

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

11 December 2018 (10.30 – 12:30)

Held at the Representation of the Free State of Bavaria to the European Union

KEY		
João Lázaro	JL	VSE President
Helgard van Hüllen	HVH	VSE Vice President
Richard Olszewski	RO	VSE Vice President
Levent Altan	LA	VSE Executive Director
Geraldine Hanna	GH	VSE Treasurer
Gabor Veisz	GV	VSE Temporary Treasurer
Livija Plančić	LP	VSE Executive Board Member
Aleksandra Ivankovic	AI	VSE Project Manager
Marina Kazakova	MK	VSE Communications Officer

1. President's Welcome Speech

President JL welcomed all those present for the Annual General Meeting including four new Members:

1. Victim Support New Zealand
2. The Women's Room - Center for Sexual Rights based in Croatia
3. The Estonian Social Insurance Board
4. Action Against Stalking

This brings VSE total membership to 54 organisations across 29 countries compared with 42 members in 2015.

2. New Members' Presentations

JL showed two presentation videos of Victim Support New Zealand and the Women's Room – Center for Sexual Rights.

3. Minutes

As customary the meeting started by approving the minutes of last General Meeting dated 24 May 2018 in Stockholm. LKA went page by page through the minutes and these were approved unanimously.

4. VSE Activity Report

4.1 Review of VSE activities 2015 – 2018 - JL

JL presented the Review of VSE activities 2015 – 2018.

He presented the five years strategy adopted in 2015 with three core objectives:

- Drive change through laws, policy and awareness raising
- To support service delivery through improvements in quality, accessibility and coordination of services
- To operate sustainability whilst growing capability through investment in VSE infrastructure, enhancing our financial resilience and growing our collective capability

JL presented what have been achieved already:

- Supported the European Commission and European Parliament to include victims' rights in a range of new EU legislation
- Development of policy advice
- Research papers for the European Parliament and for the World Bank
- Supporting Special Advisor Joelle Milquet to develop proposals for improving compensation or victims across Europe

VSE has developed close relations with various parts of the UN including the UNODC, the UN Counter terrorism office, the UN Victim's Advocate.

VSE is also engaged with the EEAS by producing a short film for their Good Human Rights Stories.

Global and regional networks were also developed: The informal group of experts on terrorism we helped establish in 2016 (IFDIS) has grown from strength to strength. They have now rebranded to be called INVICTM – International Network for Victims of Terrorism and Mass Violence.

VSE has also established its sister organisation Victim Support Asia. Europe. The organisation already has over 12 members and will hold its first conference in South Korea next March.

Our objectives have focused around two types of action

- Developing national projects which will support organisations to deliver services
- Help establish multi-agency dialogue

In 2018, we have also created new opportunities for dialogue and knowledge exchange. The Regional exchange for the Balkans hosted this year in Croatia, and the staff exchange between APAV and Victim Support Northern Ireland, proved extremely successful and we look forward to continuing to develop these and other ways to support your work together.

From a starting point where VSE had delivered a number of limited events, today we have now provided training for our Members, for judges, prosecutors and police on supporting victims of terrorism, on implementing the victims' rights directive, on lobbying, cybercrime, helplines, distance support and more.

Internal organisation: Our Brussels Office has expanded from 3 staff in 2015 to 6 staff in 2018, 2 internships, 3 volunteers and 1 contractor.

JL then presented our diverse sources of funding: in 2018 income has derived from membership fees, an EU operating grant, contracts with European and International institutions, EU project grants, sponsorship and income from our annual conference. In 2018 VSE's income relies 55% on the Operational Grant and Membership and 45% on Projects, Consulting Services and Sponsorship.

4.2. VSE Activities 2018 - A closer look Board and Staff - HVH

HVH presented the new board and staff members.

Some changes will be done: the position of the Office Manager will be substituted by the Administrative Officer position. Event management duties move to the responsibility of our Communications Officer, leaving space for Administrative Officer to focus on administrative tasks, human resources etc.

Two paid internships are envisaged for 2019 and we are in discussions to take on another free intern as part of a European exchange programme.

VSE Brussels office is foreseen to change its office during the summer 2019.

Capacity Building Activities - GV

GV presented VSE capacity building activities in 2018.

- Standards and accreditation: first accreditation with VSE full member in Croatia Bijeli Krug.
- Developing Centres of Excellence across the EU
- VSE training

Regional and National Coordination - LP

LP presented the regional and national meeting in Split, Croatia. The regional event gathered member organisations from South- East Europe to discuss their work, identify common and different challenges and practices. In addition, a first national meeting was organised in partnership with Bijeli Krug for Croatian organisations including NGOs and State authorities.

JL then presented the round table meeting "A multi-disciplinary approach to implementing victims' rights and services in Greece" which took place in Athens. Victim Support Europe in collaboration with the European Public Law Organisation, the European Anti-Violence Network, the Centre for the Study and Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, the Smile of the Child and

Panteion University held a multi-stakeholder meeting exploring how the State and NGOs can work together to improve the situation of victims of crime in Greece.

International Engagements – HVH

HVH outlined VSE's cooperation with EU institutions, namely its new connections in DG Home dedicated to working on terrorism, cybercrime, and confiscation of criminal assets. Work outside the EU has been enhanced through the European External Action Service.

