



Victim Support Europe



Victim Support Europe | Press release | 20 December 2019

Victim Support Europe appointed to run the European Commission's EU Centre of Expertise for Victims of Terrorism

Victim Support Europe (VSE) is delighted to announce that it has been appointed to run the European Commission's Centre of Expertise for Victims of Terrorism.

The Centre will operate as a hub for guidance, expertise and support with respect to victims of terrorism. Its establishment reflects the priority that the European Union places on victims and demonstrates the commitment to true partnerships between the EU, States, civil society, the private sector and victims themselves.

VSE will run the centre together with its partners Arq Impact, Fondation Lenval, and the AFVT, along with the co-operation of ICFI and Ecorys and the support of many victim organisations making up VSE's membership.

For many years VSE and its wider network of partners has pointed to the need for co-ordinated EU action to ensure that the specific needs of victims of terrorism are understood and that the right legislation, policy and services are in place to support them. Just as we must have EU expertise to counter radicalisation and terrorism, we must have the expertise to help victims.

We would like to express our deepest thanks to all those who have supported the creation of this centre, in particular MEPs: Teresa Jiménez-Becerril Barrio and Maite Pagazaurtundúa, who proposed the creation of the centre in the European Parliament.

The EU Centre will assist EU Member States in ensuring effective transposition and practical application of EU rules on victims' of terrorism.

The EU Centre will provide for concrete and practical actions which will have a positive impact on victims of terrorism. In particular, the EU Centre will produce guidelines and training for practitioners, information for victims and it will develop networks of experts at the national level to support knowledge exchange and more effective responses across borders.

At the end of the project all actions of the EU Centre will be evaluated to determine the necessity and the feasibility of setting up a future EU Coordination Centre for Victims of Terrorism.

The EU Centre will carry out four tasks:

1. Develop guidelines and organise training activities on the basis of lessons learnt from the past terrorist attacks. Training activities will be organised for the staff of national authorities and of national victim support organisations.
2. Set up and maintain lists of national and EU level experts (psychologists, psycho-trauma experts, lawyers, experts in compensation) and victim support organisations, facilitate access to information about victims' rights and their application in practice. The EU Centre will gather experts, research, knowledge and skills from the European Union and around the world.
3. Assist the European Commission and the European Network of Victims' Rights (a network consisting of EU Member State professionals, usually from the Ministries of Justice, acting in the field of victims' rights) in reinforcing operational coordination between Member States and victim associations. Including establishing safe communication channels allowing immediate exchange of information about victims from different Member States.
4. Evaluate the necessity and the feasibility of setting up of an EU Coordination Centre for Victims of Terrorism.

All actions of the EU Centre of Expertise for Victims of Terrorism will be under the steer and close supervision of the European Commission and in cooperation with the European Network of Victims' Rights.

"I am excited to have such a high calibre team in place to lead the Centre for Victims of Terrorism. It is crucial that the public have confidence that the centre operates with a full understanding of victims needs and can reflect the priorities and different situations of every Member State. I believe that by bringing together partners and experts from around the world, we will create a world class centre of expertise that places victims at the heart of its work", says Levent Altan, Executive Director of Victim Support Europe.

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