



Support VoC 

## **3.3. Generic Plan /Standard Operating Procedures for the provision of Victim Support Services**

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## INTRODUCTION

The SupportVoC project seeks to contribute to the promotion and protection of rights of victims of crime, with a particular focus on Spain, Greece, Italy, Bulgaria and Cyprus. Particularly, the project's aim is to elaborate minimum standards for the creation of Victims Support Services (VSS) in the last four countries, according to the art.8 of the Directive 2012/29/EU.

In order to achieve this objective, the partnership has, firstly, carried out an analysis of the European and national legal frameworks regarding the rights and protection of victims of crime, as well as an ethnographic analysis (based on in-depth interviews and focus groups) on the perspectives of policy makers and professionals who work with victims. Additionally, the strengths and weaknesses of the design and implementation process of Victims Support Services (VSS) in Spain have been identified (also through a legal and ethnographic study). Given that Spain is the only participant country that has already created VSS, the analysis of the implementation in Spain provides a critical view that serves as a point of reference for the other countries. To complement the analysis of the Spanish services to assist victims of crime, a study visit in Barcelona has been carried out with Greek, Italian, Bulgarian and Cypriot partners, as well as invited stakeholders from those countries, to transfer the knowledge on the ground. During the activity participants had the opportunity to visit the VSS of Barcelona, located in the City of Justice.

Based on the results of the analytical phase and the study visit, in the present document the SupportVoC project presents a Generic Plan for the organisation and implementation of VSS, which will later be adapted to the specific contexts of Cyprus, Italy, Bulgaria and Greece. The objective of the Plan is for VSS to meet, at least, the minimum services outlined in the art.9 of the Directive 2012/29/EU:

- (a) Information, advice and support relevant to the rights of victims including on accessing national compensation schemes for criminal injuries, and on their role in criminal proceedings including preparation for attendance at the trial.
- (b) Information about or direct referral to any relevant specialist support services in place.
- (c) Emotional and psychological support.
- (d) Advice relating to financial and practical issues arising from the crime.

(e) Advice relating to the risk and prevention of secondary and repeat victimisation, of intimidation and of retaliation (unless otherwise provided by other public or private services).

First of all, this document presents the 10 basic principles that should guide the creation of Victims Assistance Offices (VAOs) in those countries that have not established them yet. Secondly, these principles have been transformed into four strategic axes, which constitute practical tools to implement the Generic Plan. Following this, the strategic axes are developed, considering their objectives, activities and responsibilities. To complement the Plan, four annexes have been elaborated: an Action Protocol to guide the comprehensive assistance to victims; a Questionnaire to evaluate the risk of revictimisation and reprisals in order to establish protection measures; the Main Indicators to carry out an assessment of the VSS; and the Template for the definition of the adaptation requirements to implement the Strategic Plan in each participant country according to national particularities.

## CREATING VICTIMS ASSISTANCE OFFICES (VAOs)

The diagnosis carried out in Cyprus, Italy, Bulgaria and Greece shows that despite the existence of laws in these countries, aimed at the transposition of the Directive 2012/29/EU, there is still a lack of public support in providing basic assistance to victims of crime. Furthermore, the existing services for victims, mostly offered by private organisations, are addressed to victims of specific types of crimes (especially children and women who have suffered gender-based and/or sexual violence, and human trafficking). In consequence, certain types of victims, especially those who do not experience a bias-motivated violence (e.g. robberies or burglaries) may lack both basic and specialised support.

Taking into account this reality, and in order to meet the requirements established by the EU, it is recommended to create **Victims Assistance Offices (VAOs)** with the aim to provide minimum legal, psychological and social support to victims of all types of crimes, as well as to refer victims to specialised services, when appropriate.

The VAOs should be conceptualised as the core of the system of victims protection, by building network and cooperation between public bodies and private organisations that assist victims. In this sense, a nodal approach to a web of connected services should be adopted.

