



DRAFT MINUTES OF VICTIM SUPPORT EUROPE GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday 10 November 2015 (9:00-12:00 am)

Held in The Hotel Brussels, Boulevard de Waterloo 38, 1000 Brussels

1. OPENING AND WELCOME

The Vice President of Victim Support Europe, João Lázaro, opens the General Meeting and warmly welcomes all participants. He presents apologies from Helgard van Hüllen, Vice President of Victim Support Europe, who could not travel to Brussels due to a Lufthansa strike.

He reminds that this is the first General Meeting since VSE President David McKenna passed away in August 2015: *"You will all remember David as a wonderful leader of Victim Support Europe. But he was also a great friend to us all, a raconteur who would regale us with an endless list of stories and anecdotes that would leave us in tears of laughter one minute and in tears of sympathy the next for those whose rights he fought for. David will be fondly remembered by all of us and greatly missed."*

2. APOLOGIES AND PRESENT

See list of attendees and apologies at the end.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the General Meeting of 15 May 2015 are approved.

4. TREASURER'REPORT – Jo Keaney (see paperwork)

YTD position shows a total surplus of €175k against a budget of €181k, this is €6k worse at Q3. This mainly relates to staff joining earlier than budgeted, office rent paid in advance and room rent costs for 10 November prepaid.

Expected 31st December 2015 position to be at a total surplus of €50k compared to the budget of €50k. The contribution from the grant and our match funding will be less due to the delay in getting EU approval of the grant and so the timing of being able to spend against the original plan. This has been offset by predicted savings in staff costs and travel. Website costs are higher than budget, but that is because we are claiming more in 2015 rather than moving into 2016. This continues to improve our position as it means we are increasing our reserves to help support our future sustainability. This gives us around 4-6 months of our current operating costs.

Jo Keaney thanks all colleagues and underlines how much she enjoyed working as the Treasurer of VSE.

Jo Keaney resigns from her position as Treasurer as she stopped working for VS England and Wales end of July. However, she has continued acting as VSE Treasurer until today and Joao

Lazaro warmly thanks her for this as well as for her excellent work during her office which strongly developed VSE financial management.

5. VICE PRESIDENTS' REPORT - João Lázaro

Activity report for the period from 16 May up to now

Since our last General Meeting in May in Lisbon, a huge amount of activities have taken place.

First of all, our Brussels office has been further extended since we have hired a **Policy Officer**, An Verelst. An started working for VSE on 6 July and she is already very well settled in our small but strong Brussels team.

Secondly, we are proud to announce that we have acquired two new associate members over the past months:

- We have a **new associate member in Croatia: “Bijeli Prsten Hrvatske”**. This is our 4th member in Croatia next to our full member “Bijeli krug Hrvatske” and two associate members, the “Croatian Victim and Witness Support Service” and the “Ministry of Justice Independent Sector for Victim and Witness Support”.
- **We have just approved the application for associate membership of the UK-based organisation “Supporting Justice”**, represented today by David Kenyon.

We wish both “Bijeli Prsten Hrvatske” and “Supporting Justice” a warm welcome to the Victim Support Europe family and we look forward to a fruitful collaboration!

Thirdly, VSE has been conducting a large number of capacity building and training activities:

- On **23-24 September**, VSE organized **experts meetings in Vilnius** (Lithuania) with representatives of NGOs aiming at developing victim support services in Lithuania and with government representatives in order to support them with the development of victim support in their country.
- On **28 October** VSE organized a **workshop for VSE members on EC Funding for Action Grants and other potential sources of funding**. The workshop took place in Lisbon and was led by Carmen Rasquete, APAV's Secretary General. It was attended by VSE members' representatives from Croatia, Hungary, Italy, Malta and Romania and by VSE Executive Director Levent Altan.
- On 2-3 November VSE organized a **workshop for VSE members on Best Practice in Operating the 116006 Helpline for Victims of Crime**. The workshop took place in Mainz (Germany) and was attended by representatives from Germany, Croatia, the Czech Republic, France, Ireland, Portugal, Sweden, UK and Cyprus (non-member organization).
- We have also **assisted several members and other victims support organization in assessing national government plans to implement the Directive on Victims' Rights**, helping them with comments to be submitted to their governments.
- We have just **hired the Leuven University to carry out a training needs assessment of different professionals dealing with victims in the EU** and this will result next year in the development of a training module based of the results of this study.

