



Criminal Justice Platform Europe

Press Release

International Victims Expert Workshop focuses on implementation of EU Directive. 12 March 2015

1. The Criminal Justice Platform Europe (CJPE) is a joint initiative of three established network organisations of European professionals who work with victims, offenders and communities, with different roles in the justice chain: probation, restorative justice and prison services, with a joint goal to cooperate and to bring a new focus to addressing the problems caused by crime.
2. A mayor focus in CJPE's current work programme is the implementation of EU Directive 2012/29/EU establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and the practical impact in the sectors of prisons, probation, and restorative justice.
3. The CJPE brought together experts on victims of crime from 6 countries: Germany, Netherlands, Czech Republic, Scotland, Croatia and Spain. The interactive meeting experiences of implementation activities in their countries and in their particular field of work were exchanged. The clock is ticking down on member states which have to be ready to implement the Directive by November 2015.
4. The event was held in the Centre for Legal Studies in Barcelona and was co-hosted by the Catalanian Ministry of Justice as part of their partnership with the CJPE. Representatives from the European Commission and the European Institute for Gender Equality also participated.
5. The workshop started with a review of preparatory work. There were examples of different approaches and excellent practice but the experts warned that implementation was likely to be patchy across Europe. The shared experiences showed that most countries did take steps to fulfil the standards provided in the Directive. Some countries have new legislation or under preparation, others have done efforts to better awareness and cooperation between network partners. The experts have proposed detailed advice for the European Union and the members of the CJPE. The report of the workshop will be widely circulated through the websites and newsletters of the three Platform members to help staff in prisons, probation and restorative justice to be ready for implementation.



6. A full report will be published containing the presentations and wide ranging recommendations. Key points from the Workshop's communique are:

a) Overarching Strategy

- It is vital to encourage the political will within the European Parliament to deliver on Victims' Directive.
- Sustained project financing is necessary to achieve reforms on victims at EU level.
- The relevant European network organisations need to be actively involved in monitoring and reporting on implementation of the Directive.
- Investment is needed in data/monitoring, definition of standards and shared indicators to allow effective comparisons to be made.

b) Sufficient Resources

- A European network is required for the implementation of the Victims' Directive which must be linked to the practitioners' network represented by CJPE.
- Member states must be encouraged to focus on driving implementation and identifying necessary resources.

c) Training Capacity

- Training capacity projects should be included in the EU Grants priorities and criteria.

d) Public Awareness

- There is a need for Communication to be a continuing priority for EU institutions to ensure that victims issues stay on national agendas.

e) Multi-agency Cooperation

- Cross border cases need attention at the pan-European level.

f) Monitoring Compliance

- The criteria that will be used to measure compliance need to be widely published and input from network organisations will be essential for effective evaluation.

g) Legal Framework

- National legislation must be seen only as the first step in the journey for developing victims' services. We recommend that a major EU-wide review is undertaken within 3 to 5 years of implementation of the victims' directive.

h) Cultural Change

- The Directive will fail in its purpose if cultural change does not follow implementation. We recommend that:
 - An international conference is convened to share and assess the impact of implementation on attitudes and culture.
 - 'Victims Ambassadors' are appointed at national level to promote victims' perspectives in all aspects of the criminal justice system.
 - The new European Parliament invites experts to share the vision and the reality of work with victims and the aspirations of the Directive.



For further information, please contact:

EuroPris - European Organisation of Prison and Correctional Services

EFRJ - European Forum for Restorative Justice

CEP - Confederation of European Probation