VAOs should be created following **10 basic principles**. These basic principles could be developed as indicators in order to evaluate the VAOs (see Annex 3):

1. **Public assistance.** To guarantee that VAOs are created and managed with the goal of serving the public interest of protecting victims of crimes in a stable and sufficient manner, VAOs are expected to be financed by public funds. Whilst specialised assistance can be provided by other public services and/or private organisations, basic assistance established in the art.9 should be offered by VAOs (financed with public funds).
2. **Universality.** Any person who has been considered as a victim of crime may request the assistance of the VAOs. VAOs should operate with a wide concept of victim. According to the EU Directive, the definition of “victims of crime” should include:
  - a) persons who have suffered harm, including physical, mental or emotional harm or economic loss which was directly caused by a criminal offence, regardless of their nationality, administrative status, age, etc.
  - b) family members of a person whose death was directly caused by a criminal offence and who have suffered harm as a result of that person's death.

3. **Proximity.** Access to VAOs should be guaranteed in terms of physical proximity so that VAOs should be organised according to a decentralised model, following the decentralised or deconcentrated political or administrative structures of the country, or the judicial ones. That is, they should ensure a proper assistance throughout the entire territory. In this sense, VAOs would be managed by intermediate governments.
4. **Professional specialisation.** The services offered by the VAOs should be delivered by specialised professionals with relevant training and expertise. Each VAO should have trained and multidisciplinary staff, including, at least, a social worker, a legal advisor, and a psychologist.
5. **Confidentiality** and victim's privacy protection. The relationship between users and professionals should be based on the confidentiality of the information. Additionally, the assistance will be offered in conditions that ensure the protection of the right to privacy of the victims. This means having the proper spaces, staff and means to grant it.
6. **Trust.** VAOs should assign a contact person amongst the staff for each user in order to foster relationships of trust.
7. **Individualisation.** The assistance should be individualised and based on the strengthening of the autonomy of decisions of the individual. It should try to take into account - within the limits of the judicial process - the victim's decisions along the process.
8. **Immediacy.** VAOs should offer a coordinated response in a short lapse of time, especially in performing the risk assessment, and whenever necessary emotional support.
9. **Inter-agency coordination.** VAOs should be placed within the network of services enforcement authorities, judicial authorities, and private organisations that assist victims, and properly connected to all them, especially in what relates to the reporting services (in particular, law enforcement authorities). An effort should be made to ensure coordination among them to avoid duplicities and gaps.
10. **Communication.** Responsibilities and functions of VAOs should be broadly publicised amongst public and private organisations, especially to identify and approach the most vulnerable victims.

## THE GENERIC PLAN: STRATEGIC AXES

In order to contribute to the organisation and implementation of VAOs in Cyprus, Italy, Bulgaria and Greece, **four strategic axes** have been established to ensure the compliance of the ten principles:

- 1. Assessing Victims' needs;**
- 2. Ensuring comprehensive assistance;**
- 3. Building network and cooperation;**
- 4. Providing training and communication.**

At methodological level, each strategic axis has its own objectives, with several proposed measures/actions to achieve each objective. Additionally, actors who should be responsible for each measure have been identified. The first two axes comprise, amongst other, the minimum services established by the art.9 of the Directive 2012/29/EU. These axes should be implemented successively, given that the comprehensive assistance can only be provided after an individualised assessment of the victim's needs. On the other hand, axes 3 and 4 should be conceived as key requirements in order to ensure efficient, close and respectful assistance.

It is important to take into account that this is an ideal plan that will be later adapted to Cypriot, Italian, Bulgarian and Greek context. These countries have different legal and political frameworks, as well as different models for service provision. In this sense, some services that should be delivered by VAOs according to the Plan, could be externalised towards other public bodies or private organisations in accordance to the national context. However, the VAO or public department that manages them (Department of Justice in most cases) should always take on the responsibility and supervise the provision of basic services to victims.

According to the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights<sup>1</sup>, there are three main models of victim support in the EU, taking into account the role of the public administration and civil society organisations, as well as their interaction in providing support: a) The state funds and provides VSS; b) The main provider is a non-governmental organisation but relies strongly on public funding; c) The main provider is a non-governmental organisation but does not strongly rely on public funding. None of these models is, a priori, better than the other, meaning that each country can develop a model according its own singularities.

