

HANDBOOK



FOR A GOOD IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 116006 HELPLINE

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116006

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116006 Handbook

Handbook for a Good Implementation of the 116006 Helpline

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One of the basis for the foundation of the European Union (EU) is the guarantee of a safe and harmonious environment for all its citizens. Enabling them to count on a similar treatment no matter where they are in the European Union is a key condition to achieve this greater aim.

The *Commission Decision on reserving the national numbering range beginning with '116' for harmonised numbers for harmonised services of social value*¹ serves precisely that purpose. In this legal document it is stressed that "it is desirable for citizens of the Member States, including travelers and disabled users, to be able to reach certain services that have a social value by using the same recognizable numbers in all Member States". This means that, wherever you are in the European Union, you know that there is only one number, equal in all EU countries, where you can get the exact same type of information and referral services you would if you were in your country of residence.

According to Eurostat, around 30 million serious criminal offences were recorded in 2007, and most crimes are never reported. This leads to a qualified estimate of about 75 million direct victims every year, with more than 225 million close relatives also affected. These figures show that the problem of victimisation in Europe is considerable – roughly 15% of the EU's population suffers directly from serious crimes every year².

The European Commission's (EC) Impact Assessment of the 18th of May 2011³ confirms what victim support organisations verify in their daily work: services are not equally available in every Member State (MSs). The fact that the needs of victims, and the corresponding rights, are generally not sufficiently or adequately met in the Member States, in spite of all the European Union's legislative efforts, is a cross-cutting problem. A basic criterion of the rule of law is that justice is available to everyone. Cross-border victimization entails specificities that lead to a more difficult access to justice. To a great extent these victims' unawareness of how to reach basic services leads to their vulnerability. A unified number can widely improve this situation, allowing a true fulfilment of the right to information to victims of crime.

Nobody would deny the merit and potential good of this idea, but its practical implementation raises many concerns. For instance, who will pay the costs for the calls? What are the real funding needs of such a helpline? How can technical problems like roaming be solved?

1 - Commission Decision 2007/116/EEC of 17.2.2007 on reserving the national numbering range beginning with '116' for harmonized numbers for harmonized services of social value, OJ L 49/30.

2 - Commission Fact Working Paper, Impact Assessment, 18.5.2011, SEC(2011) 580 final.

3 - Idem.

In how many languages should these services be provided? All these pressing issues will be addressed in this handbook.

The object of this handbook is to clarify all steps and procedures and to formulate a number of “best practices” and “recommendations” regarding the operational implementation of the 116 006 telephone number for helplines for victim support. This is a new harmonized number listed in the Annex to the Decision 2009/884/EC of the EC of 30 November 2009 amending Decision 2007/116/EC as regards the introduction of additional reserved numbers beginning with “116”.

The “best practices” are the result of the information exchanged between victim support organisations (VSOs) members of Victim Support Europe (VSE) and literature analysis. A survey was launched and led to the conclusions that helped us build this set of findings. You can find the results of such survey in the Annex part of this handbook.

This handbook constitutes one of the activities drawn for project CABVIS – Capacity Building for EU crime support, a VSE’s project co-funded by the European Commission’s Directorate-General Justice.

In the European Union, it is up to the MSs the assignment of numbering resources and the management of the national numbering plans. However, MSs “shall support the harmonisation of specific numbers or numbering ranges within the Community where it promotes both the functioning of the internal market and the development of pan European services”⁴. These “harmonised services of social value” are a type of “pan European services” for which the MSs shall set up harmonised numbers for harmonised services.

LEGAL BACKGROUND⁵

INTRODUCTION

116 006 is the third of a range of six digit telephone numbers beginning with 116 which, under the Decision 2007/116/EC (hereinafter 116xyz Decision), each Member State must reserve in its national numbering for “harmonised numbers for harmonised services of social value”.⁶ According to the EC, a harmonised service of social value is “a service meeting a common description to be accessed by individuals via a freephone number, which is potentially of value to visitors from other countries and which answers a specific social need, in particular which contributes to the well-being or safety of citizens, or particular groups of citizens, or helps citizens in difficulty”.⁷

The 116006 number was only launched in 2009, through an amendment to the 116xyz Decision⁸. Ever since, its implementation has been slow and the latest data⁹ shows that even in the countries where it is already operational, there is a lack of awareness by the general population about its existence.

It has been a long journey from the moment the initiative was first drawn until the moment where amendments clarified the wording that gave discretion to MSs to interpret the extent of their obligations. And yet, not all problems are completely solved as we speak. Such is the example of roaming¹⁰, a still highly debated topic. There is still a long way to go until we truly have a common number that offers common services with no time limitation and

4 - Art. 10(4) of the Directive 2002/21/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 March 2002 on a common regulatory framework for electronic communications networks and services, OJ L 108/33 of 24.4.2002, as amended by Directive 2009/140/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of 25 November 2009, OJ L 337/37 of 18.12.09.

5 - Information gathered through direct consultation of the mentioned legislation, from the Eurobarometer public consultation documents and from 116000 The European Telephone Number for Missing Children – Best Practices and recommendations, March 2010 Review and Study on the Implementation of the Harmonised 116111 Number, For member child helplines Europe, Child Helpline International.

6 - Art.1 of Commission Decision 2007/116/EEC of 17.2.2007 on reserving the national numbering range beginning with ‘116’ for harmonised numbers for harmonised services of social value, OJ L 49/30.

7 - Art.2 of Commission Decision 2007/116/EEC of 17.2.2007 on reserving the national numbering range beginning with ‘116’ for harmonised numbers for harmonised services of social value, OJ L 49/30.

8 - Decision 2009/884/EC of 30 November 2009, amending Decision 2007/116/EC as regards the introduction of additional reserved numbers beginning with “116”

9 - Special Eurobarometer 387, Harmonised numbers for services of added social value – 116, Report released on May 2012.

10 - “Roaming is defined as the ability for a cellular customer to automatically make and receive voice calls, send and receive data, or access other services when travelling outside the geographical coverage of the home network, by means of using a visited network” – in Study on the Implementation of the Harmonised 116006 Number – For member child helplines in Europe, Child Helpline International, page 70.

to every victim of crime. However, progress has been made and MSs are more and more aware of the importance of this helpline. This is truly a milestone, that can immensely impact victims' rights and respond to many of their emergency needs. The next lines will unveil the story of this initiative and the stage we are in at the moment.

THE 116XYZ DECISION

The 116xyz Decision establishes the creation, the main requirements, the aims and the scope of a set of harmonised numbers of social added value. Underlying this Commission's initiative is the idea that all citizens and residents of European Union's MSs can access a specific service always through a specific number that does not change no-matter where they go in the EU.

Scope:

Technically speaking, the 116xyz Decision is a "numbering decision", which the majority of stakeholders MSs interpret in a very narrow manner. This approach is flawed¹¹, both from an operational and a legal point of view.

From a legal perspective, a broader regulatory framework shows that there is ample room for a more pro-active approach, as the end-user's interest is the objective of the provision. This framework will be further analysed still under this heading. The operational argument is even more crystal clear. The harmonisation of the 116 range numbers is indeed a purely numbering decision, however it only exists linked to the goal of establishing an EU-wide "harmonised service of social value". The goal is to "give access to the same type of service in different Member States"¹². It is therefore completely dependent on the service offered and that is the key aim of this Decision.

Requirements:

The Decision further sets some obligations to Member States:

- To ensure that 116 numbers listed in the Annex of the Decision are used only for the service for which they have been reserved;

11 - Missing Children Europe's observation to which we adhere, in Missing Children Europe (2010), 116000 The European Telephone Number for Missing Children – Best Practices and recommendations, March 2010 Review, p. 16 and 17.

12 - Recital 2 of Decision 2007/116/EC.

- To attach a list of general conditions safeguarding the “social value” nature of the service;
- To attach, for each individual 116 number, the specific conditions as set out in the Annex of the Decision;
- To ensure that the National Regulatory Authority “can assign” the numbers referred to in the Annex as from a certain date;
- But they DO NOT have to ensure that the service in question is provided within the territory – they only need to “reserve” the numbers (i.e. not allocate them for the services) and open the possibility of assignment;
- And DO NOT have to promote the launching of common numbers for services of social value.

The 116xyz Decision solely establishes conditions to the use of the number, leaving the actual assignment conditions to the MSs’ discretion. As long as the new criteria does not interfere in any way, contradict or impede the application of the 116xyz Decision, the Member States can regulate additional conditions on the national legislation that implements the Decision. The topics these further conditions can refer to are¹³:

- The payment of certain fees;
- Membership in international organisations;
- The verification of certificates issued by other authorities (e.g. proof of reliability issued by the ministry responsible for the area wherein the respective harmonised service of social value is integrated);
- The respect of possible deadlines.

In terms of obligations to service providers, it further determines that:

- Services must provide information, or assistance, or a reporting tool to citizens;
- Services must be open to all citizens;
- Services are not time limited;
- Services are not subjected to a prerequisite of payment to be used;
- Some activities are forbidden during a call. These are: advertising, entertainment, marketing, selling and using the call for future selling of commercial services.

The 116xyz Decision was thus amended in two different moments by Decision 2007/687/EC (hereinafter, 2007 amendment) and Decision 2009/884/EC (hereinafter, 2009 amendment), which defined new 116 numbers adding to the 116000 for missing children that was

13 - Child Helpline International (2009), Study on the Implementation of the Harmonised 116111 Number, For member child helplines in Europe, p. 18.

created by the original Decision. The 116006 line was created with the 2009 amendment. The basic specific conditions for this helpline were there established. The scope of the helpline is the provision of support to victims of crime. The Decision further specified what this means, by stating that “the service enables victims of crime to get emotional support in such circumstances”¹⁴. The minimum standards there defined for the information that shall be provided to victims through this means are the following:

- Information about rights of victims;
- Information about how to claim those rights;
- In particular, information about local police and criminal justice proceedings;
- In particular, information concerning possibilities of compensation and insurance matters;
- Referral to relevant organisations;
- Support in finding other sources of help that might prove relevant.

Freephone nature:

The cornerstone of these harmonised numbers for harmonised services is their freephone nature. Insofar, freephone numbers are guaranteed for all Member States and in a pan-European manner, helping travelers to know where to turn to when in another European country. It is so defined in the 116xyz Decision.

This is particularly relevant for travelers that become crime victims. With 75 million people falling victims of crime every year in the European Union¹⁵ and with the establishment of a full freedom of movement zone, the need for such a helpline proves to be crucial. The rising number of travelers and temporary workers/students in Member States other than their own leads to the rise of common criminality against these people, who as a result of being in an unfamiliar land are more vulnerable to crime. Victimization has an even harder impact on these victims because they are not familiar with the judicial system of the country and many times do not even speak the local language. Most importantly, these victims lack the knowledge of the culture of the country and do not know to which agencies they should turn to nor (even if they know the agencies) where to find them.

¹⁴ - Recital 1 of Decision 2007/116/EC.

¹⁵ - Commission Fact Working Paper, Impact Assessment, 18.5.2011, SEC(2011) 580 final.

New conditions:

The amendment to the 116xyz Decision, however, creates specific conditions for the use of the different numbers. These conditions make some requirements for service providers more flexible. For instance, where the 116xyz Decision simply states that the services shall not be time-limited, the Annex to the 2009 amendment softens this condition by stating that “where the service is not continuously available (i.e. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, nationwide), the service provider must ensure that information about availability is made publicly available in an easily accessible form, and that, during periods of unavailability, callers to the service are advised when the service will next become available”¹⁶.

THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

Shortly after issuing the 116xyz Decision, the EC launched a Public Consultation to identify services of social value in the EU that could benefit from single European freephone numbers starting with 116.

