

# Key Challenges for Effective Response to Victims of Crime



**euclid**

European Law Forum: Prevention • Investigation • Prosecution

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**News**

On 28 November 2024, the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) published a paper titled “Stepping up the response to victims of crime: FRA’s findings on challenges and solutions” The paper outlines the main challenges and solutions in promoting and protecting victims’ rights across the EU and provides an overview of all relevant FRA research on victims, with examples of relevant FRA opinions. It also briefly explains the legal framework for victims’ rights in the EU, which consists of EU primary law and Art. 47 of the Charter (giving victims the right to an effective remedy and fair trial) as well as EU secondary law and the Victims’ Rights Directive. The latter grants a wide range of rights to all victims of crime to ensure that they receive appropriate information, support, protection, and are able to effectively participate in criminal proceedings. Legislative amendments to establish more far-reaching minimum standards under the Victims’ Rights Directive are currently under discussion (→[euclid 2/2023, 158](#)). In addition, sector-specific Directives, such as the Directive to combat violence against women and domestic violence, focus on selected categories of victims by introducing additional safeguards.

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Published in  
2024, Vol. 19(4) [euclid](#)  
ISSN: 1862-6947  
<https://euclid.eu>

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The FRA paper looks at three main areas in which measures are needed:

- To facilitate reporting by victims and to avoid underreporting;
- To protect against secondary victimization;
- To guarantee effective victim support services.

According to the paper, there is a need to step up the response to victims of crime who suffer from the severe and lasting negative consequences caused by ineffective responses by Member States’ authorities. To find solutions, the paper therefore draws on practices in various EU Member States that have proven effective in meeting the practical needs of victims and improving their access to rights.

Effective solutions to counter underreporting include alternative ways for victims to report crime, such as third-party reporting and proactive monitoring. Third-party reporting allows victims, family members, and witnesses to inform an appropriately trained third party about a crime. With the victim’s consent, this third party can report the crime to the police without the victims having to be in direct contact with the police themselves. Proactive monitoring targets victims that live in situations controlled by others, with little chance to inform the police about their victimisation. Such situations may arise in institutions (e.g., involving children, the elderly, prisoners, and people with disabilities) or in situations of isolation (e.g., victims of labour exploitation or human trafficking). Proactive monitoring by independent authorities can help such victims report crimes.

Effective solutions to prevent secondary victimisation include a variety of measures, such as the *Barnahus* model, in which those responding to victims receive special training, follow evidence-based protocols, and have their interviews observed by members of a multidisciplinary team.

To ensure effective victim support, the paper suggests services that provide free and appropriate support in a manner that respects the victims' right to equal treatment: taking measures to establish effective coordination between victims support services, introducing a system of accreditation, and standardised referral mechanisms.

Lastly, when looking at emerging challenges, the paper highlights the increasing impact of online crime on victims and confirms FRA's intention to expand its research and knowledge base to inform EU and national policy- and lawmaking on victims' rights in this area.

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The project is co-financed by the [Union Anti-Fraud Programme \(UAFP\)](#), managed by the [European Anti-Fraud Office \(OLAF\)](#).



**Co-funded by  
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