VSE, in partnership with Transcendent Media, produced a film based on interviews with victims and support workers upon EEAS's request in just two weeks. The collaboration will extend into 2019.

In October 2018, VSE participated in the 'ENVR Autumn Expert Meeting and Seminar' in Valletta, Malta.

A new relationship was formed in 2018 with the UN's first Victim's Advocate – Jane Connors.

Additionally, HVH spoke about establishment of Victim Support Asia, which is led by Korean Crime Victim Support. A first conference is planned in March 2019 in South Korea with VSE supporting its preparations.

Finally, VSE maintains its international contacts in Canada, USA, Australia, the middle east and Africa.

HVH then spoke about VSE's collaboration with other NGOs. Specifically, she talked about the partnership with the Age Platform – a European network for the elderly; a project with the French government; work with the European Emergency Numbers Association advocating for emergency services; and the recent collaboration with Ilga Europe. It was pointed out that many of the connections were established through the EU NGO Roundtable that VSE organises every year. This year, the Roundtable was titled "Victims of crime in Europe: a broader NGO perspective".

Additionally, HVH mentioned the increasing cooperation with the private sector and the new sponsoring partnerships with two international law firms: DLA Piper and Osborne Clarke.

Projects – AI

AI outlined the projects VSE was engaged in in 2018.

The biggest project this year has been VOIARE, which is now reaching its final stages.

VSE continued their cooperation with the World Bank in Serbia and has worked towards completion of three reports focusing on the role of civil society in providing victim support as well as cost-benefit analysis of victim support

In cooperation with EIPA ((European Institute for Public Administration).), we are supporting Mme Milquet, the special advisor of Commissioner Juncker, in presenting her report on victims' compensation.

AI also introduced the VICTORIA project which was launched in 2017 and which will run over two years and look into how best to ensure referral, information and individual assessment for victims of crimes in Lithuania, Portugal, Romania and Italy.

4.3. Communications – MK

MK introduced herself as the new Communications Officer at VSE and presented the work that has been done during the last six months, highlighting VSE's previous lack of coordinated publicity and visibility. This year, MK has developed VSE's Communication Plan for 2018-2020 with three main objectives:

1. Raising awareness of victims' issues
2. Sharing knowledge with national organisations
3. Strengthening VSE's collective capability

As part of the new strategy, VSE is preparing its annual report, conducting social media campaigns, and developing the new Intranet.

Finally, MK identified VSE's three main current focus areas: hate crime, cybercrime, and terrorism.

First respondent's poem project video screening

5. Future Plans – LA

Before speaking about future plans, LA gave an overview of the current state of affairs. At the moment, VSE is in the process of 17 project applications. One of the projects looks at helping the public with regard to what to do in case of terrorist attack.

LA pointed out that there is an obligation in the EU for victim support; however, the consequences can be different– some NGOs are losing funding, being pushed out of the area. Through the work in Serbia in cooperation with the World Bank, VSE is trying to develop a clear narrative which can be applied in any country and contribute to a national framework of victim services. It includes not only NGOs, but also all the actors interacting with victims.

As for the plans for the future, LA echoed MK in agreeing that VSE needs to communicate better – both internally (with its members) and externally – and proceeded to speak about the importance of the 2019 European Parliament election. VSE will work on victims' rights both with the new parliamentarians and with the Commission.

Additionally, LA spoke about the importance of cooperation with the European Council, which operates in 58 countries and at whose venue the VSE conference will take place in June.

Then LA introduced the staff exchange program, where different VSOs can send their employees on short-term exchange to learn how VSOs operate in other countries. He also spoke about the enforcement of victims' rights post-VOCIARE project, fundraising, and developing more sponsorship opportunities.

Finally, LA addressed the members and encouraged them to reach out to VSE with their requests and proposals and introduced an upcoming survey of member organisations in order to better understand their needs.

6. Financial report – GH

The financial and audit reports were introduced by GH. She first presented the financial report and then asked for its approval by Members. This was done by a show of hands and it was decided by a unanimous vote. She also asked for the approval of the audit report 2017, which has been sent to all Members some weeks beforehand. GH went over the audit report page by page and there was a unanimous vote on it as well as on the extension of VSE's audit contract for another three years with Callens, Pirenne & Co. The approval was also done by the raising of hands.

The financial and audit reports were introduced by GH. They could also be found in each member's package. GH spoke about VSE's strong financial performance in 2018, pointing out to 1% increase in expenditure.

VSE's anticipated surplus is ??? – check financial report. GH concluded that VSE is experiencing an upward trend.

7. Elections and Resolution – JL, LA

Voting for the President

JL thanked everyone for their hard work and turned it over to HVH. HVH announced that even though there was a board position opening, there were no nominations; therefore, only the election of the president was to be taken care of. HVH then turned it over to LA to manage the election process.

LA announced that the quorum requires 1/3 of full members to be present. 11 out of 20 full members were present and quorum was met. The members voted and JL won with 11 votes in his favour.

8. Conclusion - JL

JL thanked everyone for their trust and expressed his belief that it is important to stand united in the battle for strong and effective rights of victims of crime, "The way we treat and protects the victims of crime is representative of our democratic values."

JL concluded that VSE's achieved considerable progress to improve victims' rights, support and services. This could only be achieved through the hard work of the Executive Board Members, the team at the Brussels office as well as the support from the members.

Video demonstration – good human rights stories