



**PROTECTING
FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS,
A VICTIM'S PERSPECTIVE**
Victim Support Europe Annual Conference 2023
7TH TO 9TH JUNE / BERLIN

**Victim Support
Europe**



Co-funded by
the European Union

HOSTED BY:

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SPRING NEWSLETTER 2023

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VSE NEWS

VSE Annual Conference 2023 | Registrations Open till June 1



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Victim Support Europe and WEISSER RING e. V. are delighted to welcome you to the [Victim Support Europe 2023 Annual Conference – 'Protecting Fundamental Freedoms, a victim's perspective'](#).

VSE's Annual Conference will take place at the [H4 Conference Center](#) in Berlin, between 7-9 June, 2023 as a hybrid event; we hope to welcome participants from around the world, both in-person and online.



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VSE ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2023
BERLIN | 7 - 9 JUNE 2023

SAVE THE DATE



This year's theme – driven by an increase in crimes against politicians and journalists, extremism, terrorism and hate crimes, as well as attempts to stifle free speech – focuses on the interconnection of fundamental freedoms and victims policy.

We have invited a diverse group of speakers for these 3 days including the [Behavioural Design Academy](#), [Security and Crisis Centre by European Jewish Congress \(ECJ\)](#), [FBI](#), [OSCE](#), [European Commission](#), [Eurojust](#), [International Association of Chiefs of Police \(IACP\)](#), [the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies](#),

[LGTBIpol](#), [Observatory for Security Against Acts of Discrimination \(OSCAD\)](#), [the Police Union Germany](#), [The](#)

Brussels Times, MIND Prevention, The Grief Directory, Körber Foundation, and of course victim support services from around the world.

The conference will lead you not only to knowledge exchange but is also your gateway to meeting more people. The [social events programme](#) boasts (1) an evening of flying buffet dinner at **The Museum für Naturkunde**, one of the oldest museums in Berlin that features scientific collections on zoology, palaeontology and mineralogy, and (2) a gala evening at the “most beautiful vaudeville theatre in Europe” **Wintergarten Variete**.

Join us physically or online in Berlin to learn and share the latest trends in victim support.

The registrations are open till 1 June, places are limited, so make sure to register. Please, find the registration link [here](#).

[→ LEARN MORE](#)

“Transforming how we communicate with victims”: new VSE policy paper aims to strengthen victims’ access to information



VSE launched a new policy paper [“Transforming how we communicate with victims”](#).

In the 21st century, the most vulnerable in our societies must be taken care of. Information rights are fundamental and key to victims’ recovery. However, looking at their implementation, many challenges remain, with many barriers for victims to access information they can understand and act upon.

The paper provides an assessment of the barriers met by victims during their journey, from crime to the outputs of criminal proceedings – describing challenges met, good practices and recommendations at each step – and proposes a shift in how we think and implement information rights.

[→ LEARN MORE](#)

VSE's new discussion paper offers up truths about the current state of justice and recommendations to achieve safe justice in the EU



After forty years of the same statements, of rights that are not implemented, of rights that cannot be exercised, of victims being marginalised, a change in approach is required. The commitments made by governments and international organisations must become a reality for victims.

The Safe Justice paper aims to kick-start this change. At its heart is the realisation that the treatment and safety of victims must be a clearly stated objective of Justice – a measurement of its success – equal in importance to other principles of justice, including the right to a fair trial.

[→ DOWNLOAD THE PAPER](#)

The Italian edition of our recently launched policy paper “National Framework for Comprehensive Victim Support” is out



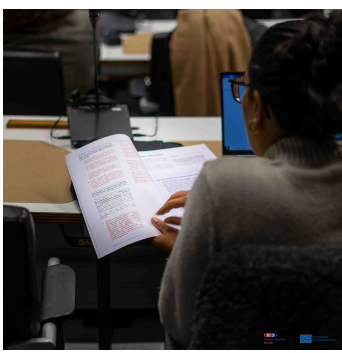
We are happy to celebrate the Italian edition of Victim Support Europe’s policy paper “National Framework for Comprehensive Victim Support”.

This recent publication offers up truths about the current state of victim support in the EU and asks the question “What defines excellence in victim support?”.

A special thank you for the translation goes to Giovanni Mierolo and Stefano Avedano.

[→ DOWNLOAD THE PAPER](#)

What defines excellence in victim support?