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<sup>1</sup> EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (2014). Victims of crime in the EU: the extent and nature of support for victims [https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2015-victims-crime-eu-support\\_en\\_o.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2015-victims-crime-eu-support_en_o.pdf)

## Axis 1. ASSESSING VICTIMS' NEEDS

**O1. To receive and orientate the victim about their rights as a victim of crime, the actions that can be undertaken, the problems that could be faced during the criminal process, and their possible consequences<sup>2</sup>.** This reception and orientation could be offered by means of two channels:

**M1.1. Face-to-face information.** Professional charged on this task should use a clear and simple language, taking into account the personal characteristics of victims, such as age, gender, administrative status, etc.

**M1.2. Phone service.** In order to ensure a broad, quick and anonym access to the reception, the creation of a phone service is strongly recommended.

**R1. Professionals in victimology who speak several languages.** Whilst the face-to-face information should be provided by professionals working at VAOs, the phone service could be provided by a sub-contracted entity.

**O2. To minimise primary victimisation and contribute to the restoration of the victim's welfare.**

**M2.1. Individualised Assessment of the victim's needs.** This assessment should be carried out through a personal interview, considering:

- The needs expressed by the victim, by respecting their physical, mental and moral integrity.
- The personal characteristics of the victim, such as their age, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, health, residence status, communication difficulties, relationship to or dependence on the offender, and previous experience of crime.
- The type and the circumstances of the crime such as whether it is a hate crime, a bias-based crime or a crime committed with a discriminatory motive, sexual violence, etc.
- The assessment should be elaborated as soon as possible after the crime.

**M2.2. Individualised Assistance Plan.** Based on the previous assessment, a detailed plan that includes legal, psychological and social measures should be elaborated. This plan should include coordination measures with the specialised services needed in each case.

**R2. Social worker, legal advisor and psychologist working at VAO** (in order to carry out the first-impact assessment from a multidisciplinary perspective).

**O3. To avoid secondary victimisation and reprisals by perpetrators.**

**M3.1. Standardised risk test.** This test is aimed at measuring the importance of the primary victimisation, and the risk of experiencing secondary victimisation, intimidation and reprisals. This test should be conducted during the personal interview, as part of the individual assessment.

<sup>2</sup> O = Objective of the axis; M = Measure to be implemented; R = Responsibility of managing the measure.



**M3.2. Identification of protection measures** for each phase of the criminal proceeding according to the results of the test, in accordance with the victim and the victim's legal counsel if the victim is taking any kind of legal action against the offender or participates in the judicial process with their own attorney.

**R3. Legal advisor and psychologist working at the VAO** (jointly with competent authorities for the adoption of protection measures).

**O4. To offer, without unnecessary delay, information adapted to the personal circumstances and conditions of the victim, as well as the nature of the crime committed and the damages experienced.**

**M4. Personal interview.** In addition to the individual assessment and risk test, during the interview information will be provided on:

- How to make the complaint and the procedure for its filing.
- Specialised services and resources, regardless of whether a complaint has been made.
- Assistance and support measures (medical, psychological or material) available for the victims and the procedure to obtain them, including, when appropriate, information on the possibilities of obtaining alternative accommodation or shelters.
- How to obtain legal advice and defence and, where appropriate, conditions in which it can be obtained free of charge.
- Accompaniment of the victim, throughout the process, if necessary to trial and/or to the different criminal procedures.
- Possibility and procedures of requesting protection measures.
- Advice on economic rights related to the process, in particular on the aids and compensation for the damages caused by the crime and, where appropriate, the procedure to claim them.
- Resources that can be used against resolutions that are considered as contrary to the victim's rights.
- Contact information of the authority in charge of the criminal procedure and channels to communicate with them.
- Available restorative justice services, if legally possible.
- In which cases a person can obtain reimbursement of court costs and, if applicable, the procedure to claim it.
- Right to be informed without unnecessary delays of the date, time and place of the trial, as well as the content of the accusation against the offender.
- The legal situation of the offender, especially when he has a restraining order or is in jail.

