



DRAFT MINUTES OF VICTIM SUPPORT EUROPE GENERAL MEETING Friday 15 May 2015 (10:00-13:00 am)

Held in:
POLÍCIA JUDICIÁRIA
Rua Gomes Freire 174, 1169-007, Lisbon

1. Opening and welcome

The Vice Presidents of Victim Support Europe, João Lázaro and Helgard van Hüllen, open the General Meeting and welcome participants.

2. Apologies and Present

See list of attendees and apologies at the end.

3. Minutes

- a) GM 17 May 2014, Warsaw
The minutes are approved
- b) GM 18 November 2014, Brussels
The minutes are approved

4. Annual Report 2014

Vice Presidents' report - Helgard van Hüllen and João Lázaro

Helgard van Hüllen and João Lázaro presents a summary of the draft annual report 2014 included in the paperwork. The Annual Report 2014 will be published after being approved by this General Meeting.

João Lázaro explains that the objectives 2015 are part of the Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) with the European Commission for the period 2015-2017. VSE application for the FPA has been selected and is currently going through a budget review for the year 2015. The agreement should be signed soon. This will effectively secure reliable funding for VSE for the next three years.

The Vice Presidents take this opportunity to thank the member organisations who have made donations to VSE as it has allowed VSE this year again to secure the co-financing of the operating grant.

Treasurer's report

Based on the balance sheet in the draft Annual Report 2014, the full accounts in their official form, the audit report and the treasurer's report included in the paperwork,

Hélène Heinrichs presents the financial report on behalf of VSE Treasurer, Jo Keaney who was unfortunately unable to attend this GM.

The appointment process for the statutory auditor for the period 2015-2017 is also explained as the mandate of DGST (Martine Piret) ends with the audit of the accounts 2014.

5. Developing VSE's Future Membership Policy – Executive Director Levent Altan

Levent Altan explains the background of the proposed new membership policy presented in the membership policy paper. The general objective is to ensure that VSE is able to provide more and better services to its members.

It is proposed that in the medium term membership policy is adjusted with respect to:

- Criteria for eligibility;
- Fees for membership;
- Services and benefits available to different members;
- Obligations on members.

The aim of such adjustments should be to:

- Maintain the core ethos of VSE as an organisation focused on victim support services;
- Strengthen VSE's legitimacy and effectiveness by ensuring that:
 - full members can properly represent the mission and vision of VSE;
 - ensure all members can support and are supportive of the objectives of VSE and do not risk VSE's mission, vision and reputation
 - members are taken from as wide a population as possible;
- Assure VSE's financial security and help it to grow.

It is suggested that all forms of membership are likely to require some changes. However, it is recognised that changing associate and full membership policies is a sensitive process requiring good preparation and time for consideration.

It is suggested that full and associate membership policy is adjusted over a longer period of time than other membership. In preparation of any decision, the Secretariat and the Executive Board will continue to examine the problems that exist with respect full and associate membership and look at a range of options. A paper will be submitted to the General Assembly in September with a view to a decision being made on any changes in November 2015.

It is proposed to have an immediate change which is the creation of a new category of membership – Supporter Membership - which, through its title and benefits,

demonstrates that such organisations do not represent VSE, but rather support its mission.

Levent Altan presents the eligibility criteria, the benefits and the membership fee suggested for this new category.

The question is raised whether the ratio "benefits against efforts" to put in place this new category has been considered.

As an answer, the financial necessity to expand membership in order to increase VSE income through membership fees is highlighted as well the strategic goal to be a more open organisation.

The proposed amendments to the VSE Constitution in order to include this new category are presented.

It is noticed that under article 6.4 (b), the following mistake needs to be corrected:

6.4 (b) An application for supporter membership shall be submitted to the Secretariat of the Board who will examine the application and submit a recommendation to the two Board members nominated by the President to determine supporter membership applications. The Board members receiving the recommendation shall take a decision whether to admit an application for ~~full or associate~~ membership. The Secretariat to the Board shall inform the applicant accordingly. The application shall be made in a form approved by the Executive Board and by VSE in a General Assembly. Appointments to supporter membership will be reported to each General Assembly.

