

Rights, support and protection of victims of crime

2023/0250(COD) - 21/05/2026 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 440 votes to 49, with 84 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive

2012/29/EU establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA.

The European Parliament adopted its position at first reading by amending the Commission's proposal as follows:

Reporting of criminal offences

Victims must be able to report criminal offences to the competent authorities through **free, accessible, user-friendly, secure, and readily available channels**. Reporting criminal offences using information and communication technologies must be without prejudice to national procedural rules concerning the formality of such reporting and the presentation of evidence.

When a person other than the victim reports a criminal offence, Member States should ensure that, where necessary, the competent authorities take measures to protect the victim before the offender is informed that an offence has been reported.

Any person **deprived of liberty or whose liberty is restricted** may indeed report a criminal offence which has been committed in detention or accommodation facilities which that person is not allowed to leave or is unable to leave at will or in places where their freedom of movement is restricted (e.g. prisons, detention and accommodation centres for third country nationals in irregular stay, specialised reception centres for disabled persons, children and the elderly).

When **children** contact the competent authorities to report criminal offences, reporting procedures must be safe, confidential, accessible, and child friendly. Where a criminal offence involves the holder of parental responsibility and there is a conflict of interest between the child victim and the holder of parental responsibility, Member States shall ensure that the ability of the child victim to report the criminal offence is not conditional upon the consent of the holder of parental responsibility. The competent authorities must take the necessary measures to protect the safety of the child before they inform the holder of parental responsibility that a criminal offence has been reported.

Victims who are **third-country nationals**, irrespective of their residence status, must not be discouraged from reporting a criminal offence and that they are treated in a non-discriminatory manner.

Victim helplines

Member States must establish **accessible, easy-to-use, secure, free, and confidential** helplines for victims. These helplines must be reachable by telephone via a number valid throughout the EU for national calls, namely 116 006, in addition to any existing national telephone number. These services may be provided through other secure and accessible information and communication technologies, including online applications and websites.

In addition to the national helpline number valid throughout the EU, helplines must be reachable via a **specific number for international calls** to victims who have suffered harm in a Member State other than

their Member State of residence. Where services are provided using information and communication technologies, these services must be available in a language the victim can understand, for example, through translation and interpretation technologies.

Right to receive information relating to the case

The victim must be promptly informed upon release, particularly in the case of release under judicial supervision, or in the event of the escape of a person held in pretrial detention, prosecuted or convicted for criminal offences concerning the victim. Furthermore, the victim must be informed of any measures taken to protect them in the event of the offender's release or escape.

Victim support services

Member States must take measures to establish **free and confidential specialist support services** in addition to, or as part of, general victim support services, or to enable victim support organisations to access specialist entities providing such specialised support. These specialist support services must remain fully operational for victims during crises, such as health crises, humanitarian situations, or other states of emergency.

Support services must provide victims with information, advice, and support regarding victims' rights, psychological support, targeted and integrated support, as well as information and, where appropriate, referrals to services providing medical and forensic examinations. Member States must provide timely access to **healthcare services, including sexual and reproductive healthcare services**, for victims of sexual violence.

Victim support services must pay particular attention to the specific needs of victims who have suffered **considerable harm** due to the severity of the crime. Furthermore, Member States must take the necessary measures to ensure the availability of targeted and integrated support services tailored to **child victims**, including when they witness an offence.

Access to support and protection measures must also be available to victims who have suffered **additional harm**, such as deprivation of dignity, resulting from the glorification of serious criminal offences, including public incitement to commit a terrorist offence.

Right to legal aid

Victims who have the right to participate in criminal proceedings but lack sufficient financial resources to afford legal representation must have access to legal aid, including, where applicable, for the purpose of claiming compensation. They also have the right to assistance on court premises, the right to avoid contact with the offender, the right to be informed of decisions made during the legal proceedings, and the right to a review of their case.

Awareness and information

Officials likely to come into contact with victims must receive both **general and specialist training** to increase their awareness of victims' needs, taking into account, where relevant, the trauma, gender, disability and specific circumstances of children and to avoid secondary victimisation. Member States must take measures to **raise awareness** of the rights set out in this Directive, reduce the risk of victimisation and minimise the negative impact of crime and the risks of secondary and repeat victimisation, of intimidation and of retaliation, in particular by targeting groups at risk such as children and victims of gender-based violence.