**R4. Professional in victimology working at the VAO.**

## Axis 2. ENSURING COMPREHENSIVE ASSISTANCE

**O1. To ensure that the victim receives proper legal advice and that measures are deployed to protect the victim physically and mentally during the court proceedings.**

**M1.1. Legal advice, whenever the victim does not enjoy their own legal counsel, in particular:**

- Information on the type of assistance that the person can receive in the framework of judicial activities.
- The rights that can be exercised within the process,
- The conditions in which the victim can access legal advice, and
- Type of services or organisations that can offer such support.

**M1.2. Measures to protect the victim physically and mentally during the court proceedings.** Amongst these the following measures should be highlighted:

- To create in court buildings and police stations separate entrances and waiting areas for victims and their families to avoid visual contact with the offender.
- Strategies to avoid revictimisation, such as summoning victims and offenders to hearings at different times, and to use video-recorded statements.
- To provide a basic emotional assistance and advice (e.g. relaxation and empowerment techniques), with the aim to mentally strengthen the victim during the trial.

**R1. Legal advisor working at the VAO** (jointly with the competent authorities and always in coordination with the legal representative of the victim, if appropriate).

**O2. To provide basic psychological assistance and refer to specialised services, when necessary.**

**M2. Psychological assistance.** The psychological assistance that VAOs offer to victims will be based on:

- The evaluation and treatment of the most vulnerable victims to counteract a possible psychological crisis derived from the crime; techniques to face the judicial process; the accompaniment throughout the process; and strategies to strengthen the capacities and skills of the victim to achieve recovery.
- A psychological support plan for especially vulnerable persons (elaborated in Axis 1). This plan will be elaborated with the general purpose that the victim follows the criminal process without feeling anguish, to strengthen their self-esteem and decision-making and, in particular, to avoid revictimisation.

**R2. Psychologist of VAO** (referral to specialised services, when necessary)

**O3. To deliver socio-economic advice and refer the victim to social services, when necessary.**

**M3.1. Economic advice.** Providing information and advice on how to access the economic aid and compensations established by law. In this case, VAOs will focus on providing assistance for the application process.

**M3.2. Social assistance.** The social intervention carried out by VAOs will be limited, after a personal evaluation, to referring the victim to the social services and institutions for ensuring safe housing, medical attention, financial assistance, with special attention to the needs derived from situations of disability, hospitalisation, death and those aggravated by the vulnerable situation of the victims.

**R3. Social worker of VAO** (referral to specialised services, when necessary).

**O4. To monitor the victim, especially the most vulnerable ones, throughout the criminal process and during an adequate period of time after its conclusion.**

**M4.1. Monitoring according to the situation of the victim after the crime, in different periods of time.** Depending on the situation of the victim, the appropriate time of monitoring should be established.

**M4.2. Monitoring of the protection measures and providing information to the victim about the situation of the offender** (in jail, paroles, permits, conditioned/unconditioned release, etc.).

**R4. Professional of the VAO jointly with law enforcement, penitentiary and judicial authorities.**

### Axis 3. BUILDING NETWORK AND COOPERATION

**O1. Creating a deep knowledge of the assistance framework in order to rationalise and optimise the provision of services.**

**M1.1. Mapping of the assisting organisations** working in the same territory as the VAO.

**M1.2. Identification of gaps and duplicities amongst the assisting organisations.**

**R1. Public authorities that manage VAOs (e.g. Justice Department).**

**O2. Ensuring an efficient coordination and joint work between VAOs and competent services and authorities that assist victims of crime.**

**M2. Creation of an assistance network.** This network will include agencies, institutions and services that may be involved in assisting victims: judiciary, prosecutor's office, psychosocial services, law enforcement authorities, social services, health services, associations and non-profit organisations, especially in cases of vulnerable victims with high risk of victimisation.

