

Newsletter

Newsletter Victim Support Europe

October 2008

From our President

Since we have met in Belgrade it seems that things are moving on with a high speed.

I look back on a very good and successful conference and I'm very happy with the confidence our members gave us to move on in the new direction.

It is clear that Victim Support Europe is already an established name in Europe and it has been a good thing to change our name!

Apart from this new name it is also clear that Victim Support Europe is seen as a strong partner and trustworthy party for other institutes and organizations.

In the period between last May and today I have represented Victim Support Europe on different occasions and have got the opportunity to present Victim Support Europe in different places.

In May Victim Support Europe was invited to take part in the newly launched Justice Forum in Brussels and in July I was present at a second meeting of this Forum consisting of approximately 70 academics, lawyers and representatives of several organizations such as Victim Support Europe. It was important to see that for the first time 'the sound of the victims' was presented at this meeting. In December the Justice Forum will meet again.

In July APAV organized a very good seminar on victims and mediation. Recently I presented Victim Support Europe at a conference in Budapest of academics coming from different European countries. During this conference the situation on victims rights in different European countries were discussed and I took the opportunity to present Victim

Support Europe in this conference. Marianne Gammer and I attended the fourth convention of the UNODC in Vienna. Victim Support Europe has the status of observer. I met several representatives of other NGO's striving for victim rights. The issue was human trafficking. In September the Executive Committee met for a short meeting in Haarlem to discuss the outcomes of our last AGM. Mrs. Caroline Morgan from the European Commission attended part of this meeting and informed us about developments in Brussels. One of the important things is that the Framework Decision from 2001 will be revised and Victim Support Europe is asked to give input for this revision and take part in a meeting in Brussels in November amongst other organizations. Our executive officer, Frank Hengeveld, has done a lot of work in applying for a new operational grant and recently we received the good news from Brussels that this grant will be approved by Brussels. He also attended the annual conference of NOVA in the USA and presented Victim Support Europe during this conference.

In this newsletter you will read about next years conference in Lisbon. Preparations are already started and the Executive Committee will meet in Lisbon at the end of this month.

A lot of work in progress as you may see. I wish you all success in your own work at this moment and hope you're making progress in the important job we all have!

Yours sincerely,

Jaap Smit

General news

Conference and AGM 2009: Lisbon

Next conference and AGM will take place in Lisbon, Portugal from Wednesday June 24, 2009 until Sunday June 28, 2009. At the end of 2008 a draft programme will be available for members and external guests. APAV (Victim Support Portugal) will host the conference.

Contact person: Carmen Rasquete, carmenrasquete@apav.pt, APAV (Victim Support Portugal).

New website

Because of the new company design, Victim Support Europe needs a new website. An excellent moment to renew the whole website concept and make it fit current demands. Victim Support Europe hired Mrs. Judith Huguen to develop this new website, and the work is almost done. Within a few weeks you will be able to visit the new website.

Login code for member website

The new Victim Support Europe website actually contains two websites: a general website for every person who wants to learn more about Victim Support Europe or victim support in Europe and a website especially for member organizations containing for example news, events and minutes. Each member organization will receive a login code to enter that part of the site. You will receive the login code within a few weeks.

Virtual surrounding for project groups

It was a wish to develop a virtual surrounding for project groups, so that project group members would be able to share documents etcetera. This was an 'extra' idea which was not calculated, and this idea could only have been realised if it would fit in the calculations that already have been made. Unfortunately it turned

out not to be possible to arrange a virtual surrounding this year. It will still be on our list for next year.

The website address will still be www.victimsupporteurope.eu

Contact person: Irene Staat, i.staat@victimsupporteurope.eu, Victim Support the Netherlands.

Victims' Day 2009

The 22nd of February is European Victims' Day. Victims' Day is a great opportunity to draw attention to victim issues and support needs in the aftermath of crime. Victim Support Europe has set the overarching theme 'Celebrating victims' rights in Europe' for the 2009 event. We aim to spread information of the work of Victim Support Europe and highlight the needs of victims throughout the EU. We encourage all national victim support organisations to take part in this important event and spreading the information contained in our Manifesto. As the 22nd of February is on a Sunday next year, many countries have chosen to hold their celebrations on the 20th February instead.

