

EVALUATION REPORT

VSE



logframe



2020

Evaluation
Report



Victim Support
Europe

EVALUATION SCOPE & OBJECTIVES

As it was referred since the beginning of this evaluation cycle that started in 2015, the Victim Support Europe (VSE) Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) process has two main focus points. The monitoring aspect, focuses on the implemented activities, their efficiency and effectiveness. On the evaluation side the focus is also on the efficiency and effectiveness but of the VSE intervention strategy and the processes used. Besides the two main focus points or focus criteria there will also be an important part of the M&E that will look in to the products developed by the network.

One can say that the proposed M&E model is focused on efficiency, effectiveness and also the quality of the products developed and implemented processes. All made with a high valorisation of key stakeholders perceptions.

In the implemented M&E model we looked into the VSE objectives and activities and tried to collect the perspectives from all relevant stakeholder groups (VSE Members, VSE Staff and VSE Board).

The VSE key objectives for the period 2016-2020 can be summarised as follows:

- Establish victim support in every EU Member State;
- Strengthen and help coordinate developing victim support organisations;
- Standards and accreditation of victim support organisations;
- Support implementation of EU Directive in relation to cross-border victimisation
- Provide state-of-the-art training tools;
- Improve operational capacity of Victim Support Europe and its members across the EU;
- Represent wider victim interest and stakeholders.

In this Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) we used the same strategic direction and objectives in 2020 to make the data interpretation comparable to previous years. In this report we've looked at these objectives and at the main changes produced by the VSE work.

In the first semester of this year the evaluation process focused on collecting members' perceptions through survey regarding the work done and in the second part of the year the focus was on exploring the main ideas collected on the members survey and other data and try to get a deeper understanding of the VSE "reality" through semi-structured interviews to the VSE Board and some member organisation representatives.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The M&E process in 2020 followed along the lines of the previous years and since the beginning the option was clear to involve Victim Support Europe (VSE) staff on the evaluation design which led to a series of construction phases that always had that focus. In 2016 we were able to have a evaluation workshop in Brussels that added to the process, in 2017 we met with the VSE Board and Staff at Oporto, in 2018 we had the opportunity to meet the Board in Lisbon, and in 2019 we had the opportunity to go to Brussels and interview VSE staff members in that continuous effort to increase engagement and maintain contact between the evaluator and the VSE structure. In this first semester of 2020, due to the covid crisis, data collection was conditioned, but it was still important to collect the insights of member organisations. These insights were then explored in the second part of 2020 through a series of interviews to Board Members and member organisations. The focus was to deepen the understanding of the perceptions and realities of the VSE work in 2020.

The first thing that was done was to read all the documentation that was given to the evaluation team by VSE team. After reading all this information an evaluation plan was drafted and sent to the staff for approval.

After this initial phase we concentrated on the collaboration to deliver the results defined for each Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) design phase.

To give a clearer picture of what was done here is a phase by phase list:

- Reading and analysis of documents
- Revisiting the VSE intervention Theory of Change (like in previous years)
- Redefine the portfolio of key evaluation questions and criteria
- Validation of the evaluation questions
- Evaluation Plan
- Validation of the Evaluation Plan
- Data collection instruments design and validation
- Data collection phase (in this first semester only a Survey to VSE members)
- Evaluation Report for the 1st semester of 2020
- Interviews with VSE Board Members
- Interviews with VSE Member Organisations

This evaluation report has been written using the data from the members questionnaire, and the analysis of documents, collected from several groups of stakeholders and given to the evaluators by VSE Staff.

The collection process ran smoothly enough, as we had previous experience from 2015 to 2019 and we were able to achieve a more than acceptable response rate for the data collection instrument used. Despite being all the covid situation it has been still possible to gather some relevant data that we believe will be useful for VSE's future work.

As always the evaluation team would like to thank the staff at VSE for their cooperation and professionalism, VSE members and their governing bodies for their time, and the responsiveness of the different VSE members.

We will now look at the main conclusions and recommendations that have been made from the analysis of the data collected.



CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Presented here are the main findings from the data collection carried out during the evaluation process along with recommendations for future implementation made by the external evaluation team. Some of the information here was already present in previous reports but we still feel that they make sense and could help VSE in its development.

MAIN CONCLUSIONS

The main conclusions that have been drawn from VSE's external evaluation process for 2020:

- ▶ In 2020, despite the pandemic crisis, the members maintain a positive evaluation of the work developed by VSE. The general

idea that stands out is that VSE work and performance has been of a high standard, and that VSE work has an important impact on the performance of its member organisations.

- ▶ Despite the constraints to the implementation of VSE's work programme, the positive evaluation for all the indicators and metrics are testimony to the good performance VSE continued to had this year. In 2020, VSE performance was high and the organisation was both active and effective, particularly in terms of the ability to adapt to a new reality; the ability to recognise members needs and timely sent them all useful information; and the development of new facilitating tools for the organisations work, being the new online referral system the highlight.

- ▶ As in last year's assessment the members identified good levels of internal coordination and transparency, as well as benefits of VSE's work to target groups, which gives a solid base for the future.
- ▶ VSE's strategy and its operationalisation exhibit a degree of robustness and elevated coherence, with successful articulation between the strategic and operational aspects of VSE's work - one can continue to observe a logical linkage between strategical documents, activities and the work plan throughout the years. Generally, members perceptions are aligned on key aspects, which reinforces the robustness of VSE's work.
- ▶ Although members find the VSE developed methodologies useful the majority of them rarely use it in their organisations, which leads to conclude that there's a need for a better understanding of the reasons why, to better respond to members' needs.
- ▶ This year, the members' perceptions point to a positive level of satisfaction with the internal communication carried out, which leads to believe that the efforts made by VSE in this area have been recognised. However, the percentage of members needing more information about the VSE Monitoring system increased, what demonstrates that internal communication is an area that

needs constant reinforcement and attention in order to guarantee that the information really gets to where it's needed.

- ▶ The growth of the VSE member base is a good thing but it is also a challenge as the staff as to make extra efforts to maintain a close relationship/communication with member organisations.
- ▶ Members value the staff/VSE support a lot and routinely pointed out that when they have the opportunity to engage with the VSE team that's always relevant for their work and organisational development.
- ▶ We can continue to say with a high degree of confidence that the importance of VSE's mission and work is recognised by its member organisations, being clear its importance and role in raising awareness on victim's rights at European Union level.
- ▶ Also evident is the crucial role that VSE plays in supporting organisations, contributing to the improvement of their performance and services quality, specially in the pandemic situation which has brought new challenges to the intervention carried out by the organisations and in terms of their financial sustainability.
- ▶ By working closely with the EU Commission VSE was able to advocate effectively for victims rights and influence policy making in Europe.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In this year, the sixth of this evaluation cycle, there are some recommendations that the evaluation team would like to present for the consideration of VSE's board, staff and members:

- ▶ We maintain our previous recommendation for a continuous investment in the monitoring system. Things are certainly better but still we feel VSE should ensure that all members are aware of monitoring practices and that VSE has a monitoring system in place for their activities. This would also mean that VSE had a shortlist of performance indicators that could be used as a barometer for organisational performance.
- ▶ Internal communication system could benefit from the creation and dissemination of a specific document/report explaining the monitoring system, the main data collected and how it could be use in the organisation's work.
- ▶ A better dissemination and communication of the work produced within the VSE framework, namely through social media and social networks, along with more communication and sharing of the results/achievements of the project. Communication is an area where VSE showed great development in the last years but, because of the organisation nature, will always be an area of great relevance and need for continuous development.
- ▶ Continue to work closely with the European Commission once it can be a value contribute for an increase on advocacy and visibility of VSE's work. Also, strengthening advocacy strategies with national governments, which may imply to create specific mechanisms in order to emphasise the importance of national support in this area.
- ▶ Considering the pandemic situation, it would be very important to monitor the impact and effects of this pandemic crisis on victims of crime, as well as on the responsiveness of organisations. It's also important to assess the strategies used by members to continue working in this period, as a way of learning.
- ▶ Covid crisis brought several constraints to the 'normal' work of organisations, with great impact in their financial conditions, this being an area to take into account. VSE should aim to use technology and new services to create a dynamic networking and engagement space online. Things like working groups and discussions spaces can be created online.
- ▶ Identify opportunities for VSE and its members arising from the EU Victims' Rights Strategy for 2020-2025.
- ▶ Look for alternative income sources to achieve greater financial sustainability.