It is suggested to use the name of friend of Victim Support Europe rather than the word supporter of Victim Support Europe. The members informally agree.

6. Election of Executive Board Member

There is a quorum for the vote as 12 full members out of 22 are represented.

The following nomination has been received and is supported by the Executive Board:

- Executive Board Member: Leena-Kaisa Åberg, CEO of Victim Support Finland (RIKU - Rikosuhripaivystys Suomessa)

She will replace Tiina Rantanen who has been a VSE board member during the transition period at Victim Support Finland when the former CEO, Petra Kjällman retired and the new CEO was not yet appointed.

Leena-Kaisa presents herself and her experience in international work which will be useful to VSE.

The GM unanimously approves the nomination of Leena-Kaisa Åberg to the position of Executive Board Member.

Tiina Rantanen, Victim Support Finland (RIKU - Rikosuhripaivystys Suomessa), resigns from her position as Executive Board Member.

The Vice Presidents take the opportunity to thank her for her contribution to the work of the board during her office as a board member.

7. Resolutions

There is a quorum for the vote as 12 full members out of 22 are represented.

Resolution 1 – Annual report and Accounts 2014

This GM approves the Annual Report and Accounts 2014 as presented on 15 May 2015

Resolution 1 is unanimously approved by the GM

Resolution 2 – Discharge of responsibility of the Executive Board

This GM discharges the Executive Board of its responsibility regarding the Annual Accounts 2014

Resolution 2 is unanimously approved by the GM

Resolution 3 - Discharge of responsibility of the Auditor

This GM discharges the Auditor of her responsibility regarding the Annual Accounts 2014

Resolution 3 is unanimously approved by the GM

Resolution 4 - Appointment of auditor

The General Assembly hereby appoints the audit firm Crowe Horwath Callens Pirenne & Co as the Statutory Auditor. Ken Snoeks has been designated by the audit firm as their representative. The audit assignment will end at the General Meeting where the financial statements ending the 31 December 2017 are to be approved. The remuneration of the auditor will amount to 3.000 EUR plus VAT per audited Financial Year

Resolution 4 is unanimously approved by the GM

Resolution 5 – Developing VSE's Future Membership Policy

This GM approves the continued development of VSE's Future Membership Policy as presented on 15 May 2015 and approves the proposed resolution on constitutional amendments included in annex 1 of the report.

Resolution 5 is unanimously approved by the GM

8. Presentation of new member

AdVIC, Ireland (Joan Deane)

AdVIC is a national, non-profit charity which was founded in 2005 by a group of families trying to cope with the unlawful violent killing of a family member. AdVIC was formed to ensure that the rights of families of homicide victims are not ignored within the Criminal Justice System and to bring about a fairer, more balanced system for such families.

9. Presentation of applicant for associate membership

ACTEDO, Romania (Adela Dumbravan)

The Equality and Human Rights Action Center (ACTEDO) was set up in 2013 in Romania with the mission to promote fundamental rights and gender equality and to act against human rights violations.

ACTEDO's activities are awareness-raising campaigns, advocacy, research, educational activities and community development actions.

Since 2014 a Pro Bono Network for Human Rights has been established. This is the first human rights clearinghouse established in Romania. It is designed to facilitate access to justice in cases of discrimination and human rights violations.

The target groups are currently vulnerable groups (victims of domestic and sexual violence, Roma, persons with disabilities, HIV/AIDS positive persons, LGBT persons, institutionalized children etc.)

The network consists of 40 Pro Bono Lawyers. 30 requests for legal assistance were dealt with in the first 4 months of its existence.

The intention is to widen the target groups to all victims of crime and to work with other organizations to provide additional services.

10. Members' reports

Helgard first gives the word to Stephen Meigham, Chair of Victim Support Scotland, to say a few words about David McKenna.

David has been sick for over 9 months now and it is not clear when and if he will be able to come back to work.

David was very much involved in VSE. He would be delighted to see how VSE has continued and developed in his absence. He will not come back to the European work but he gives his best wishes for the future to VSE.

