

VICTIM SUPPORT



Victim Support
Europe

116 006

HELPLINE

**VSE MEMBERS
JOINT STATEMENT**

JOINT STATEMENT BY VICTIM SUPPORT EUROPE AND ITS MEMBERS ON 116 006, THE EUROPEAN VICTIM SUPPORT LINE

116 006 has been a **dedicated European helpline for victims of crime** since November 2009. However, almost 15 years later, this number is **only in use in 13 countries** 1.

We need your help – victims need your help – **to ensure 116 006 is available in every EU Member State! No victim should be forgotten about or left behind.** The number is easy to remember, and allows all EU citizens at home or abroad to quickly reach help after a crime.

All victims of crime must have access to this helpline; **without access to 116 006, tens of thousands of victims feel alone and unheard**, unable to take that first step towards recovery and justice. Where helplines are available, **demand for assistance is huge**: 63.330 calls in the Netherlands, 41.630 in France and 20,882 in Germany in 2022. Thanks to the trained call handlers, thousands of European citizens, who have fallen victim to crime, have been able to **receive information and support** when they've needed it most.

However, some victims have difficulty getting someone to listen to them and helpline call handlers are often the only people victims speak to after a traumatic event. Thus, 116 006 helplines, run primarily by NGOs which provide victim support services, are key to ensuring victims receive appropriate information and support, and that they are referred to the services they need most.

In 2022, EU Commissioner for Justice Didier Reynders and Eric Dupond-Moretti, Keeper of the Seals, French Minister for Justice called on all EU Member States “to make use of the 116 006 helpline for the benefit of their citizens, in the conviction that **it is a necessary tool for providing information and care to victims.**”².

Since then, **no further 116 006 helpline have been made available in EU Member States.** Neither Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia nor Spain offer their citizens a 116 006 helpline. If a missing children’s helpline – 116 000 – is available in every country³, why is there not a helpline for victims of crime?

Through amendments to the EU Victims Directive, we call on the **European Commission, Council and Parliament to make the 116 006 helpline a requirement in all EU States**, and to **support Member States through EU funding**, following the approach for the missing children helplines. Proper funding for new and existing helplines is essential. Increases in helpline funding see an immediate increase in helpline use.

We call on all EU Member States to help victim support organisations to set up 116 006 helplines for all victims of crime.

Time is of the essence – 4000 homicides, around 200,000 sexual violence crimes, more than 600,000 assaults – take place each and every year, and the list of other crimes is much longer. **15% of Member State populations become victims every year: these are people you know – family, friends, colleagues.**

Without your help, many victims will struggle to find support and recovery. Join us in demanding action from the EU and Member States. To fail to do so, is to fail victims.

