the EU handbook on victims of terrorism, which will address the circles of impact after a terrorist attack, the needs of victims and their rights, registration of victims, the risks of secondary victimisation, and the role of remembrance. The handbook is aimed at policy experts and will be available by the end of September. Training is an important task of the EUCVT too; we aim at training national staff in the first months of 2021. In each member state a group of about 20 participants will be trained, coming from governments, first responders and victim support organisations. For each member state, we will develop a national handbook, based on the needs of member states themselves.

In addition to this, we are developing 2 lists of experts. One list is on psycho-trauma experts in each of the member states, who will be available to advise governments and victim support organisations and to support victims. The second list is a general list of experts in each member state, from compensation authorities, police, victim support organisations, etc. These experts will have at least 3 years of experience in supporting victims of terrorism or are currently part of the crisis infrastructure in their member state. Please contact us at [eucvt@victimssupporteurope.eu](mailto:eucvt@victimssupporteurope.eu) if you have ideas or questions.

**RS:** 2019-2020 marked progress and changes in all aspects of membership: attracting new members, membership application process, member engagement, and membership management system. A campaign aimed at attracting new members is in the pipeline. Previously, the membership application process was dealt with through our old intranet system, which was riddled with problems. We created a manual application process, which allowed us to regain control over applications and improve the whole system, and we are aiming to eventually integrate this process into a more efficient online version. We created a form with mostly click functionalities, and shortened the questions. We are looking to maintain our personal touch as we move the application process to an online system.

We also want to improve our communication with existing members, and continue this personal connection. We have created an engagement strategy, which consists of each member organisation being allocated a staff lead from the VSE team, who will be the personal contact for that organisation. All these features have been designed to be integrated into our upcoming membership management system, which is currently in the creation process through our external web designer and developer. It's been developed to automate certain tasks, and to send reminders to the VSE membership team.

Up until now, I've been responsible for all things member-related within VSE. It is now time for me to take on a new responsibility. During my maternity leave, Iris will be responsible for all things membership-wise, her email address is: [i.lokerse@victimssupporteurope.eu](mailto:i.lokerse@victimssupporteurope.eu).

LA presents VSE's advocacy developments. VSE has been connecting and collaborating with international institutions and trying to influence international legislation. We have more

connections with the UN Counter-Terrorism Centre, who also deal with victims of terrorism. We have been supporting them in experts meeting to develop reports. We were also invited to speak at their Remembrance Day 's event.

Now the UN Office on Drugs and Crimes, who have started working on model provisions on victims of terrorism, which are basically drafts of how national governments can legislate in this area. We have also been invited to be part of an expert group there.

VSE is now increasingly involved with the Council of Europe as well. The Council of Europe is looking at whether they should amend or create new recommendations on victim support. A Committee has been set up to review the 2016 recommendations, and LA has been invited to be part of the discussions. This might result in new recommendations coming out of the Council of Europe, covering all victims of crime. This would be an interesting development for our members working outside of the EU, and who are relying on international legislation for their national advocacy work.

LA then explains that VSE is also progressing in partnerships with influencers, such as the police. They are starting to notice VSE and we are looking at ways to influence the way the police work with victims. We will be doing a joint presentation with two other organizations in October 2020, about the ways in which the police need to have a more victim-centric approach.

LMC presents on VSE's involvement in consultations. VSE participated in 12 EU consultations in 2020 on different topics, such as gender equality strategy, artificial intelligence, child sexual abuse. Most importantly, VSE's input in the Victims' Rights Strategy was important, which was based on the findings of the VOIARE project. Many of our ideas developed in our contributions have been retained by the Commission, such as the creation of the database of EU project funding results and the inclusion of a broader range of groups considered as vulnerable victims.

## **7. Planning for 2021**

AI reminds that VSE is in 5 projects in plus of the operating grant. We try to organize our work in an effective manner – and we want to do things that make sense in the broader picture and in a strategic way. We are preparing our work plan for 2021, which will be submitted to the European Commission within our Operating Grant – which is our biggest source of income and the biggest part of the work that we deliver. We have been consulting with the management team in preparing the work plan. The biggest elements are in policy and advocacy, as well as communications and campaigns:

- VSE will work together with the European Commission on pushing them towards the implementation of the Victims' Rights Strategy;
- VSE will work on series of policy and advocacy activities, including a policy paper which will probably focus on the evaluation of the Victims' Directive and look into some of the provisions that VSE members feel are the most important to be looked into more detail;
- Campaign: the European Commission will have a big campaign as part of their Victims' Rights Strategy and VSE will be working alongside with them;

- Campaigns in 6 EU member states which will be about providing information to victims the best way, by having a very focused and scientific approach;
- Launch our facility dogs projects (FYDO) in 4 EU member states: Italy, Ireland, France and Belgium. VSE will be working with dog training organizations to train facility dogs. This will be connected to a social media and wider media campaign, and try to expand the service in other EU countries;
- APAV's Info Victims III project: this will require VSE members' involvement as well. This will also focus on how to deliver information to victims in the best way. VSE will be responsible in the policy element, and looking into the information that victims need.
- Online training platform development: this will hopefully become a signature feature of VSE in the next few years.

AI adds that VSE will also consult members in the planning of 2021 and make sure that VSE's activities and focus respond to members' needs and reality.

### **MK speaks about the 2021 Awareness campaign**

As mentioned before, we will witness the first ever EU campaign on victims' rights. Based on that, we have decided to launch our own campaign in order to supplement theirs, and to make a step further, be more creative, more victims-oriented, to do more efforts in terms of localization of the campaign (because the Commission is always targeting the EU in general but not national contexts). VSE's campaign will be targeting local and national contexts. We are envisioning a series of short animation films – a budget was allocated from the 2020 unspent budget. We have a Belgian animator on board. With this idea, we will give a voice to victims and keep their privacy through animations and based on their story-telling. We are planning to create these mini films also using contents from the PREVICT, CREST and COUNTERACT projects.