According to this Public Consultation, calls to 116 numbers will receive the same treatment as calls to existing freephone numbers. This means that almost none of the call costs will be borne by the calling party. Thus, either the called party pays it or agreements are established with telecom operators to exempt the service provider from this financial burden. The main problem, though, is that no European funds were allocated for this action. Moreover, the Consultation also concluded that there is no obligation upon the EC or the MSs to ensure that the service is actually provided. As we will see further on, some improvements were made in this field (under heading “end-user access”).

EC’s working documents dating from 2009 (2) and 2010 (1), as well as studies from Eurobarometer from 2011 and 2012 give a better perspective on the implementation of these European provisions. We will analyse some of them more in depth further on in this publication.

¹⁶ - Commission Decision 2009/884/EC, Annex.

THE TELECOM DIRECTIVES

The assignment of numbering resources is only possible under Directive 2002/21/EC, the so-called telecom Framework Directive¹⁷.

In fact, the 116xyz Decision cannot be isolated from the general telecom regulatory framework. Such an approach leads to a narrow scope. In fact, the 116xyz Decision's provisions should be complemented with those in the general regulatory framework.

This framework addresses some of the cross-cutting specificities that make all the difference for the operation of such helplines. These topics will now be analysed a little more in detail.

End-user access:

One of the most important aspects is the accessibility of the helplines to end-users and the free nature of these calls.

Insofar, the Directive 2002/20/EC, so-called Authorization Directive¹⁸, in its Annex, clearly states that Member States may attach a condition to the general authorization to the right of use of the numbers that *de facto* guarantees access to these numbers to end-users.

In order to make this a reality, several barriers will have to be overcome. One of them is interconnectivity. This means that a caller with a phone number from a certain operator can call the helpline operated by another without any fee charged for that. Therefore, it would be crucial that National Regulation Agencies (NRAs) had the ability to impose interconnection agreements between the different telecom operators.

The Directive 2002/19/EC, so-called Access Directive¹⁹, establishes on Article 5 (1) that NRAs shall "encourage and where appropriate ensure, in accordance with the provisions of this Directive, adequate access and interconnection, and interoperability of services, exercising their responsibility in a way that promotes efficiency, sustainable competition, and gives the maximum benefit to end-users", further granting them with the opportunity of imposing the "extent that is necessary to ensure end-to-end connectivity, obligations on

¹⁷ - Directive 2002/21/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 March 2002 on a common regulatory framework for electronic communications networks and services.

¹⁸ - Directive 2002/20/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 March 2002, on the authorisation of electronic communications networks and services.

¹⁹ - Directive 2002/19/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 March 2002 on access to, interconnection of, electronic communications networks and associated facilities.

undertakings that control access to end-users, including in justified cases the obligation to interconnect their networks where this is not already the case”²⁰.

The Directive 2009/140/EC, that amended the Access Directive, went even further adding that NRAs may also impose “in justified cases and to the extent that is necessary, the obligations on undertakings that control access to end-users to make their services interoperable”²¹. Paragraph 4 clarifies that NRAs have insofar powers to intervene when justified to assure compliance with the policy objectives defined on the Framework Directive.

But article 12 goes even further. It ensures that NRAs may “impose obligations on operators to meet reasonable requests for access to, and use of, specific network elements and associated facilities, inter alia in situations where the NRA considers that denial of access (...) would not be in the end-user’s interest”²².

This means that NRAs have the power to demand actual agreements that guarantee the fulfillment of the Framework Directive’s aims. It has serious implications on end-users’ effective access to the helpline, as it is important that users can call from whatever network and still access the same service via freephone.

Emergency and non-emergency lines:

Another important framework is established by Directive 2002/22/EC²³, so-called Universal Service Directive, and its following amendments²⁴.

On its new article 27(a), the Directive establishes, among other things, that MSs shall promote and encourage services for which 116 numbers are reserved and MSs may even adopt technical implementing measures as long as they refer to non-essential elements and do not jeopardize the organisation that provides the service.

This widely differs from the obligations the MSs have towards the 112 number, where there is an obligation to ensure not only that the service is accessible but also how it is made so. That is to say that not only it should be free of charge for end-users but also that no means of payment can be used (i.e. for the use of the telephone itself)²⁵. Let us not forget that the

20 - Article 5 (1a) of the Access Directive.

21 - Article 5 (1) as amended by Directive 2009/140/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2009, amending Directives 2002/21/EC on a common regulatory framework for electronic communications networks and services, 2002/19/EC on access to, interconnection of, electronic communications networks and associated facilities, and 2002/20/EC on the authorisation of electronic communications network and services.

22 - Idem, Article 12.

23 - Directive 2002/22/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 March 2002 on universal service and user’s rights relating to electronic communications and services.

24 - Directive 2009/136/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2009 amending Directive 2002/22/EC on universal service and users’ rights relating to electronic communications networks and services, Directive 2002/58/EC concerning the processing of personal data and the protection of privacy in the electronic communications sector and Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004 on cooperation between national authorities responsible for the enforcement of consumer protection laws.

25 - This is the author’s interpretation of the legal text that states that “Member States shall ensure that all end-users (...) are able to call the emergency services free of charge and without having to use any means of payment (...)”.

112 number is not solely a freephone one, like the 116 range, it is also free to the caller. The difference is that whereas the freephone system entails that no call should be charged on the calling party, but does not say anything about the burden of costs for the called party (that normally bears the costs). The “free to caller” system means that the costs are never charged to both caller numbers, regardless of routing, type of networks and commercial agreements. There is no such obligation for the 116 numbers. The 116xyz Decision leaves that to the agreement between service providers and telecom operators, specifically stating that this freephone nature does not mean that operators are obliged to carry on 116 numbers at their own expenses.

Furthermore, there is a specific obligation to make sure calls to the number are handled “at least as expeditiously and effectively as calls to the national emergency number or numbers where these continue to be in use”²⁶.

However, these differences tend to be reduced. Firstly, the integration of the 116 numbers in the Universal Service directive in 2009 confirms that their status is not limited to a technical “numbering”, but a harmonised service of social value; extends the Member States’ obligations in relation to their promotion; and attributes stronger mandatory measures for the 116000 helpline²⁷.

Even within the 116 range of numbers there are differences. The 116000 helpline (for missing children) has stricter wording on this same article, on number 4, where it is stated that the MSs have more than just an obligation to “promote” and “encourage”, but also one to “make every effort to ensure” that the helpline is accessible to every end-user.

This last point deserves our reflection. In fact, not all 116 numbers have the exact same urgency and therefore they should not be granted the same conditions. The principle of equality defines that all shall be equally guaranteed, minding their specific nature in order to fully achieve that goal. In the case of the 116000 helpline, it is clear it has a character of urgency, due to its scope (helpline for missing children). This specific nature was already recognised in some countries, leading France and Belgium to even grant this helpline with the status of emergency number.

26 - Directive 2009/136/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2009 amending Directive 2002/22/EC on universal service and users’ rights relating to electronic communications networks and services, Directive 2002/58/EC concerning the processing of personal data and the protection of privacy in the electronic communications sector and Regulation [EC] No 2006/2004 on co-operation between national authorities responsible for the enforcement of consumer protection laws.

27 - Missing Children Europe (2010), 116000 The European Telephone Number for Missing Children – Best Practices and recommendations, March 2010 Review, p. 16.

We believe that the 116006 has the same urgency and degree of social need. This helpline's end-users are people of all ages (children, elderly people, women, men) and all types of background. They can be travelers or nationals. But what they all have in common is that they were victims of crime. It can be a victim of burglary as well as a victim of rape. Research has shown that vulnerability can be found in victims not only according to the type of crime they suffered, but also to their own personal characteristics, even beyond long time accepted conditions for vulnerability such as age and disabilities. This has been reflected in recent European legislative efforts. The proposal of a new Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime entails precisely this same vision, as it establishes a mechanism of case assessment of vulnerability. Every victim of crime can be especially vulnerable, depending upon this risk assessment. Furthermore, crime brings along urgent needs that demand urgent responses, especially when we talk about cross-border victims. The latest do not know where to turn to and are unfamiliar with the criminal system as well as the local culture. A unique number is insofar crucial to guarantee that these victims are supported no matter where they are in the European Union.

In sum.

- Generally, stakeholders construed a narrow approach to the 116xyz Decision, showing some reluctance to get engaged in any kind of pro-active attitude;²⁸
- This narrow approach is flawed, as amendments to the 116 xyz Decision and the telecom directives prove;
- The ultimate goal of this Decision is to enable citizens in the EU to be able to reach the helpline by using one and the same number in the largest possible number of Member States;
- This service shall not be discriminative towards disabled people, nor towards any other user according to their location;
- There is still no clear solution to the roaming problem, especially in international terms;
- Recent amendments of the telecom directives clarified the real scope of these numbers and extended Member States obligations.

28 - Missing Children Europe (2010), 116000 The European Telephone Number for Missing Children – Best Practices and recommendations, March 2010 Review, p. 19.

SWOT ANALYSIS OF THE 116006 NUMBER²⁹

STRENGTHS

- The harmonised 116006 number is short and easy to memorise;
- The use of a harmonised number at EU level will allow victims moving around, either victimised while travelling or still suffering consequences of a crime committed in another Member State, using the same number to reach the same type of service;
- The 116006 number provides a better and faster response to more victims in need, due to its free-of-charge nature, catchy number and permanent connection of the number to the service wherever the victim is;
- This initiative is aligned with the idea of common standards for victim support that the latest European Commission's initiatives on the rights of victims address;
- The new 116006 number can be run parallel to the existing victim support organisations' helpline services and implementing organisations can decide themselves when to completely switch off the old number;
- Although the 116xyz Decision requires a non time limited helpline, it is not mandatory to have a 24/7 running helpline, as long as the end-user is duly informed of the time-frame in which it is available;
- This number can tackle the long felt problem of referral to other victim support organisations in other MSs.

WEAKNESSES AND CHALLENGES

- The free phone character of the number, since, in many MSs, the costs of incoming calls are borne by the service providers, hindering the full implementation of the number;
- The number is completely new and there is no specific funding to help raise awareness;
- The lack of experience with the 116 number range and various technical difficulties make its implementation a complicated procedure;
- Since the implementation is not EU regulated, thus left to MSs discretion, and the diversity of criteria laid out by different NRAs, there is no role model from other MSs that can be fully copied;

29 - Some points are unique to the 116006 helpline due to its specific characteristics; others are common to other helplines of social added value and in Child Helpline International (2009), Study on the Implementation of the Harmonised 116111 Number, For member child helplines in Europe, p. 72.

- In some countries the number is assigned to the telecom operators. This entails that any changes within the company might affect the actual service provider;
- Considering that there is no option for international free phone calls, there is a language barrier that entails an extra effort to victim support services.

OPPORTUNITIES

- The implementation of the 116006 number will imply negotiations with telecom operators, and that can create opportunities for sponsorship by these enterprises;
- The 116006 number can encourage further harmonisation of victim support services within the EU. Sharing a number and a certain brand can build trust between the organisations and this can lead to jointly raise the quality standards of the services provided;
- If successful, the implementation of this number can also bring about lobbying for emergency numbers opportunities;
- Victims can memorise a number that will provide them with the same basic service all over the EU, potentially increasing the awareness of the existence of victim support organisations and, most importantly, that they can always call that same line wherever they are and get the information and support they require.

THREATS

- Operating both the 116006 number and the old number at the same time can create confusion among the end-users;
- This number is meant to give the idea of a harmonised number that offers the same quality of service in every Member State. However, there are no guidelines or assessment mechanisms to ensure in practice it is done so;
- Although this is a freephone number, it does not guarantee free of charge access from mobile phones or international connection.

Further on we will present some possible solutions for the weaknesses and threats hereby presented, by showing some best practices of the countries that are already operating the helpline.

PROCEDURES TO ALLOCATE THE HELPLINE

As mentioned before, Member States can allocate the number in many different ways.

