

# Annual Report

2008-2009



## Victim Support Europe

Victim Support Europe is a network of 22 non-governmental victim support organizations in 19 European countries, which provide assistance and information to victims of crime.

Founded in 1990, Victim Support Europe exists to promote the establishment and development of victims rights and victim services throughout Europe.

Each year, the Victim Support Europe member organizations assist towards three million people affected by crime. Around 3,000 paid staff and over 20,000 volunteers provide much needed practical and emotional support and juridical advise to victims of crime.

### Mission

Victim Support Europe is professionalizing itself into a strong European organisation, working as a competent representative stimulating further establishment of the rights of victims of crime in Europe. Victim Support Europe therefore is building a network within the European Commission and authorities from European countries.



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## President's report

It is with great pleasure that I present to you the Annual Report 2008-2009 of Victim Support Europe. And it is with great pleasure to be able to say that the last year has been a very successful one for the organisation.



The expert meeting on the 2001 Council Framework Decision\* in Brussels in November certainly was one of the most important happenings for the development and establishment of victims' rights in Europe. Victim Support Europe worked on a revision of the Framework Decision last year and presented the proposed revision during the expert meeting. It is a privilege to contribute to a revision of the Framework Decision which will improve the standing of victims in criminal proceedings.

Victim Support Europe re-launched the 'Manifesto for Europe' to members of the European Parliament and experts in the field of victim support in Brussels in February. With the Manifesto Victim Support Europe calls on the European Commission to put the protection and promotion of victims' rights back on the EU agenda. MEPs and legal advisors from throughout Europe visited the re-launch.

As President of Victim Support Europe I had the honour to be asked to represent Victim Support Europe in many occasions in many places throughout Europe. These invitations show that Victim Support Europe is well known and that partners have high expectations from our organization.

We are happy that we make big progress also with important organizational issues such as a new membership policy which gives more organisations the opportunity to join Victim Support Europe. Growing bigger will help us to become more important and influent in the field of victim support.

Jaap Smit <sup>MA</sup>  
*President*

\* Council Framework Decision of 15 March 2001 on the standing of victims in criminal proceedings (2001/220/JHA)

## Secretary's Report

Another exciting and successful year for victim support in Europe. Our members have continued to develop and improve the services offered to victims of crime throughout Europe. Recently the Executive Committee were delighted to welcome Soprotivlenie, the victim support organisation in Russia and Victim Support Northern Ireland to full membership. Presently Victim Support Europe is considering four new approaches for membership and many more are in the pipeline.



Key activities have included the development of proposals to adopt a new constitution for Victim Support Europe that would be registered in Belgium and in the future the organisation will be based in Brussels. The help provided by Lovell's solicitors both in London and Belgium in making this move possible is very much appreciated.

Victim Support Europe has also drafted a new set of policy and procedures to govern applications for full and associate membership and hope to launch these soon. The year ahead will see further development of the application pack to make it easier for organisations to apply and for the executive committee to consider requests.

Finally I am grateful for and appreciate all the help and support I have received from members across Europe during the past 12 months. A special thanks is due to Frank Hengeveld, our executive officer, for all his hard work. Victim Support Europe is well placed for the future to succeed for people affected by crime in Europe.

David McKenna  
*Secretary*

## Treasurer's Report

The Victim Support Europe accounts show for the year 2007-2008 a total income of € 143.808.

The income out of membership fees increased to € 12.875 under the revised fee structure of 2005 and two new members: the Interregional Human Rights Public Association „Soprotivlenie“ from Russia and Victim Support Northern Ireland.

Operating Grants conceded by the European Commission under JLS/2007/JPEN/005/OP (period 1 April 2007 - 31 March 2008) permitted to increase income € 33.349,80 and under JLS/2008/JPN/001/OP (period 1 April 2008 - 31 March 2009) to increase income € 97.357,37. With the financial support of the European Commission, for the first time in the history of Victim Support Europe, a perspective is given to develop a strong European Organisation on a solid basis.