**R2. Public authorities that manage VAOs (e.g. Justice Department).**

**O3. Increasing the exchange and availability of data amongst competent authorities**

**M3. Centralised online service.** This service should inform VAOs about new cases of victimisation in order to contact the victim for delivering reception and orientation. In addition, the service should facilitate to know all changes regarding the situation of the offender (e.g. prison permits, violation of the restraining order, end of sentence, etc.).

**R1. Public authorities that manage VAOs jointly with law enforcement, penitential and judicial authorities.**

## Axis 4. PROVIDING TRAINING AND COMMUNICATION

**O1. To train professionals who are in contact with victims to guarantee victim rights, and to foster awareness on the special needs of vulnerable victims.**

**M1.1. Training courses for VAO staff.** Continuous training should be provided mainly focused on how to deal with the different types of victimisation.

**M1.2. Training courses for law enforcement authorities.** These courses should be focused on how to treat the victim during the complaint process (especially the most vulnerable ones) and to strengthen the links with civil society organisations.

**M1.3. Training courses for judicial actors.** These courses should be focused on how to treat the victim during the criminal process (especially the most vulnerable ones), and the use of protection measures during the trial (e.g. separated waiting rooms, video-recorded statements, etc.).

**R1. Assisting network with the support of public authorities** (providing economic and human resources).

**O2. Increasing the knowledge on the rights of victims of crimes and the responsibilities and functions of VAOs.** Special attention should be paid in disseminating information amongst victims with specific needs, such as victims of sexual violence, victims of gender-based violence and victims of violence in close relationships.

