



**23rd CONFERENCE AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF
VICTIM SUPPORT EUROPE
LISBON, PORTUGAL 25 JUNE – 27 JUNE 2009**

**MINUTES OF VICTIM SUPPORT EUROPE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
SATURDAY JUNE 27 2009 AT 10.00 AM
Hotel Real Palacio Rua Tomas Riberio, 115
1050-228
Lisbon**

1. OPENING AND WELCOME

The Chair, Jaap Smit, welcomed everyone to the 2009 Annual General Meeting.

2. Apologies and Presence

Present

Jaap Smit, Chair	Netherlands	Slachtofferhulp Nederland
David McKenna, secretary	Scotland	Victim Support Scotland
Marianne Gammer, treasurer	Austria	Weisser Ring Austria
Helgard van Hüllen	Germany	Weisser Ring Germany
Vesna Nikolic-Ristanovic	Serbia	Victimology Society of Serbia
Joao Lazaro	Portugal	APAV
Frida Petersson	Scotland	Victim Support Scotland/ Victim Support Europe
Carmen Rasquete	Portugal	APAV
Lone Nielsen	Denmark	Victim Support Denmark
Gitte Olesen	Denmark	Victim Support Denmark
Ove Bendtsen	Denmark	Victim Support Denmark
Ron Daniel	Scotland	Victim Support Scotland
Alan Davie	Scotland	Victim Support Scotland
Stiliyan Ivanov	Bulgaria	Victim Support Bulgaria
Satu Hintikka	Finland	Victim Support Finland
Sara Toth	Netherlands	Victim Support Europe
Owen Sharp	England & Wales	Victim Support England & Wales
Sven-Erik Alhem	Sweden	Victim Support Sweden
Paul Simpson	Northern Ireland	Victim Support Northern Ireland
Susan Reid	Northern Ireland	Victim Support Northern Ireland
Petra Kjällman	Finland	Victim Support Finland
Jutta Hartmann	Germany	ADO Germany
Maeve Ryan	Ireland	Crime Victims Helpline (IRL)
Gabrielle Holthaus	Germany	Weisser Ring Germany

Barbara Scharping	Germany	Weisser Ring Germany
Sonja Leferink	Netherlands	Slachtofferhulp Nederland
Kris De Groof	Belgium	Steunpunt Algemeen Welzijnswerk
Jan Mans	Netherlands	Slachtofferhulp Nederland
Susan Gallagher	Scotland	Victim Support Scotland
Jasmina Nolic	Serbia	Victimology Society of Serbia
Michele de Kerckhove	France	INAVEM
Marketa Vitousova	Czech Republic	Bily Kruh Bezpeci
Petra Vitousova	Czech Republic	Bily Kruh Bezpeci
Olga Kostina	Russia	Soprotivlenie (Victim Support Russia)
Marina Schepp	Russia	Victim Support Russia
Tamara Kalantaryan	Russia	Victim Support Russia
Jana Siposova	Slovakia	Pomoc Obtiarn nasilia (Victim Support Slovakia)

Apologies

Frank Hengeveld	Netherlands	Victim Support Europe
Gillian Guy	England & Wales	Victim Support England & Wales

3. Minutes of AGM 2008

On page 3, under agenda point 3, the first sentence should read **no** matters arising.

Under agenda point 4, section 2, second sentence, change Mr. Fratini to **an EU official**.

With these amendments, the minutes from the last AGM, held in Belgrade, Serbia on May 31 2008 were approved.

Jaap acknowledges the effort and hard work being conducted by Victim Support Europe during this past year, in particular by Frank Hengeveld and Frida Petersson.

4. Annual report 2009

- Chairs report Jaap Smit

Jaap presents Victim Support Europe's new Annual Report. He declares that Victim Support Europe is getting a stronger and more pronounced role, we are asked to partake in many meetings, conferences and work groups throughout the Europe. One example is the EU Justice Forum, in which 70 people from the criminal justice field in Europe are invited to discuss advancements of criminal justice issues within the EU. Victim Support Europe have been invited to participate, and are now represented on the Forum. In addition to taking part in international developments, VSE is also being asked to provide assistance to countries in their initial stages of establishing a victim support organisation.