The amounts granted by the European Commission and prepaid in 2007 and 2008 by member organizations of Victim Support Europe are restricted incoming resources and are to be reimbursed to the member organizations. They relate to costs for developing communication supports, the publication of the Manifesto for Europe distributed all over Europe, costs for the secretariat and for meetings of the Executive Committee.

Total expenditure was € 7.866. Within this figure, € 6.638 are related to costs for experts and speakers during the Victim Support Europe Conferences and governance costs (accountancy and bank charges).

Marianne Gammer MA  
*Treasurer*



“Unfortunately Marianne Gammer will step down as a treasurer at the end of June 2009. On behalf of the Executive Committee I would like to express my thanks to Marianne for the wonderful work she has done for Victim Support Europe as a treasurer during the last 10 years. Due to her ongoing effort to professionalize the financial part of the organisation Victim Support Europe now is where it is.”

Jaap Smit  
*President*

## Executive Officer's report

In the legal year of 2007 - 2008 Victim Support Europe received funding from the European Commission for the first time in its history. This gave the organisation the opportunity to hire a paid staff member, responsible for the functioning of the Secretariat of Victim Support Europe. It was my pleasure to execute the tasks of Executive Officer for the first year.

It has been a mayor experience to be allowed to contribute to the important work that Victim Support Europe does for victims of crime throughout Europe. Main part of the tasks dealt with preparing, organising and attending the meetings of the Executive Committee and the Annual General Meeting in Belgrade, May 2008. Other tasks undertaken had to do with the involvement in writing the Annual Report, the review of the 2001 Framework decision and applying for funding within the European Commission where part of the job.

Joining meetings like the Fundamental Rights Platform in Vienna and other events throughout Europe gives me the opportunity to meet people involved in the support of Victims and to represent the important work of Victim Support Europe.

The coming year might become an even more exiting year. Investigating the possibilities of implementing the free European 116 service number will certainly be one of the main issues to work on. But knowing that the organization consists of highly motivated and inspired members I am sure Victim Support Europe will be able to take every challenge to continue to support victims all around Europe.

Frank Hengeveld MA  
*Executive Officer*

## Manifesto for Europe

Victim Support Europe has continued to spread the Manifesto for Europe across Europe. The aim of the Manifesto is to promote and highlight the needs of victims of crime within the EU. In particular, Victim Support Europe wishes to have the protection and promotion of victims' rights put back on the EU agenda, by including them in the next five-year programme (2010-2014), decided in Stockholm in 2009. To follow up this call, Victim Support Europe met with representatives from the Swedish Justice Ministry in April 2009 to reinforce the need for them to include victim issues in the coming 'Stockholm programme' and to discuss how victim's rights can be advanced during the Swedish EU presidency.

Victim Support Europe initially launched the Manifesto during Victims' Week in February 2008 at the European Council, Directorate for Freedom, Security and Justice. After that, each national victim support organization has received an information pack, including draft letters and suggestions how to promote the content of the Manifesto, both nationally and Europe-wide. A copy of the Manifesto has also been sent to all Members of the European Parliament. During Victims' Week in February 2009, Victim Support Europe reinstated her calls of the Manifesto in Brussels, in connection with the meeting for CEO's.

### CEO meeting Brussels

On the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> of February 2009 CEO's from Victim Support Europe gathered for the first time to discuss the current standing of victims within Europe and future actions to be taken to further improve their position. Apart from the Annual Conference it turned out to be important to meet as CEO's once a year to be able to discuss mayor issues within each member organization. After this meeting Victim Support Europe did organize a lunch for different stakeholders on victims' rights like MEP's and people involved in justice policy. During the lunch the Manifesto for Europe was re-launched and it was a pleasure to see so many delegates took the change to attend the meeting stipulating again the importance of the work done by Victim Support Europe.

### Framework Decision

On 15 March 2001, the European Council Framework Decision\* on the Standing of Victims in Criminal Proceedings came into force. The aim of the Framework Decision was to lay down requirements for the Member States to improve their services to victims of crime and to their families.