As the European Commission intends to publish an amended [Victims' Rights Directive](#) in 2023, now is the time to raise awareness of and talk about this topic. Ten years after the first Directive, a review is needed to strengthen existing victims' rights, and to establish both clearer Member State obligations and new rights for victims. Our [new policy paper](#) offers reasons why the existing approach to victim support has to be revised and suggests a forward-looking model for victim support in the EU.

We sat down with the VSE's Executive Director, Levent Altan, and Policy Officer, Léa Meindre-Chautrand, to get the inside look at the

VSE's freshly launched policy paper 'National Framework for Comprehensive Victim Support'.

[→ READ THE ARTICLE](#)

Joint Statement on 116 006, the European victim support line



In a joint statement, Victim Support Europe and 40 victims support organisations call on the EU to take action to ensure that all victims of crime can access support and information by implementing and supporting 116 006 helpline in all EU Member States.

[→ READ MORE](#)

"Unlocking the potential of communication tolls" workshop | Registration now open (VSE Members Only!)



On the 4th of May, the members of the [Victims' Rights Communicators Network](#) have an opportunity to attend an online workshop "Unlocking the potential of communication tolls" conducted by Aleksandra Anikina, Communications Officer at the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control ([HEUNI](#)), in collaboration with Lauri Hovi, Head of Communications at Victim Support Finland ([RIKU](#)).

The goal of this workshop is to help participants to learn about new tools and techniques for effective communication.

[→ REGISTER \(VSE MEMBERS ONLY\)](#)



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VSE PROJECT NEWS

[AREV Project](#) | Study Visit to Finland: knowledge exchange on the use of 'PAKE Abuse and Body Map' tool



On April 12, members from the Advancing Rights of Estonian Victims (AREV) project team together with healthcare professionals from Narva Hospital, Rakvere Hospital and East-Viru Central Hospital visited the Helsinki University Hospital in Finland. The study visit provided an opportunity to tour the facilities and discuss various topics relating to the use of the 'PAKE Abuse and Body Map' in both countries. While the tool has been used in numerous hospitals across Finland for about two decades, an adapted version is currently being piloted in three hospitals in the project's pilot region in Estonia.

[→ LEARN MORE](#)

[Project CREST](#) | CREST campaign encourages you to observe your usual environment from a different perspective



Do you know what to do in case of a terroristic attack? CREST's campaign aims at raising awareness about elements from your daily scenery that can be normal in usual situations, but that can also be of great help or threat in others.

[→ LEARN MORE](#)

[Project CHAT for victims](#) | Fruitful ‘CHAT for victims’ project meeting in Budapest



On the 1st – 3rd of March, partners of the ‘[CHAT for victims](#)’ project, including Victim Support Europe, met in Budapest for a regular gathering organised by [Validity Foundation](#).

The three-day meeting saw all partners share their contributions on their specific work packages so far – the implementation of the project and project activities.

[→ LEARN MORE](#)

[COVIS Project](#) | Partners are launching COVIS MONDAYS, a social media campaign to raise awareness of the project



Social media is a fantastic tool for sharing our project news, and what better way to do this than by joining in our INSPIRING COVIS MONDAYS. Despite our global beliefs, the concept of miserable Mondays should be ditched!

Together with COVIS project partners, we’ve compiled a fascinating editorial to share with you every Monday, during upcoming months. There are so many good vibes to choose from, they’re bound to put a smile on your face no matter what day of the week it is. Follow us on social media to get the insights.

[→ LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PROJECT](#)

[FYDO Project](#) | Since the [FYDO – Facility Dogs Europe – project](#) came to an end in December 2022, the project consortium has been striving to complete the project’s



mission: to train and place justice assistance dogs which will support vulnerable victims of crime on their journey to justice.

This article offers you a brief overview of the project partners’ ongoing work in their respective countries.

[→ LEARN MORE](#)

[PROTECT Project](#) | Protect project partners will conduct Workshop D “Promoting “respect of Victims’ Rights Through the Implementation of restorative Practices” on June 7 at the VSE Annual Conference 2023.



This workshop focuses on good practices as well as on policy work in the field of victim support and restorative justice. Thanks to the work done within the two-year Erasmus+ funded project “PROTECT”, partners from Italy, Belgium, Germany, Spain, and Portugal took part in a series of training to exchange good practices on restorative justice

and to further promote victims’ rights. The project served also as a platform for Victim Support Europe (VSE) and the European Forum for Restorative Justice (EFRJ) reflect together about the upcoming revision of the EU Victims’ Rights Directive (VRD) and influence policy work at the European level.