It is up to the National Regulatory Authority to define the procedures to undergo. Hence, MSs are free to use the so-called **“one step” or “two step” procedure**.³⁰

- One step procedure: the number is allocated to a service provider who then has to contact the telecom sector to negotiate the terms and conditions under which the service will be made accessible to the public (e.g. 116000 in Portugal, allocated to Instituto de Apoio à Criança);
- Two step procedure: the number is allocated to an electronic communications service provider who then has to select a service provider (e.g. 116111 in Romania, allocated to Rometelecom);
- Some Member States have opted to keep both options open, and insofar those who want to operate the number (either service provider or telecom operator) have to apply for it, following the NRA's requirements (e.g. 116006 Crime Victims Helpline in the Republic of Ireland);
- Allocation procedures may be general (for all 116 short codes) or specific for the 116006 number.

Many difficulties can be felt in this process of allocation. From lack of information regarding the simple identification of the competent departments of State authorities or NRAs, to lack of pro-active approach by the State, the NRAs or the telecom operators, passing by the sometimes over bureaucratic procedures to be followed³¹.

These difficulties were fortunately not felt by the victim support organisations that already implemented the 116006, with very good experiences that are an example to be followed. These good practices will be presented under the next heading.

³⁰ - Missing Children Europe (2010), 116000 The European Telephone Number for Missing Children – Best Practices and recommendations, March 2010 Review, p. 31.

³¹ - Idem.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION IN THE MEMBER STATES

So far, only five (5) Member States implemented the 116006 helpline. These are: Austria, Finland, Germany, Republic of Ireland and The Netherlands. Among these, only three (3) have these lines running. We will therefore only look at those latest examples of Germany, Republic of Ireland and The Netherlands.

Republic of Ireland:³²

VSE Member Org.	Crime Victims Helpline
Nature of the number	Free phone number – no emergency status
Date of assignment and of beginning of operations	Assignment – 10/06/2010 Operational – October 2010
Partners, Sponsorship Agreements	No partnerships nor sponsors
Main telecom operator and agreements	Aircom telecom
National Authority Responsible for Number Assignment	ComReg
Assignment Procedure	Comreg sent out an advertisement for the call for applications and Crime Victims Helpline applied.
Conditions for Assignment	The ones specified on the EU Decisions. Decision to allocate numbers directly to service providers. That was a form that had to be filled and there was all the VSO had to present. ComReg did require that the Ministry of Justice certified that the VSO provided such service, but ComReg itself made those contacts, there was no burden on the side of the Crime Victims Helpline.
Agreement with telecom operator	Agreement with Aircom telecom. All other telecom operators came to agreement directly with Aircom, not through any effort by the Crime Victims Helpline. The call costs are borne by Crime Victims Helpline. Crime Victims Helpline is not aware of any roaming problems with accessing their helpline.
Major Problems with Implementation	- Public buildings access to the helpline; - Substituting the old number.
Solutions encountered	- The problem concerning public buildings' access to the helpline was that inside many public buildings in Ireland the phone number code is 11, therefore there are some restrictions on the use of helplines starting with 11. Inside many of

³² - Information provided by Crime Victims Helpline in June 2012.

these buildings are police stations that insofar could not dial the 116006 number. Crime Victims Helpline contacted ComReg that immediately got in touch with the Head of the Police and sorted out this technical problem. Now all police stations can dial the 116006 number. However, the problem might still remain in other public offices and private corporations working inside such buildings;

- Since there is the possibility to do so, Crime Victims Helpline opted to keep the old number until there is a better knowledge of the existence of the new 116006. They had to maintain it for the simple fact that the police did not change the number on their forms yet (the VSO keeps insisting for it to be replaced by the new number). In Ireland victims are informed of the existence of victim support helplines through a letter that is sent directly to them.

The Netherlands.³³

VSE Member Org.	Stichting Slachtofferhulp Nederland
Nature of the number	Free phone number – no emergency status
Date of assignment and of beginning of operations	Assignment – 10/07/2008 Granted to Slachtofferhulp – 24/06/2010 Operational – February 2011
Partners, Sponsorship Agreements	The number is operated by Slachtofferhulp Nederland; the costs are financed by the Dutch Department of Safety and Justice
Main telecom operator and agreements	MTTM
National Authority Responsible for Number Assignment	Independent Post And Telecommunications Authority (OPTA)
Assignment Procedure	The availability of the number was advertised in government publications. Slachtofferhulp Nederland had to apply for the number and describe the services it delivers to victims. After 6 months OPTA assigned the number to Slachtofferhulp Nederland. No recommendations or evaluation grid were given. There was no joint application with other organisations or pre-application.
Conditions for Assignment	OPTA required Slachtofferhulp Nederland to make the 116-006 number fully operational within 1 year.
Agreement with telecom operator	There was a regular agreement procedure with the telecom operator. The calls are being paid by Slachtofferhulp Nederland. There were no difficulties concerning interconnection, including roaming.
Major Problems with Implementation	No problems in the early phase of implementation.

³³ - Information provided by Slachtofferhulp Nederland in June 2012.

Germany:³⁴

VSE Member Org.	Weisser Ring Germany
Date of assignment and of beginning of operations	Assignment - 15/06/2010 Operational - 10/09/2010
Partners, Sponsorship Agreements	Without sponsorships or partnerships.
National Authority Responsible for Number Assignment.	Bundesnetzagentur für Elektrizität, Gas, Telekommunikation, Post und Eisenbahnen ("Bundesnetzagentur").
Assignment Procedure	Advertised by "Bundesnetzagentur", based on a paragraph in "Telekommunikationsgesetz" mentioning the 116xyz numbers. WEISSER RING applied for the advertised number and had to demonstrate their experience and expertise in the field of counseling victims by telephone, including quality standards concerning the counselors (volunteers). WEISSER RING had to agree to different norms and to prove their human, financial and networking capacity to operate the 116 006.
Conditions for Assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Where the service is not continuously available, service provider must ensure that victims will be informed when the service will be available; - Nation-wide; - Free of charge in the country; - Service only for victims of crime.
Agreement with telecom operator	WEISSER RING integrated the 116 006 into an existing agreement with Telekom, including call distribution. WEISSER RING pays the calls that come from Germany. Calls from other countries are paid by the telecom operator and use the usual telecommunication connections.
Major Problems with Implementation	WEISSER RING had no noteworthy problems because the VSO operated a similar helpline before.

34 - Information provided by Weisser Ring Deutschland in June 2012.

Here you can find information that can help you understand how to better operate this helpline and how to overcome the obstacles you might face.

In our recommendations we took into account the fact that Victim Support Europe is a heterogeneous network of member associations with significant differences between them. All members share the same vision and meet common requirements, but their human resources and financial capacity widely differs. A different cultural background and history, as well as size and mission, also influence their diverse organisational idiosyncrasies. Therefore, it is understandable that each of them might offer a different degree of service when it comes to operating the 116006 helpline.

BASIC REQUIREMENTS

For the victim support provider:

- Only officially registered organisations can operate the helpline;
- The operator shall provide information, assistance and a reporting tool to victims of crime;
- All these services shall be free of charge;
- There can be no marketing or advertising activities during the phonecalls.

For the helpline:

- Calls should be free of charge for users;
- The service shall be open to all citizens;
- The service is not time-limited (although permanent availability of the helpline is envisioned, this does not implies mandatory 24/7 service, as it is recognised that it might not be feasible from the very beginning).

TECHNICAL ASPECTS: CHALLENGES AND PITFALLS

International dialing:

Country codes cannot be pre-dialed to the 116006 number to redirect the call to the service provided in that country. It is envisaged that calls made to 116 numbers will be nationally originated, routed and terminated to a national network termination point. It also works like that to emergency numbers such as 112, 999 or 110.

The main reasons for this is that the pre-dial 0 of local telephone numbers is not dialed when calling from abroad. Nevertheless the call entering a country would be registered as +CC (0) 116 006. Translated into the national numbering plan of the country receiving the call it would not be directed to 116 006 but to 0116 006 which could be an area code or a regular local destination³⁵.

Another problem is that the costs would have to rise as interconnection schemes would be more complex in technical terms.

The EC Public Consultation previously mentioned clearly states that 116xyz numbers are designed to be used within the MSs borders due to the high level of resulting costs.

Roaming:

Roaming refers to the ability to make phonecalls and other phone activities from a certain cellular phone while travelling, therefore using a visited network. If outside the home country it is called international roaming³⁶, and it is relevant in this context for international tourists and business travelers.

According to the EC provisions, calls to the 116006 number should start and end nationally, irrespective of roaming. However, temporarily using another network within a country has costs. This applies both to national roaming and even more to international roaming, which imply extra costs³⁷.

35 - Child Helpline International (2009), Study on the Implementation of the Harmonised 116111 Number, For member child helplines in Europe, p. 69.

36 - Child Helpline International (2009), Study on the Implementation of the Harmonised 116111 Number, For member child helplines in Europe, p. 70.

37 - Idem.

The reasons why it is so problematic are related to the free-phone nature of the number and the end to end connectivity. As we have seen before, although the free nature of these helplines is one essential condition, the end-users (in the case of the 116006, the victims) shall be exempted from any kind of costs for the call. However, there was no indication on who would cover the costs of the calls.

Besides, the Universal Service Directive states that every Member State should make every effort to ensure that citizens have full access to the helpline. This implies that access should be available both through mobile and fixed lines. In spite of the Commission's recent initiatives³⁸ to regulate roaming (lowering prices and boosting competition), the problem for these harmonised numbers of social value goes beyond it. Service providers still have to battle to solve the problem of extra costs they might incur in.

Missing Children Europe suggested that "a proposal for roaming costs to the 116000 hotlines to be dropped entirely would undoubtedly be a major step forward for 116000 hotlines"³⁹. We strongly support this idea not only for 116000 or for our 116006 but for all 116 range numbers, considering the purpose of their creation: offering social added value services free of charge everywhere in the European Union at the distance of a simple phone call. No matter where the person is in the EU, dialing 116006 will always give access to victim support.

More than one helpline per country:⁴⁰

Sometimes, Member States legislate to impose that NRAs regulate shared service provision by more than one organisation. Others, organisations themselves prefer to share this task.

It is interesting to look at the 116111 helplines example to understand the possible scenarios. On Child Helpline International's Study on Implementation, we find the following description⁴¹:

- "The NRA can decide through the assignment procedure for the 116 111 number that the number will be shared among the child helplines fulfilling the criteria set out. In this case, the eligible child helplines are obliged to reach an agreement to share the number. Example: For the assignment of the number 116 111 in Belgium, the Belgian NRA decided that, if more than one helpline wish to offer the same services but they are not complementary from a geographical

38 - See http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/roaming/docs/MEMO-12-316_EN%5B1%5D.pdf.

39 - Opinion expressed directly to the author by Missing Children Europe, August 2011.

40 - The routing options hereby exposed come either from experiences Missing Children Europe directly mentioned to the author or from Study on the Implementation of the harmonised 116111 number - For member child helplines in Europe, Child Helpline International, page 67 and 68.

41 - Child Helpline International (2009), Study on the Implementation of the Harmonised 116111 Number, For member child helplines in Europe, p. 67.

point of view, the reservation of number will be accepted under the condition that a co-ordination body, to which all the eligible entities must belong, demands and uses the short number.

- Lottery. Example Austria: If, at the end of the selection period, there is more than one applicant fulfilling the conditions for the assignment of the number, a decision will be reached by drawing lots.
- There is no obligation imposed by the NRA and the number will be assigned to one child helpline. In this case, it is left to the various child helplines to decide whether or not there will be a future agreement to share the number” (Child Helpline International, 2009).