Concerned about the poor implementation of the Framework Decision across European Member States, the European Commission is currently conducting a review to see how the Framework can be updated to improve compliance. Victim Support Europe provided general suggestions and comments how the Framework could be strengthened to provide tangible improvements in services to victims. Throughout the document, we suggested alterations to the vague wording of the text, to ensure that each article contains real and concrete demands on Member States. Other suggestions include a definition of a vulnerable victim, more details on victims' right to information, a strong demand on each Member State to fund victim support and an expanded role for victim support service. As part of the review of the Framework Decision, the European Commission held an expert meeting on victims in November 2008. Victim Support Europe was represented along with attendees from national victim support organisations, key stakeholders from Member States, governmental representatives and national experts in criminology and criminal law. The new text of the European Framework is expected around September 2009.

\* Council Framework Decision of 15 March 2001 on the standing of victims in criminal proceedings (2001/220/JHA)

### Annual Conference/General Meeting Belgrade

The 22nd Annual Conference and Annual General Meeting of Victim Support Europe took place in Belgrade from May 28 until June 1, 2008, and therefore was hosted and organized by the Victimology Society of Serbia. This conference assembled more than 80 experts who work in victim support organizations or support victims in other manners. The theme of the conference was 'Taking the Victims Agenda Forward'.

The conference was opened by mr. Jaap Smit, President of Victim Support Europe, mr. Anthony Pahigian, Deputy Head of OSCE Mission to Serbia, mr. Rodoljub Šabić, the commissioner for Information of Public Importance and mrs. Vesna Nikolić-Ristanović, director of the Victimology Society of Serbia.

The opening ceremony was attended by guests of the conference, the ambassador of Croatia MR. Tonči Stanišić, representatives of the Belgian and German Embassies in Belgrade, and members and associates of the Victimology Society of Serbia.

During the conference the experts discussed about research concerning victims of stalking and domestic violence and its applications in practice, supporting victims of trafficking in people, children and young people - the links between violent victimization and offence, supporting victims of terrorism, help lines, fundraising, restorative justice and victim support, development of Victim Support Europe and Putting the Victim's Agenda on the EU's Agenda.

On Saturday morning important issues like the membership policy and constitutional matters of Victim Support Europe were discussed during the Annual General Meeting of the organization.

The conference was completed successfully in relation to the topics, organization and social events and as a consequence Victim Support Europe fortunately we received a lot of positive reactions.

wat zijn dit  
voor een tekens?

## Projects

The Portuguese Association for Victim Support (APAV) is presently developing the Victims in Europe project, on behalf of Victim Support Europe. Project aims to develop knowledge on the implementation of the Framework Decision in each of the 27 EU member states, perform a comparative analysis between the results achieved, carry out a global evaluation on the implementation of the Framework Decision at a European level. All to promote a discussion around the relevancy of the Framework Decision in what concerns victims' rights in the process of criminal justice.

Since there is no literature available yet concerning the level of implementation of the Framework Decision and since there is doubt about the way members have implemented the proceedings stated in de provisions, experts on victims' issues from each EU member state have been contacted to provide information on the legal and organisational situation of victims of crime. *Hier moet Jaap nog even naar kijken! Is er al wel literatuur???*

The project Victims in Europe, running from 2007 until 2009, will have as main result a final report including information about the national reality of the EU member states, as well as a comparative analysis on this issue, pursuing a transnational perspective of the implementation of the Framework Decision. Moreover the project will utilize various international and national indicators to gauge the impact on victims' experiences across Europe.

During the 'Victims in Europe – 23rd Annual Conference' of Victim Support Europe the preliminary results of the project will be presented to experts and professionals in the area of justice, social matters and policy-makers.

## Project Victims & Mediation

The aim of the 'Victims & Mediation' Project, finished in July 2008, promoted by the Portuguese Association for Victim Support (APAV) and co-financed by the EU, was to contribute to the protection of victims' rights within victim-offender mediation, by promoting a transnational cooperation as well as to give clues to the development of further research in this field. Under this project, the following activities took place:

- 3 study visits (Portugal, The Netherlands and Scotland) ending each one with a workshop to exchange information, knowledge and best practices on
  - contacting, informing and briefing victims on the mediation process;
  - training of mediators on victims' issues;
  - cooperation between mediation services and victim support services;
- a research on how Restorative Justice services operate regarding the standing and treatment of victims in Restorative Justice programmes;
- closing seminar held in Lisbon, with the participation of experts in this field, like Kathleen Daly, Simon Green, Gerd Delattre and Leoberto Brancher;
- publication of the research report and of the papers presented during the workshops and the closing seminar.