A glowing lightbulb with a filament, set against a background of bokeh lights. The lightbulb is on the left side of the image, and the bokeh lights are on the right side. The overall color palette is warm, with oranges, yellows, and browns.

PLUSES & MINUS IN 2020...

We've tried to synthesise the main pluses and minus that emerge from the data collected in the evaluation process in 2020.



REGULAR, COHERENT AND EFFICIENT, COMMUNICATION, SPECIALLY IN COVID CRISIS

SHARE OF INFORMATION AND TOOLS AND CONTINUOUS UPDATES

AVAILABILITY, INVOLVEMENT AND PROMPT ASSISTANCE/ANSWER TO ENQUIRIES

THE WORK MADE ON THE 116006 HELPLINES

PLEASANT FEELING OF BEING PART OF A NETWORK WHERE ALL ARE ON THE SAME LEVEL

NEW VSE'S INTRANET REFERRAL SYSTEM AS A SIGNIFICANT STEP FORWARD

NEW VSE INTRANET

WORKSHOPS/WEBINARS AS INFORMATIVE AND HELPFUL

COORDINATION OF THE INFORMATIONAL EXCHANGE ABOUT CROSS BORDER VICTIMISATION

GREAT CAPACITY TO ADAPT AND FIND SOLUTIONS IN A PANDEMIC CONTEXT

BETTER COMMUNICATION OF THE PROJECT (E.G. ON SOCIAL NETWORK)

MORE TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

SHARE OF TESTED TOOLS

FOCUS ON PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF VICTIMS

MORE CONCRETE POSITION PAPERS ON RELEVANT TOPICS

MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR DIALOGUE AND SHARE OF KNOWLEDGE

MORE COMMUNICATION ON THE MONITORING PROJECT AND SHARING OF RESULTS/ ACHIEVEMENTS

DIRECT COMMUNICATION WITH NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS CAPABLE TO INFLUENCE THEIR ACTION IN THIS FIELD



METHODOLOGY

The main activities undertaken during this sixth year of the M&E model were the meta-evaluation of the model and the collaborative redesign and validation of the data collection instruments. The VSE M&E model has an adaptive design that tries to incorporate lessons learned in a yearly feedback loop. Our aim was, as always, to ensure that the M&E model design was suitable and supported by a portfolio of indicators and metrics relevant to VSE's management in an effort to ensure continued development throughout the process that will further the aims and objectives of the network.

We revisited the initial design phase that was characterised by two key moments: the design of the model in its "final" format and then the design and validation of the Evaluation Plan and data collection instruments.

We started by developing a Theory of Change (TOC) of the VSE work. The TOC is a visual map of the activities, outputs and outcomes that VSE aims to achieve. We can think of it as a visual representation of the organisation work that helped us to reach a common understanding of the organisation activities and goals.

With that map in our hands we then developed a portfolio of key evaluation questions that we presented to the VSE Staff for discussion. After a final list of questions was validated, we developed the indicators and metrics to respond to them. After that step, we analysed the previously developed data collection instruments. We are mainly talking about surveys and interview guidelines that, along with the documents provided gave the evaluation team the information that was used to support the present report.

We must take into account that this was a two year construction process and that we had a small timeframe to set in place the VSE evaluation for 2015 so the 2016 year was important to reinforce the whole system and in 2017 and 2018 we had a more mature Evaluation model that we continued to develop in 2019 and in 2020. In the first year we developed the key questions and indicators but this second year the focus was on the robustness of the responses and in the focus shifting to get stronger causality links and a more evaluative reasoning in the answers to the evaluation questions.

Data was collected following the completion and validation of the Evaluation plan and its respective data collection instruments. The data was analysed using comparative and combined methods and has been summarised in this report and presented in other formats for internal reporting.

After six years the data gathering this system is working and we need to now invest in the development of data gathering instruments of other natures, like, for example, more focus groups and interviews.

APPROACH & INSTRUMENTS

Considering the objectives and calendar of this evaluation process, as well as the characteristics of VSE's work, we organised the evaluation process in 3 main phases:

Phase 1: Preparation of the M&E and Evaluation Plan

Phase 2: Data collection

Phase 3: Data Analysis, Reporting and Feedback

EVALUATION PHASES...



Given the geographic dispersion of participants, number of activities and network objectives, this evaluation process relied on the use of new Information and Communication Technologies (we used synchronous and asynchronous communication and work forms). Despite the importance of these resources, the evaluation integrated other methods such as interviews and analysis of relevant documentation. We also used a Board meeting to interact with the VSE board face to face and facilitate an M&E activity.

Throughout, the evaluation process different instruments and methods were used, like:

- Document analysis
- Online survey
- Interviews
- Logic Model Analysis
- Mind Mapping

The M&E Team designed the questionnaires, surveys, interviews and other methods/ instruments and processed and critically analysed the recorded information.

The investment in such a broad set of methods aimed to guarantee, as a whole, a multi-method approach that would allow for a safer "filtering" of the data and a more accurate analysis of the reality.

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VICTIM SUPPORT EUROPE ACTIVITIES

MAIN FINDINGS

The present evaluation report is the sixth in this planning period and once more summarises and looks to critically analyse the data and present the findings from the analysis of the collected data during the first semester of 2020 but without forgetting to use data from previous years. Being an annual report, and due to the pandemic situation that hindered to collect more data, the main conclusions that are presented take into account the responses from VSE member organisations, followed by an analysis of the response trends cross-referenced to the perceptions collected in previous years, as most of the indicators and metrics remain the same and we want to look at the evolution of these.

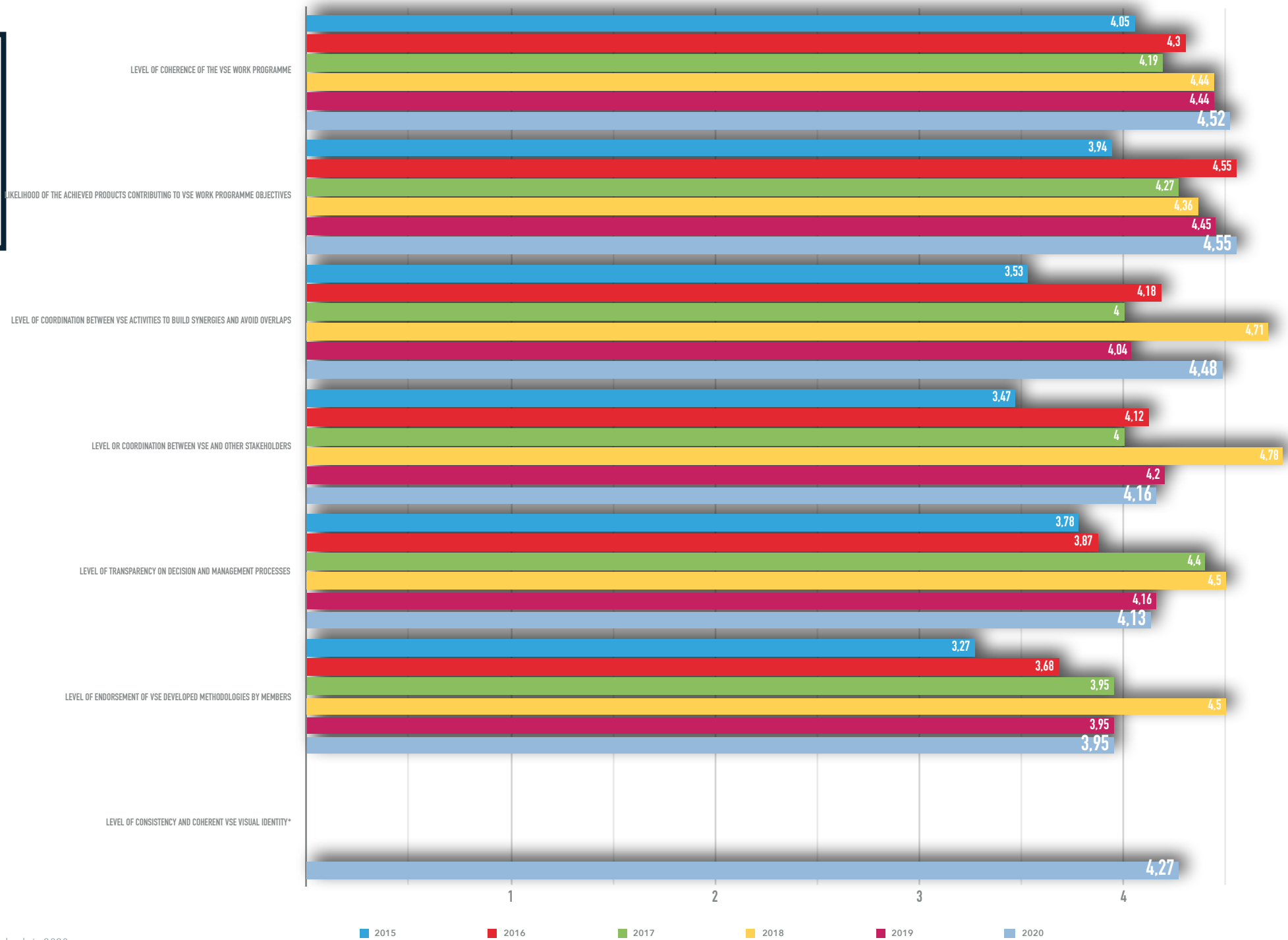
Looking at how members evaluated the VSE work and performance it is possible to draw two main conclusions:

