



implementing
victim-oriented reform of the criminal
justice system in the european union



Practice sheet on TRAINING

This document includes a series of concrete ideas on the practical implementation of Article 25 of the Victims' Directive, and not only concerning *training*.

In this order, you will find:

1. Police training in Cyprus
2. Training victim support officers in Portugal
3. Restorative justice practitioners in Sweden



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1. Police training in Cyprus

The Police Academy has the responsibility to train police officers. Victim-oriented themes are taught at all levels of the **police educational programme** (i.e. basic training for recruits police officers and specialised training for sergeants, inspectors, chief inspectors).

In addition, **specialised training** is organised in collaboration with other relevant offices (e.g. Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Office; Combating Human Trafficking Office) for police officers involved in criminal proceedings who are likely to have personal contacts with victims of crimes. The aim is to train them 'to identify victims and their needs and deal with them in a respectful, sensitive, professional and non-discriminatory manner.'

Some trainings are organised periodically (e.g. on investigating cases of child sexual abuse, on interviewing vulnerable witnesses, on obtaining video recorded statements), others on annual basis (e.g. on dealing with child victims). Sometimes, trainings are delivered to 'refresh' and update the knowledge of police officers; these trainings can be organised locally or at the central department.

For example, the **Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Office**, in cooperation with the Police Academy, organises seminars and lectures for training and raising awareness. After completing their basic training at the Police Academy, new recruits are offered a three four-hour training course (on procedures, awareness and specifically on child sexual abuse), while police officers are offered a five day (40 hours) course depending on the needs. Courses take place either at the police stations or at the criminal investigations departments. Additional lectures on domestic violence and child abuse are delivered also during other police training specialized on other themes (e.g. human trafficking, community policing).

Also the **Combating Human Trafficking Office** organises trainings in cooperation with the Police Academy. Every year an analysis is made in order to identify what the needs are for trainings. This is done in collaboration with the European Police College, the Immigration Department, the Criminal Investigation Department and other relevant bodies. These specialised trainings '*include subjects such as such as law, victims' identification, EU strategies, investigation techniques, trends, connection with other crimes' and are meant to educate police officers, especially those in the front line such as 'immigration officers, members of the community policing and criminal investigation department's officers.'* Among others, one aim is to raise awareness and educate police officers on dealing with potential victims of human trafficking.



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2. Training victim support officers in Portugal

The Portuguese Association for Victim Support (APAV) created its Training Centre in 2003, coordinated centrally at the Head Office and with Training Offices spread across the country in Lisbon, Oporto, the Algarve and the Azores. APAV has the accreditation of the Directorate General of Employment and Work Relations, an entity responsible for defining and publicizing the evaluation criteria for quality and the accreditation of training institutions in Portugal, which formally recognizes the technical and pedagogical capacity of APAV to provide professional training.

Among the training available, APAV Training Centre and its Training Offices are responsible for managing and providing a **mandatory Training Course in Support of Victims of Crime** (of 90 hours, total) to all new victim support officers and volunteers. With about 3 training courses being delivered every year in each APAV Training Office, the Training Course is composed of the following modules:

- APAV presentation (vision, mission, values; model; strategic plan);
- The Victim Support Officer (Personal skills and Technical skills); the Support (impact of victimization; secondary victimization; types of support);
- Communication techniques; Code of Conduct, Confidentiality and Safety;
- Introduction to the Specialised Support;
- Specialised support (psychological support; legal support; social support; each trainee is allowed to attend one of the three sessions of specialised support, according with their educational background);
- Support of Victims of Domestic Violence (risk factors; impact; legal framework; the provision of support to victims of domestic violence/intervention strategies; case studies);
- Elderly Victims of Violence and Crime (different types of violence and crime against the elderly; ageism; legal framework; intervention strategies; case studies);
- Children and Young People Victims of Violence and Crime (different types of violence and crime against children; risk and protective factors; impact and dynamics; legal framework; intervention strategies; case studies);
- Property Crimes (different types of property crime; safety measures; case studies);
- On job training (with supervision; 52 hours).



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3. Restorative justice practitioners in Sweden

Sweden provides **training for restorative justice practitioners** (i.e. mediators) which are not compulsory.

Currently, about 90% of mediators have a background as social workers, lawyers, doctors, but 10% does not (e.g. people working for the church). Mediators are mostly volunteers, but more and more often are paid.

The **mediation coordinator** is paid and has a **longer training** (4 + 4 days). Municipalities decide who is going to be the mediation coordinator and decide if she/he is going to have training: according to the expert, this may not play in favor of victims.

In 2009, after the Mediation secretariat was demolished and the Agencies for Social Services took over the responsibility, **guidelines were written stating that mediators should be competent in theory and practice**, but this is not regulated for financial reasons but also because 'there are no resources to make sure that mediators are actually competent'.