**M2.1. Web page.**

**M2.2. Phone service.**

**M2.3. Information leaflets.**

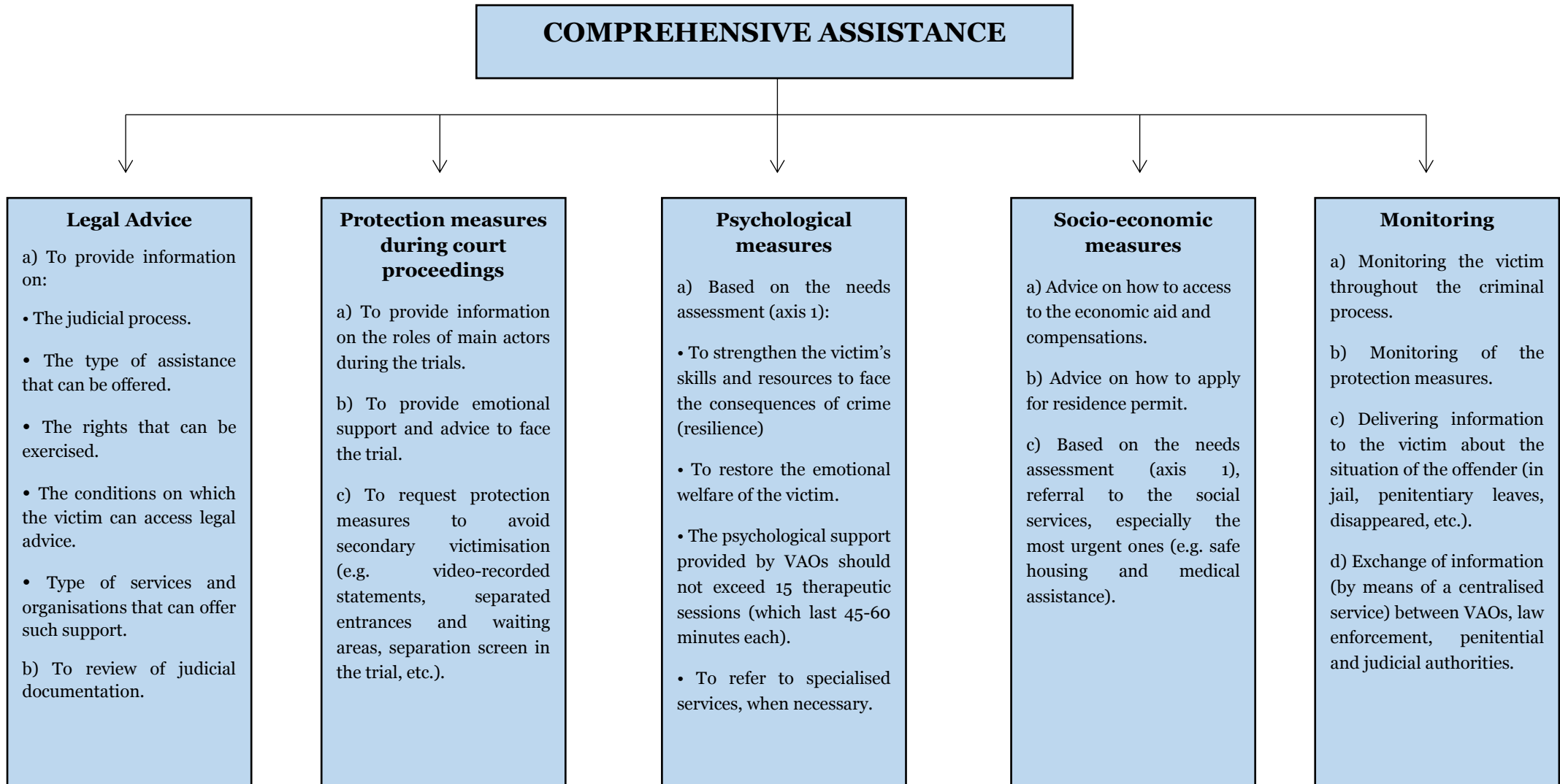
**M2.4. Downloadable booklets.**

**M2.5. Awareness-raising campaign.**

**R2. Assisting network with the support of public authorities** (providing economic and human resources).

## ANNEX 1. ACTION PROTOCOL

### COMPREHENSIVE ASSISTANCE



## ANNEX 2. RISK ASSESSMENT

As established in the Axis 1 (Objective 3), to conduct a standardised risk test in order to establish protection measures (including during the court proceedings) is key to avoid secondary victimisation and reprisals by the perpetrators. In this annex, a test model is proposed to guide professionals on how to carry out this evaluation<sup>3</sup>. The test could be adapted in accordance with the national contexts and/or the victim's profile.

The test is divided in two parts. The initial questionnaire has been conceived to gather the personal characteristics of the victim and the type and circumstances of the crime perpetrated. According the socio-economic factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, health, residence status, disabilities, and communication difficulties should be taken into account during the assessment given that they shape the (re)victimisation process and determine the capacity of victims to achieve the restoration. In a similar vein, the type and the circumstances of crime (e.g. previous personal connection between victim and offender) affect the sense of fear, as well as the vulnerability of the victim, so that is key to gather it during the evaluation.

The second part of the assessment is devoted to a detailed evaluation with the aim to establish whether the victim needs special protection measures. This second part should be completed once a particular vulnerability to secondary victimisation, intimidation or retaliation has been identified during the initial questionnaire. The detailed test consists of three parts: a) the current situation of the victim; b) the offence history; c) the profile of the suspect.

The risk assessment report produced by the legal advisor and the psychologist of VAOs after the test should be referred – with the consent of victim - to the judicial authority or the prosecutor's office with the aim to establish protection measures.

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<sup>3</sup> This model is based on the “EVVI Project-Victim's assessment for special measures”. Cf. Ministère de la Justice-Republique Française (coord.). *EVVI. Evaluation of Victims*. Co-funded by the Criminal Justice Programme of the European Union. [http://www.justice.gouv.fr/publication/evvi\\_guide\\_en.pdf](http://www.justice.gouv.fr/publication/evvi_guide_en.pdf)

**RISK ASSESSMENT FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME**

File number:

Nature of the offence:

Date of the offence/last offence:

Assessment Date:

Note: these questions are for guidance and should not be read out in questionnaire style to the victim.