You have recently received information with suggested activities how to use the information contained in the Manifesto to contact your national justice representatives. If you have not yet initiated a working dialogue with your national politicians, Victims' Day is a great opportunity to inform them of your national organisation, the work of Victim Support Europe and our calls for improved protection and promotion of victims' rights across Europe. We look forward to hearing about your celebrations in future Newsletters.

Contact person: Frida Petterson, frida.petterson@victimsupportscotland.org.uk, Victim Support Scotland.

Expert meeting in Brussels

On the 17th of November 2008 members of the Executive Committee will join an expert meeting in Brussels. During this meeting a total of 54 external guests will discuss the Framework Decision. As you all may know, this Framework Decision deals with the standing of victims of criminal proceedings within the European Commission. Part of this Decision needs a revision. The expert meeting will have a close look at it and come with recommendations towards the European Commission. You will surely be informed about the outcome of the meeting.

Meeting of all CEO's

On February 17, 2009 a meeting of all CEO's / decision makers from members of Victim Support Europe will be held in Brussels. Although it is clear that the Annual General Meeting of Victim Support Europe is of great importance to the organization, it was decided that a meeting with relevant decision makers within the different member states could add value to further professionalize Victim Support Europe. The agenda and exact content of the meeting will be published as soon as possible.

For those members who did not yet e-mail the name of the person that will attend this important meeting: please notify Frank Hengeveld about who will join on the 17th of February via

f.hengeveld@victimsupporteurope.eu.

State of affairs EU 116 telephone number

Last year all members received information about the fact that the European Commission is considering the possibility to assign a free EU 116 helpline telephone number for several groups of people within the EU which need a certain kind of help. Such a telephone number might also be possible for victims of crime within the EU. To be able to deliver victim support via this 116 helpline victim support organizations have to meet several criteria, for example delivering their service in English. Victim Support Europe has been able to sign in for

an EU 116 telephone number because several members declared to be willing to deliver this service. At the moment, the European Commission is considering the applications, including the Victim Support Europe application. The prospect is that the European Commission will decide about this in March 2009.

*Contact person: Frank Hengeveld,
f.hengeveld@victimsupporteurope.eu,
Slachtofferhulp Nederland (Victim Support the Netherlands).*

Portugal

Seminar Victims & Mediation

On July 14-15, 2008 the Seminar Victims & Mediation took place in Lisbon. More than 150 researchers and practitioners working in the area of mediation, victim support and justice attended. For the first time in Europe, it was possible to organize an event specifically focused on the theme *victims and mediation*.

This Seminar had the participation of key speakers, namely Kathleen Daly (Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Griffith University, Brisbane), Leoberto Brancher (Judge working in the area of Juvenile Justice in Porto Alegre, the capital of Rio Grande do Sul, one of the 26 Brazilian states) and Simon Green (lecturer in criminology and community justice for the Centre for Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Hull (United Kingdom)). This was definitely an opportunity to exchange knowledge and experiences at an international level.

APAV (Victim Support Portugal) is preparing the final Publication (in English and Portuguese) in which will be presented the results from the investigation based on the drafting and application of research instruments regarding the standing and treatment of victims in mediation programmes. This publication will also include the communications presented during the workshops and during the closing seminar, in order to disseminate the main results achieved during the project.

New leaflets

APAV (Victim Support Portugal) is currently producing new leaflets for victims of domestic violence and victims of sexual violence. With improved content and image, APAV aims to better reach these victims, giving them hints on what to do and at the same time raise awareness regarding domestic and sexual violence.

Self-awareness for women victims

In November 2007 started the Project Increasing Self-Awareness (ISA) - Victims of Intimate Partner Violence Assessing Risk of Repeated Victimization and Enhancing Resiliency Strategies. The project ISA aims to increase self-awareness of risk of repeated victimization in women victims of intimate partner violence, through the development of an European valid self-rating version of the SARA (Spousal Assault Risk Assessment).