[→ LEARN MORE ABOUT THE WORKSHOP](#)



NEWS FROM VSE MEMBERS

ALBANIA & BULGARIA: 'Law and Internet Foundation' & 'Center for Legal Civic Initiatives' are conducting the Workshop G **"Having the courage to stand up for your beliefs online – united against hate speech and threatening"** on June 7 at the VSE Annual Conference 2023.

[→ LEARN MORE & REGISTER](#)

BELGIUM: 'CAW' and 'Helpline1712' are conducting the Workshop E **"Ensuring the right to support for victims of violence and abuse. Overcoming barriers to support services as part of an aid continuum: the example of professional helplines and specialised services of the Centres for General Welfare Work (CAW) in Flanders, Belgium"** on June 8 at the VSE Annual Conference 2023.

BELGIUM: 'V-Europe' in collaboration with 'The Grief Directory' are conducting the Workshop F **"Victims of terrorism to highlight gender needs and its impact on youth issues"** on June 8 at the VSE Annual Conference 2023.

[→ LEARN MORE & REGISTER](#)

GERMANY: Weisser Ring e.V. is conducting the Workshop B **"Having the courage to stand up for your beliefs online – united against hate speech and threatening"** on June 7 at the VSE Annual Conference 2023.

[→ LEARN MORE & REGISTER](#)

NORTHERN IRELAND: Victim Support NI is conducting the Workshop F **"Sexual Offences Legal Advisors: giving victims of sexual crime in Northern Ireland a voice"** on June 7 at the VSE Annual Conference 2023.

[→ LEARN MORE & REGISTER](#)

PORTUGAL: The Portuguese Association for Victim Support (APAV) is conducting the Workshop C **"Specialised Integrated Intervention Strategies: examples of gender-based and child sexual violence"** on June 7 at the VSE Annual Conference 2023.

[→ LEARN MORE & REGISTER](#)

SCOTLAND: Victim Support Scotland is conducting the Workshop A **"Virtual reality court familiarisation: a core fundamental right to access justice"** on June 8 at the VSE Annual Conference 2023.

[→ LEARN MORE & REGISTER](#)

SWEDEN: Victim Support Sweden (COVIS Project partnership) is conducting the Workshop D **"I could never have done it without you" – insights and inspiration for delivering victim/witness support in court as a fundamental part of justice"** on June 8 at the VSE Annual Conference 2023.

[→ LEARN MORE & REGISTER](#)

THE NETHERLANDS: In partnership with Weisser Ring e.V., Slachtofferhulp is conducting the Workshop A **"Fundamental freedoms from a youth perspective; the potential of youth within victim support organisations"** on June 7 at the VSE Annual Conference 2023.

Furthermore, Slachtofferhulp is conducting other two workshops: Workshop E **"Protecting fundamental freedoms. A closer look at the EU directive and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)"** on June 7 and Workshop C **"Fundamental freedoms: considerations on how to achieve victim rights for a broad spectrum of victims"**.

[→ LEARN MORE & REGISTER](#)



OPINIONS

In 2022, we launched the [OPINION section](#) on our website. The section aspires to be the destination for sharing compelling, first-hand accounts of overcoming challenges on the road to improving victims' lives around the world. Explore the latest opinion pieces written by our members and partners!

JOHN O' MAHONY

[Modern Society – Creating new challenges for Victim Support Groups](#)

5 MIN READ



Modern Society – Creating new challenges for Victim Support Groups

John O' Mahony
Retired Assistant Commissioner An Garda Síochána (Irish Police)
Board Member ADVIC (Advocates for families of Homicide Victims)

As a former Police Officer with 40 years' experience of working with victims of crime and, since my retirement from An Garda Síochána in 2017, have been working on a voluntary basis as an Advocate for crime victims, I want to highlight what I believe is an additional challenge for Victim Support

organisations everywhere.

[→ READ MORE](#)

LEENA-KAISA ÅBERG

[Victims need fast support in large scale data breaches](#)

5 MIN READ



Victims need fast support in large scale data breaches

Leena-Kaisa Åberg
Executive Director, Victim Support Finland

Something unexpected happened in Finland in October 2020. A Psychotherapy Centre called Vastaamo and its clients became victims of a major data breach in which sensitive patient information was stolen and later disseminated online. The actual hacking of the database had happened much earlier

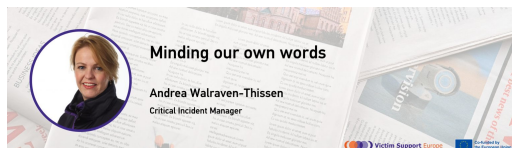
in 2018-2019 but became public in October 2020.