Olga Kostina, Soprotivlenie, Russia

This year VS Russia celebrates its 10th anniversary and a lot of events are planned. Last year we managed to include significant changes in the Russian criminal code. Now it is time for social changes: in October there will be a hearing in the Russian parliament dedicated to social aspects of victims' issues.

At the Federation council we are planning to promote a law on domestic violence. This issue has so far been neglected in Russia. Unfortunately, domestic violence creates a vivid debate in the Russian society but we hope to at least have a draft law and pass a first hearing in the Parliament.


More initiatives planned:

- Establish a hotline for people who have been victims of crime abroad
- Development of a Russian society on victimology
- One of the challenges in Russia is the view of victims in the Russian society. Being a victim still means being weak. At the same time, 2 events have shocked the Russian society recently: the Charlie Hebdo attacks and the murder of a famous Russian Politician. VS Russia is planning to create a series of videos where we ask popular and famous people to make short films showing victims who speak about their trauma and how they overcame it


VSE has supported us over the past years and we are very thankful for that. Without the knowledge VSE kindly shared with us we would not have been able to achieve all these changes in the criminal code.

11. Vice Presidents' closing remarks

Helgard van Hüllen thanks very much APAV team for all their excellent work on the conference. João Lázaro thanks all VSE Members, VSE Executive Board Members and VSE Staff in Brussels for their very good work all over the year.



Helgard van Hüllen



João Lázaro

Vice Presidents of Victim Support Europe

List of attendees:

Full Members

Helgard van Hüllen, Vice-President of Victim Support Europe – Weisser Ring Germany
João Lázaro, Vice-President of Victim Support Europe - Associação Portuguesa de Apoio à Vítima (Portugal)
Victor Jammers, VSE Executive Board Member – Slachtofferhulp Nederland (NL)
Sabrina Bellucci, VSE Executive Board Member – INAVEM (France)
Tiina Rantanen, VSE Executive Board Member - Rikosuhripaivystys Suomessa (Finland)
Barbara Unterlerchner – Weisser Ring Austria
Petra Vitousova - Bily Kruh Bezpeci (Czech Republic)
Marketa Vitousova - Bily Kruh Bezpeci (Czech Republic)
Ludmila Cirtkova - Bily Kruh Bezpeci (Czech Republic)
Steen Knudsen - Offerrådgivningen (Denmark)

Else Marie Buck - Offerrådgivningen (Denmark)
Leena-Kaisa Åberg - Rikosuhrupaivystys Suomessa (Finland)
Christoph Gebhardt – ADO (Germany)
Petra Klein - Weisser Ring Germany
László Fügedi - Fehér Gyűrű (Hungary)
Ákos Harmath - Fehér Gyűrű (Hungary)
Carmen Rasquete, APAV (Portugal)
Olga Kostina – Soprotivlenye (Russia)
Tamara Kalantaryan - Soprotivlenye (Russia)
Carolyn Hodrien - Victim Support England and Wales (UK)
Geraldine Hanna - Victim Support Northern Ireland (UK)
Stephen Meigham - Victim Support Scotland (UK)
Heather Dickson - Victim Support Scotland (UK)
Liz Taylor – Victim Support Scotland (UK)

Associate members

Lisa Kennedy – ITAS (Ireland)
Joan Deane – AdVIC (Ireland)
Naomi Gould – Crime Victims Helpline (Ireland)
Tomasz Piechowiak - Subvenia Victima (Poland)
Marzena Piechowiak - Subvenia Victima (Poland)
José Miguel Ayllón - ANVDV (Spain)
Sandra Müller Gmünder - SVK-OHG (Switzerland)

Guests

Adela Dumbravan – ACTEDO (Romania)
Iulia Pascu – ACTEDO (Romania)

Staff

Levent Altan, VSE Executive Director (VSE office Brussels, Belgium)
Hélène Heinrichs, VSE Administrative Officer (VSE office Brussels, Belgium)

Apologies

David McKenna – President of Victim Support Europe -- Victim Support Scotland (UK)
Jo Keaney, Treasurer of Victim Support Europe - Victim Support England & Wales (UK)