- ▶ Overall, the VSE members' perceptions are very positive on the key evaluation questions and criteria.
- ▶ In 2020, despite the pandemic crisis, the perceptions reveal similar values for almost all criteria, compared to the previous year, maintaining a positive evaluation of the work developed by VSE.

A five point scale was used to analyse the perceptions of the VSE members, respondents could score each category a maximum of 5 points and a minimum of 0. A score of 5 corresponded to an evaluation of "excellent".

Examining the graph below that plots the responses of the VSE member organisations, we can conclude, as in the previous year, that all criteria were evaluated as 3, "medium" and 4, "high", which indicates a positive evaluation. Generally speaking, in the first semester of 2020, the evaluation was consistent with the last year.





* asked only in 2020

As can be seen, there was a very positive evolution in almost all the indicators and metrics perceptions by the VSE membership from 2015 to 2018. In the last two years, although without a significant difference, the perceptions collected indicate a lower evaluation than in previous years for almost all indicators (with the exception of 4). It should be noted that this data may be explained not only because VSE members become more demanding and with higher expectations towards the process, but in this particular year, also due to the constraints of the Covid-19 that impacted the normal VSE activity.

Nevertheless, the general idea that stands out from the members perceptions is that VSE work and performance has been of a high standard despite the restrictions around Covid-19 and that VSE, as an organisation, is a great support to its member organisations. More specifically, members highlight:

- VSE effective and active performance, especially with the development of the new intranet that allows the direct referral between VSE Members;

- The frequent, coherent and timely communication, characterised by care in disseminating all the material and studies available, as well as useful information and resources, both to members and other organisations;
- The quick response and adaptability to the circumstances imposed by Covid-19, translated into the quick change to online meetings, the support and assistance provided to the organisations dealing with the pandemic, and the gathering of information and useful knowledge on counseling victims in a Covid-19 "era".
- If one wants to identify some points to emphasise about VSE work and performance in this first semester those would be:
- The members had a lower evaluation in the present year, with the exception of the resources availability on time; the coherence of the work plan; the contribution of the products to the programme objectives; and

the coordination between VSE activities in order to build synergies.

- Regarding the availability of resources, it is to underline that the evaluation was higher than in last year, which is meaningful from the point of view of the VSE's responsiveness, specially because it has been an atypical year;
- The "level of endorsement of VSE developed methodologies by members" had a significant drop in the evaluation by the members in the last two years.
- As a result of the evaluation and recommendations on the previous report, this year, a new category of assessment related to the consistency and coherence visual identity was introduced, which was positively evaluated by the members (4.27 average), which seems to indicate that positive work has been done in this area.

In this sense, the data presented indicates a global alignment of member's perceptions throughout the implementation cycle which was high, as they do not lead to significant discrepancies in the interpretation of results for this scope of activities.

On examining the findings from the data analysis it is possible to conclude the following:

- The results are generally positive, as in previous years. All criteria still received a mean score above the average performance levels and even if the results were not generally better than the ones from last year. Although in 2020 the evaluation on almost every criteria didn't rise, as in the previous years, we observe that the perceptions of the members remain within the average, which still represents a robust push in the right direction.
- There still is an overall positive feeling in regard to the outcomes of VSE's work and activities for target populations. The environment also appears to be positive and

transparent which is essential for the achievement of VSE's objectives.

- The VSE's quick response to the challenges posed by the pandemic crisis appears to have reinforced its role and importance in the support of member organisations.

To summarise, we would define 2020 as a challenging year for VSE's work, which required adjustments to the way of working, but that were overcome in a positive way, reinforcing even more the perception of the importance of the work carried out by VSE and of the support given to member organisations, proving VSE's maturity and readiness to respond to new challenges in the years to come.

MAIN VSE ACTIVITIES IN 2020

Here we list the main Victim Support Europe activities in 2020.

Even with the impact of the covid pandemic VSE had a very busy year with some major events held using the technologic possibilities available. This adaptability was rather impressive and this was pointed out by member organisations that felt that the speed in which the VSE staff found alternatives to maintain a very busy schedule was noting short of impressive.

In 2020, we had events, papers, projects and quite a few internal organisational upgrades and systems set in place.

External Events:

- ▶ VSE 2020 Annual conference online (plenary sessions + workshops)
- ▶ Online EU NGOs round table
- ▶ Regional knowledge exchange event

- ▶ National victim support meeting (Slovenia)
- ▶ National victim support meeting (Croatia)
- ▶ 1 Webinar with EU NGOs on the EU Victims' Rights Strategy
- ▶ 1 Webinar for the launch of the EU Victims' Rights Strategy with EU Commissioner Reynders

Internal Events

- ▶ Annual General meeting
- ▶ General meeting
- ▶ 4 Executive Board meetings
- ▶ 5 Management Team meetings
- ▶ 3 Centre of excellence online meetings
- ▶ 1 Centre of Excellence workshop (online for some members only – those running a 116 006 helpline and/or providing online support to victims)
- ▶ 1 Workshop - Webinar on the challenges related to the COVID-19 crisis for VSE members

Reports and Papers:

- ▶ Position paper on 116 006 helpline for victims of crime in the European Union
- ▶ VSE Paper on Data Protection
- ▶ External evaluation report
- ▶ ECJ/ ECHR case-law report
- ▶ VSE Annual report
- ▶ More than 10 submissions to EU consultations and surveys

Internal development:

- ▶ Launch of VSE new Intranet
- ▶ Referral system for cross border cases available for VSE members on intranet
- ▶ New VSE Strategy for 2021-2025
- ▶ Development of an online training platform

External Communications:

- ▶ 1 PR Campaign in support of the first ever EU Victims' Rights Strategy
- ▶ 1 PR Campaign linked to VSE online autumn conference
- ▶ 1 media Campaign 1st phase of the #OneVoiceOneCall campaign launched on the European Day for Victims of Crime on 22nd February
- ▶ 1 media Campaign 2nd phase of the #OneVoiceOneCall campaign
- ▶ 4 newsletters
- ▶ COVID-19 web page on VSE website
- ▶ Fighting Crime and Terrorism with an IoT-enabled Autonomous Platform based on an Ecosystem of Advanced Intelligence, Operations, and Investigation Technologies (CREST)
- ▶ Inclusive Holistic Care for Refugee and migrant victims of sexual violence in Belgium, Sweden and the UK (INHeRE)
- ▶ Preventing and combating online radicalisation (Counter@ct)
- ▶ EU Centre of Expertise for Victims of Terrorism
- ▶ Initiation of a Multidisciplinary Unit for Victims of Hate Crime/Speech at Maltese Police / Maltese Ministry of Home Affairs

Projects

- ▶ Best Practices in Victims' Support: Referrals, Information, Individual Assessment (VICToRIIA)
- ▶ Promoting Rights of European Victims (PREVICT)

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC CHALLENGES

The pandemic situation (Covid-19) brought real constraints and challenges to VSE work, which implied a clear limitation to the execution of the actions as planned.