Jaap was invited to conferences in the following countries/cities:

- Croatia
- Poland – establishing victim support
- Prague – vulnerable victims
- London – meeting Gillian Guy

- Edinburgh – developing VSE website
- Sofia – establishing victim support
- Stockholm – met Justice Ministry to discuss future “Stockholm programme”
- Stockholm – conference regarding Sweden’s priorities during its EU presidency
- Budapest – overview over European legislation
- Vienna – UN Conference on human trafficking
- Lisbon – victims and mediation from the perspective of the victim
- Verona – restorative justice conference
- Brussels – CEO meeting. It was positive to see so many representatives from our member organisations attending; we should arrange this type of meeting every year. By having decision makers attending from each country, decisions can be taken more quickly and VSE progress in its work and development.
- Brussels – discuss EU funding. There is a large amount of bureaucracy regarding EU funding, with large amounts of ineffective paperwork having to be conducted. VSE hopes for improvements to be made; one option we are considering is to hire a consultant to apply for EU funding on VSE’s behalf.

In addition to these external visits, a Turkish delegation came to visit Victim Support Europe and Victim Support Netherlands to discuss the work and cooperation with police and prosecutor agencies.

The meetings of the Executive Committee have increased, from 3 to 4 meeting each year, due to the increasing amounts of work of the organisation.

Jaap expresses a wish that the AGM shall not only discuss organisational matters, but also the content of the work. Increased victims’ rights throughout the EU will impact on our work, and we must be able to help victim access these rights.

Finally, Jaap thanks for the confidence the member organisations have put in him, which he very much enjoys.

- Secretary’s report David McKenna

David informs the meeting that the last year was very exciting and busy for Victim Support Europe. A tremendous amount of work went into the policy work surrounding the Manifesto, the Victims in Europe project and the review of the Constitution, to only mention a few.

There has been a lot of interest from organisations across Europe to become members of Victim Support Europe. In March, the Executive Committee approved full membership for Victim Support Northern Ireland. On the meeting on Wednesday (24 June 2009), three new associate members from the Republic of Ireland were approved:

- Irish Tourist Assistance Service
- Commission for the Support of Victims of Crime
- Crime Victims Helpline

Foundation FAVIDE, a regional victim support organisation covering the region of Valencia, Spain, has also been awarded associate membership. Congratulations to all new members and associate members, you are all welcome. Victim Support Europe is

very encouraged by the increasing interest in our organisation, for instance by countries such as Denmark, Poland, Romania and Hungary.

David finally expresses his gratitude for the help and support given by all member organisations during this past year. He also thanks Frank Hengeveld and Frida Petersson for their work and contribution.

- Approval of annual report

Approval of the VSE Annual Report 2008-2009 was suggested by Ron Daniel and seconded by Owen Sharp.

5. TREASURER'S REPORT – Marianne Gammer

Income and Expenditure 2008

The Treasurer, Marianne Gammer, presented the accounts of Victim Support Europe for the year ending 31 December 2008, distributed in advance to all member organisations (Report of the Trustees and Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2008). It was noted that total income 2008 had been Euro 143.808 (membership fees 12.875, EU Grants 2007 and 2008 130.707 and other income of 226) and that expenditure had amounted to Euro 7.866 (Euro 6.638 for travel and hotel costs for external speakers at the annual conferences 2007 and 2008 as well as Euro 1.228 for audit costs and bank charges). In the accounts 2008, donations in kind contributed by member organisations are not considered. Total funds as per 31 December 2008 are Euro 152.206, cash on bank are Euro 145.861.

The Treasurer stressed that funds have increased extraordinarily due to payments of the European Commission for 2 Operating Grants under JLS/2007/JPEN/005/OP (period 1 April 2007 - 31 March 2008) of Euro 33.350 and under JLS/2008/JPEN/001/OP (period 1 April 2008 - 31 March 2009) of Euro 97.357,37. This income has to be reimbursed to member organisations as defined in the Grant Applications.