The objective is that ISA will assist women to help themselves go through what they are living, be aware of the risk they are running and develop possible ways to manage and reduce the risk of recidivism and negative mental/behavioral consequences of violence, by enhancing coping strategies, resiliency and adopting pro-active measures believed as efficient for the victim herself.

This project ends in November 2009. Victim support organizations dealing with Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) across Europe have different approaches, methods and legislations. Implementing and testing the efficacy of new methods in EU countries can help setting up efficient practices that might be extended at other EU countries. Nowadays the partners involved in the Project are developing the European valid self-rating version of the SARA and preparing the needed training to implement in each organization.

The project, co-financed by the European Commission under the DAPHNE Programme II, is promoted by Associazione Differenza Donna (Italy) and

has the partnership of Victim Support Portugal (APAV), InterVICT - Department of Criminal Law, Faculty of Law (Netherlands), National Institute of Police and Criminal Sciences (Portugal), Progetto Donna CETERIS, ONLUS (Italy), Victim Support the Netherlands and Victim Support Scotland.

Contact person: *Carmen Rasquete*, carmenrasquete@apav.pt, APAV (Victim Support Portugal).

Russia

Proud to be a member

On behalf of Olga Kostina, CEO of the ngo Soprotivlenie (Victim Support Russia), and our victim support organization 'Soprotivlenie' I would like to thank you for the invitation to the annual conference of Victim Support Europe! We are very proud to become a member of Victim Support Europe! It gives us not only hope to raise an awareness of victims needs but it will also help us to build a really good working system for victims of crime in Russia. Thank you all very much for your great support!

Marina Schepp

Government pays attention for victims' issues

After we came back from the Annual Conference in Belgrade, we had one more important event. The Commissioner on Human Rights in Russian Federation Mr. Lukin published a report about victim's rights in Russia. This report was written together with the experts of Soprotivlenie (<http://www.rg.ru/2008/06/04/doklad-dok.html>).

One week later Mr. Lukin met the president of Russian Federation Mr. Medvedev, where they talked about the victims of crime' issue. In other words, we reached a very high level of our government to attract their attention to the victims of crime and their rights in RF.

Victim support in camps of refugees

In August 2008, psychologists of Soprotivlenie (Victim Support Russia) worked in camps of refugees in South Ossetia rendering the psychological help to victims – especially children, their parents and old people.

Photo exhibition

September 4. – Soprotivlenie organized an open-air photo exhibition 'Victim' in the center of Moscow. The aim of the event was to raise awareness of problems as domestic violence, child abuse and victims of war.

Interregional Forum for Victim Rights

On the 30. September - 1st October 2008 in Moscow took place Soprotivlenie's first interregional Forum for Victim Rights 'Civil society and law enforcement agencies for rights of crime victims'. The aims of the forum was to consolidate public organizations and law enforcement forces in order to build effective mechanisms of the victim support, to raise awareness of the new challenges and opportunities in fighting violence and to help share best practices across different sectors. The Forum brought together the regional non governmental organizations, law enforcement forces, the legislative and judicial representatives.

At the forum international experts participated: from Slovakia Mrs. Jana Šipošová (Victim Support Slovakia), Mrs. Suzi Kvas (JZ Socio, Republic of Slovenia), Mrs. Marjeta Feraln Istinič (Ministry of labor family and social affairs of Republic of Slovenia), Mr. Terry Kinney a legal advisor U.S. department of Justice, experts from Ukraina and others.

At the Forum Soprotivlenie presented a book 'Criminal violence against women and children: international standards of combating crimes', which we worked on together with Mr. Vladimir Ovchinsky the senior lawyer of Russia, a doctor of jurisprudence, an adviser of the Chairman of the Constitutional Court. The book includes main international legal

documents and the international research on problems of criminal violence against women and children.

Internet safety

Together with our partner the Regional Public Organization for Internet-Technologies (ROCIT Soprotivlenie work on the National Internet Safety Code <http://www.saferunet.ru/en/>). The mission is to promote Internet development, Internet safety in Russia, combat child pornography and keep children and young people safe online.

