

Victim Support Europe and partners launch a campaign 'You won't believe it, but it exists' to inform of support services available in the EU

BRUSSELS, 22 February 2021 – As this day marks the European Day for Victims of Crime, Victim Support Europe is excited to announce the launch of its “You won't believe, but it exists” information campaign. Conducted with 14 partners across 13 different countries, the campaign intends to inform general public of the existence of victim support services and to encourage victims to reach out these services.

The campaign will deliver tailored information about the support services to the estimated more than 9 million of victims of crimes in the 13 countries¹. Animation speed-paintings, videos and other information materials (billboards, posters, brochures, stickers, etc.) will be rolled out in social media and offline from 22 of February till the end of 2021 under the hashtag #itexists.

“**An important EU law for victims of crime** was established in 2012: the EU Victims' Rights Directive is a legal statute that the majority of the EU citizens aren't aware of. All victims of any crime that took place in the in EU has the right to free victim support services, and every Member State has to establish a national victim support service. Currently, most EU countries can now offer these services to victims; however, over half of the general EU population is unaware of the Directive and the availability of support services². This campaign aims to fill that knowledge gap. The information focuses on ensuring that people know what a victim support service is and where to find help in the aftermath of a crime,” said Marina Kazakova, Communications Officer, Victim Support Europe.

The campaign features the faces and voices of victims, whose stories we learn through the medium of animation and video. Through these films – one per country, in its national language – the victims take the viewers on a powerful and emotional journey through their stories. From the opening scenes of stunning vistas of the victim's home country to the location where the victim's narrative takes place, the videos showcase the effects of crime on the victims and how they were empowered to respond. The characters share their experiences, their doubts and their fears, how they learned about victim support services, how they found the courage to look for help, and how their lives were changed by the support they received.

¹ According to Eurostat data, around 25 million criminal offences against persons or property, excluding minor crimes, are recorded annually in the European Union. Yet, most crimes are never reported, which leads to an estimate that there is likely to be up to 75 million direct victims of crime every year in the EU. Thus, 15% of population falls victims to crime. Hence, the campaign aims to reach these segment to get them informed about available support services. 20 million people is approximately 15% of the combined total population of the campaign partner countries. The campaign goal is to reach at least half of the total number, which is approximately 9 million people.

² The estimation is based on the 2-year in-depth research conducted by VSE within the VOciare project, the outcome of which was a report from 26 EU countries that tracks how EU Member States implement the Victims' Rights Directive 7 years after it was established. Learn more about [VOciare research](#).

The campaign consists of two components:

1. 'You won't Believe, but ...exists' is ' part animated speed paintings' produced by VSE for 7 countries (Bijeli Krug Croatia, Victim Support Denmark, Victim Support Finland, France Victimes, Associazione Libra Onlus, Rete Dafne Italia and Victim Support Sweden);
2. and 'Reclaim your safety' is part of the EU-funded PREVICT project, in which Victim Support Europe, the leading organisation along with Transcendent Media Capital (TMC), and 6 victim support organisations participate: the Human Rights for Democracy Centre (AL), Udruga za Podrsku zrtvama I Svjedocima (HR), Fehér Gyűrű (HU), Victim Support Malta (MT), Vilias (LT) and APAV (PT).

The poster is divided into two main sections. The left section has a light blue background with the text 'RECLAIM YOUR SAFETY' in bold black letters, followed by 'Together we can' in a smaller blue font. Below this is a grid of six stylized human figures in various colors. The right section has a light yellow background with the text 'If you are a victim of crime, call for free and confidential support' in black and blue. It includes the VSM logo (a blue and red umbrella) and the website 'http://www.victimsupport.org.mt' and phone number '+356 2122 8333'. At the bottom, there are logos for the European Union, Transcendent Media Capital, Victim Support Europe, and other partner organizations.

This multi-country campaign builds on the recent [EU Strategy on Victims' Rights](#), adopted by the European Commission in June 2020. The campaign is in line with the priority of the strategy 'Effective communication with victims and provision for a safe environment for victims to report crime' to achieve the EU's objective to empower victims to report crime. The campaign was produced with financial support from the Justice Programme of the European Union.

"An innovative aspect of the campaign is reflected in how information tools were developed. First, in-depth research on the best practice in delivering information to victims was conducted, in partner countries and at the international level. Based on that research, the partners developed creative and tailored information materials that respond to the victims' needs", said Inês Nunes de Freitas, VSE's Project Officer, who coordinates the [PREVICT project](#).

For more information and to discover the campaign content materials, please, consult the campaign webpage ['You won't believe it, but it exists'](#).