MK informs that VSE is about to launch an open call for communications officers of all members to start a working group for this campaign in September/October 2020 in order to have a plan in December, and then start the campaign in Spring 2021.

## **8. Presentation of VSE strategic planning 2021-2025**

GH introduces the work on the 2021-2025 strategy. The process started with the VSE team drafting areas of priorities based on their assessment of the current environment. A discussion with the Executive Board was held to receive feedback and there, a decision was made to establish a working group of members. This working group counts:

- Geri Hanna, WG leader (Victim Support Ireland)
- Fredrik Melkvist (BOJ Sweden)
- Silvia Taravan (Rete Dafne Italy)
- Donna Price (IRVA Ireland)
- Ann Moulds (Action against stalking, Ireland)
- Lucia Formenti (EMDR)

GH explains that the working group has had 2 meetings to date, focusing on the initial proposal of the VSE team looking at areas that should be in the strategy, the format and the outcomes we are trying to achieve. The working group is planning to share the key topics considered to be part of the strategy and take feedback from the full members in the next weeks through a survey. VSE's

strength lays in its membership's expertise and the board encourages you to respond to the survey. It is very important to have members shape VSE's direction, so that VSE also complements the needs of members.

AI explains that so far VSE has been trying to be as inclusive as possible, and that it has been of enormous importance to have the involvement of members. The original idea was to stay focused on the 8 strategic goals of the current strategy (2017-2020), which were:

1. Ensuring compliance with existing laws and policies
2. Raise awareness on victims' rights issues in our work
3. Achieve improvements in accessibility and quality of support services
4. Coordinate and facilitate coherent service delivery
5. Strengthen VSE's collective capability
6. Invest in VSE's infrastructure
7. Achieve financial resilience

AI explains that in the past years VSE was trying to thematise its work. The next logical step was to work around the five needs of victims as much as possible in addition to some basic thematic issues (victims of terrorism, gender-based violence, hate crime). This would still make sense for the next few years.

AI reminds that training will be an important element of our work as well as data collection. At the same time the important changes: less focus on organizational development, ensure sufficient focus on wider European actions. Because most money sources have come from EU, but we want to look wider than the EU and rather Europe in general, given the wide geographical distribution of our members.

#### **Draft 6 strategic objectives that are prioritized for the next five years:**

1. Promote implementation, strengthening and mainstreaming of victims' rights: Full implementation of Directive, and we want victims' rights to be taken into consideration at all levels;
2. Ensure victims are recognized, treated with respect and protected from secondary victimization/ recognition of all victims of all crimes. Because there's a huge problem of under reporting in certain groups of victims;
3. Promotion of resilience and recovery: through training, raising awareness etc. and we want to mainstream elements of victim support in all fields of society;
4. Facilitate full access to support for victims within national framework – should be at the core of our strategy. We want to recognize different types of support and different ways of delivering support. We want to understand each aspect of this framework better.
5. Work towards victim-centred justice systems and compensation schemes;
6. To grow and strengthen VSE to be better heard etc.

AI stresses the importance of members' responses to the survey.

#### **Planning for adoption:**

- Member survey (September 2020)
- Draft Strategy for comments (October 2020)
- Final Strategy for adoption (November 2020)

## **9. Elections and resolution**

JL announces 2 open positions for the Executive Board seats and 1 position for re-election. But first, another extraordinary nomination for the executive board seat takes place. For the first time ever this year and according to the article 10.03 of the VSE 2020 Constitution, the Executive Board nominated an Associate member to join the Board. This became possible thanks to the new Constitution. Moreover, it changes the face of VSE: from now and on our organisation gives associate members an opportunity to have their voice heard and take part in decision-making processes. The Board decided to invite Ms. Silvia Taravan from Rete Dafne-Italy to be invited to join the Executive Team. He welcomes Silvia and gives her the floor to introduce herself. She is the president of Reta Dafne Italia association.

### **KVB opens the elections of board members:**

For this meeting there is the possibility to elect Vice President, Treasurer and re-electing of a Board member.

In line with in the Constitution, all of our full members who are not currently on the Board had the opportunity to submit nominations. We have received 2 nominations one for each of the positions and 1 nomination for the re-election. All nominations were received 14 days prior to the meeting and in accordance to the VSE constitution.

KVB asks Geraldine to present herself, and why she is running for the Vice-President position.

KVB asks Petra to present herself and why she is running for the Treasurer position.

KVB asks Gabor to present himself and why he is presenting himself for re-election.

**15** full members out of 17 are represented which means a quorum is met. All full members received a link with the voting paper and were asked to vote for the nominees – yes, no, abstention. In order for the nominees to be elected, they must receive a majority of votes from those present and eligible to vote today. The majority was **8**.

While the votes are counted, a short video about the development of VSE's new Website was displayed.

KVB announced the results of the votes: 11 members voted out of 15 members present.

- Treasurer: Petra was elected with 10 positive votes and 1 negative, no abstention;
- Vice-president: Geraldine was elected with 11 positive votes;
- Board member: Gabor was re-elected with 11 positive votes;
- The Associate board member: Silvia Taravan was elected with 11 positive votes.

### **10. Concluding remarks**

JL notes that VSE's activities during the pandemic are very committing and quite challenging. Looking at the past 1,5 year, we can proudly say that we have successfully achieved considerable progress to improve victims' rights, support and services. This 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.

Thank you and keep up your excellent work. As done in the past, we continue to look forward with our new plans and work together for the benefit of all victims.

A special thank you and goodbye was then made to Helgard.