

Practitioner Workshop: Improving Access to Justice for Victims of International Crimes in Europe

5 November 2019, 27th EU Genocide Network Meeting (The Hague)

In January 2019, the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), the European Centre for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR) and REDRESS Nederland launched a two-year joint project funded by the European Union (EU) on **implementation of the EU Victims' Rights Directive for victims of international crimes**.

The project aims to improve the implementation of the Directive for victims of international crimes and to enhance cooperation and coordination amongst national authorities, victims' networks, diaspora communities and NGOs with a view to enhancing victims' access to justice more generally.

The project team has carried out a comparative research study on the practical implementation of the Directive in respect of international crimes in five target countries throughout 2019: **Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden**.

This one-day closed **Practitioner Workshop**—hosted together with the EU Genocide Network and Eurojust—is designed to highlight some of the best practices surrounding implementation of the Directive in cases involving international crimes, as identified during our comparative study. It will also give practitioners an opportunity to raise any obstacles encountered in ensuring access to justice for victims of international crimes in their jurisdictions. The format of the workshop is **interactive panels** composed of practitioners from the project's five target countries, as well as experts in victims' rights from a number of EU agencies.

Other key outputs of the project include:

- **Policy submission:** a submission based on a technical review of victims' rights in the context of mutual legal assistance, mutual recognition and other cooperation frameworks for international crimes. The submission will include policy recommendations as to how existing and future MLA arrangements (such as the MLA Initiative) should be tailored to give effect to victims' rights. The policy submission will be presented in **early 2020**.
- **Comparative research report:** a detailed review of the implementation of the Directive in national law and practice for victims of international crimes with specific case studies for the five target countries. The report will identify best practices and obstacles encountered by national authorities and practitioners in ensuring victims' access to information, protection and support during investigations and prosecutions of international crimes. The report will be launched at a **one-day seminar on victims' rights** at the European Parliament in **mid-2020**.



This joint project is being implemented with the assistance of the European Union. The contents of this programme and other workshop materials are the sole responsibility of FIDH, REDRESS Netherlands and ECCHR and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.

This Workshop is being conducted under the Chatham House Rule. Information revealed during the discussions may be used by the project partners in the development of the project's comparative research report, however statements will not be attributed to any participant without obtaining their express consent.

Programme

10:30 – 11:15 **Arrival of Participants (coffee and light breakfast)**

11:15 – 11:20 **Welcome by Mr. Ladislav Hamran, President of Eurojust**

11:20 – 11:30 **Presentation of Programme**

Matevž Pezdirc (EU Genocide Network) & Sarah Finnin (Project Coordinator)

11:30 – 13:00 **Panel I – Access to Information and Active Participation in Proceedings**

Interactive debate moderated by Clémence Bectarte (FIDH)

- Thijs Berger, Landelijk Parket (the Netherlands)
- Christophe Deprez, Cabinet Jus Cogens (Belgium)
- Patrick Kroker, International Crimes and Accountability Program, ECCHR
- Albin Dearing, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

Interventions from audience

13:00 – 13:45 **Lunch Break**

13:45 – 15:15 **Panel II – Support and Protection against Secondary Victimisation**

Interactive debate moderated by Sarah Finnin (Project Coordinator)

- Investigating Judge Magda Koole (the Netherlands)
- Bengt Hesselberg, Sju Advokater (Sweden)
- Dr Mechthild Wenk-Ansohn, Psychotherapist, Centre Überleben (Germany)
- Aleksandra Ivankovic, Deputy Director, Victim Support Europe

Interventions from audience



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15:15 – 15:45 **Coffee/Tea Break**

15:45 – 17:15 **Panel III – Protection against Retaliation and MLA/Cooperation**

Interactive debate moderated by Andreas Schüller (ECCHR)

- Colonel Eric Emeraux, Head of the Central Office for Combating Crimes against Humanity, Genocide and War Crimes (France)
- Emmanuelle Marchand, Senior Legal Counsel, Civitas Maxima
- Francisco Jiménez-Villarejo, National Member for Spain, Eurojust
- Vítor Sousa, Witness Protection Specialist, Europol Special Tactics Team

Interventions from audience

17:15 – 18:15 **Open Discussion on Best Practices and Obstacles**

Moderated by Alejandra Vicente (REDRESS)

18:15 – 18:30 **Concluding Remarks**

Matevž Pezdirc (EU Genocide Network) & Sarah Finnin (Project Coordinator)

18:30 **Close and Reception hosted by FIDH (refreshments and canapés)**



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