However, it seems consensual between the board and member organisations that, despite all the constraints, VSE's performance was very positive in the last year, revealed immediately by VSE quick reaction and response to an unexpected crisis situation, demonstrating flexibility and the ability to adapt the planned actions for online and remote formats.

On one hand the pandemic made it difficult to carry out some actions, decreasing the potential for networking between organisations and the opportunities for meetings between VSE staff and its members.

But on the other hand, the collected perceptions indicate that VSE was able to continue a good work, as the list of activities above shows, namely

in providing times and spaces for meeting and sharing of ideas, keeping the information loop, and even in supporting organisations so that they themselves could face the difficulties inherent to the pandemic situation.

Online meetings and conferences seem to have contributed to increasing the participation potential of organisations since it reduces travel and accommodation costs, allowing to monetize the time.

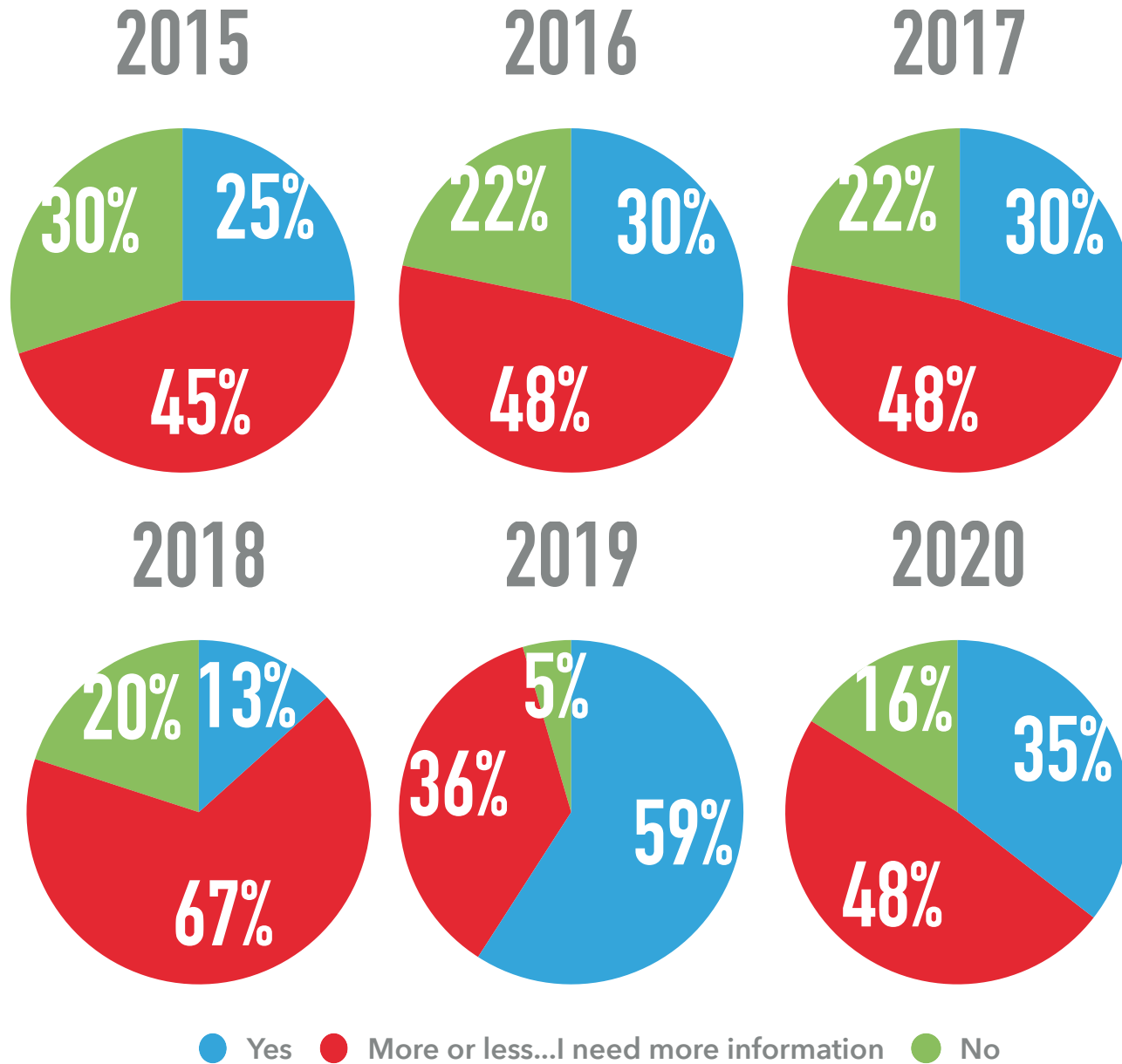
As the pandemic situation will continue to affect us all in 2021 the challenge for Victim Support Europe will be to build on its successful efforts in 2020 and create more creative and effective ways to increase networking and sharing on the online space.

VSE MONITORING SYSTEM

The assessment of this criteria of VSE's work continues to be more complex, due to its technical nature. It is well known that management support systems, like the monitoring system, are not at the top of the list of concerns or interests of most member organisations, even if they are usually of central importance for achieving organisational goals. In fact, operational activities, that involve different publics and that help the organisation to achieve its main objectives, can be said to occupy a more central role in the thinking and concerns of organisations. After the surprise result of 2018, and the significant reverse of the perceptions in 2019, this year the percentage of members needing more information on the monitoring system increased again, but still above the 2018 values and the previous years. These data are certainly not totally indifferent to the current pandemic situation, but demonstrate that internal communication is an area that needs constant reinforcement and attention. In an overview it's possible to conclude that the members had a gradual increase of knowledge across the years.



DO YOU KNOW THE VSE MONITORING SYSTEM?



When we analyse specific criteria regarding the monitoring system and its activities it's possible to conclude that, generally speaking, the level of knowledge about these management support instruments seems to be good (since the scores are all above the average of 3,5 in a scale of five points), what can only be a good sign.

HOW DO YOU RATE THE VICTIM SUPPORT EUROPE MONITORING REGARDING:

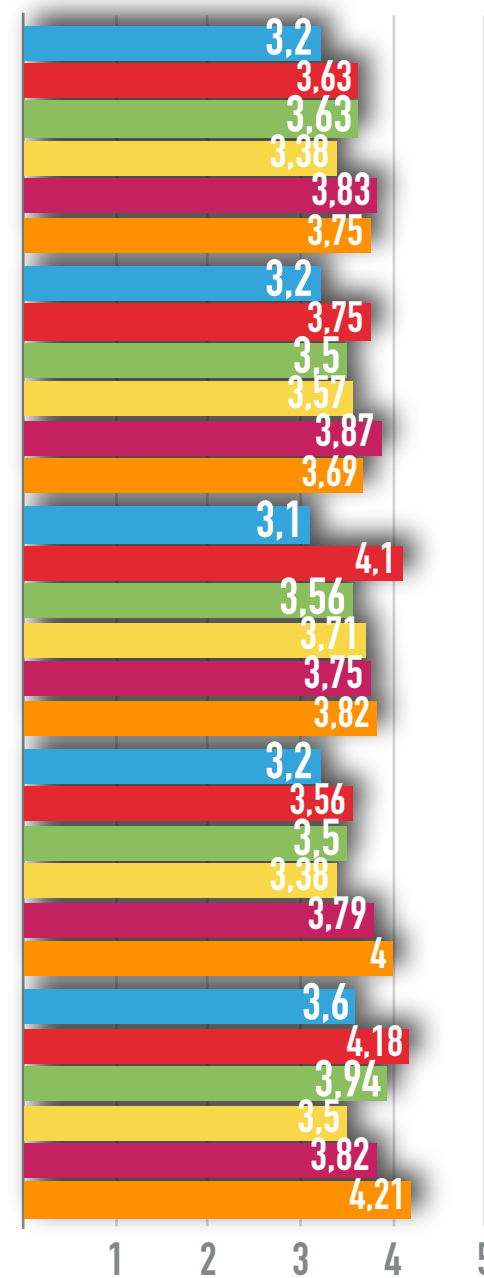
THE EXISTENCE AND QUALITY OF MONITORING MECHANISMS USED FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORK PROGRAMME