With more than 2 years experience of European Commission Operating Grants, Victim Support Europe has learnt that applying for, and receiving, grants is related with considerable costs in terms of manpower and, not to forget, the capacity of pre-financing all activities for a rather long period. Another important aspect is that 30% of the total Grant budget has to be contributed by the applicant. This is increasingly becoming a problem when VSE or member organisations are involved in several Grants simultaneously.

As per 27 June 2009, the Grant under JLS/2007/JPEN/005/OP is confirmed by the European Commission with a total budget of Euro 72.094. Contributions in kind are mainly given by Executive Board members whose working hours contribute Euro 27.410 (VSE has already received Euro 33.350, and are still waiting for the additional Euro 11.334 to be paid from the European Commission).

The Grant under JLS/2008/JPEN/001/OP has not yet been confirmed by the European Commission. This project with a total budget of Euro 209.860, with contributions in kind being Euro 48.643 (VSE has already received Euro 97.357, but are still waiting for the additional Euro 50.984 to be paid from the European Commission if the total budget proposal is accepted). The reimbursement of expenses of member organisations for participating in the Conference of Victim Support Europe in Belgrade in May 2008 can not be started as long as we do not

know the final budget, so we still have to wait for the confirmation of the Grant in order to know which expenses up to which amount will be accepted.

This situation of financial uncertainty, without final confirmation how much funding we will receive, raises a problem that all VSE members have to consider. Victim Support Netherlands is prefinancing a large part of all activities related to paid staff costs (Frank Hengeveld, Irene Staat), the secretariat and operation in general, which means that Victim Support Netherlands also carries the risks related to these expenses. For the period 1 April 2008 to 31 December 2008 and for 2009, Victim Support Netherlands has not received any money to cover these costs. We have to find a mechanism that allows VSE to reimburse these costs within a reasonable time; one way would be to give priority to the costs incurred by Victim Support Netherlands and that the reimbursements to the other member organisations (mainly travel and hotel costs) will be delayed until Victim Support Netherlands' costs have been paid. All members, especially those represented in the Executive Board, should be aware and act as if the expenses related with their activities for Victim Support Europe will not be reimbursed or reimbursed several years later.

Budget 2009

The Budget 2009 was distributed to all members in advance. The budget shows restricted income for 2009 of Euro 76.253 related to the Operating Grants under JLS/2007/JPEN/005/OP (period 1 April 2007 - 31 March 2008) and JLS/2008/JPEN/001/OP (period 1 April 2008 - 31 March 2009) and Euro 12.875 for membership fees. The same period holds expenses of Euro 206.960 related to the above cited Grants.

Membership Fees 2009 and 2010

The Treasurer informed that the membership fees 2009 and 2010 for each member organisation, according to the membership-fee structure accepted by the AGM by resolution in May 2005 and the resolution to be proposed to this AGM later on, will be at the same level as in 2008:

Bulgaria, Estonia, Malta and Serbia	Euro 250
Slovakia	Euro 375
Czech Republic, Finland, Hungary and Portugal	Euro 500
Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland	Euro 750
France, Netherlands, Russian Federation	Euro 1.000
Germany (ADOI and Weisser Ring)	Euro 1.250 (total)
England & Wales, Northern Ireland, Scotland	Euro 1.500 (total)

The Treasurer stresses that membership fees 2009 are due within the year 2009 and all those who have not yet paid the fees for former years should pay as soon as possible.

The Treasurer explains that the resolutions relating to the setting of membership fees are proposed because the system valid up to now is not as efficient as it should be. Membership fees for a current year are fixed in the AGM in May or June of that year, so membership fees can only be requested after the AGM. In order to increase future planning and be able to ask for payment at the beginning of the year, Marianne hopes that future membership fees should be fixed by the AGM in the previous year, before the year starts.

The Treasurer's Report was approved by a show of hands, suggested by Paul Simpson and seconded by Michele de Kerckhove.

Appointment of Auditors

- Resolution 4. Approval of Newnham & Company as Auditors

Marianne Gammer reads the resolution, "This AGM agrees to continue for a further year (2009) the appointment of Newnham & Company of 27 Morden Hill, London SE13 7NP at a fee yet to be determined" as the auditors VSE." The resolution is suggested by Owen Sharp and seconded by Joao Lazaro.

