

ALL VICTIMS RECOGNISED, NO VICTIM FORGOTTEN:

JOINT STATEMENT FOR EUROPEAN DAY FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME

22 FEBRUARY, 2015

Brussels, 20 February 2015 - Sunday 22 February marks European Day for Victims of Crime. A day to remember those who have suffered at the hands of criminals – many millions every year – children and adults, women and men, poor and wealthy, residents and visitors to the EU.

It is a day to recognise the plight of victims everywhere and to give voice to their needs.

Across Europe and the world, reports of crimes against victims – whether they relate to terrorism, abuse, domestic violence, hate crime, human trafficking, robbery or any other crime, are a stark reminder of how unpredictable crime can be.

Our thoughts are with all those who have been victimised, whether or not the crime is reported in the media, whether it is reported or not to the police or to other organisations. Even if you have never told anyone about the crime, you are not alone, and our thoughts are with you.

We know that in many countries victim support services are able to respond immediately to help victims. Such a timely response is essential. On this occasion, we would like to thank all those who stand ready to help victims - the staff and volunteers of victim support organisations, specialised bodies, individual professionals and many more, for their extraordinary efforts.

Your dedication gives victims an essential line to help them recover and to overcome the hardships they face. We also thank Victims of Crime International (VOCI) and the US National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA) for their expressed support.

Yet we must recognise that victim support is not always available in every country in Europe, nor around the world. Not every State has well established, well-funded, national victim support organisations which provide victims with the support they need. Nor is every victim entitled to access victim support services even when they are available. Unfortunately, there is often still a large gap between victims' rights on paper and their rights in practice.

In 2015, this cannot continue to be the case. Every Member State of the European Union has made a clear commitment to establishing victim support services – both generic and specialised, to establishing full and effective rights for victims of crime, and to implementing the EU Directive on Victims' rights by November of this year (with the exception of Denmark).

Today, we call on those Member States to live up to this and other commitments to victims. We call on them and on States around the world to continue to strive to improve the situation of victims.

All victims of crime, no matter what crime, no matter where it took place, no matter who the victim is, where they come from or the reasons for their victimisation, should be treated with respect and

dignity. They should be supported in the immediate aftermath of the crime and for as long as is necessary afterwards.

Law enforcement and justice systems must work tirelessly, not only to find, prosecute and punish the criminals, but also to safeguard each and every individual victim involved in that process. The system should not cause more harm or suffering to victims and it should not impose unnecessary burdens and costs.

Our national systems must treat each victim as an individual. The needs of one group of victims are not the same as for another. The needs of one person are not the same as for another. Nor can the response be identical for each person. The reasons for the crime will vary, the social, cultural and personal background of individuals will change the impact of the crime, the dangers the victim may face, the likelihood they are re-victimised and the help that victim will need.

An effective and humane response to victimisation must take all this into account. It must coordinate the action of justice and law enforcement agencies, of educational establishments and health services, of social care systems and local authorities, to ensure that the response to victimisation is a social response, just as crime is an attack on society as a whole as well as the individual.

Victim Support Europe



AGE Platform Europe



European Network Against Racism



Transgender Europe



Missing Children Europe



Network of Associations of Victims of Terrorism



ILGA-Europe



La Strada International



PICUM



European Disability Forum



Brottsofferjouren Sverige (Victim Support Sweden)



Slachtofferhulp (Victim Support Netherlands)



APAV (Victim Support Portugal)



Victim Support Scotland



Victim Support Malta



Rikosuhripaivystys Suomesa (Victim Support Finland)



Advocates for Victims of Homicide (ADVIC)



Viktimološko društvo Srbije (Victimology Society of Serbia)



Udruga za podršku žrtvama i svjedocima (Croatian victim and witness support service)



Pomoc obetiam násilia – Victim Support Slovakia



Subvenia Victim (Polish Victim Support)



Victim Support Northern Ireland



Victim Support England and Wales



SOS for the Family (Poland)



Office for Justice (Hungary)



Weisser ring (Victim Support Austria)