Another stream of activities has been focussed on **European and international advocacy**:

- We have been pushing for the implementation of the victims' directive through **weekly contacts with the European Commission**, highlighting problems and concerns to them.
- **On 2 October**, we had a **meeting with Věra Jourová, Commissioner for Justice**, Consumers and Gender Equality. VSE was invited to update the Commissioner on some of the key priorities and concerns within the victims' field. It was an opportunity to reflect upon the importance of maintaining the momentum by paying attention to victims' issues and in this way ensuring victims will not be forgotten.
- **Where national members have specific concerns, we have raised those to the EC** (ex: INAVEM France, Greece Women shelters in Greece, etc)
- **On 29th September** VSE invited international NGO networks and institutions dealing with victims' rights and support to participate in a **roundtable discussion hosted by the European Commission Directorate-General for Justice**. In 2014 we had started this networking and advocacy initiative with 5 organisations. This year the roundtable was **attended by 17 organisations** including the Fundamental Rights Agency, Women Against Violence Europe, the European Network Against Racism, Transgender Europe, the European Disability Forum, Amber Alert, Missing Children Europe, European Forum for Restorative Justice, Intervict, Child Helpline International, Confederation of European Probation, ILGA Europe, the End FGM European Network, the AGE-Platform, PICUM, Inclusion Europe and the European Commission Directorate-General for Justice.

This was a very productive discussion which showed important opportunities for cooperation and exchange between the different organisations. All participants agreed that Victim Support Europe in particular could facilitate this collaboration through the organisation of a similar roundtable meeting on a regular basis. We are therefore planning again at least one similar event in our 2016 work programme. **This roundtable also resulted on the successful petition sent to Member States and presented at our European Parliament event yesterday.**

- The petition was part of a larger social media **campaign around the 16 November** which we have been conducting through Twitter and a Thunderclap (crowdspeaking platform which allows a single message to be mass-shared so it rises above the noise of social networks). The main goal of this campaign is to inform the public about the implementation deadline and mobilize them to call upon EU governments.
- We also have **continued to develop Victims of Crime International (VOCI)** and relations with victim support organisations across the globe
- Finally we have **initiated contacts and discussions with institutions like the FBI**

Since May we have attended 13 conferences:

- The **European Forum on the Rights of the Child** on 3-4 June in Brussels – attended by Lev
- The Conference **“Addressing the challenge of elder abuse in Europe”** (10th World Elder Abuse Awareness Day) on 15-16 June in Brussels – attended by Lev
- The SOS Family Annual Conference **“Assistance to Abused Children”** on 24-25 June 2015 in Szczecin, Poland – attended by Helgard

- The **EUCPN workshop on secondary victimization** on 18 August in Brussels – attended by Joao
- The **15th Annual Conference of the European Society of Criminology** (Eurocrim2015) on 2-5 September in Porto, Portugal – attended by Lev
- The Conference **“Human Rights, Development and Transitional Justice: reaching back, looking forward”** on 10 September in Brussels – attended by An
- A **JUSTICIA Network Member meeting** on 15 September in Brussels – attended by Lev
- A **conference of the European Federation for Road Traffic Victims** (FEVR) about the EU Directive on victims’ rights on 25 September in Brussels – attended by An
- The **Annual Conference of the Association for Criminal Justice Research and Development** (ACJRD) on 2 October in Dublin – attended by Stephen Meigham (VS Scotland) on behalf of VSE
- A **High-level ministerial conference on Criminal justice response to radicalization** on 19 October in Brussels – attended by Lev
- The **ERA conference on EU Criminal Justice** on 22-23 October in Trier, Germany – attended by Helgard
- The **PROTEUS project seminar**: identity theft online: preventing, fighting & supporting victims on 29-30 October in Lisbon, Portugal – attended by Lev
- A **Conference on the EU directive on victims’ rights** on 28-29 October in **Palermo, Italy** – attended by Sabrina

VSE has also been working on **support in cross-border cases**:

- We have been coordinating communication between member organisations when assistance was needed (ex: Paris attacks, German Wings crash)
- We have also received direct requests from victims and we have been able to put them in touch with the right victim support organisations

For next year, our plan is to develop recommendations on how to improve access to rights in cross-border cases.