The project delivered insight in the diversity of practices and the lack of standards of intervention concerning the participation of victims in Restorative Justice practices. Next to that, the information collected and exchanged during this project allowed to notice the fact that the few aspects that are nowadays more or less consensual in terms of what can be beneficial and what can be potentially or effectively harmful for victims of crime are not always adequately addressed in practice. On the other hand, the project showed that there are very good examples of victim-sensitive practices that deserve to be disseminated in the near future. The expectation is, that this project contributes to the adoption -within Restorative Justice practices- of a set of very concrete victim-sensitive procedures that allow to maximize the positive impact of those practices and to minimize the risks of secondary victimization.

### EU helpline for victims

In 2007 the European Commission adopted the 2007/116/EC decision that obliges member states to reserve a six digit helpline number range starting with 116 for services of social value. In 2008 Victim Support Europe applied for a free European 116 helpline number for victims of crime to receive support and advice. The Communication Committee approved this application and made a reservation of the 116006 helpline number for victims of crime. It is expected that the number will formally be adopted around mid 2009. At least seven Victim Support Europe member organizations have indicated to be interested in using such a number if certain conditions will be set by the EU. In 2008 a start has been made to set up a project group within Victim Support Europe to investigate all consequences of the implementation of this number.

The European Commission is interested in the establishment of 116 help numbers since throughout Europe different numbers in different countries are used for the same services. Common numbers will facilitate the provision of services at a European level.

### Other Projects

Apart from the projects mentioned above in detail, Victim Support Europe has been consulted for requiring partners to take part in the following projects. So that in case of successful project ending the obtained knowledge and experience can be beneficial for other Victim Support Europe member organizations.

- The PHARE Twinning project organized by the Bulgarian Ministry of Justice together with the local victim support organization SVCCC foundation. The project aims at the establishment and strengthening of a National System for Support of Crime Victims. The project group met in Sophia, Bulgaria in December 2008. Victim Support Europe was represented by President Jaap Smit who, as an expert, supported and advised the project group (duration of the project: June 2008 – June 2009).
- The ISA project as part of the Daphne II program organized by the Associazione Differenza Donna from Rome in cooperation with Victim Support The Netherlands, APAV in Portugal,

Victim Support Scotland and Intervict from Tilburg, the Netherlands. The project aims at increasing self-awareness of risk of repeated victimization of women victims of intimate partner violence (duration of the project: November 2007 – November 2009).

- The DesVICT project was promoted by the European Forum for Restorative Justice in cooperation with the International Victimology Institute Tilburg (Intervict) with support of the Catholic University of Leuven and Victim Support The Netherlands towards European standards for victims of terrorism. The project aimed for determining the needs of victims of terrorism and the development of recommendations for European standards on psychological support and legal systems of victims of terrorism. The recommendations has been offered to the European Commission. The project ended with a seminar held in Tilburg on March 11, 2008.

## Liaison

Representatives of Victim Support Europe had the opportunity to attend several important meetings and conferences during the last year. The following overview indicates the growing importance of Victim Support Europe within member states of Europe and for members of Victim Support Europe themselves.

### Justice Forum

In 2008 the European Commission has established a Justice Forum in order to provide a platform for consultation with stakeholders on EU justice policy. Following the launch of the Forum, the Commission organised two thematic meetings: on Mutual Recognition in Criminal Matters and on Judicial Training. The third meeting, which took place in March 2009, was dedicated to E-justice within Europe. President Jaap Smit represented Victim Support Europe at this Forum which gave him the possibility to underline the importance of victims' rights being on the agenda of the EU justice policy.

