



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL JUSTICE and CONSUMERS

Directorate B: Criminal justice
Unit B.2 : Procedural criminal law

*Report from the Plenary meeting of the Victims' Rights Platform on the
revision of the Victims' Rights Directive
(Summary)
26 April 2022, 10:00 – 16:00*

On 26 April 2022, the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers of the European Commission (hereafter: “the Commission”) organised a **Plenary meeting of the Victims' Rights Platform via** that was dedicated to the revision of the Victims' Rights Directive. It was an online meeting, via WebEx.

The event gathered representatives from EU networks, agencies, bodies and civil society organisations and provided an excellent forum to consult members of the Victims' Rights Platform.

The meeting started with a welcoming address by a representative of the Procedural Criminal Law Unit. It was followed by a presentation on the proposal for the Directive on Combating violence against women and domestic violence.

In the discussion that followed members of the Platform demonstrated general support to the proposed measures for the revision of the Victims' Rights Directive.

The exchange with the members of the platform focused on three key topics:

I. Strengthening victims' right to information

The Commission proposed four measures to strengthen the right to information: setting up a mandatory, single victims' helpline; mandatory coordination on information provision and content; details on the format in which information to victims should be provided and specific access to information for persons in detention/closed institutions.

The members of the Platform were generally in favour of strengthening coordination on information provision and content. They also supported setting up a single helpline as long as it is not necessarily operated by the state. Concerns were raised with regard to the language barriers and inability of some victims to access telephones or the Internet. Coordination among different helplines should also be enhanced. Providing information in multiple formats, that are tailored to the needs of victims was also supported. In addition, the participants expressed interest in measures related to access to information to victims in detention and closed institutions.

II. Strengthening victims' right to protection

The Commission suggested four measures related to strengthening the right to protection: setting up mandatory cooperation between authorities and non-governmental organisations to carry out individual assessments; establishing physical protection measures; cross-border referral mechanisms for victim protection and privacy measures for victims.

The participants supported the setting up of cooperation between authorities and non-governmental organisations on individual assessments. However, in their view it was not necessary that the cooperation should be mandatory. A requirement that authorities set up standard operation procedures could be useful. Members of the Platform were positive on the introduction of physical protection measures and strengthening the role of the European agencies with regard to cross-border victims of crime. The participants suggested to look not only at the start of the application of those protection measures but also at the end of these measures (in the framework of restorative justice mechanisms, for instance). Concerns were raised with regard to privacy measures for victims. Difficulties related to data protection issues were stressed - authorities are very reluctant to share data (even though the General Data Protection Regulation might allow for it), due to contradicting interpretations of the GDPR in different Member States.

III. Strengthening victims' access to support services

The Commission presented the following proposals: inclusion of details on support services; free psychological and medical services; enhancing cooperation and coordination on victim support services and setting up one-stop-shop approach to support services.

The members of the Platform expressed general support to the inclusion of details on support services. The provision of free psychological assistance and medical services were also favoured in light of significant benefits. The participants stressed the importance of coordination of support at national level and of a community-based approach to victims' support services. Concerns were raised with regards to the existence of very small organisations which had the trust of victims but at the same time were not very close to the justice system. Some participants also expressed concerns about mistrust between the different services.