[→ READ MORE](#)

ANDREA WALRAVEN-THISSEN

[Minding our own words](#)

5 MIN READ



Minding our own words

Andrea Walraven-Thissen
Critical Incident Manager

Most people will never get to meet us and I hope you never will; when we get called to an incident serious tragedy has struck. Often multiple people have died and we join the blue light services to set up the incident management and psychosocial emergency support for both civilians and the first

responders involved. Depending on what happened a big part of our work is to prevent many "well meant but not well done"-initiatives; when we witness tragedy this causes feelings of helplessness in us and we often smother the people affected by wanting to completely take over and control their situation. But we are not helping them if we do, we are actually mitigating our own helplessness into an action perspective.

[→ READ MORE](#)

FREDERICO MARQUES

[Opinion: a recent decision by a Portuguese court](#)

5 MIN READ



Opinion: a recent decision by a Portuguese court

Frederico Marques
Chief Operations Officer / Senior Adviser, Portuguese Association for Victim Support (APAV)

From time to time, in Portugal, we are surprised by court decisions that stray from progress that has been made in recent years, in terms of the protection and promotion of the rights and interests of victims of crime. Not long ago, the Lisbon Court of Appeal published a decision relating to a case of

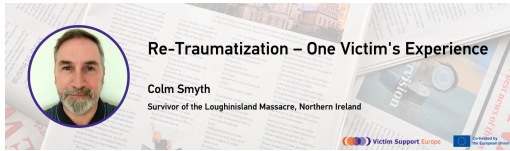
domestic violence: an 87-year-old man had been convicted, in the first instance, of abusing his 82-year-old wife and was given a prison sentence of 4 years and 4 months. Additionally, he was barred from contacting the victim for 5 years and was further obliged to attend a program on the prevention of domestic violence.

[→ READ MORE](#)

COLM SMYTH

[Re-Traumatization – One Victim's Experience](#)

5 MIN READ



Yesterday, 13th October 2022, I was re-traumatized by a Healthcare professional. In Northern Ireland the UK govt set up a compensation fund for victims of the 'Troubles'. It is called the Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme and administered by the Victims Payments Board. It is to provide

successful applicants with between £2000-£10,000 annually to help improve their quality of life. I applied 12 months ago and since then I have provided all medical, therapist and personal documentary evidence of my PTSD and what happened to me as a survivor of the Loughinisland Massacre.

[→ READ MORE](#)



– 05.

NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome to our new members: [Vilnius Institute for Advanced Studies -VILIAS](#) (Lithuania), [The Guernsey Victim Support and Witness Service](#) (UK) and the [Association DROGA](#) (Poland).

Today, VSE's 72 members span the globe, from Europe to North America and New Zealand. The membership gives organisations unparalleled access not only to our in-house expertise but also to our network of organisations and to the EU institutions and international organisations with whom we collaborate and who regularly speak at our events.



[VILIAS](#) was established as an NGO in 2013. During its 10 years of activity, participation in many national and European Commission projects, victim assistance, and crime prevention have developed to be key areas of VILIAS' activities.

VILIAS is also a member of the Lithuanian Association of Specialised Assistance Services. The Institute's activities are mainly based on cooperation with students (bachelor and master studies in criminology) and lecturers of the Department of Criminology of the Faculty of Philosophy of Vilnius University. Therefore, it combines academic knowledge and youthful enthusiasm, allowing the Institute to be quite

active in developing victim support and crime prevention systems in Lithuania.

[→ READ MORE](#)



[The Guernsey Victim Support and Witness Service](#) is an independent charitable organisation offering free and confidential support to victims and witnesses of crime and their family and friends. They provide emotional support, practical help and information to victims of crime, and to their families and friends. The Witness Service provides support

and information for anyone called as a witness to the criminal courts. Support is offered before, during and after the case is heard.



[The Association DROGA](#) was registered in the summer of 2010. The aim of the Association is to initiate and support activities in the field of social and health policy, consisting of the implementation of tasks in the field of social integration, health protection and promotion, social work, prevention and treatment of addictions, with particular emphasis on

high-risk groups.

[→ READ MORE](#)

About Victim Support Europe

Victim Support Europe is the leading European umbrella organisation advocating on behalf of all victims of crime, no matter what the crime, no matter who the victim is. VSE represents 72 national member organisations, providing support and information services to more than 2 million people affected by crime every year in 35 countries.

- Contact Victim Support Europe:

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