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Directorate A: Justice Policies
Unit A.5 : Criminal Procedural Law

Report from the High-level extended plenary meeting of the EU Victims' Rights Platform on the EU Strategy on victims' rights (2020 – 2025)

17 April 2023

On 17 April 2023, the European Commission organised a High-level extended plenary meeting of the EU Victims' Rights Platform on [the EU Strategy on victims' rights \(2020 – 2025\)](#). The aim of the event was to exchange views on what has been achieved so far under the Strategy and how to achieve best any remaining tasks.

The event gathered around 100 participants, including national experts, representatives of the EU institutions, agencies and bodies, civil society and academia.

Richard Sonnenschein (Director on Justice Policies, DG Justice) opened the event with a short film from the campaign on victims' rights. It was followed by speeches of **Commissioner Didier Reynders** and video messages by **the Swedish Minister of Justice, Gunnar Strömmer** and **the Chair of the European Parliament Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee Juan Fernando López Aguilar (S&D, ES)**. All speakers showed their commitment to the implementation of the actions under the Victims' Rights Strategy.

The High-Level meeting was divided in four panels dedicated to the main strands of the Strategy: strengthening cooperation and coordination to ensure effective access to justice for victims of crime; effective communication with victims and safe environment for victims in the aftermath of crime; improving support and protection to the most vulnerable victims; strengthening the international dimension of victims' rights.

The meeting was moderated and chaired by **Katarzyna Janicka-Pawlowska, EC Coordinator for victims' rights**.

Panel 1: Strengthening cooperation and coordination to ensure effective access to justice for victims of crime

A representative of **Eurojust** opened the panel with a presentation on the role of Eurojust in ensuring victims' rights in cross-border. A representative of **the Criminal Procedural Law Unit, DG Justice** presented the ways to ensure victims' effective access to justice as a condition for strengthening cooperation and mutual recognition of judgements and decisions in criminal matters. A Professor from **Université Libre de Bruxelles** explained the role of academia in ensuring victims' ability to rely on their rights. A representative of **Victim Support Europe** presented the National Framework for Comprehensive Victim Support, stressing on the need to strengthen victims' resilience and adjust EU legislation.

Panel 2: Effective communication with victims and safe environment for victims in the aftermath of crime

A representative of **the Inter-institutional Relations and Communication Unit, DG Justice** presented the main aspects of the EU campaign on victims' rights, stressing on its main objective that is the need to create a movement of support for victims of crime.

The panel continued with a very emotional presentation of the **TOO CLOSE documentary** on child sexual abuse. The documentary is a collective voice of all children, mothers and all silent victims of child sexual abuse who cannot speak.

A representative of **the European Union Agency on Fundamental Rights** presented *FRA Report Underpinning victims' rights* focusing on the need of setting efficient specialist support services that meet clearly defined performance standards. A representative of **the European Network on Victims' Rights** spoke about the role of the ENVR on creating safe environment for victims in cross-border cases.

Panel 3: Improving support and protection to the most vulnerable victims

The third panel was dedicated to the support and protection measures for the most vulnerable victims.

A representative of **the Gender Equality Unit, DG Justice** presented the main aspects of the Commission proposal on combating violence against women and domestic violence. A representative of **DG HOME** spoke about the challenges to victims of trafficking in human beings and the revision of the Anti-trafficking Directive. **The EC Coordinator for the Rights of the Child, DG Justice** sent a written statement stressing on the need to promote the inter-disciplinary Barnahus model and to strengthen the integrated child protection system. A representative of **DG HOME** explained the need to strengthen the support and protection to **child victims of sexual abuse** in the upcoming amendments of the Directive on combating child sexual abuse. A representative of **the Fundamental Rights Policy Unit, DG Justice** updated about the most recent policy measures to enhance hate crime victims' support taken in the context of the High Level Group on combating hate speech and hate crime.

Panel 4: Strengthening the international dimension of victims' rights, including victims of terrorism

The fourth panel was focused on the strengthening of the international dimension of victims' rights.

A Professor from **Université Libre de Bruxelles** presented the measures of support and protection to victims of core international crime by making a comparative analysis between the EU and the international dimension. A Professor from **the Yaroslav Mudryi National Law University (Ukraine)** spoke about the victimisation of people fleeing from the war in Ukraine, stressing that there are more than 8 000 000 displaced persons across Europe and more than 4 000 000 people who are granted with temporary protection in the EU. A representative of **the Council of Europe** and a Professor from **KU Leuven** presented the main elements of the revision of the Council of Europe Recommendations on Victims' Rights. There was a written statement by a representative of **the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism** on the enhanced EU-UN cooperation on victims of terrorism. Representatives of **the Criminal Procedural Law Unit, DG Justice** and of **the EU Centre of Expertise for Victims of Terrorism** spoke about the role of the Centre in strengthening the cooperation with external partners.

The event ended with concluding remarks by **the EC Coordinator for victims' rights** that all key actions under the EU Strategy on victims' rights (2020 – 2025) are either implemented or set in motion (for the continuous actions). The Commission has set up the Victims' Rights Platform and has launched the EU campaign on victims' rights. The Commission has closely worked with Member States to overcome the remaining gaps in the transposition of the Victims' Rights Directive. The EU Centre of expertise for victims of terrorism is established and developed. The Commission has secured budget for promoting victims' rights under several programmes. There is a number of ongoing legislative initiatives in the sectorial legislation: the proposal on Violence against Women and Domestic Violence is very important, revision of the Anti-trafficking Directive, a new Eurocrime proposal, the amendments to the Child Sexual Abuse Directive are in the pipeline. We expect to present soon the revision of the Victims' Rights Directive which is the remaining legislative action under the EU Strategy on Victims' Rights.