The victim agrees for an evaluation to take place:  Yes  No

**PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE VICTIM****General information**

Name:

Gender:

Date of birth/reported age:

Nationality (legal/illegal residence):

**Contact:**

Address:

E-mail address:

Phone number:

Lawyer/contact person:

**Socio-professional status** (may select more than one response):

- Employed
- Unemployed
- Retired
- Student

**Specific observations** (clarify if necessary):



**PERSONAL VULNERABILITY**

Child

Pregnant

Disability (please clarify if necessary):

Mental

Physical

Victim of a crime in the last two months?

No

Yes (please clarify and assess if the victim still has problems with that victimisation)

Mother tongue:

Difficulty speaking:

Yes (please clarify if necessary)

No

Difficulty reading:

Yes (please clarify if necessary)

No

Other communication difficulties (please clarify):

Dependent children:

Yes (number and age):

No:

Are you (or your children) supported by a social worker or other agency?

No:

Yes (please specify which):

Other vulnerabilities (please clarify, i.e. health problems, alcohol, drug dependence, etc.):

**RISK OF HARM**

Type or nature of crime (may select more than one response)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Human trafficking                | <input type="checkbox"/> Gender-based violence       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hate crime                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual violence             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Organised crime                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Child abuse or exploitation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Violence in a close relationship | <input type="checkbox"/> Terrorism                   |

Circumstances of the crime

Does the victim have a personal connection with the suspect?  Yes  No

Does the victim fear further harm from the suspect?  Yes  No

Does the suspect have previous offending history against the victim?  Yes  No

I hereby certify that the information given above is accurate.

Signature of the evaluator:

Signature of victim:

Date :



**VICTIMS' ASSESSMENT FOR SPECIAL MEASURES**

File number:

Nature of the offence:

Date of the offence/last offence:

Assessment Date:

Please fill this section if:

- the offence is one of the crimes specified above or;
- you have answered 'yes' to any of the questions under circumstances of the crime or;
- you consider it appropriate, taking into account any identified vulnerability.

Note: these questions are for guidance and should not be read out in questionnaire style to the victim.

The victim agrees for an evaluation to take place:  Yes  No

<b>CURRENT SITUATION</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
1. Has the current incident resulted in injury? If so, please clarify.		
2. Is the victim frightened?		
3. Does the victim have relatives/friends/community resources (cultural, religious, other) to support her/him?		
4. Does the victim feel isolated?		
5. Is the victim feeling depressed or having suicidal thoughts?		
6. Is the victim in contact with the suspect? If so, please clarify.		
7. Does he/she try to intimidate the victim?		
8. Does the victim live with the suspect?		
9. Is there any conflict over financial issues? (if applicable)		
10. Is there any conflict over children? (if applicable)		
11. Has the suspect ever committed acts of violence against others within the family (children, relatives, etc.) or against pets?		
12. Is the victim still able to access his/her personal documents/money?		
13. Is the victim free to move around in and/or leave her/his house?		



<b>OFFENCE HISTORY</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
14. Has the suspect ever threatened or committed acts of violence against the victim? If so, please clarify.		
15. Has the suspect ever used a weapon against the victim? If so, please clarify.		
16. Has the victim ever filed a complaint against the suspect?		
17. Has there been an escalating series of incidents?		
18. Are other persons potentially at risk? If so, please clarify.		
19. Has the victim been threatened by any other person? If so, please clarify.		

<b>SUSPECT</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
20. Is the suspect identifiable?		
21. Is the suspect a child (under 18 years old)?		
22. Does the suspect have access to weapons? If so, please clarify.		
23. Has the suspect ever been convicted of any offence against the victim? If so, please clarify.		
24. Are there any outstanding court orders against the suspect? If so, please clarify.		
25. Has the suspect ever been convicted of any serious offence? If so, please clarify.		
26. Does the suspect have/had the suspect had problems with drugs and/or alcohol? If so, please clarify.		
27. Does the suspect have/had the suspect had mental health problems? If so, please clarify.		
28. Has the suspect ever threatened or tried to commit suicide?		

Additional information regarding victim/suspect:

Views of the victim on what support they require during criminal proceedings:

I hereby certify that the information given above is accurate.