Radio program 'Right for Protection'

Since October 2007 Soprotivlenie human rights movement and 'Radio Rossii' launched a joint radio project- a one-hour program called 'The Right for Protection'. It is a live program devoted to the social and legal protection. The program prompts all those who found themselves in hard life circumstances what to do and where to go in each particular case. The program invites professional lawyers, psychologists, representatives of the law-enforcement bodies, judicial, legislative and executive branches of power as well as public personalities.

Coming up events

October 17, 2008 – Participation at the conference Stop Violence in the Ukraine.

November 2008 – Participation at the conference on the Problems of human trafficking and sex violence against women and children in Russia at the Russian Parliament (Duma)

November 2008 – Soprotivlenie is organizing a forum 'Say No to Violence' for social workers of Moscow city.

November 2008 – The second ceremony of the annual award 'Vybor' (Choice) for civil courage in resisting the crime. The award was established by Soprotivlenie movement and NTV TV-company in 2007.

The purpose of founding the award is to draw public attention to the problem of fighting against criminality and to express the public gratitude to all those Russian citizens that were brave enough to resist the crime.

*Contact person: Marina Schepp,
www.soprotivlenie.org,
marinaschepp@soprotivlenye.ru and
marinaschepp@gmx.de, Soprotivlenie
(Victim Support Russia)*

Scotland

Victim Notification Scheme

Victims have seen their rights to information expanded through the Scottish Victim Notification Scheme. From the 15th of May 2008, the Scheme offers information to victims in cases where the offender receives a sentence of 18 months imprisonment or more, which is an expansion from the previous four year threshold. Available information includes the date of the offender's release; the date of any transfer; if the offender is eligible for temporary release; and notification if the offender escapes from custody.

Victim Impact Statement

After a successful pilot run, the Scottish Government has decided to roll out Victim Impact Statements across Scotland. From April 1, 2009, victims in all Scottish High Courts and cases where a sheriff sits with a jury will be offered the possibility to provide victim statements. The evaluation of the pilot scheme, that took place in three sites across Scotland (Ayr, Edinburgh and Kilmarnock), showed that 61% of statement makers reported that making a victim statement had made them feel better and 85% said they were glad they took part. Through the statements, victims can inform the court how the crime has affected them physically, emotionally and financially. David McKenna, chief executive

of Victim Support Scotland ensures that 'Victim Support Scotland is willing to play its part in ensuring the success of this initiative by the Scottish Government'.

Public Speaking Competition

The 22nd of May, Victim Support Scotland organised its first national-wide annual public speaking competitions for first and secondary school pupils. The aim of the competition was to spread knowledge of crime and its effect on local communities; two pupils from each school were invited to give presentations within the topic 'Justice in our Communities'. Through the event, Victim Support Scotland brought together children and their schools with judicial authorities including the lord advocate; high court judges and senior police officers.

*Contact person: Susan Gallagher,
susan.gallagher@victimsupportsco.org.uk,
Victim Support Scotland.*

Austria

Competence Center Victim Support

By September 1, 2008 Weisser Ring Austria (Victim Support Austria) was charged by the Federal Ministry of Justice to establish the 'Competence Center Victim Support' in Austria. The central function is to operate an information and clearing center for victim support and victim protection (information for victims, public institutions such as police, courts, compensation board, etc. and NGO's working in the field of victim support and protection), to operate the national wide 24 hours helpline for victims 0800 112 112, to collect and to spread information on victim's rights, relevant statistics, studies and evaluations, to draw up training programmes for bodies involved in victim support and to develop a concept for quality management for victim support.

2nd Act on the Protection against Violence (Draft)

In the passed month the Federal Ministry of Justice, experts of criminal and civil law and proceedings and practitioners worked out a draft act to improve victims' rights in Austria. A new crime, 'continued violence' is to be implemented, rights of victims in the criminal proceedings will be introduced as well in the civil proceedings, the right to psychosocial and juridical support before, during and after the criminal proceedings will be implemented for a larger group of victims, new provisions for compensation by the state ('advanced payment') are to be implemented. The draft act was agreed by the Federal Ministers of Justice and the Minister of the Interior, but is not yet approved by the Parliament.