As part of the fundraising strategy which we have been developing, we have produced a **leaflet presenting VSE** and its advantages for members, potential donors and other supporters.

And finally, we have been very active over the past months in developing our **presence in social media and as well as the services we offer to members through our website and intranet**.

Report on future plans

As far as our future plans are concerned, we have developed an operating grant application for 2016 (please see detailed activities and budget in printed paperwork) which we are going to submit to the European Commission later today. This application is part of our Framework Partnership Agreement 2015-2017 with the European Commission and our objectives for 2016 will continue to be:

- Strengthening VSE capacity and services provided to members;
- Developing VSE’s membership policy to better allow it to meet its objectives;
- Developing victim support services in Member States or helping to develop existing ones;
- Supporting and monitoring the implementation of EU legislation;
- Examining options relating to accreditation of victim support services;
- Helping to improve support to victims in a cross-border situation;
- Identifying training needs for support services and practitioners.

Among the numerous activities planned, we would like to highlight:

- The **awareness raising campaign** which we will be organizing around the 22 February / **European Victims Day 2016**. In 2015 we were able to organize a relatively successful joint statement on the occasion of the European Victims Day but we want to do more in future years and we will begin in 2016 with a large campaign targeted at stakeholders, EU and national policy makers and at the General Public.
- The **Annual Conference and General Meeting** which will be held in the "[Muntgebouw Utrecht](#)", in the Netherlands on 24-26 May. VSE Annual General Meeting will take place on 27 May in the same venue.
- The **workshop for members** potentially including a study visit under our capacity building objective. We will choose the theme of this workshop based on a needs assessment of our members but the suggested topics will be:
 - practical access to general and specific victims' support services
 - individual assessment
 - new methods of counselling such as online counselling
- And finally a **public event and leaders meeting** to be held in Brussels in the Autumn

6. ELECTION OF PRESIDENT, VICE PRESIDENT, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

There is a quorum for the vote as 18 full members out of 22 are represented.

The following nominations have been received:

- President: João Lázaro, APAV Portugal
- Vice President: Sabrina Bellucci, INAVEM France
- Executive Board Member: Livija Plančić, Bijeli Krug Croatia
- Executive Board Member: Barbara Unterlerchner, Weisser Ring Austria
- Executive Board Member: Mark Castle, Victim Support England and Wales

Unfortunately, Livija Plančić and Mark Castle could not attend the meeting. Bijeli Krug is represented by Dunja Stanicic. Victim Support England and Wales is represented by Lucy Hastings.

The GM unanimously accepts that the nominations of Livija Plančić and Mark Castle are valid although they were not able to attend the meeting.

The GM unanimously approves the nomination of João Lázaro to the position of President.

The GM unanimously approves the nomination of Sabrina Bellucci to the position of Vice President.

The GM unanimously approves the nomination of Livija Plančić to the position of Executive Board Member.

The GM unanimously approves the nomination of Barbara Unterlerchner to the position of Executive Board Member.

The GM unanimously approves the nomination of Mark Castle to the position of Executive Board Member.

7. RESIGNATION

Jo Keaney resigns from her position as Treasurer.

8. RESOLUTIONS

Executive Director Levent Altan presents the proposed reviewed membership policy (see paperwork sent to members on 10 September 2015) before the vote.

1. Resolution 1 - Membership Process

This GM approves the continued assessment of the membership process as set out in the Executive Summary of the Paper: 'Developing Victim Support Europe's Membership Policy'.

The GM unanimously approves resolution 1

2. Resolution 2 - Full Membership Criteria

This GM approves changes to full membership eligibility criteria and obligations on Members as set out in the Executive Summary of the Paper: 'Developing Victim Support Europe's Membership Policy'.

The GM unanimously approves resolution 2

3. Resolution 3 - Full Membership Fees and Fee Structure

This GM approves changes to Full Membership fees and fee structure as set out in the Executive Summary of the Paper: 'Developing Victim Support Europe's Membership Policy'

The GM approves resolution 3

1 vote against

No abstention

4. Resolution 4 - Associate Membership criteria

This GM approves changes to Associate Membership criteria as set out in the Executive Summary of the Paper: 'Developing Victim Support Europe's Membership Policy'

The GM unanimously approves resolution 4

5. Resolution 5 - Increase in Associate Membership Fees

This GM approves the increase of Associate Membership fees to €250 per year.