Date:

Signature of victim:

Recommendations of the evaluator regarding victim's needs assessment (TO BE COMPLETED IN ALL CASES)

a) Victim's protection needs (needs related to victim's protection and/or related to improving the quality of the evidence):

b) Support referral needs (counselling legal services, community services...):

Identity of the evaluator:

Date :



## ANNEX 3. INDICATORS

As mentioned above, VAOs should be created following 10 basic principles. These basic principles could be considered as the basis from which to develop indicators that allow for the assessment of VAOs based on a measurable methodology.

### Principles:

#### 1. Public assistance

- Budget compromised to fund VAOs yearly.
- Multidisciplinary staff hired.
- Basic assistance covered by VAOs.

#### 2. Universality

- Number and profile of people contacting VAOs.
- Detection of exclusion factors in contacting VAOs (age, gender, legal status, disabilities, etc.)

#### 3. Proximity

- Establishment of common criteria for deploying VAOs.
- Number and location of VAOs.
- Territory covered.
- Distance to VAOs from remote locations.

#### 4. Professional specialisation

- Interdisciplinary staff, including, at least, a social worker, a legal advisor, and a psychologist.
- Training courses offered yearly.
- Inclusion of training in the staff curricula and selection process.

#### 5. Confidentiality

- Forms provided.
- Respect of EU Data Protection Standards.
- Measures taken to ensure the privacy of victims in the VAOs.

#### 6. Trust

- Assignment of a contact person amongst the staff for each user.
- Maintenance of the same contact person throughout the assistance process.

**7. Individualisation**

- Individualised Assessment of the victim's needs.
- Individualised Assistance Plan.

**8. Immediacy**

- Lapse of time to carry out the needs assessment.
- Lapse of time to establish protection measures.
- Lapse of time to provide comprehensive assistance.

**9. Inter-agency coordination**

- Mapping of the assisting organisations.
- Identification of gaps and duplicities.
- Assistance network managed by public authority that manages VAOs.
- Centralised online service.

**10. Communication**

- Web page.
- Phone service.
- Information leaflets.
- Downloadable booklets.
- Awareness-raising campaign.

## ANNEX 4. ADAPTATION REQUIREMENTS

Following the Workplan of the SupportVoC project, after the elaboration of a Generic Plan for the implementation of Victims Support Services, each participant country should identify those aspects of the Plan which are subject to be readapted according the particularities of Greek, Cypriot, Italian and Bulgarian contexts. These readjustments will further allow for the elaboration of National Plans for the implementation of Victims Support Services (one per country) with the collaboration of local NGOs and institutional stakeholders.

In order to facilitate the definition of the adaptation requirements, the following **questions** should be responded in relation to **each objective** of the plan, taking into account the measures and the responsibility of managing the measure:

- **Is this objective already addressed in your country?**
- **If yes, how is it carried out?**
- **If not, how could this objective be addressed in your country considering that some aspects may be changed/added/taken out? Please take into account any possible obstacles and ways of tackling these.**

Below you can find an example for the first objective:

<b>Axis 1. ASSESSING VICTIMS' NEEDS</b>
<b>O1.</b> To receive and orientate the victim about their rights as a victim of crime, the actions that can be undertaken, the problems that could be faced during the criminal process, and their possible consequences.
<b>M1.1. Face-to-face information.</b> Professional charged on this task should use a clear and simple language, taking into account the personal characteristics of victims, such as age, gender, administrative status, etc.
<b>M1.2. Phone service.</b> In order to ensure a broad, quick and anonym access to the reception, the creation of a phone service is strongly recommended.
<b>R1. Professionals in victimology who speak several languages.</b> Whilst the face-to-



face information should be provided by professionals working at VAOs, the phone service could be provided by a sub-contracted entity.

**Is this objective already addressed in your country?**

**If yes, how is it carried out?**

**If not, how could this objective be addressed in your country considering that some aspects may be changed/added/taken out? Please take into account any possible obstacles and ways of tackling these.**