Using this method implies that routing⁴² options will have to be studied. Routing can also be important outside this context, if, for example, the service provider cannot offer a twenty-four hours, seven days a week (24/7) service. For instance, one can use a routing mechanism that transfers the calls to the mobile phones of staff members working home (some service providers of the 116000 helpline have implemented this option).

One possibility, of particular interest for countries with different time zones throughout the country, is time of day routing. This system allows expanded coverage, that is to say that, for e.g., a call center based in Moscow might work from 9 AM to 15PM but in order to guarantee that the same time coverage is given to calls coming from Omsk, it would still provide service for the region until 18 PM Moscow time.

Another idea, applicable to cases where there is more than one call center working on the line, is to use origin-of-call routing. This means that, depending on the regional origin of the call, callers will be routed to victim support workers within regional vicinity.

There are other interesting alternatives for non-24/7 services within the same service provider. Some examples are:⁴³

- Alternate routing for calls that arrive on specific days or fixed holidays;
- All-trunks-busy routing – providing an alternative destination to the call, for instance mobile phones or houses of staff/volunteers that are working based there. It can also be useful in peak hours;
- Overflow routing – that allows contingency routing for non-answered calls.

⁴² - According to Child Helpline International, routing is the “process of selecting paths in the telecom network along which to send network traffic”.

⁴³ - Child Helpline International (2009), Study on the Implementation of the Harmonised 116111 Number, For member child helplines in Europe, p. 68.

Working in partnership with other organisations has proven an effective way of going about the time limitation constraints. Some have opted to redirect calls to emergency lines working 24/7⁴⁴, another option would be to operate calls in different times or days. If all the organisations have a similar structure, availability and cover about the same area, the choice on routing can be made on a percentage basis, making use of an automatic call distributor.

The 116000 number in France is a good practice that should be emphasised in this chapter, although it will be further on presented in more detail. The number was attributed to the Institut National d'Aide aux Victimes et de Médiation (INAVEM) and is operated in partnership with other agencies. A call made to 116000 is received by INAVEM that will make a first analysis of the call, to verify if it should be sent to a special unit created for this purpose within the partner Foundation pour l'Enfance⁴⁵. These organizations are then linked by other partnership agreements with several other agencies for direct referral.⁴⁶

Costs to operate such a helpline:

In terms of annual costs, the three 116006 helplines operating face different realities. Slachtofferhulp Nederland allocates yearly around 25.000€ to 50.000€, whereas Crime Victims Helpline operates with funding of roughly 65.000€ (spent majorly on telephone costs, and also insurance costs, training costs, awareness raising, office supplies and salaries). Weisser Ring Germany spends per year a total of 68.000€ (detailed allocation: 35.000€ for telephone charge; 22.000€ for training; 6.000€ base fee and mobiles; 5.000€ for supervision).

44 - Experience reported by Missing Children Europe, August 2011.

45 - Nowadays, it is CFPO enfants disparus who operates the helpline together with INAVEM, in the same basis the Foundation pour l'Enfance did.

46 - Foundation pour L'Enfance (2010), Les disparitions d'enfants en France – Rapport Annuel 2010, 116000 Enfants Disparus, p. 16.

PRACTICAL GUIDELINES

Steps to undertake and details to bear in mind when trying to implement the 116006 helpline:

IMPLEMENTATION:

1. Make sure you have the necessary structure to implement a helpline

A recent survey⁴⁷ revealed that the majority of victim support organisations (VSOs) members of Victim Support Europe already operate a national helpline (14 out of the 20 organisations that replied to the questionnaire). Among these three (3) operate the 116006 helpline already.

All these VSOs are very different between themselves. Only a small number has the capacity to operate their helplines 24h / 7days. In order to do so, Offerrådgivningen Danmark (Victim Support Denmark), for e.g., uses cell phones to answer the calls, ensuring that victim support workers can provide this service directly from their homes.

The majority of VSOs operate their helplines with the work of volunteers, whereas Bily Kruh Bezpeci's (Victim Support Czech Republic) runs the helpline with staff.

The above mentioned shows that resources widely vary and therefore there can be no standard procedure. However, on a positive note, this same study also showed that the services provided to victims are very similar and that there is an understanding by the different VSOs on the added value of the 116006, thus making them interested on operating such a helpline once doubts on its feasibility are clarified. The greatest concerns highlighted regarding this helpline are generally the same:

- Who pays for the calls?
- How can the roaming problem be solved?
- Is a 24h / 7 days service mandatory?

47 - Victim Support Europe (2011), Victim Support Helplines Current State, CABVIS newsletter, issue 1.

- Where does the funding come from?

Some of these questions were already addressed above and more details will be provided in the best practices chapter. Others are yet to be discussed in the best practices chapter that follows.

There are many challenges in the implementation of this helpline, but the data available on the VSOs' current helplines shows that the great majority is already prepared to operate it.

As it was previously explained, there is no obligation on providing 24h / 7 days service as long as the period of time the helpline is running is well publicised when victims try to reach the helpline.

The free phone nature of this helpline makes it mandatory that phone calls are free for callers. However nothing is mentioned in the EC Decisions regarding who bears the costs of the calls. Nonetheless, there are good practices that can be copied. In the Netherlands, Slachtofferhulp is still the call cost bearer but the Dutch Department of Safety and Justice finances these costs. In the case of the 116000 helpline⁴⁸, some good examples of agreements with telecom operators were made. In Portugal and Romania, operators accepted to cover interconnection costs, and in Poland all mobile phones excluded charging interconnectivity. As a result, the service is free of charge also for the called party (service provider), not only to the caller. In Hungary, a negotiation between the Hungarian Missing Children Europe and telecom companies led to a minimum price charged and implementing the 116000 helpline before any agreement proved to be a good strategy for advocacy.

Making use of others' experiences revealed in the upcoming best practices chapter can be very useful to overcome the barriers you might encounter along the process. Insofar, we advise you to read further and learn more.

2. Contact your National Regulating Authority

First and foremost, it is important to identify the existing NRA responsible for the assign-

48 - Missing Children Europe (2010), 116000 The European Telephone Number for Missing Children – Best Practices and recommendations, March 2010 Review, p. 32.

ment of the number in your country. Here is a list by Member State:

- Austria: Rundfunk und Telekom Regulierungs
- Belgium: BIPT
- Bulgaria: Communications Regulation Commission (CRC)
- Cyprus: OCECPR
- Czech Republic: Czech Telecommunication Office (CTU)
- Denmark: NITA (allocated previous 116 numbers but is now closing, the Ministry responsible shall be contacted for information on the duty to allocate new numbers)
- Estonia: Tehnilise Järeelvalve amet
- Finland: FICORA
- France: ARCEP
- Germany: Bundesnetzagentur
- Greece: EETT
- Hungary: National Media and Infocommunications Authority
- Ireland: ComReg
- Italy: AGCOM
- Latvia: no information available on European Commission's website
- Lithuania: RRT
- Luxembourg: Institut Luxembourgeois de Régulation
- Malta: Malta Communications Authority
- Netherlands: OPTA
- Poland: UKE
- Portugal: ANACOM
- Romania: ANCOM
- Slovakia: Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of the Slovak Republic
- Slovenia: APEK
- Spain: Fundacion Anar España
- Sweden: PTS
- United Kingdom: Ofcom

Bear in mind that, as mentioned prior, NRAs can impose specific conditions adding to the ones requested by the European Commission's framework. Procedures widely vary within

the MSs, but all NRAs publicise the procedure to allocate the number on their websites. At times they also provide evaluation grids that can prove useful when trying to apply to run the 116006 number.

Do not forget that NRAs have the power to impose interconnectivity and must ensure that access to end-user is facilitated.

3. Come to an agreement on pricing with telecom operator

Although the 116xyz Decision defines the number as free phone and not free to caller. Therefore, victim support organisations might have to negotiate prices with telecom operators. There are good practices in this field that will be further analysed.

Hence, the Decision only addresses the issue of the telecom costs, not the costs of the actual service. This is a matter for the operation of the helpline and that has nothing to do with telecom operators, but that has to be considered when preparing to implement the helpline since there may be a need for sponsorships or other funding sources.

4. Adopt a method to transition from your old phone number to the 116006 helpline

In order to guarantee the use of the 116006 helpline, VSOs that already operated national helplines must make sure that a good transition to the new number is in place so that victims are well informed and do not have obstacles to access support.

Crime Victims Helpline still maintains the old number and operates them simultaneously because of a very specific problem with the lack of updating on the police station databases. The VSO is trying to solve the problem and slowly transition, but it has not been possible yet.

The Hungarian Missing Children Europe: member association has a very interesting experience in this matter.⁴⁹ Whenever a caller calls the old number (that was used for 15 years), the new number is announced. It would be even more interesting if an agreement for routing the call to the new number was available.

49 - Missing Children Europe (2010), 116000 The European Telephone Number for Missing Children – Best Practices and recommendations, March 2010 Review, p. 34.

OPERATION:

5. Raise awareness on the number

One of the biggest challenges is to make the number known. A harmonised number is of great importance to victims. A short easy-to-remember number is more likely to receive phonecalls. This expands the potential number of people actually contacting the helpline. Furthermore, it builds trust in victims that wherever they go they will always find the same kind of services through this helpline. The value of this helpline has been highly recognized by the European Union's population, showing strong support for this single numbering range.⁵⁰

This can however prove to be a great distress for VSOs due to a lack of funding. Some recommendations concerning this topic are made further on under heading "Recommendations".

6. Ensure initial and on-going and specialized training

Operating a helpline implies a need for fast accurate information provision. Insofar, training is of the utmost importance. This must consist not only on the regular victim support skills training but also on specialized telephone assistance training. Further on (Best Practices chapter) we will consider Weisser Ring Germany's example for reference.

7. Ensure out-of-hour emergency system

This can mean the mere use of voice mail or more elaborate techniques such as: redirecting calls to mobile phones, as seen previously; using partnerships with other organisations for routing of calls to them in after hours periods, and/or weekends, and/or holidays; using an sms emergency system (answering specific easy questions, mainly for referral purposes and basic legal information) – system in place in Finland, within Rikosuhripaivystys Suomessa's current national helpline.

What is crucial is that the time period in which the helpline is operating is well publicised

50 - Special Eurobarometer 387, Harmonised Numbers for Services of Social Value – 116, Report, May 2912, European Commission, page 80.

and victims can know it everytime they try to access the helpline. Although the 24h / 7 days system is desirable, it is difficult to implement it from the very beginning by every VSO. Therefore, methods to overcome this limitation have to be found.

116006 HELPLINE BEST PRACTICES & RECOMMENDATIONS

116006

THE SITUATION SO FAR: WHO IS RUNNING THE HELPLINE AND WHERE?

INTRODUCTION

In May 2012, a new special Eurobarometer report on harmonised numbers for services of social value 116⁵¹ was published. This report shows that 90% of European citizens believe that a free Europe-wide single number for helplines for victims of crime is useful and 65% even mention it as very useful. The number seems to be particularly valued in countries such as Greece and Cyprus (99% of the respondents considered it useful). In May 2011 the same study was launched and there were positive evolutions reflected on this 2012 study report in terms of perceived usefulness of this harmonised number, namely in Slovakia, with 95% of the respondents showing their enthusiasm towards the initiative, representing a rise of 3 points.

Nonetheless, only five countries have the 116006 number assigned to service providers (Austria, Finland, Germany, Republic of Ireland and the Netherlands) and within these, only three are actually operating the helpline (Germany, Republic of Ireland and the Netherlands).

Therefore, in this chapter we will present best practices not only from these three VSOs, but also from organisations operating other 116 range numbers.

VICTIM SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS EXPERIENCES

The survey launched about the national helplines showed that many VSE members are concerned about the helpline implementation, in spite of their wish to do so. Therefore, before summarising best practices in 116 helplines' implementation and operation, it is important to leave some remarks on the major operation difficulties and experiences the VSOs faced while implementing the 116006 helpline. These experiences can help clarify some of the issues raised by the VSOs and bring more confidence to proceed with this implementation.