THE FREQUENCY OF MONITORING OF WORK PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

THE INTEGRATION OF NETWORK MEMBERS' CONTRIBUTIONS

THE EXISTENCE AND QUALITY OF MONITORING MECHANISMS FOR ALL AREAS OF INTERVENTION (COMMUNICATION, ETC)

THE REPORTING AND FEEDBACK TO VSE MEMBERS



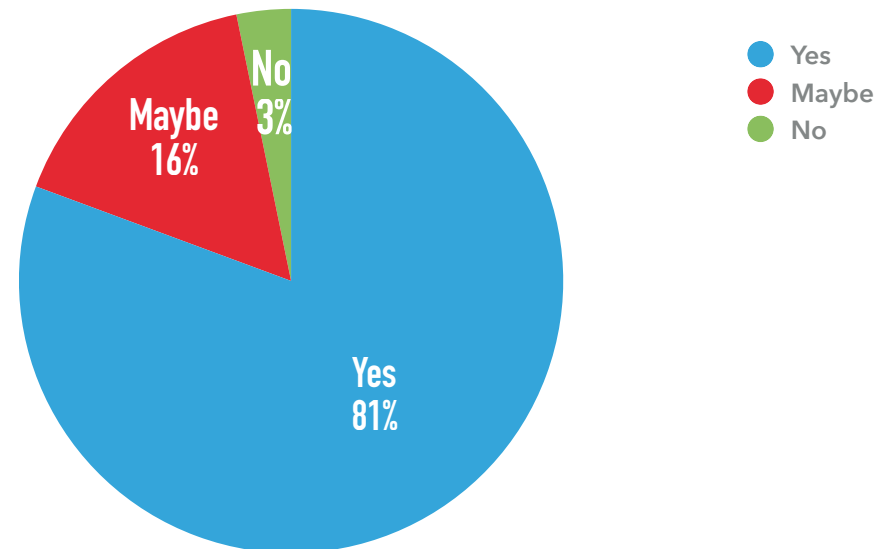
Three very interesting points are raised when analysing the perspectives of VSE members:

- Comparing with 2019, in this first semester the member's perceptions are higher on average for almost all assessment criteria (with the exception of 2), which seems to indicate that members appear to have earned a better knowledge of the monitoring system.
- The criteria that were better evaluated by members were the reporting and feedback to VSE members, the inclusion of member contributions, and the existence and quality of monitoring mechanisms used for implementation of the work programme. These three criteria are very important since they are related to principles of participation and transparency, and are a guarantee of the effectiveness of the VSE intervention.
- The worst-evaluated criteria was the frequency of monitoring of work programme implementation, which is understandable given the unusual circumstances of this year. Related with this

one, the other criteria with lower evaluation was the existence and quality of monitoring mechanisms used for implementation of the work programme, which leads to conclude that there's still the need for efforts in this area.

- Despite the results presented, it's clear that the majority of respondents members (81%) would like to receive a document explaining the Monitoring system, the main data collected and how they could use it in their work.
-

MEMBERS' INTEREST IN RECEIVING A DOCUMENT EXPLAINING THE MONITORING SYSTEM



More specifically, members refer to the importance of sharing information in the following main aspects:

- ▶ Synthetic overview of the monitoring system: what it is exactly, how does it operate, what comes out of the project;
 - ▶ Impact of the work developed: main results and achievements of the activities developed, and the main benefits for members and for victim policy on EU/World level;
 - ▶ Main challenges and findings of the project: what can be improved, what new approaches and ideas result from the work developed, and good practices in working with victims;
 - ▶ Regular reporting: more regular reports on the standing of victim support services amongst VSE members that allow even to advocate for improvement of national situations (e.g. the existence of country factsheets with comparable and synthesized data on funding, access to most important rights (information, protection, support services) that might be regularly updated).
- ▶ Also in this regard, most of the members consider that VSE management system and its communication is very effective, and that the new intranet system greatly improved the quality of communication and share of good practices among VSE and members and also between members themselves.
 - ▶ Nonetheless, we would like to present the suggestions of some the members to improve VSE management system and its communication with the membership (next page).

SUGGESTIONS OF IMPROVEMENT...

BUILDING A NETWORK OF EXPERTS IN THE FIELD THAT CAN EXCHANGE THEIR KNOWLEDGE

INFORMATION MEETINGS TARGETING EACH MEMBER STATE

CREATE SOME FORM OF PRESENTATION TO NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS IN ORDER TO EMPHASISE THE IMPORTANCE OF NATIONAL SUPPORT IN THIS AREA

CONTINUE TO 'FEED' THE WEBSITE ALSO WITH OVERVIEWS OF STATE OF PLAY IN DIFFERENT OBJECTIVES AND DOSSIERS

WORKING OUT BASIC MANUAL FOR 116006 WORK

GREATER EFFORT TO MAINTAIN THE SAME LEVEL OF COMMUNICATION WITH ALL MEMBERS

ONLINE TRAINING AND ACTIVITIES, NAMELY WEBINARS WITH SPECIALISTS FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGNS

GREATER INVOLVEMENT AND PROACTIVITY BY MEMBERS, IN ORDER TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF VSE PARTNERSHIP

To conclude this section of the evaluation, and although the strategies implemented by VSE staff to reinforce the quality of the monitoring processes seem to have had results, in particular the creation of the new intranet system, we still continue to recommend that the monitoring system's communication components be reinforced and visibly and continuously integrated in to all of VSE's activities and work.

We always expected an increase on the understanding of the evaluation and monitoring systems and contributions and results would be clearer for all members. The efforts made in the last years, by the Board and specially Staff, appear to have had good results, in the sense that the members consider themselves to be better informed about the system along the years, however, the data reveal that this is an area that needs continuous improvement efforts to further solidify and generate more knowledge about the VSE monitoring system at all levels, namely with the regular sharing of a specific document that summarises the main conclusions, impacts and discoveries made with

the project, that can even serve as a basis for advocate for changes in each member state.

