

# Reports on Victims' Rights



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European Law Forum: Prevention • Investigation • Prosecution

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## News

At the end of April 2019, FRA published a set of four reports on justice for victims of violent crimes. The set of reports deals with access to justice from four different perspectives:

- Victims' rights as a standard of criminal justice;
- Justice in criminal proceedings;
- Sanctions;
- Justice for women who are victims of partner violence.

The reports are based on conversations with victims, workers at victim support organisations, police officers, attorneys, prosecutors, and judges in Austria, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal and the UK. They aim at providing practical guidance for policymakers on how to improve the help for victims.

Key recommendations of the reports include the following:

Provide for more effective and comprehensive backing to address the piecemeal approach to support. This can be achieved through better coordination between the police and support services in order to enable swift and effective referrals. Member States are called on to provide adequate staffing and funding for support services, including free legal aid, counselling, and advice on victims' rights.

Better protection during court proceedings, i.e., through measures to separate offenders and victims during proceedings in order to prevent further trauma.

Women who fear of violence from their partners should receive greater police protection, i.e., through the systematic use of barring and court orders.

Victims should be better compensated for suffering endured and better informed about their rights to compensation. Training for judges should include the importance of compensation as part of the sentencing.

Offenders should receive rehabilitation measures, such as anti-violence training, probation, and victim-offender mediation. These measures would also benefit society as a whole, as they would help prevent further violence and make offenders more accountable for their actions.

Special training should be offered to the judiciary and to the police in order to encourage understanding and empathy when dealing with victims and, consequently, to better recognise victims' rights.

Healthcare providers should be trained to better identify and act on incidents of abuse. The police should be educated on the need to intervene in order to prevent women from further suffering at the hands of their partners.

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When presenting the report, FRA Director *Michael O'Flaherty* stated that too many victims of violent crime are not involved in criminal proceedings. More efforts should also be taken to avoid further victimisation.

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