Crime Victims Helpline revealed that their major problems referred to two main areas: lack

51 - Special Eurobarometer 387, Harmonised Numbers for Services of Social Value – 116, Report, May 2012, European Commission.

of recognition of the number by the public and limited budget for advertising the number.

Both difficulties raised are linked together to the same root of problems: lack of financial resources. The VSO informed that they had a very limited budget for advertising the number when it was introduced, and engaged as much as possible in on-going awareness raising but it is still not sufficient. They believe that this is a considerable obstacle that prevents wider use of the number, especially by people who are visiting the country.

The means that have been used by the Irish VSO are press releases followed by media interviews, information directly provided to the Irish Police Force, advertising on both national and regional radio, leaflets, posters and a notice on their own webpage.

Slachtofferhulp, on the other hand, referred that they did not encounter great difficulties in any stage of implementation. Neither during the implementation phase, nor afterwards when starting to operate the line.

Weisser Ring Germany revealed that it was an easy transition for them. The implementation was guaranteed by updating an existing agreement with a telecom operator (for details on the agreement, see above, under heading Implementation of the Decision in the Member States). In terms of the helpline operation, no major problems were detected either. This is mainly because Weisser Ring still uses both numbers. The VSO promotes the 116 006, raising awareness on its existence, and in this way fade out the older service number.

Another difficulty that may come up is related with the language requirement. Although it is not clearly formulated as mandatory anywhere in the 116xyz Decision, it is a consequence of the aim of the Decision: guaranteeing same access to same services. It means that the service should be available at least in English besides the national language(s). This might also bring added costs. However, this problem was not felt by the 116006 helplines already operating. Both Weisser Ring Germany and Slachtofferhulp Nederland already operated their national helplines in English, apart from their national languages. Crime Victims Support even operates not only in English and Irish Gaelic but also in more than one foreign language.

Implementing this helpline might prove a challenge of different dimension according to the existence or not of a national helpline already operated by the VSO. On the bright side, the majority of the VSOs already operate one, although in many different ways. Some VSOs are already able to provide 24/7 service (Victim Support Malta, Victim Support Denmark, Bily Kruh Bezpeci), others have a 24h service during week-days (Victim Support Finland) and others use out-of-hours emergency systems to respond to needs of victims, from simple voice mail and call back (Victim Support England & Wales) to routing to cell phones (Victim Support Slovakia and Victim Support Denmark). Some helplines are operated solely by staff (Bily Kruh Bezpeci, Victim Support Malta and INAVEM), others by both staff and volunteers (such as APAV, Slachtofferhulp or Victim Support Sweden), others are coordinated by staff but operated by volunteers (for e.g. Crime Victims Helpline and Victim Support Austria) and finally there are those that operate exclusively with volunteers (Victim Support Denmark and Weisser Ring Germany). The good practices and recommendations below will reflect these different experiences and help you find the most suitable way for you to implement this number.

BEST PRACTICES

1. Applying for allocation

1.1. *A more pro-active and supportive attitude from the competent authorities*

- In Hungary, the 116000 service was recognised as a priority and integrated in the 2008-2010 Government programme for the protection of children's rights. This made it easier to get some financial support for the running of the helpline.⁵²
- In the Netherlands, the NRA, OPTA, allocated the 116006 number to Slachtofferhulp Nederland and required the VSO to fully implement the helpline in one year. To help operate the helpline, State funding is provided through the Dutch Department of Safety and Justice.

1.2. *Appointment of a contact person within the relevant stakeholders (State agencies, NRAs, telecom operators)*

- In Hungary, the 116000 helpline service provider (Kék Vonal) identified one person within the telecom operator (Magyar telecom) who intervened positively to facilitate all contacts, making use of the person's active position in the Corporate Social Responsibility department.⁵³

1.3. *Competent authorities make the relevant information available and easily accessible to all stakeholders*

- The Hungarian authorities organised a conference with all major Hungarian telecom operators on the subject of the introduction of 116000 in Hungarian numbering system. The justification for such a meeting was the oddity of a six digit number and implications for telecom operators.⁵⁴

1.4. *Assistance from the State*

- In the United Kingdom (UK), Ofcom, the national NRA, asked the UK Government to create advisory committees to assist in the selection process for allocation of 116 num-

⁵² - Missing Children Europe (2010), 116000 The European Telephone Number for Missing Children – Best Practices and recommendations, March 2010 Review, p. 32.

⁵³ - Idem.

⁵⁴ - Idem.

bers. These committees “are to have the requisite knowledge of the hotline industry to help Ofcom make the correct number assignment decisions”.⁵⁵

1.5. *Joint applications between a service provider and a telecom operator*

- Again in Hungary the fact that the NRA opted for a two-step procedure of allocation was overcome for the 116000 helpline by an agreement between Kék Vonal and one of the Hungarian major telecom companies, Magyar Telecom, in which the Missing Children association applied as content provider.⁵⁶
- In Romania, the same path (for the same helpline) was followed, but this time the applying telecom company was the one contacting the content provider.⁵⁷

2. Pricing issues

2.1. *Require assistance*

- In Greece, the 116000 number was allocated in the one-step procedure and the Missing Children Europe member to whom the number was attributed set up a group of technical consultants to assist in the price negotiations.⁵⁸

2.2. *Convince telecom operators to offer support*

a) Regarding the price charges

- 116000 helplines in Portugal and Romania have interconnection costs fully covered by telecom operators.⁵⁹
- In Poland, all mobile phone companies agreed not to charge interconnectivity to the service provider of the 116000 helpline. The calls are therefore not only free of charge for the caller but also for the service provider.⁶⁰

b) Using Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program

- In Greece, all call costs for the 116000 helpline are covered by the telecom operator

55 - Missing Children Europe (2010), 116000 The European Telephone Number for Missing Children – Best Practices and recommendations, March 2010 Review, p. 32.

56 - Idem.

57 - Idem.

58 - Idem, p.33.

59 - Idem.

60 - Idem.

under its CSR programme.⁶¹

- In Hungary, for the same helpline, there is a commercial agreement on prices and telecom operators refund the Kék Vonal, in whole or in part.⁶²

c) Through direct financial support

- As mentioned before, the Dutch 116006 helpline provider (Slachtofferhulp Nederland) receives direct funding from the State that covers for such expenses.

- The Greek 116000 helpline provider is sponsored by private entities (among them the telecom operator itself) and provides their sponsors with: detailed data on the number of calls the helpline receives; how many children are involved; the type of service provided and the number of children that are found and the audited annual accounts. Furthermore, they publicise their sponsorship on their website and on printing materials, as well as by mentioning them in public events and the media.⁶³

2.3. Granting “emergency numbers”

- In France, as well as in Belgium, the 116000 helpline was granted the status of “emergency number”.⁶⁴ This option seems to be a good solution at first glance; however, it might not always be the case. Based on its experience with the 116000 helpline, INAVEM has expressed its opinion that, due to their technical characteristics, “emergency numbers” might bring more barriers than actually solve them. The emergency nature of this number makes it a fast dial number as well, meaning that you might accidentally dial it without even noticing. This situation happens far too often and in the medium term reduces the quality of the service, because the number of calls dramatically increased leading to an inability to respond to all the calls.

2.4. Charging arrangements

- The UK Ofcom decided to consult on appropriate charging arrangements for 116 numbers individually, on a service by service basis, evaluating different factors. These include the social need and value of the service or the likely situation of callers when they need to make such call. The initial three numbers (116000, 116111 and 116123) have

⁶¹ - Missing Children Europe (2010), 116000 The European Telephone Number for Missing Children – Best Practices and recommendations, March 2010 Review, p. 32..

⁶² - Idem.

⁶³ - Idem, p.33.

⁶⁴ - Idem.

been classified of “extreme social need” and are therefore free to the caller.⁶⁵

3. Time limitations

- Victim Support Slovakia, as well as Victim Support Denmark, use a routing system that redirects calls to volunteers working at home with cell phones, guaranteeing out-of-hours emergency services in a 24/7 basis (Denmark) or for a limited period of time (Slovakia).
- In Sweden, a smaller number of volunteers work after the office’s working hours.
- In Finland, a sms system was put in place, providing victims with basic information for emergency cases when the office is already closed.
- In France, 116000 works in outsourcing between INAVEM, that analyses the calls, and another organisation specialized in support to families of missing children.
- In some countries, different organisations were assigned the 116000 number and work together in different times of the day, complementing each others availability and ensuring a 24/7 service.
- In Belgium, outsourcing with an emergency helpline was made to guarantee support to the most serious cases calling the 116000 helpline during out-of-hours periods.

4. Training

Under this topic we will present one example of training for 116006 helpline in the Weisser Ring Germany.

In Germany, the helpline is solely operated by volunteers, who receive extensive initial and on-going training. This training consists not only on providing general and crime specific information and developing skills for victim support, but also on helpline operation. Therefore, the volunteers are both informed and trained through written information, Seminar lectures and practical exercises.

For the initial training, there is a Seminar of 1 day and a half about the topics which were addressed in the written information previously sent to the volunteers with the invitation to participate in the Seminar. These topics are: support offered by Weisser Ring; information about sexual crimes, stalking, domestic violence and trauma; criminal proceedings

65 - Missing Children Europe (2010), 116000 The European Telephone Number for Missing Children – Best Practices and recommendations, March 2010 Review, p. 33.

and support throughout them; state compensation; background on the helpline. A second Seminar of 1 day and a half is also provided before the volunteer can start operating the helpline. This second training session focuses on: tools for negotiation; information on how to manage a phone call of this kind (including how not to get too emotionally involved in the victim's story and how to talk to the victim); practical exercises, including many simulations of phone calls where volunteers are taught, among other things, how to handle stress and resources they can use during the calls.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To the Member States

- Member States should fulfill the requirements of the 116xyz Decision and encourage the provision of 116006 helpline services within their territories;
- In order to do so, Member States should make every effort to ensure that every citizen has access to the helpline, guaranteeing that the number is equally accessible through fixed line and mobile phone, assuring end-to-end connectivity⁶⁶;
- Member States should, where the helpline is already available, promote awareness raising campaigns on the number and make information about the helpline permanently available in strategic locations (e.g. police stations, hospitals, Ministry website, whenever possible);
- Identify a single central point of reference for the 116006 helpline within its responsible agencies that centralises information on the 116006 helpline implementation, working as a helpcenter for applications, interacting with all actors⁶⁷;
- Provide guidelines for the implementation of the 116xyz numbers in the country, taking into account the European requirements and the national added requirements, and including as well a self-evaluation grid for VSOs and agreement on interconnectivity as a mandatory requirement. Some minimum requirements for VSOs must also be agreed upon with the VSOs themselves and afterwards established under these guidelines, to ensure that there is a same quality standard. These guidelines should refer to the principles of free phone and full availability;
- Create a special fund for, at least, the initial implementation of the helpline within the Ministry of Justice (or other more suitable in the national context) and include a specific sum for awareness raising. This is a number of social value required by the European Commission and that can guarantee wider assistance to victims, setting their rights as a priority (following the EC's initiative in the latest years) and consequently also allowing a smoother course of judicial proceedings.

2. To the NRAs

- Appoint a 116006 project manager who will centralize all contacts⁶⁸;
- Organise meetings with telecom operators to inform them about the objectives of the

⁶⁶ - Based on recommendations in Missing Children Europe (2010), 116000 The European Telephone Number for Missing Children – Best Practices and recommendations, March 2010 Review, p. 36.

⁶⁷ - Idem.

⁶⁸ - Idem.