The resolution is unanimously adopted.

Membership fees

- Resolution 5. Setting membership fees

"This AGM resolves that in addition to setting the membership fees for the present year it may also by ordinary resolution set the fees for future years."

Marianne Gammer explains the resolution; membership fees are decided by the AGM for the current financial year. However, the financial year starts in January and the AGM is not held until the summer. The resolution suggests that in order to facilitate more forward planning and transparency in the financial management, the AGM should, in addition to the membership fees for the current year, also be able to set the fees for future years. This resolution is suggested by Petra Kjällman and supported by Vesna Nikolic-Ristanovic.

The resolution is unanimously adopted.

Membership fees 2009 and 2010

- Resolution 6. Membership fees 2009 and 2010

"This AGM resolves that the fees for membership of VSE for 2009 and 2010 will be as follows" :

2009

Full Membership	250 Euros minimum – 1500 Euros maximum
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2010

Full Membership	250 Euros minimum - 1500 Euros maximum
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Associate Membership	200 Euros
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Marianne Gammer reads this resolution, which is suggested by Helgard van Hüllen and seconded by Vesna Nikolic-Ristanovic.

The resolution is unanimously adopted.

6. Executive Officer's Report

Frank Hengeveld is not present at the meeting, so Frida Petersson reads out a written Executive Officer's report in which Frank thanks all members for the support during the last year, especially Marianne Gammer for her financial advice regarding the funding programmes.

7. Establishment of VSE constitutions

- Resolution 1. The Establishment of VSE Constitution in Brussels

David McKenna explains the background and content of the resolution. The AGM 2008 decided in principle to move the VSE constitution from the UK to Brussels. Lovell's agreed to handle this transfer, advising us that it would be appropriate for an international organisation such as VSE to be based in Belgium. The new constitution was circulated among our member organisations and discussed at the CEO meeting in Brussels in February 2009. The new constitution is widely based on the old constitution, with the following new measures:

- Changed terminology – the chair will now be called the **president** of Victim Support Europe
- Revised size of the Executive committee – the committee will consist of 6 – 10 members, the exact number decided by the AGM
- Following discussions in Brussels in February, the Executive Committee will in the new constitution be called the Executive Board
- Revised term of office – extension of the service of Executive Committee members from the current 2 terms of 2 years, to 2 terms of 3 years (max 6 years).
- The present Executive Committee members will follow the new constitution retrospectively regarding the length of time they serve on the Committee
- The new constitution includes the possibility for the organisation to establish accreditation schemes in the future
- It formalises the concept of associate membership
- The level of liability is the same in the UK as in Belgium, so there will be no difference in practice

After the AGM, if the constitution is approved, the new constitution will be circulated throughout all Member organisations, which should be seen as founders of the new constitution.

The resolution empowers the Executive Committee to put the new constitution in place.

Sonja Leferink asks regarding the purpose and limit of associate membership. This will be dealt with under the next resolution.

Susan Reid asks if the liability lies with the Netherlands or Victim Support Europe, since Victim Support Netherlands is pre-financing the majority of the VSE's running costs. David explains that the liability would lie with Victim Support Europe, but Victim Support Netherlands would be seen as a creditor, able to sue Victim Support Europe. These matters will however be resolved, and full liability lies with Victim Support Europe, once the secretariat moves to Brussels.

The resolution is unanimously adopted.

8. Membership

- Resolution 2. Membership of Victim Support Europe

David McKenna gives an overview over the resolution and the benefits of the two different types of memberships; full member and associate member. These policy

criteria are already applied in practice, but the resolution will make them formalised on paper.

The resolution is unanimously adopted.

9. Framework Decision

- Resolution 3. Review of the EU Framework Decision

Frida Petersson gives an overview over the resolution. The policy direction on the Review of the Framework Decision on the Standing of Victims in Criminal Proceedings was circulated to all member organisations and discussed at the CEO meeting in Brussels in February 2009. Although the EU has decided not to proceed with the review of the Framework Decision, it would still be beneficial to VSE's future policy developments to decide on what changes the member organisations wish to see regarding the advancement of victims' rights.

The resolution is unanimously adopted.