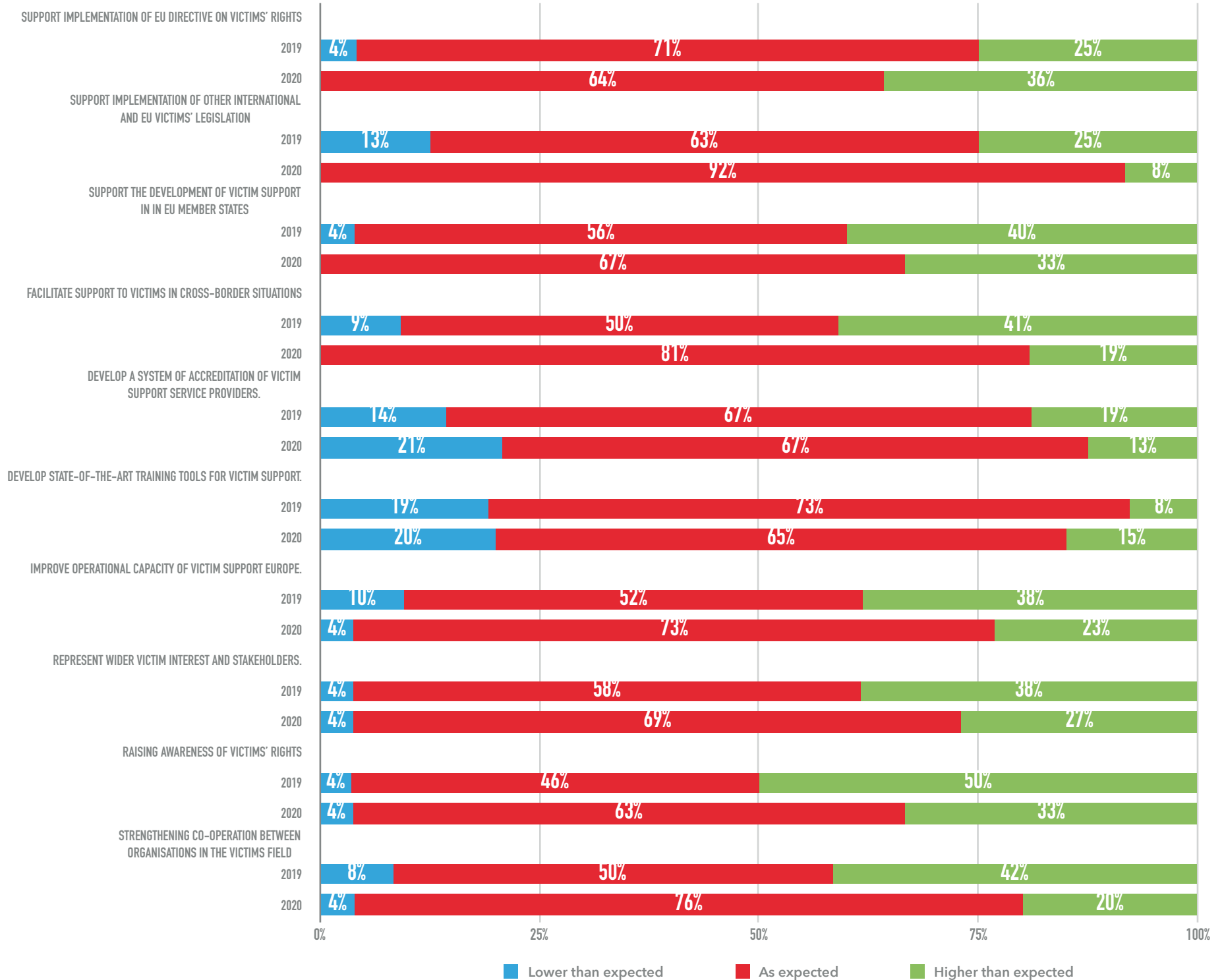
VSE WORK OUTCOMES & IMPACTS

Analysing the information gathered about the outcomes achieved by VSE in 2020, it's not too much to emphasise again the impact that the pandemic crisis had in the 'normal' VSE work and activities and consequently on the outcomes and impacts achieved this year. Even so, and comparing it with the results from last year we once again came to the conclusion that the work carried out by VSE corresponded to the expectations of most of the member organisations.

As illustrated by the graph in the next page, the most relevant information is that VSE is consistently meeting the expectations of its members across all of the criteria.

In this sense, it's safe to conclude that, once again, in 2020 members expectations were met, in particular with regard to "Develop state-of-the-art training tools for victim support". This criterion presents the most significant

increase in the evaluation, going from the lowest score in 2019 to the highest score this year, which gives a positive sign about the work done by VSE, in particular in terms of the willingness to meet the needs of the members organisations and the implementation of useful and practical instruments for their intervention. The "Develop of a system of accreditation of victim support service providers" had the lowest score this year, which could be an area to invest more in the future.

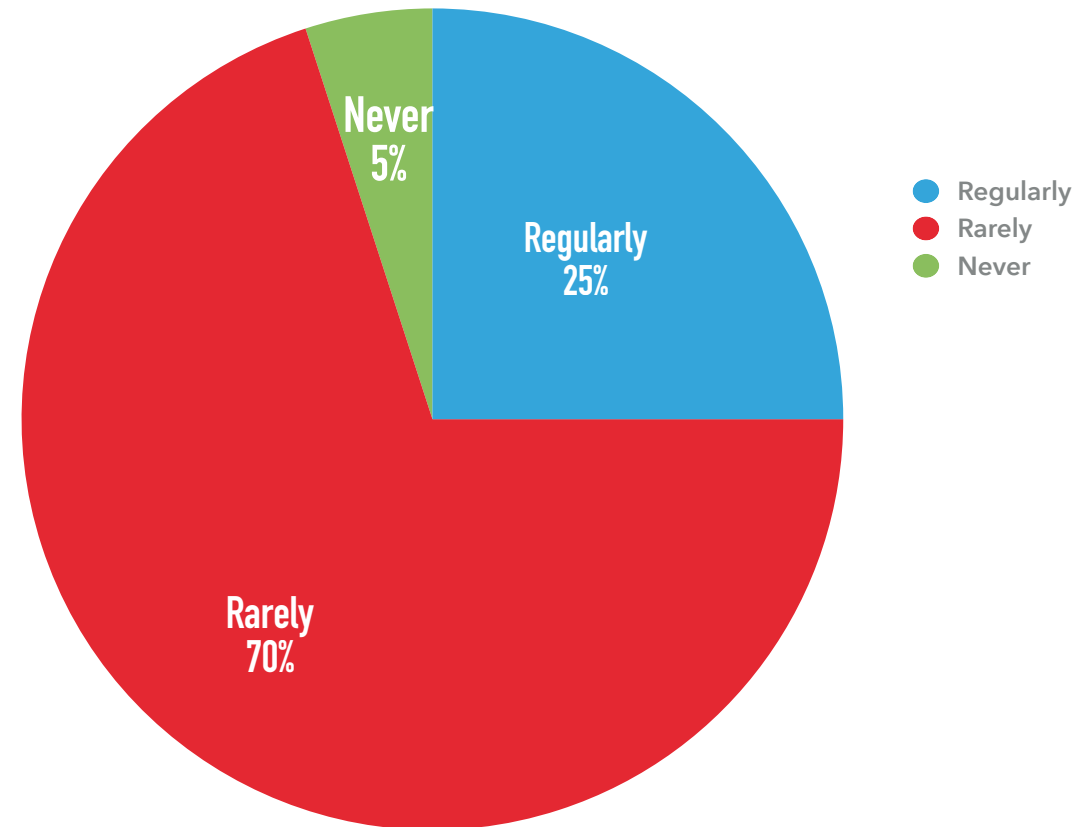


Lower than expected As expected Higher than expected

Still within this framework, and in a more concrete analyse of the changes/impacts, in the way the organisations work, as a result from the collaboration/participation in VSE, as we can see in the graph below, although members find the methodologies useful and consider that it represent a reference with effective indications for the daily practice of organisations, the truth is that the majority of the surveyed members rarely use the developed methodologies (70%).

In some cases the non-use is due to the fact that they are organisations recently affiliated, in others it's more related to the fact that no opportunity has yet arisen for the use of these methodologies or because they are not fully applied to the local situation. There are also members who say they do not use it because they do not yet have sufficient knowledge about the methodologies.

USE OF VSE DEVELOPED METHODOLOGIES BY MEMBERS ORGANISATIONS



But regardless of the reasons given for the non-use of the methodologies, the perceptions collected suggests that VSE work already has an important impact on the performance of member associations, as we can see in the table below.

In fact, it's possible to assess the importance of VSE work in terms of providing updated knowledge, information and support in different areas (e.g. about victims' rights, legal framework, information of EU developments, knowledge of EU victim support organisations and their work and of victim support system on EU level, monitoring information, access to relevant statistics from all over the world, support with data protection issues, among others), which is considered by organisations as an important asset for their work. In the same line as the previous, the exchange of good practices between members and sharing useful resources and tools are aspects considered to have a positive impact on the way they work, increasing their level of performance. The cross-border cooperation and the connection/

communication between organisations are also mentioned by members.

The obvious conclusion is that 2020, despite all the constraints due to the pandemic crisis, has been another positive year in terms of the work being done by VSE and that, even though there are improvements to be made, members consider that VSE plays an important role not only in supporting organisations that provide services in this area, but also in the close cooperation with the European Commission, in order to continue the yet necessary improvement

of the situation of victims', namely their statute and its importance at EU and national level.

Last we wanted to show some of the outcomes that were more valued by the VSE members in the first semester of 2020.

Change/impact in the way organisations work	N
Increase of support, knowledge and useful information	11
Learning from good practices and new initiatives sharing	8
Cross border cooperation	7
Useful resources and tools for the organisations work	7
Better performance of the organisations	5
(Inter)Connection and communication between organisations	3
Financial benefit for the organisations	3
Advocacy work (with the European Commission and in a country level)	2

PERCEIVED OUTCOMES & IMPACTS OF VSE WORK...

