



## **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting**

**Friday 7 December 2017 (15.30 – 18.45)**

Held at:

The Hotel, Boulevard de Waterloo 38, 1000 Brussels

### **1. President's Report**

President of Victim Support Europe (**VSE**), João Lázaro (**JL**) opened the General Meeting. He welcomed the two new Members - Associazione Aleteia from Italy and HRDC from Albania. Their representatives delivered a presentation later during the meeting. **JL** also announced that V-Europe, the Belgian Association of Victims of Terrorism is finalising its process to become a Member of VSE.

Speaking on staff changes, he noted that Jeanette Fava (**JF**) took over the office management role of Irina Dragoman. It was also announced that the Deputy Director, An Verelst (**AV**) would be leaving the organisation at the beginning of next year - 2018.

**JL** informed the Members about the various capacity building activities VSE has carried out from May up to the present in several countries including Romania, Lithuania, Germany, Italy, Greece, Paris and Lisbon. He also informed the AGM of VSE's first winter school which proved to be highly successful. The training focused on the needs of victims of terrorism, the impact of an attack and issues such as trauma processing. It was attended by a number of VSE members.

The minutes of the previous AGM of May 2017 were approved by unanimous vote. Subsequently, **AV** provided a summary of VSE's extensive work with the EU institutions related to terrorism victims which VSE has been undergoing during the last few months.

Aleksandra Ivankovic (**AI**), Project Manager of VSE gave an overview of VSE's main projects not related to its EU Operating grant. These included projects for the European Institute of Public Administration (**EIPA**), World Bank Projects, Project Vociare and Project VICToRIIA.

With respect to the EIPA, she explained that VSE had been contracted to prepare a study for the European Parliament on the needs of the terrorism victims. The report "How can the EU and the Member States better help victims of terrorism?" was published by the European Parliament in September. VSE had a further opportunity to work with EIPA when it was contracted by them to provide training sessions to the Serbian judges, prosecutors and professors in relation to the implementation of the EU Victims' Rights Directive.

Regarding World Bank Projects in Serbia, **AI** stated that VSE has worked considerably to helping bring Serbia closer to compliance with the Victims' Rights Directive in support of their accession process. This work resulted in four reports - one report provided an overview of the existing victim support services in Serbia, together with an interactive map. Another report focused on the various mechanisms for funding victim support services. The third report was on the current victim services being established in France and Finland and the last presented an analysis about the responsibilities of the Serbian police vis-à-vis victims of crime.

The Vociare project is the biggest project VSE has led up to present. AI explained that the project brings together twenty-six organisations in Europe, in an attempt to evaluate the practical implementation of the Victims' Rights Directive.

Subsequently, Helgard van Hullen (**HVH**), Vice President of VSE, spoke about other projects of VSE. She spoke about the VICToRIIA project which was launched last September. The project is led by the Vilnius Institute for Advanced Studies and aims to enhance effective implementation of referral systems as well as to enhance the provision of information and individual assessments to the victims. The project focuses on services in Lithuania, Romania, Italy and Portugal.

**HVH** also spoke about the new version of the UN Handbook of Justice for Victims of Crime. The Handbook which will be published in due time, focuses on the needs of victims and on new approaches to policy-making in relation to those needs. VSE has been responsible for the latest revision.

**AV** then proceeded with the progressive work done by VSE in relation to victims of terrorism. She informed about the recent meeting with Commissioner Jourova during which the present situation of the victims of the Brussels terrorist attacks were discussed including how they could get quality support were discussed.

AV continued with a presentation of VSE's participation in two separate transposition workshops organised by DG Home of the European Commission related to the Combating Terrorism Directive. VSE has been asked to explain the specific needs of victims of terrorism and set out some of the known best practices in the field.

The Executive Director of VSE, Levent Altan (**LA**) spoke about the future plans of VSE. He explained that next year VSE will be concentrating on particular themes and group of victims such as cross-border compensation and cybercrime victims.

**LA** explained that looking over the past three years, VSE has been seeking to increasingly improve its services for its Members. In this regard, in 2018, VSE will be organising more activities including several regional meetings and exchanges with its Members and will engage more volunteers.

**LA** explained that in the following months, VSE will continue to organise effective and motivating workshops, will engage in various surveys which will serve as draft road-mapping to future EU legislations related to victims, will continue to provide training related to cybercrime and other priority projects, continue the work which has already started related to the Centres of Excellence and focus more on distant support and the implementation of the Victims' Directive. He added that VSE is looking forward to winning new EU projects next year and will also look for other forms of income such as from the UN and the World Bank.

## **2. Financial Report**

In the absence of the Treasurer of VSE, Brendan Loughran, the financial report was presented by Sanjin Buzo (**SB**), VSE's Project and Finance Officer. **SB** explained that from the financial point of view, the year 2017 was very successful and VSE increased its total income by 228%. He added that the financial reserves for VSE are also foreseen to increase to 71500 euro by the end of 2017.

**SB** explained that the VSE team is working to ensure similar income sources as well as a further increase in the total reserves within the next two years. **SB** also explained the sources of income as per each project as well as how the operating funds were effectively used.

### **3. Presentations by New Members**

Two new Associate Members delivered presentations about their organisation.

#### **3.1 Presentation by Human Rights in Democracy Center (HRDC) - Albania**

Ms Prroni explained that Human Rights in Democracy Center (HRDC) is a non-governmental, non-partisan and non-profit organization aiming to work for the respect, protection and fulfilment of human rights in Albania. They focus mainly on vulnerable groups in society, such as women, girls, minors and minorities. She explained the vision and mission of HRDC and provided information about their activities and foreseen projects, the services they give as well as on their networks and accomplishments.

#### **3.2 Presentation by Associazione Aleteia - Italy**

Ms Pellizon explained Aleteia Association is made up of a group of mediators with proven professional experience in the field of restorative justice.

The general objective of the association is to promote the analysis of conflict dynamics, as well as to contribute to the dissemination of an alternative culture of management and resolution of disputes.

Ms Pellizon also informed about their main activities in progress including those attributed to the Dafne Florence Network and to the Interdisciplinary Center for Juvenile Restorative Justice, as well as mediation, reparative activities and training.

### **4. Concluding remarks**

In concluding, **JL** remarked that considerable work has been done over this last year by VSE to ameliorate the rights and the services for victims. He thanked all those involved in progressing this work and concluded that the VSE team and all collaborators will continue to work together on future plans for the benefit of all victims.

<b>KEY</b>		
João Lázaro	<b>JL</b>	VSE President
Jeanette Fava	<b>JF</b>	VSE Office Manager
An Verelst	<b>AV</b>	VSE Deputy Director
Aleksandra Ivankovic	<b>AI</b>	VSE Project Manager
European Institute of Public Administration	<b>EIPA</b>	
Helgard van Hüllen	<b>HVH</b>	VSE Vice President
Levent Altan	<b>LA</b>	VSE Executive Director
Sanjin Buzo	<b>SB</b>	VSE Project and Finance Officer
Human Rights in Democracy Center	<b>HRDC</b>	