116xyz Decision and the purpose of the 116006 helpline⁶⁹;

- Set up a helpdesk freely accessible to all interested parties⁷⁰;
- Guarantee direct communication with agencies responsible for requirements of application that are not directly at VSOs' disposal (e.g. if a certification of the VSO by the Ministry responsible to oversight the field, than it should be asked directly to the Ministry and not putting the burden on the VSO);
- Try to transform the free phone principle into a "free to the caller" principle as much as possible.⁷¹

3. To VSOs that wish to operate this helpline

- Try to integrate the 116006 helpline application into existing national strategies on victims' rights. This helpline might also be used as a lobby mechanism where such a priority is not established. Try to show the link between this initiative and the recent legislative initiative of the EC (Directive on minimum standards for victims rights);
- Ask for the assistance of the responsible NRA on matters such as the price negotiations;⁷²
- Set up a team of technological advisers;⁷³
- Clearly define how you can commit to "full availability" requirement. Mind you that it is ideal but not mandatory to establish a 24/7 system, as long as it is clearly mentioned also to the caller;⁷⁴
- As much as possible, try to negotiate the most favourable customer prices or NGO prices;⁷⁵
- In alternative, try to request a Corporate Social Responsibility approach: this implies that the telecom operators will have to financially support the helpline implementation;⁷⁶
- Get sponsors for the helpline;
- Endure in active partnership with different actors involved in the process in order to raise their awareness of the helpline;
- Throughout negotiations, make sure that full accessibility is guaranteed. Therefore, bear in mind issues like roaming (mobile phone accessibility), disabled people's accessibility, and interconnectivity.
- Make sure you can provide support in your own language and at least one more especially needed to guarantee support to travelers as well, usually English;
- Make sure you include a special training program about the operation of a helpline and the kind of support skills needed to support victims in this manner;

69 - Idem.

70 - Idem.

71 - Idem.

72 - Idem, p.38.

73 - Idem.

74 - Idem.

75 - Idem.

76 - Idem.

- Exchange knowledge and best practices with organisations that already implemented the 116006 and, if and when needed, with organisations that implemented other 116 range numbers;
- Raise awareness among your constituencies and strategically selected third actors on the importance of this helpline.

4. To the European Commission

- A special line of funding should be created to support Member States in the implementation of such a helpline. It is the EC's rightful understanding that these services are crucial for European Union's citizens and residents, therefore its implementation should be promoted. Special lines of funding for projects on the implementation of the numbers are a good way to overcome most of the existent barriers;
- There is a need for Guidelines that highlight:⁷⁷
 - a) the role of the 116006 number in the broader EU strategy for victims' rights;
 - b) stressing the need for an implementation policy at national level that clearly states how these harmonized numbers are more than part of technical telecom numbering decisions;
 - c) explaining the differences and advantages and disadvantages of the different allocation procedures;
 - d) specifying the service description and outlining minimum requirements for the service providers' content of support, based on the minimum standards defined in the proposal for a new Directive on victims' rights and in consultation of Victim Support Europe;
 - e) specifying clearly the minimum technical requirements. That is to say the "freephone" principle, the language requirements, the importance of full time availability as opposed to "accessibility" (specify whether outsourcing the service during night hours is a possibility).

⁷⁷ - Partially based on recommendations in Missing Children Europe (2010), 116000 The European Telephone Number for Missing Children – Best Practices and recommendations, March 2010 Review, p. 39.

The implementation of the 116xyz numbers started out as a complicated bureaucratic process, filled with uncertainties and doubts on its actual content and purpose. A long way has passed by since then, and although improvement is still needed, there is a clearer idea of what is necessary and more support by MSs to such an implementation.

The existing experiences of 116006 full implementation of the 116006 helpline is proof of a positive progress. The three countries that already operate the number did not face many difficulties and are best practices that should be followed by other VSOs. Nonetheless, some difficulties in relation to the telecom costs, the funds for awareness raising and roaming can still constitute a problem.

The experience of other NGOs implementing other 116xyz numbers also shows that even these difficulties can be addressed and overcome with more negotiations, partnerships and advocacy.

Furthermore, there has been a positive evolution on the MSs' approach to these helplines over the years, as well as more clarity on the side of the European Commission regarding the obligations to the different agencies and specific requirements.

We hope that this handbook can prove useful as a basic tool to prepare the implementation of such a helpline, that we consider of the utmost importance.

In fact, the importance of a harmonized number for harmonized services has been raised not only by politicians or associations; it is also the explicit direct demand from the Europeans, as the recent Eurobarometer studies have undoubtedly shown. The same studies also reflect a positive progress of the general public's knowledge of the number. Nonetheless, only a fifth of Europeans think that people are adequately informed about the 116 helplines and more than a half of those who know about the helplines remain unaware that the number can be used across the EU, which is, in fact, one of its major advantages.

There is therefore still room for improvement on what has been a very rewarding progress for this attempt to promote equal treatment and access to services for all EU citizens and residents, no-matter where in the EU they are.

This is a unique opportunity for victim support organizations to solve one long felt problem of referral to other organizations in cross border cases. Victims do not have to wonder which number to call or if there is or not a victim support helpline in the country. Once all Member States adopt it, and if it is duly advertised, this will be known by the whole population and fewer uncertainties will remain. Also, if guidelines on quality standards are created, victim support organisations can rest better assured that the same type of service will be granted to a victim in a different country. It is not a guarantee, but it can be a start up and a tool for improvement of support services.

Victims of crime, and especially cross border victims, can immensely benefit from this system, if it is duly adopted. This initiative encompasses the aim of every victim support organization: guarantee support to the victim at all times, granting the same quality service regardless of any physical, psychological or geographical limitation.

COMMISSION DECISION

of 15 February 2007

on reserving the national numbering range beginning with “116” for harmonised numbers for harmonised services of social value

(notified under document number C(2007) 249)

(Text with EEA relevance)

[2007/116/EC]

THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community,

Having regard to the Directive 2002/21/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 March 2002 on a common regulatory framework for electronic communications networks and services (the Framework Directive) [1], and in particular Article 10(4) thereof,

Whereas:

(1) It is desirable for citizens of the Member States, including travellers and disabled users, to be able to reach certain services that have a social value by using the same recognisable numbers in all Member States. At present there is a patchwork of numbering and dialling schemes in the Member States and no common numbering scheme is in operation to reserve the same telephone numbers for such services in the Community. Community action is therefore required for that purpose.

(2) The harmonisation of numbering resources is necessary to allow these services provided in different Member States to be accessed by end-users using the same number. The combination “same number — same service” will ensure that a specific service in which ever Member State it is provided is always associated with a specific number within the Community. This will provide the service with a pan-European identity to the benefit of the European citizen who will know that the same number dialled will give access to the same type of service in different Member States. This measure will encourage pan-European services to develop.

(3) In order to reflect the social function of the services in question, the harmonised numbers should be freephone numbers, without this meaning that operators would be obliged to carry calls to 116 numbers at their own expense. The freephone nature of the numbers is therefore an essential component of the harmonisation being carried out.

(4) It is necessary to attach conditions closely re-

1 - OJ L 108, 24.4.2002, p. 33.

lated to controlling the nature of the service provided to ensure that the harmonised numbers are used for the provision of the particular type of service covered by the Decision.

- (5) It may be necessary that specific conditions are attached to the right of use for a specific harmonised number, for example, that the associated service should be provided 24 hours a day and 7 days a week.
- (6) In accordance with the Framework Directive, national regulatory authorities are responsible for the management of national numbering plans and for controlling the assignment of national numbering resources to specific undertakings. In accordance with Article 6 and Article 10 of Directive 2002/20/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 March 2002 on the authorisation of electronic communications networks and services (Authorisation Directive) [2], conditions may be attached to the use of numbers and penalties may be applied in case of non compliance with those conditions.
- (7) The list of specific numbers in the numbering range beginning with “116” should be regularly updated in accordance with the procedure in Article 22(3) of the Framework Directive. Member States should make known the existence of such numbers in a manner that is accessible to all interested parties, for example, via their websites.
- (8) The Commission will consider revision or further adaptation of the present Decision in the light of experience gained, based on reports provided to the Commission by the Member States, in particular whether a specific serv-

ice for which a number has been reserved has developed on a pan-European basis.

- (9) The measures provided for in this Decision are in accordance with the opinion of the Communications Committee,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

Subject matter and scope

The numbering range beginning with “116” shall be reserved in national numbering plans for harmonised numbers for harmonised services of social value.

The specific numbers within this numbering range and the services for which each number is reserved are listed in the Annex.

Article 2

Harmonised service of social value

“Harmonised service of social value” is a service meeting a common description to be accessed by individuals via a freephone number, which is potentially of value to visitors from other countries and which answers a specific social need, in particular which contributes to the well-being or safety of citizens, or particular groups of citizens, or helps citizens in difficulty.

Article 3

Reservation of specific numbers within the “116” numbering range

Member States shall ensure that:

- (a) numbers listed in the Annex are used only for the services for which they have been reserved;
- (b) numbers within the “116” numbering range that are not listed in the Annex are not used;
- (c) the number 116112 is neither assigned nor used for any service.

Article 4

Conditions attached to the right of use for harmonised numbers

Member States shall attach the following conditions to the right of use of harmonised numbers for the provision of harmonised services of social value:

- (a) the service provides information, or assistance, or a reporting tool to citizens, or any combination thereof;
- (b) the service is open to all citizens without any requirement of prior registration;
- (c) the service is not time-limited;
- (d) there is no payment, or payment commitment as a pre-requisite to use the service;
- (e) the following activities are excluded during a call: advertisement, entertainment, marketing and selling, using the call for the future selling of commercial services.

In addition, Member States shall attach specific conditions to the right of use of harmonised numbers as set out in the Annex.

Article 5

Assignment of harmonised numbers

1. Member States shall take all necessary measures to ensure that as from the 31 August 2007 the competent National Regulatory Authority can assign the numbers referred to in the Annex.

2. The listing of a specific number and the associated harmonised service of social value does not carry an obligation for Member States to ensure that the service in question is provided within their territory.

3. Once a number has been listed in the Annex, Member States shall make known at national level that the specific number is available for the provision of the associated harmonised service of social value, and that applications for the rights of use for this specific number may be submitted.

4. Member States shall ensure that a register of all harmonised numbers, with their associated harmonised services of social value, available in their territory is maintained. The register shall be easily accessible to the public.

Article 6

Monitoring

Member States shall report periodically to the Commission on the actual use of numbers listed in the Annex for the provision of the related services within their territory.

Article 7

Addressees

This Decision is addressed to the Member States.

Done at Brussels, 15 February 2007.

*For the Commission
Viviane Reding
Member of the Commission*

ANNEX

List of reserved numbers to harmonised services of social value

Number	Service for which this number is reserved	Specific conditions attached to the right of use for this number
116 000	Hotlines for missing children	

COMMISSION DECISION**of 30 November 2009****amending Decision 2007/116/EC as regards the introduction of additional reserved numbers beginning with "116"***(notified under document C(2009) 9425)***(Text with EEA relevance)**

(2009/884/EC)

THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community,

Having regard to Directive 2002/21/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 March 2002 on a common regulatory framework for electronic communications networks and services (Framework Directive) [1], and in particular Article 10(4) thereof,

Whereas:

(1) Commission Decision 2007/116/EC [2] reserves the national numbering range beginning with "116" for harmonised numbers for harmonised services of social value. The Annex to that Decision contains a list of specific numbers within this numbering range and the services for which each number is reserved. This list may be adapted in accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 22(3) of Directive 2002/21/EC.

(2) Two services, namely Helpline for victims of crime and Non-emergency medical on-

call service, have been identified as services of social value that may qualify for harmonised numbers. For these reasons, Decision 2007/116/EC should be updated and additional reserved numbers introduced. The number for Non-emergency medical on-call service is not intended to replace 112 or national emergency call numbers in life-threatening situations.