EXCHANGE OF
INFORMATION, KNOW-HOW
AND GOOD PRACTICES

GREATER
AWARENESS ON
VICTIM'S RIGHTS AND OF THE
NEED FOR SUPPORT FOR
VICTIMS ACROSS
EUROPE

IMPROVEMENT OF THE
SITUATION OF VICTIMS' RIGHTS
IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

CAPACITY
BUILDING IN COUNTRIES
WHERE SERVICES ARE
STILL UNDER
DEVELOPMENT

DISSEMINATION EFFORTS
(E.G. NEWSLETTER, BROCHURES,
MANUALS, RECOMMENDATIONS,
GUIDES, ANNUAL CONGRESS,
REPORTS)

RECOGNITION AND
UNDERSTANDING OF
VICTIMS RIGHTS

NETWORKING OF
MEMBERS/CROSS-
BORDER NETWORK

ADVOCATING AND ASSISTANCE IN THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF VICTIM-ORIENTED
LEGISLATION/ EU DIRECTIVE

ADVOCACY AND
LOBBYING ON
EU LEVEL (WITH THE EUROPEAN
COMMISSION)

HELPING TO IMPROVE
VICTIMS' SERVICE PROVIDERS
PERFORMANCE

INCREASE
POLITICAL INTEREST

STRENGTHENING
COOPERATION AND
COMMUNICATION AMONG MEMBERS
THAT IMPROVE THE WORK AND

IMPACTING THE
PUBLIC OPINION

ESTABLISHMENT
OF THE 116 006 PROJECT (HELPLINES AS
A TRANSVERSAL AND STANDARDISE SUPPORT
SERVICE FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME IN
EUROPE)

ACCESS TO
INTERNATIONAL NEWS
AND CONNECTIONS

THE BOARD PERSPECTIVE...

During the evaluation process we collected the Victim Support Europe Board perception regarding the organisational performance during 2020.

Since the beginning of these evaluations of the VSE performance we always felt it was important to have the Board perspective, a strategic perspective, on how the organisation year was.

This year was a very different year to every organisation on the planet and VSE faced the same challenges and it was generally hard for Board members to compare 2020 with other years. We think that was the main reason why, apparently, some metrics have lower ratings than last year's. The truth is all Board members in their interviews made a very positive evaluation to the way in which the organisation and all the staff raised to the challenge and got different and efficient ways to get the projects and activities going.

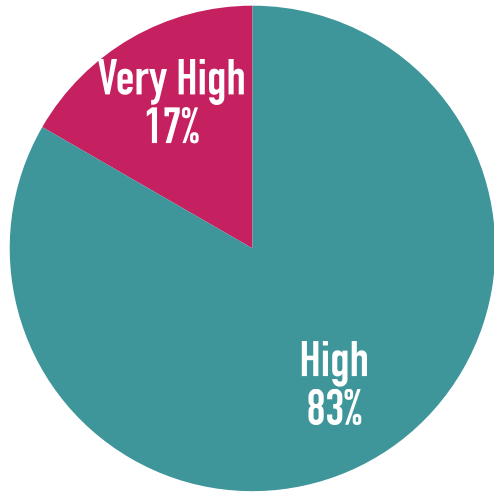
In fact, the move to online activities was a response to a specific situation but had a positive impact in the participation of members as travelling and lost time was not an issue and more people were able to get involved in VSE activities.

In general the Board was happy with the way the staff was able to implement most of the planned activities and also with the way those activities resulted in relevant outcomes relating to the global VSE strategy.

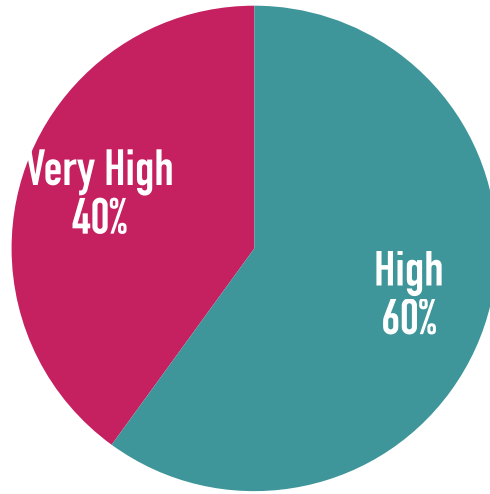
The networking levels were good even if online networking still falls behind face to face interaction, as most Board members noted. Again, VSE made the most of a bad situation.

The strong and effective work with the EU Commission was pointed out as one of the highlights of 2020.

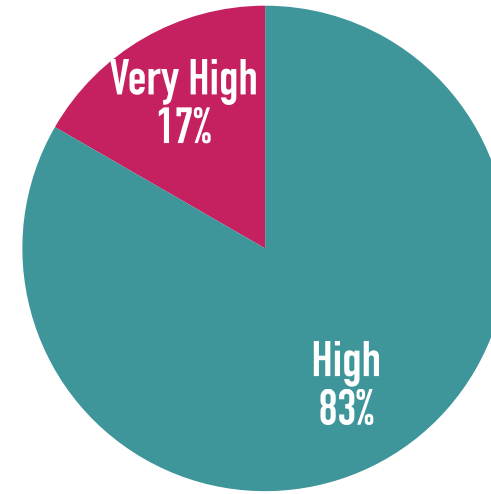
VSE BOARD PERCEPTIONS ON ORGANISATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS



2018



2019

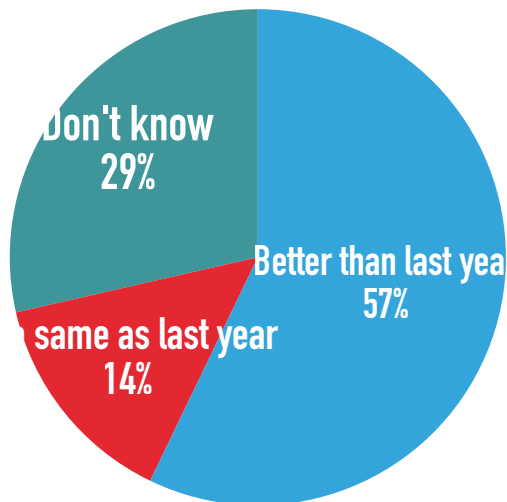


2020*

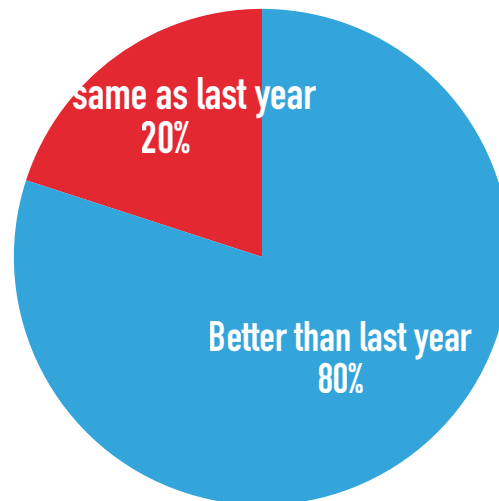
- Very low
- Low
- Average
- High
- Very High

* Three board members considered that this was a singular year or they just recently arrived to the Board and because of that couldn't answer the question.

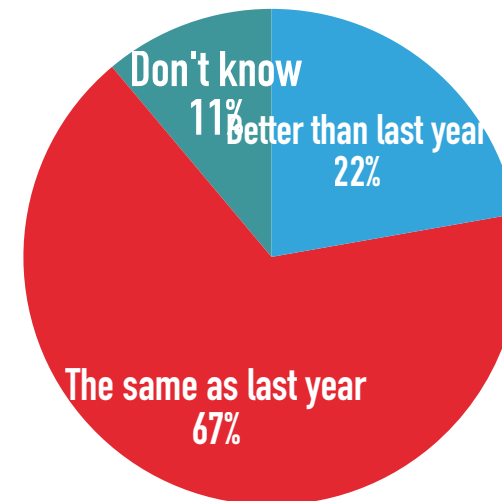
THIS YEAR VSE WORKED...



2018



2019



2020

- Better than last year
- The same as last year
- Worse than last year
- Don't know

During the interviews with the Board it was evident that it was still a positive year but difficult to compare to previous, nobody felt this year was a “step backwards”.

VSE work is still seen as very relevant and that even in difficult conditions the voice of victims is stronger than ever in Europe.