*Contact person: Marianne Gammer,
m.gammer@weisser-ring.at, Weisser Ring
Competence Center Victim Support (Victim
Support Austria)*

Czech Republic

Campaign partner of The Body shop

The Body Shop has launched the '2008 Stop Violence in the Home' campaign on the theme of friendship. By providing practical tools to empower women to provide support to friends in need, the campaign can be a source of inspiration and support for millions of women around the world. As part of the campaign The Body Shop has created a 'For Me, For You' Special Edition Shea Lip Care Duo. By simply giving one to a friend you each get a wonderful reminder that you have a confidante whom you can trust, for whom no secret is too big or too small. All proceeds from the sale of the Shea Lip Care Duo go directly to the campaign partners whose work supports those who have been affected by domestic violence. Bílý Kruh Bezpečí (Victim Support Czech Republic) has been chosen as the campaign partner for The Czech republic.

Journalists and victims of crime

Czech Ministry of Interior together with Bílý Kruh Bezpečí prepared the new publication 'Journalist and victims of crime'. The publication is focused on journalists who cover crime. It is a guide which informs about ethic rules for medial presentation of victims of crime. The publication was introduced at the press conference as well as at the Czech universities to students of journalism.

Armenia working on domestic violence law

In July 2008 two representatives of Bílý Kruh Bezpečí were invited for a week to Armenia to share the knowledge of Bílý Kruh Bezpečí with creation of domestic violence law. At the meetings with representatives of the Police of the Republic of Armenia, with officials of Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and also at the roundtable on Armenian draft of domestic violence law with representatives of justice, Ministry of health, international organization and local NGO's the president of Bílý Kruh Bezpečí explained the history of elaboration of domestic violence law in the Czech Republic, main points of the law and its efficiency in practice, creation and operation of the Alliance against domestic violence, functioning of NGO's and intervention centers in the field of domestic violence.

Cross border witness support

For the first time in 17 years of Bílý Kruh Bezpečí our organization provided witness support to our clients at the court hearing abroad. Two Czech victims of serious sexual violence were called as witnesses for the Crown and were required to attend London in order to give evidence at the trial. Bílý Kruh Bezpečí has been in a contact with both victims for more than a year and due to the seriousness of the case, cross border investigation and the language barrier, a BKB social worker accompanied both women to London. The

co-operation of Bílý Kruh Bezpečí with Witness support UK was very helpful in this serious case. The offender has been given a 14 life sentences. DI Keith Richardson, from Lambeth Sapphire Unit, said: "I would like to thank two young women for their bravery in reporting the offences and their willingness to cooperate with police agencies from two jurisdictions".

Contact person: Marketa Vitousova, bkb.praha@bkb.cz, Bílý Kruh Bezpečí (Victim Support Czech Republic), www.bkb.cz, tel.: +420 257 317 110.

The Netherlands

Case management for relatives of Murder and Manslaughter

In January 2007, Slachtofferhulp Nederland (Victim Support The Netherlands) started a pilot project targeting at further improvement of service to relatives of victims from murder and manslaughter. The first outcome of this project is very positive. In fact, the experiences gained during the last year has led to further expansion of the project to all regions within Slachtofferhulp Nederland. From January 1, 2009 on, in every region of the country two case managers will assist relatives and will give support in dealing with emotional, practical and legal issues.

Contact person: Frank Hengeveld, f.hengeveld@victimsupporteurope.eu, Slachtofferhulp Nederland (Victim Support the Netherlands).

Colofon

The Victim Support Europe newsletter exists to inform all Victim Support Europe members about recent developments, research, documents for collective use and training materials.

Victim Support Europe members have the opportunity to contribute to this newsletter as follows: every member organization appoints one contact person. This contact person compiles information for the newsletter and communicates this to the editor.

This contact person is also responsible for spreading the newsletter through his or her own victim support organization after he or she received the newsletter.

Editor:

Irene Staat, Victim Support the Netherlands.

*i.staat@victimsupporteurope.eu
+31 30 2320773*