(3) Decision 2007/116/EC should therefore be amended accordingly.

(4) The measures provided for in this Decision are in accordance with the opinion of the Communications Committee,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

The Annex to Decision 2007/116/EC is replaced by the Annex to this Decision.

Article 2

Member States shall take all necessary measures to ensure that as from 15 April 2010 the

1 - OJ L 108, 24.4.2002, p. 33.

2 - OJ L 49, 17.2.2007, p. 30.

competent National Regulatory Authority can assign those numbers added to the list by virtue of this Decision.

Article 3

This Decision is addressed to the Member States.

Done at Brussels, 30 November 2009.

For the Commission
Viviane Reding
Member of the Commission

ANNEX

List of numbers reserved for harmonised services of social value

Number	Service for which this number is reserved	Specific conditions attached to the right of use for this number
116 000	<p><i>Name of service:</i> Hotline for missing children</p> <p><i>Description:</i> The service (a) takes calls reporting missing children and passes them on to the Police; (b) offers guidance to and supports the persons responsible for the missing child; (c) supports the investigation.</p>	Service continuously available (i.e. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, nation-wide).
116 006	<p><i>Name of the service:</i> Helpline for victims of crime</p> <p><i>Description:</i> The service enables victims of crime to get emotional support in such circumstances, to be informed about their rights and about ways to claim their rights, and to be referred to the relevant organisations. In particular, it provides information about (a) local police and criminal justice proceedings; (b) possibilities of compensation and insurance matters. It also pro-</p>	Where the service is not continuously available (i.e. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, nation-wide), the service provider must ensure that information about availability is made publicly available in an easily accessible form, and that, during periods of unavailability, callers to the service are advised when the service will next become available.

	vides support in finding other sources of help relevant to the victims of crime.	
116 111	<p><i>Name of the service:</i> Child helplines</p> <p><i>Description:</i> The service helps children in need of care and protection and links them to services and resources; it provides children with an opportunity to express their concerns, talk about issues directly affecting them and contact someone in an emergency situation.</p>	Where the service is not continuously available (i.e. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, nation-wide), the service provider must ensure that information about availability is made publicly available in an easily accessible form, and that, during periods of unavailability, callers to the service are advised when the service will next become available.
116 117	<p><i>Name of the service:</i> Non-emergency medical on-call service</p> <p><i>Description:</i> The service directs callers to the medical assistance appropriate to their needs, which are urgent but non-life-threatening, especially, but not exclusively, outside normal office hours, over the weekend and on public holidays. It connects the caller to a skilled and supported call-handler, or connects the caller directly to a qualified medical practitioner or clinician.</p>	Where the service is not continuously available (i.e. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, nation-wide), the service provider must ensure that information about availability is made publicly available in an easily accessible form, and that, during periods of unavailability, callers to the service are advised when the service will next become available.
116 123	<p><i>Name of the service:</i> Emotional support helplines</p> <p><i>Description:</i> The service enables the caller to benefit from a genuine human relationship based on non-judgmental listening. It offers emotional support to callers suffering from loneliness, in a state of psychological crisis, or contemplating suicide.</p>	Where the service is not continuously available (i.e. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, nation-wide), the service provider must ensure that information about availability is made publicly available in an easily accessible form, and that, during periods of unavailability, callers to the service are advised when the service will next become available.

List of further relevant legislation:

COMMISSION DECISION of 29 October 2007 amending Decision 2007/116/EC as regards the introduction of additional reserved numbers beginning with '116'

DIRECTIVE 2002/21/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 7 March 2002 on a common regulatory framework for electronic communications networks and services (Framework Directive)

DIRECTIVE 2002/22/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 7 March 2002 on universal service and users' rights relating to electronic communications networks and services (Universal Service Directive)

DIRECTIVE 2002/20/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 7 March 2002 on the authorisation of electronic communications networks and services (Authorisation Directive)

DIRECTIVE 2002/19/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 7 March 2002 on access to, and interconnection of, electronic communications networks and associated facilities (Access Directive)

DIRECTIVE 2009/136/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 25 November 2009 amending Directive 2002/22/EC on universal service and users' rights relating to electronic communications networks and services, Directive 2002/58/EC concerning the processing of personal data and the protection of privacy in the electronic communications sector and Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004 on cooperation between national authorities responsible for the enforcement of consumer protection laws

DIRECTIVE 2002/21/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 7 March 2002 on a common regulatory framework for electronic communications networks and services (Framework Directive)

ANNEX 2 – SURVEY ON CURRENT STATE OF VICTIM SUPPORT HELPLINES, 2011

116006

CURRENT SCENARIO

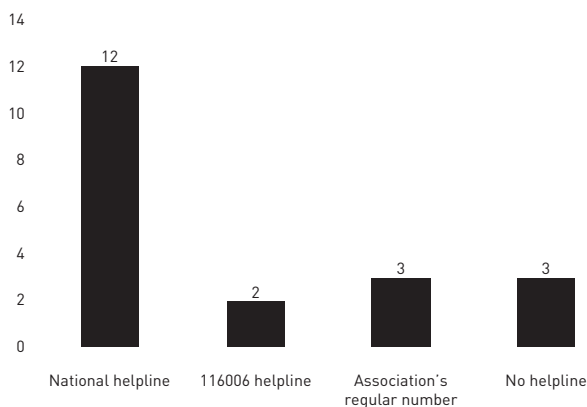


Chart 1 - Type of existing helpline in VSE member

In what concerns the out-of-hours system, **seven organisations have voice mail activated**, two (VS Denmark and Pomoc Obetiam Násilia) have volunteers working at home with cell phones, one (VS Swden) has less volunteers working at the office outside regular working hours, and four (INAVEM, Slachtofferhulp Nederland, VS Malta and Rikosuhripaivystys) have another type of out-of-hours emergency system. INAVEM, Pomoc Obetiam Násilia and Rikosuhripaivystys have two types of out-of-hours system. Three organisations (Bily kruh bezpeci, VS Scotland and Helpline Ireland) did not answer this question. Of the fourteen victim support organisations who answered this question, **twelve answer the calls in the organisation's office.**

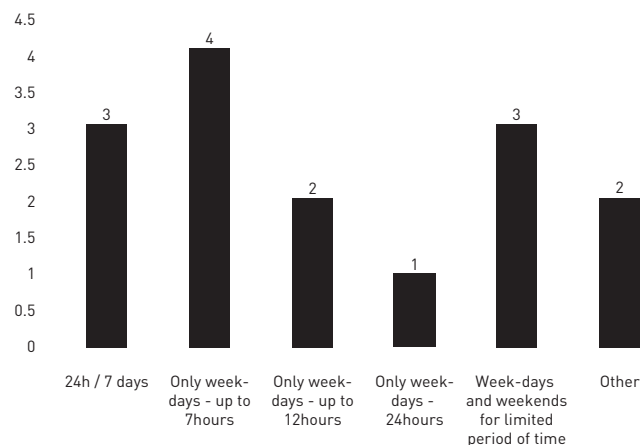


Chart 2 - Helpline working period

In **most of VS organisations (12), the operation of the helpline is delegate to volunteers**, whether solely (APAV, VS Denmark and Weisser Ring Germany), in conjunction with staff (VS Scotland, VS Sweden, Slachtofferhulp Nederland, Pomoc Obetiam Násilia and Rikosuhripaivystys), or coordinated by staff (Helpline Ireland, Weisser Ring Austria, VS England & Wales and Victimology Society of Serbia). In the remaining three organisations it is members of staff who operate the helpline.

Highlighting...

- The great majority of VS organisations manage a national helpline;
- Most organisations operate their helpline only on week-days;



Chart 3 - Human resources operating the helpline

In what concerns the out-of-hours system, **seven organisations have voice mail activated**, two (VS Denmark and Pomoc Obetiam Násilia) have volunteers working at home with cell phones, one (VS Sweden) has less volunteers working at the office outside regular working hours, and four (INAVEM, Slachtofferhulp Nederland, VS Malta and Rikosuhripaivystys) have another type of out-of-hours emergency system. INAVEM, Pomoc Obetiam Násilia and Rikosuhripaivystys have two types of out-of-hours system. Three organisations (Bily kruh bezpeci, VS Scotland and Helpline Ireland) did not answer this question. Of the fourteen victim support organisations who answered this question, **twelve answer the calls in the organisation's office**.

In **most of VS organisations (12)**, the operation of the helpline is **delegate to volunteers**, whether solely (VS Denmark and Weisser Ring Germany), in conjunction with staff (VS Scotland, APAV, VS Sweden, Slachtofferhulp Nederland, Pomoc Obetiam Násilia and Rikosuhripaivystys), or coordinated by staff (Helpline Ireland, Weisser Ring Austria, VS England & Wales and Victimology Society of Serbia). In the remaining three organisations it is members of staff who operate the helpline.



Chart 4 - Type of out-of-hours system

Highlighting...

- Volunteers are the major workforce operating VS helplines;
- Most organisations have a voice-mail activated during out-of-office hours;
- The vast majority of VS organisations answer calls from their own offices.

In the question related to the type of services provided by helplines, organisations could check as many services as applied. **Every organisation helpline provides general information.** All but VS Malta's helpline provide psychological support. Every helpline except APAV and VS England & Wales' refer calls to other organisations. Ten helplines scan the calls and refer them to adequate victim support workers, and six (Bily kruh bezpeci, Weisser Ring Austria, INAVEM, Slachtofferhulp Nederland, Pomoc Obetiam Násilia and Rikosuhripaivystys) give legal advice. In addition, Bily kruh bezpeci and Slachtofferhulp Nederland provide other types of non-specified services.

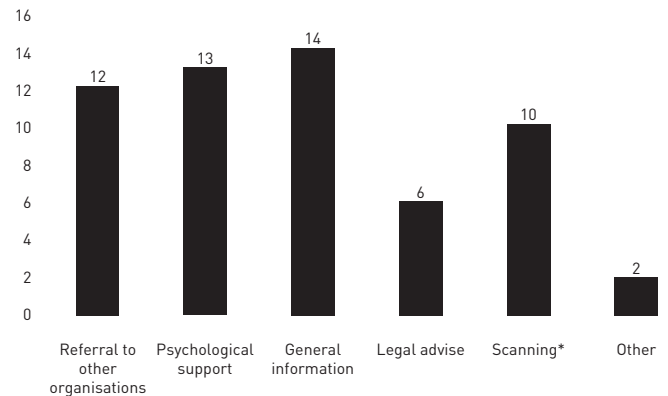


Chart 5 - Type of services provided by helplines

Highlighting...

- Every helpline provides general information;
- Most helplines provide psychological support and refer calls to other organisations.

Six organisations reported an average duration of calls between 5 and 10 min. Six organisations (Bily kruh bezpeci, Helpline Ireland, Weisser Ring Austria, Slachtofferhulp Nederland, VS Malta and Rikosuhripaivystys) **mention calls lasting on average between 10 and 15 min**, and two (APAV and VS Denmark) report their average duration calls as 15 to 30 min.

The majority of organisations (8) did not specify the time of day when there was a greater concentration of calls. VS England & Wales specified nights as the period of major concentration of calls, and Weisser Ring Austria and Rikosuhripaivystys mentioned afternoons. Work day mornings was the time of the day reported by VS Scotland, Slachtofferhulp Nederland and Pomoc Obetiam Násilia as having the greater volume of calls.