Jaap expresses VSE's disappointment that the European Commission has decided not to take the review of the Framework Decision forward, but thanks Frida for her excellent work on VSE's contribution to the review.

10. Appointments to the Executive Committee

a. Appointment of Executive Committee member / Nomination of Gillian Guy, Joao Lazaro and Helgard van Hüllen

Jaap expresses his joy that Joao and Helgard would like to continue their work in the Executive Committee, and he is also pleased that Gillian Guy has expressed her interest in joining. It is important to have a mix of organisations, including some of the big contributors, represented on the Committee.

There are no objections, so all three nominees are approved. Congratulations to you all.

b. Appointment of Treasurer / no nominations received

We have not received any nominations for the appointment of treasurer, so this will be further discussed by the Executive Committee. Members are encouraged to step forward or give suggestions on who they think would be suitable. Suggestions can be sent to Frank Hengeveld.

Number of members

- Resolution 7. Number of members Executive Committee

David McKenna gives an overview over the resolution. The Executive Committee recognises the increasing workload of Victim Support Europe. The resolution enables the Executive Committee to appoint another member of the Committee, if it is needed in the future, between AGMs.

Petra Kjällman confirms that this is a good working arrangement for the Committee.

The resolution is unanimously adopted.

11. Future Annual Conferences

Indicative bids Germany 2010 and 2011 to be decided

2010

Victim Support Europe has received a bid from Weisser Ring Germany, offering to organise the VSE Annual Conference in 2010. ADO representative Jutta Hartmann introduces herself and declares her surprise over the bid. ADO was not aware that Weisser Ring had given this bid and she asks if it would be possible for ADO and Weisser Ring Germany to host the conference together. Jaap states that VSE can only decide on the bids that are presented, and the only official bid for hosting the 2010 conference came from Weisser Ring Germany. VSE appreciates and gladly accepts this bid; it is up to Weisser ring and ADO to decide amongst themselves if they will organise the conference together or if only Weisser Ring will be the host. Joao Lazaro reminds the meeting that it should be seen as Victim Support Europe's conference **hosted** by a country, it is not that country's conference.

Petra Kjällman agrees that this is not a subject for the AGM to discuss, and it is up to Germany how they will organise the conference amongst themselves. Instead, she suggests that the next CEO meeting can discuss how to support the cooperation of members from the same country.

Jaap concludes that this year's conference in Portugal should be seen as an example in not only making the conference attractive to VSE members but also to external parties. This puts increased demands on the host organisation and on the quality of the conference, in order to maintain or increase the high level of external participants such as judges, prosecutors, Justice Ministries and academics.

It is agreed that the Annual Conference 2010 will be held in Germany.

2011

Victim Support Europe invites suggestions on who would like to organise the Annual Conference 2011, please send your suggestions to the VSE secretariat.

12. Other resolutions

No other resolutions were submitted

13. Any other competent business

Some members have (been) asked to address the meeting.

Northern Ireland

As a new member, Susan Reid from Victim Support Northern Ireland presented some short key facts about her organisation.

- Northern Ireland is a relatively small country with 1.6 million inhabitants
- Victim Support Northern Ireland have existed for around 30 years
- Victim Support Northern Ireland has a budget of £2 million, 65 staff members and 180 volunteers
- During the last 6 years, the organisation has extended the Witness Services and the work regarding criminal injuries compensation. 4 years ago, 20% of all criminal injuries compensation work in Northern Ireland was conducted through

Victim Support. This figure has now grown to 40% so the work of the organisation is increasing

- Developments are being made to establish electronic referrals of all witnesses, which will make the Witness Service better placed to offer pre-trial visits
- Similar developments are being done regarding the referral of victims from the police with the aim that each victim should **always** be referred to victim support unless the person says no
- One of the biggest challenges is currently the devolution process, whereby Northern Ireland will be responsible for their own criminal justice issues
- Susan thanks the meeting for accepting Victim Support Northern Ireland as a member, and invites all to visit Northern Ireland. Finally, she congratulates Jaap and the other founding members on VSE's continuing development

