

Eurojust Report Maps Challenges for Victims' Rights

Cornelia Riehle

News

On 22 February 2022, Eurojust published a [report](#) on its casework on victims' rights. The report looks at the main challenges related to the exercise of victims' rights in a cross-border context and at best practices in overcoming them. Issues dealt with in the report relate mainly to the following:

- Definition and identification of victims, especially in cases involving high numbers of victims and/or large-scale terrorist attacks;
- Uncertainties about the procedural status of victims;
- The need to anticipate and mitigate the risk of secondary or repeat victimisation;
- Considerations given to victims' interests when addressing jurisdiction issues;
- Difficulties in ensuring the compensation of victims.

The report makes several recommendations, e.g. to involve Europol at an early stage and to make use of coordination meetings at Eurojust. Information on money flows also often leads to the identification of the names and locations of victims.

Looking at the procedural and protection rights of victims, in particular, the report recommends already discussing victims' procedural rights during the investigation phase - as part of the prosecutorial strategy. It also recommends discussing the setting-up of Joint Investigation Teams, coordination meetings, and coordination centres. To secure effective access to justice, the report outlines several best practices, e.g. to take the victims' interests into consideration when discussing matters of jurisdiction and a possible transfer of proceedings. Many judicial authorities proactively reach out to victims to inform them of their rights and any relevant procedures. In some Member States, victims are provided with free legal aid, representation, and interpretation/translation. In addition, victims are given the possibility to give evidence, to submit requests for action during the investigation, and to be present at the hearings.

Lastly, the report pinpoints [Directive 2012/29/EU on Victims' Rights](#) as a key element for "enshrining the victim's dimension in cross-border investigations and prosecutions."

The report is also supporting the European Commission Coordinator for Victims' Rights in mapping the difficulties for victims' rights in the European Union.

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