The Board members also felt that continuous investment in strengthening of the internal structure and staff made created the conditions that led to some major outcomes like:

- ▶ Ability to better respond to member organisation needs and faster; and
- ▶ Capacity to create more knowledge and produce policy papers and other documents.

This internal growth as also created the ability to better support member organisation to develop better solutions that were tailored to their country contexts. Also things like the VSE intranet could boost networking and the more efficient knowledge and best practices sharing.

The Board also valued that in 2020 VSE continued involved in a considerable amount of projects in areas like victims rights, migrations, etc.

The communication area was this time pointed out as one that was working much better and its continuous evolution is also testimony that evaluation recommendations from previous years were systematically taken into account. Communication went from being one of the areas of most concern to be an area that is seen as a strong basis for the future.

For 2021 the Board elected areas like cybercrime, hate crimes or recovery as important ones alongside the continuation of the good work being done with the Commission or giving visibility and share of best practices in victim support.

Interesting was the idea of making an effort to evaluate the impact of the EU legislation that protects victims rights.

Last but not least, the Board members also gave us some of their ideas for the continuous development of VSE.

This year the Boards perceptions on internal growth were about networking, communication and sustainability.

The ability to generate and diversify income sources to increase financial sustainability and the continuous growth of members were referred as central for the future.

Also important seems to be the development of strong shared positions and discourse around central issues. Having one voice, a VSE voice, robust and coherent was also on the Board shortlist for 2021.

Another idea was the creation of working groups around relevant topics for members.

Finally the ever-present need to continue to develop the communication area even if all agreed the organisation is now miles away from where it was in 2016.

**BIGGEST IMPACTS IN
2020**

STRONGER VICTIMS VOICE IN EUROPE

FOCUS ON CYBERCRIME

SUPPORT TO MEMBERS

CONTINUE TO WORK CLOSELY WITH THE
COMMISSION

POLICY PAPERS/KNOWLEDGE

CHAMPION BEST PRACTICES

IMPACT IN THE EU COMMISSION OPTIONS/
LEGISLATION

HATE CRIMES

DEVELOPMENT/SUPPORT OF
COUNTRY BASED SOLUTIONS

ASSESS THE IMPACT OF EU LEGISLATION

ONLINE ACTIVITIES INCREASED MEMBER
PARTICIPATION

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

STRONGER STRUCTURE LEAD TO IMPROVED CAPACITY TO
RESPOND TO ORGANISATIONAL AND MEMBER NEEDS

RECOVERY

**ACTIVITIES/TOPICS TO
DEVELOP IN 2021**

**AREAS FOR
INTERNAL
GROWTH**

LOOK FOR ACTIVITIES TO GENERATE INCOME/SUSTAINABILITY

CREATE/HAVE A UNIFIED VOICE

COMMUNICATION IS BETTER BUT STILL WITH ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

CREATE WORKING GROUPS

WHAT NEXT FOR VSE...

Bearing in mind that the impact of VSE's work depends largely on the active role of its members, we present some suggestions that were pointed out by Board members, that could be important from a more strategic perspective.

VSE & ITS MEMBERS..

- Strengthen engagement with organisations in countries where victims support systems are not yet sufficiently developed. It is crucial that the EU directive is properly implemented by all countries, to ensure that there are no victims without support, being very important to have all European countries gathered around this theme.
- Reinforce a closer communication between VSE staff and members, through more regular meetings (annual or biannual), even if it is online, to discuss

the difficulties experienced by organisations and to exchange ideas and concrete recommendations / orientations that can be implemented by organisations, thereby improving their work.

- Consider creating working groups on specific topics (similar to what happened with the 116006 Helpline group), or between organisations in a given European region, as a way to promote the interaction and debate between the different members.
- The next seminars and conferences could include more time and space for debate and reflection, implying a reduction in the number of presentations.
- Consider creating an information instrument that gathers and synthesise the most relevant information on VSE's work.

- The new intranet system made it possible to improve information sharing, but maybe it would be useful to have feedback from organisations regarding its use and try to understand if it is possible to make it more accessible and 'user friendly'.

PRIORITIES FOR THE FUTURE...

According to the data we've gathered it is important that the VSE continues its work on several levels: training, networking between organisations, and EU-level lobbying and advocacy actions. Nonetheless, we could identify some actions to be prioritised :

- Maintain the focus on terrorism. VSE plays a central role in this area by sharing relevant information and knowledge that can make a difference at national level. In this sense, it is important to clarify the joint work that still needs to be done, and to consider a more preventive perspective (e.g., i.e., draw attention to the importance of all organisations to be prepared to act quickly in case of need, through the definition of systems / action plans).
- Continue to develop support in cross border cases, as it is a differentiating factor in supporting victims in Europe.
- Importance of more training activities, especially in terms of technological / digital support for victims.
- Importance of continuing to increase awareness of victims' rights, namely through campaigns, nationally and internationally, in order to be able to act in a more preventive way.
- Combine the deepening and sharing of new knowledge in specific areas / themes, with the reflection on the criteria to be taken into account in providing quality support to victims.
- Importance of carrying out some kind of evaluation regarding the European legislation already developed in this area, in order to assess the effective results of the

implementation of those documents in the intervention carried out by the organisations. This evaluation will make it possible to plan new actions more consistently and understand which areas need to be strengthened.

Next we highlight some of the priorities that the VSE members pointed out for next year.

STRENGTH CONNECTIONS BETWEEN VSE ORGANISATIONS AND EXCHANGE OF GOOD PRACTICES FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

ENSURING IMPLEMENTATION OF EU DIRECTIVE ON VICTIMS' RIGHTS IN EACH MEMBER STATE

IMPROVE STATE COMPENSATION

ATTENTION TO CYBERCRIME AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS

ASSESS THE DIFFERENT STRATEGIES USED BY MEMBERS TO CONTINUE WORKING IN THE PANDEMIC CONTEXT

MONITORING THE IMPACT AND EFFECTS OF THE COVID PANDEMIC ON VICTIMS OF CRIME (NATURE OF THE CRIMES POST PANDEMIC)

DEVELOP A MORE PRECISE AND DETAILED SYSTEM OF ACCREDITATION OF VICTIM SUPPORT SERVICE PROVIDERS

ADDRESSING VICTIMS MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT AS CRUCIAL IN THE SERVICES PROVIDED

SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS STRUGGLING WITH COVID-19 CONSTRAINTS

TRAINING PROGRAMMES (SPECIFICALLY ONLINE)

STRENGTHENING ADVOCACY STRATEGIES WITH NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS

IMPROVE EFFECTIVE OUTCOMES FOR VICTIMS BY USING INDEPENDENT AUDIT AND ASSESSMENT METHODS

EU VICTIMS' RIGHTS STRATEGY FOR 2021-2025 (MAKE KNOWN, IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES FOR VSE AND MEMBERS AND PROVIDE MONITORING STRATEGIES)

COOPERATION WITH MEMBERS (OR TOOLS) TO IMPROVE THEIR FINANCIAL COHESION

FINAL THOUGHTS

In 2020 the evaluation process, and in continuity with what was mentioned in the previous report, it was time to consolidate some of the gains in previous years and create new and more demanding target levels, new metrics and data gathering tool for this year.

However, in a year of great challenges for VSE work, some of this aspects could not be worked on. Still the global results point to a very good performance from VSE and a very high level of compliance to the organisation mission and activity plan. There are a few things that are pointed in this report that have to be addressed, but the general assessment is very positive.

In fact, the main idea that emerges from the members and the board's perceptions is that, despite all the current constraints, VSE followed its work efficiently and responsibly, with great capacity to adapt to the new circumstances,

introducing even new tools / strategies that represent a significant step forward defending the victims rights (as is the case of the new intranet referral system and the referral system for cross border cases).

There is always room for improvement, but it is possible to conclude that VSE made a positive and consistent effort in continuing the work and responding to the members needs, contributing positively in the way organisations have managed the pandemic crisis.



Victim Support
Europe

A hand holding an open vintage brass compass. The compass face is black with white and green markings, showing cardinal and intercardinal directions. The background is a soft-focus scene of autumn leaves in shades of orange and brown.

logframe



Evaluation
Report

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