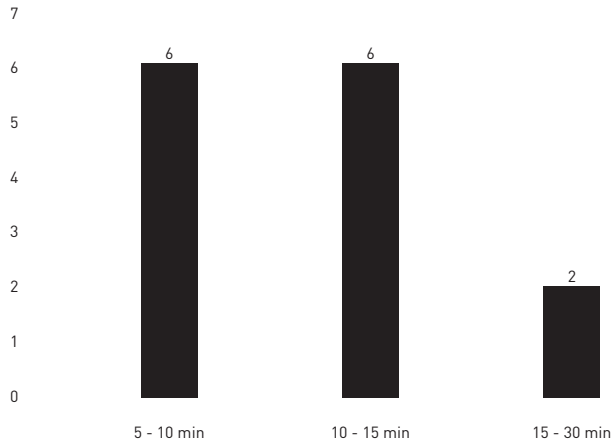


Chart 6 - Average duration of calls

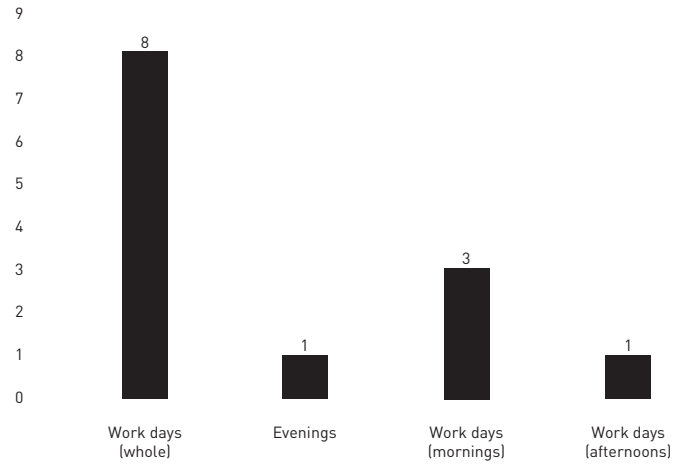


Chart 7 - Period of greater volume of calls

Highlighting...

- The great majority of calls last between 5 to 15 minutes;
- The greatest concentration of calls happen during work-days.

FUNDING AND HELPLINE COSTS

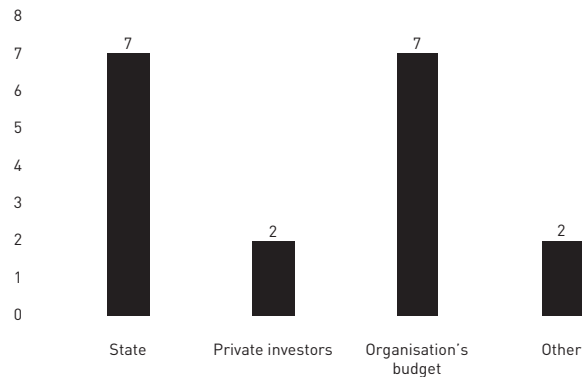


Chart 8 - Helpline funding entity

Annual costs of helplines vary widely across surveyed organisations. Eight organisations mention annual costs ranging between €25.000 to 75.000, while the remaining five report annual helpline costs of over €75.000.

In the question concerning how is their helpline funded, organisations could check as many options as applied. **The State is the most common contributor to the helpline funding** (7). Besides the State, Bily kruh bezpeci and INAVEM's helplines are funded by private investors, and Brottsofferjourernas Riksförbund (Sweden) and Slachtofferhulp Nederland add a contribution from the organisation's budget. Five organisations (APAV, VS Scotland, Weisser Ring Austria, VS Malta and Weisser Ring Germany) fund their helplines solely through the organisation's budget. Pomoc Obetiam Násilia and Rikosuhripaivystys fund their helplines through another non-specified source.

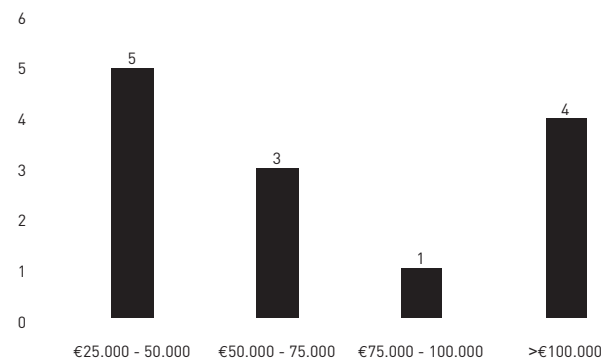


Chart 9 - Annual cost of helpline

Highlighting...

- The State is the most common source of funding for helplines, followed by the organisation's own budget;
- 9 organisations mention annual costs between 25.000 and 100.000 euros with their helpline.

THE VOICE OF EXPERIENCE...

Feedback on the already implemented 116006 helplines

In what concerns the major obstacles faced by organisations in the implementation of the 116006 helpline, only four organisations (VS Scotland, Helpline Ireland, VS Denmark and Slachtofferhulp Nederland) voiced their experience. **Obstacles related to logistics were the ones most mentioned (3).** The issue of who pays for the calls was also pointed by two organisations (Helpline Ireland and VS Denmark) as affecting the process of implementation. Slachtofferhulp, with an operating 116006 helpline, was the organisation which mentioned the higher number of concerns (3: funding, staff, and logistics). Helpline Ireland, also with an operating 116006 helpline, points to a particular difficulty in advertising the number.

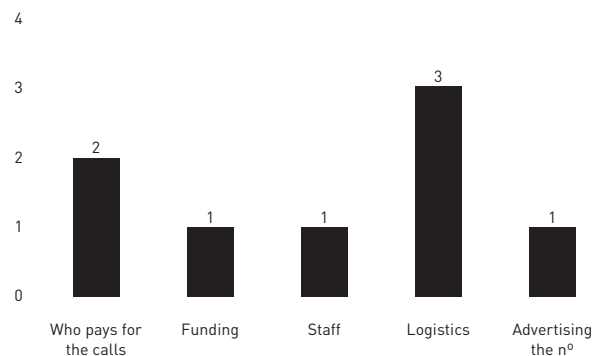


Chart 10 - Difficulties in the 116006 implementation

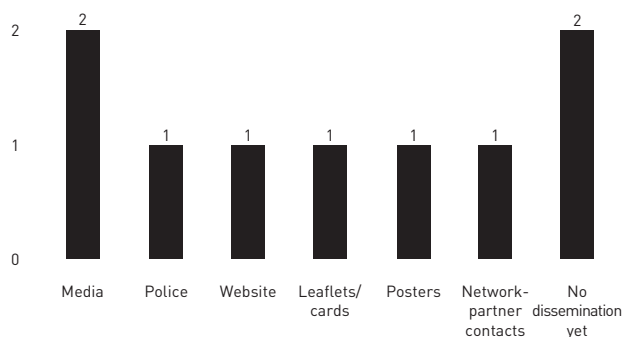


Chart 11 - Medium of advertisement of the 116006 helpline

Four organisations mentioned the ways used for the dissemination of their 116006 helpline: Weisser Ring Germany, Helpline Ireland, VS Denmark and Slachtofferhulp Nederland. The last two answered that they had not yet initiated the advertisement of the number. Helpline Ireland mentioned the five mediums through which they are disseminating the 116006 number: media, police, website, leaflets and posters. Weisser Ring Germany advertises its 116006 number through the media and through network-partner contacts of local volunteers.

Highlighting...

- Logistics is the main obstacle encountered by the organisations who have already implemented 116006;
- The dissemination of the number was not initiated by 2 organisations yet, but the remaining 2 have used diverse mediums.

An attempt was made to attest the number of languages used in the 116006 helpline in the organisations which already operate one or which are in the process of implementing it. The relevance of this question is understandable because the 116006 number is a harmonised number specifically for tourist victims or cross-border victims. Four organisations replied to this question. Helpline Ireland operates the 116006 helpline in English, Gaelic and more than one other language. Slachtofferhulp Nederland operates 116006 in its national languages and English. VS Denmark will run the 116006 helpline in Danish and English. Weisser Ring Germany operates its 116006 helpline in German and English. In addition, Brottsofferjourernas Riksförbund, currently in the process of implementation of 116006, stated that it operates its national helpline in 22 different languages, implying that the same system might be used when 116006 is fully operating.

Annual cost of 116006 helpline: This question is quite relevant since it allows VS organisations to estimate the costs of a future implementation of 116006 helpline, based on the reported costs of current 116006 helplines. Only Slachtofferhulp Nederland, VS Denmark and Weisser Ring Germany replied to this question. The first organisation reported annual **costs between 25.000 and 50.000 euros**, while **VS Denmark stated costs of more than 100.000 euros** per year. **Weisser Ring Germany reported costs between 50.000 and 75.000 euros** per year. It should be highlighted that VS Denmark is currently negotiating the implementation of the helpline, and that Helpline Ireland, the other organisation currently operating a 116006 helpline, has not replied to this question.

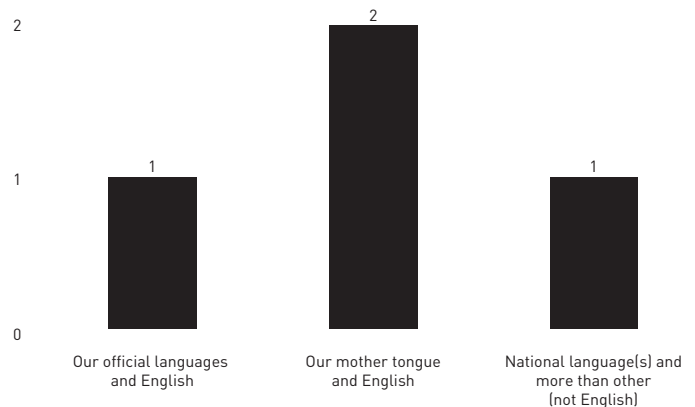


Chart 12 - Languages used in the 116006 helpline

Highlighting...

- Existing 116006 helplines are operated in the national language(s) as well as English;
- Outsourcing was only needed in one case;
- Reported annual costs of 116006 helplines range from 25.000 to more than 100.000 euros.

CONCERNS OVER 116006

Which concerns were expressed by organisations relating to the implementation of the 116006 helpline in their own country? Six organisations (VS Scotland, VS Denmark, Pomoc Obetiam Násilia, Helpline Ireland, Slachtofferhulp Nederland and Weisser Ring Germany) did not reply to this question; the first two probably due to their being in the negotiating phase, and the last two because the helpline is already running in their countries. The concerns mentioned more often were funding the helpline (4) and the staff and working hours (4). VS England and Wales was the organisation which expressed more concerns (who pays for the calls, funding, staff/working hours, roaming and logistics). Two organisations (IN-AVEM and Weisser Ring Austria) mention their concern

that adding a further helpline number for victims would be too confusing and/or unnecessary.



Chart 13 - Concerns over the implementation of the 116006 helpline

ON A BRIGHTER NOTE...

Despite the concerns expressed by the VS organisations, **every one of them has expressed their willingness to at least consider a future implementation of the 116006 helpline in their own country.**

The report with the results from this survey will be added to the upcoming '116006 implementation handbook', a good-practice manual that will expose the pros and cons of this helpline, with the intent to help countries decide whether the implementation of 116006 is advantageous.

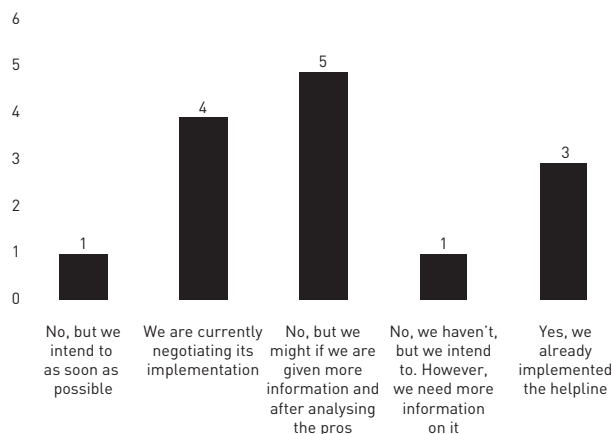


Chart 14 - Prospects for the implementation of 116006 helpline

116006

116006

115005



partnership:



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