Russia

One year after becoming members of Victim Support Europe, Victim Support Russia has paid large attention to the information produced by VSE. An important part of the organisation's work and aim is the humanisation of criminal justice in Russia. Victim Support Russia has been very active in commenting and criticising new plans for the development of Russian criminal justice, since it only focused on the offenders and not on victims. There is for instance no compensation system and no legal provisions for psychological support to victims. As the result of Victim Support Russia's letters to the president and to the Prime Minister, the developments have been put on hold and Victim Support has been invited to help to reform the work in this area. The President developed measures to provide support to victims, with the support of Victim Support Russia, since it is the only organisation able to conduct this work. Victim Support Europe has helped to provide this knowledge. A main part of the work of Victim Support Russia in developing new rights and provisions for victims in Russia has been to bring western experience by translating document, in particular documents from Germany, UK and the Czech Republic. At next year's conference, Victim Support Russia hopes to have more information on the new Framework from Russia. **Victim Support Europe reforms the justice system in Russia through Victim Support Russia.**

Regarding the current crime situation in Russia, there is a huge increase (30 fold increase) in violence against children and a tenfold increase in child pornography crimes. In cooperation with the IT community, Victim Support Russia organised the project "Do not allow". The organisation and project have the support of the Parliament and the President, and are now preparing suggestions how to address child pornography. In February, Prime Minister Putin gave his support for the work Victim Support Russia is conducting with children and in fighting crimes against children.

Victim Support Russia extends its thanks to Portugal for both the work and non-work part of this annual conference.

Jaap is happy to see that the VSE membership is so important to the development in Russia.

England & Wales

Victim Support England & Wales has been absent from the international arena lately due to an internal organisational change, going from 77 individual charities to 1 single organisation.

Victim Support England & Wales is big, with a budget of around £50 million, 2000 staff members and 6500 volunteers.

Due to changes prompted by the Government, Victim Support England & Wales is now working through "Victim Support Plus", a telephone based needs-assessment scheme, conducted within 46 hours of a crime. The assessment will identify each victim's individual needs, after which both practical and emotional support will be offered through local victim centres.

Next step is a review of the service provision to witnesses. The review will be conducted in cooperation with the Government, who will set expectations regarding both witnesses and partner agencies.

Ron Daniel – Scotland

Ron Daniel declares that this is the last VSE meeting he will attend since his term as chair of Victim Support Scotland is coming to an end. He thanks for the cooperation until now and wishes all member organisations best of luck in their future work.

Michele de Kerckhove – France

Michele suggests that all member organisations of Victim Support Europe should have a mutual project/event each year during the International Victim Day. Jaap declares that this will be discussed by the Executive Committee, who will set a mutual theme.

INAVEM has received the list of families to the victims of the Air France plane crash and has so far contacted 500 people from the list. Some victims were foreign, and INAVEM has also received phone calls from foreign family members wanting support and information. Michele is therefore asking VSE to coordinate the response to the families of the plane crash victims, to ensure that they can all access support as close to their home as possible.

Jana states that Slovakia has had common experience and Michele should send a letter of the Slovakian names to Jana so she could provide support.

Jaap suggests that INAVEM should give a list of all names to the respective victim support organisations, so they can contact them to offer support.

David thinks it is better to give the information to the victims themselves, so they can choose if they want to contact victim support. There might be other organisations nationally that are working with these type of victims, for instance the Red Cross, so it should be up to the victims themselves who they wish to receive support from. This will also ensure the quality of support and will not raise the expectations for victims in countries without a developed victim support organisation.

Jaap concludes that if the present victim support organisations provide support to families of traffic accidents, they should contact Michele and she will give the contact details of the national victim support organisation to the respective families involved.

May Veine

May from Crime Victims Helpline in Dublin declares the organisation's joy of becoming an associate member. She also takes the opportunity to thank everyone involved in organising the annual conference.

Marianne Gammer

Since Marianne is stepping down as a treasurer, Jaap takes an official farewell of Marianne and presents her with a card and a gift. Thank you Marianne for all your hard work! Marianne says a few words of thanks, and says it has been a pleasure to work in the Executive Committee team.

Jaap closes the conferences and wishes everybody a safe trip home from Lisbon.