### NOVA

The North American Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA) met for its annual conference in Louisville, Kentucky in September 2008. The Executive Officer had the chance to participate at this five-day meeting. Apart from plenary sessions on the state of victims' rights and services within the USA a lot of emphasis on other relevant issues was given in detail during workshops. Support to relatives of murdered victims, cooperation between the police, the justice system and victims and insights in how the media works were amongst them. Attending the conference contributed to the insight Victim Support Europe has in the way victim support is given in countries outside Europe and also strengthens the relationship between Victim Support Europe and NOVA.

Apart from the above mentioned meetings, Victim Support Europe attended the following meetings in the year 2008-2009 to promote victims' rights throughout Europe and to stipulate the importance of the work of Victim Support Europe:

- The first meeting of The Fundamental Rights Platform organized by the Fundamental Rights Agency in Vienna in October 2008 to support the Agency in preparing their annual programs on fundamental rights.
- The fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against transnational crime in Vienna in October 2008.
- The bi-annual meeting of representatives of all members of the Weisser Ring Germany, together with the Executive Committee of the organisation in Fulda on October 25, 2008.
- A conference organised by the Hungarian Judicial Academy on legal rights of Victims within Europe and surrounding countries in Budapest on October 7, 2008.
- The Taiex seminar organised by the European Commission on police assistance to vulnerable victims in Zagreb on February 13, 2009.
- A conference on 'Crime Victims' Support Network' organized by the Polish Ministry of Justice in Warsaw on February 19, 2009.
- The criminal law conference on 'Protection of vulnerable victims and their standing in criminal proceedings' organised by the Czech Ministry of Justice in Prague on March 17 and 18, 2009.



## Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 December 2008

	Year Ended 31.12.08		Year Ended 31.12.07	
	€	€	€	€
	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total	Total
<b>Incoming resources</b>				
<b>Other Income</b>				
European Commission	130,707	226	130,933	-
<b>Activities for Generating Funds</b>				
Bank Interest	-	-	-	1
<b>Incoming Resources from Charitable Activities</b>				
Membership Fees	-	12,875	12,875	11,250
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	130,707	13,101	143,808	11,251
<b>Resources expended</b>				
<b>Costs of generating funds</b>				
Charitable activities	6,047	591	6,638	9,819
Governance	-	1,228	1,228	5,738
<b>Total resources expended</b>	6,047	1,819	7,866	13,557
<b>Net income for the year</b>	124,660	11,282	135,942	(2,306)
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>				
Total funds brought forward	-	16,264	16,264	18,569
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	124,660	27,546	152,206	16,264

All the above results are derived from continuing activities.  
There were no recognized gains or losses other than those  
Stated above.

## Balance Sheet 31 December 2008

	31.12.08 €	31.12.07 €
<b>Fixed Assets</b>		
Tangible fixed assets	-	-
Investments	-	-
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Debtors	7,750	2,000
Cash at bank	145,861	14,864
	153,611	16,864
<b>Creditors</b>		
Amounts falling due within one year	1,405	600
<b>Net Current Assets</b>	152,206	16,264
<b>Net Assets</b>	152,206	16,264
<b>Funds</b>		
<b>Restricted funds</b>	124,660	-
	124,660	
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>	-	11,000
Designated funds	27,546	5,264
General funds	27,546	16,264
<b>Total Funds</b>	152,206	16,264

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graaf moet er  
blijven staan?

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### The Executive Committee consists of the following members:

- J. (Jaap) Smit MA, CEO 'Slachtofferhulp Nederland', The Netherlands (President)
- Mr. D. (David) McKenna, CEO 'Victim Support Scotland' (Secretary)
- Mag. M. (Marianne) Gammer, CEO 'Weisser Ring', Austria (Treasurer)
- Dr. H. (Helgard) van Hullen, Member of the Board from 'Weisser Ring', Germany
- João Lázaro, Vice Chair 'Apoio à Vítima' (APAV), Portugal
- Prof. Dr V. (Vesna) Nikolic-Ristanovic, director of Victimology Society of Serbia.

The executive office is managed by: F. (Frank) Hengeveld MA, Executive Officer  
Victim Support Europe.