The GM approves resolution 5

1 vote against
No abstention

6. Resolution 6 - Naming of the third category of membership

This GM approves that the new name of the third category of Membership shall be Supporters of VSE.

The GM approves resolution 6

Supporters of VSE: 10 votes
Supporting members of VSE: 5 votes
Friends of VSE: 3 votes

7. Resolution 7 – Update of the Constitution


This GM approves the updated Constitution as submitted to Members.

This GM unanimously approves resolution 7

9. CLOSING REMARKS

João Lázaro thanks everyone and announces the workshops of the afternoon Leaders meeting.

João Lázaro



President of Victim Support Europe

LIST OF ATTENDEES:

Full Members

1. João Lázaro, Vice-President of Victim Support Europe - APAV, Portugal
2. Jo Keaney, formerly working for Victim Support England and Wales, acting Treasurer until 10 November 2015
3. Victor Jammers, VSE Executive Board Member – Slachtofferhulp Nederland, The Netherlands
4. Sabrina Bellucci, VSE Executive Board Member – INAVEM, France
5. Leena-Kaisa Åberg, VSE Executive Board Member - Rikosuhripäivystys Suomessa, Finland
6. Barbara Unterlerchner – Weisser Ring Austria
7. Petra Vitousova - Bily Kruh Bezpeci, Czech Republic
8. Marketa Vitousova - Bily Kruh Bezpeci, Czech Republic

9. Else Marie Buck – Offerrådgivningen, Denmark
10. Bianca Biwer - Weisser Ring Germany
11. Barbara Wüsten - Weisser Ring Germany
12. Petra Klein - Weisser Ring Germany
13. László Fügedi - Fehér Gyűrű, Hungary
14. Ákos Harmath - Fehér Gyűrű, Hungary
15. Viktória Kósi - Fehér Gyűrű, Hungary
16. Carmen Rasquete, APAV, Portugal
17. Lucy Hastings - Victim Support England and Wales, UK
18. Frida Wheldon - Victim Support Scotland, UK
19. Janka Šípošová - Pomoc Obetiam Násilia, Slovakia
20. Igor Dušenka - Pomoc Obetiam Násilia, Slovakia
21. Eva Larsson – Brottsofferjouren Sverige, Sweden
22. Fredrik Mellqvist - Brottsofferjouren Sverige, Sweden
23. Gähtlin Leppänen – Ohvriabi, Estonia
24. Kurt De Backer - Steunpunt Algemeen Welzijnswerk, Belgium
25. Roberta Lepre - Victim Support Malta
26. Dunja Staničić - Bijeli krug Hrvatske, Croatia
27. Stiliyan Ivanov – SVCCC Foundation, Bulgaria
28. Svetoslav Nikolov - SVCCC Foundation, Bulgaria

Associate members

1. Mario Slišković - Croatian Victim and Witness Support Service, Croatia
2. Nikica Hamer Vidmar, Independent Sector for Victim and Witness Support (Ministry of Justice), Croatia
3. Gabor Veisz - Office of Justice (Igazságügyi Hivatal), Hungary
4. Lisa Kennedy – ITAS, Ireland
5. Joan Deane – AdVIC, Ireland
6. Helen Doyle – AdVIC, Ireland
7. Michele Puckhaber – Crime Victims Helpline, Ireland
8. Elisa Corbari – LIBRA, Italy
9. Tomasz Piechowiak - Subvenia Victima, Poland
10. Marzena Piechowiak - Subvenia Victima, Poland
11. Olga Brązkowska - Subvenia Victima, Poland
12. Kamila Djinska - Subvenia Victima, Poland
13. José Miguel Ayllón – ANVDV, Spain
14. Jasmina Nikolic - Victimology Society of Serbia
15. David Kenyon - Supporting Justice, UK

Staff

1. Levent Altan, VSE Executive Director (VSE office Brussels, Belgium)
2. Hélène Heinrichs, VSE Administrative Officer (VSE office Brussels, Belgium)
3. An Verelst, VSE Policy Officer (VSE office Brussels, Belgium)

APOLOGIES

1. Helgard van Hüllen – Vice President of Victim Support Europe – Weisser Ring Germany
2. Geraldine Hanna – Victim Support Northern Ireland
3. Olga Kostina – Soprotivlenye, Russia
4. Christoph Gebhardt - Arbeitskreis der Opferhilfen (ADO), Germany