Area of freedom, security and justice: compensation to crime victims. Green Paper

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PURPOSE : to present the Green Paper on compensation to victims of crime. CONTENt : This paper launches a consultation with all interested parties on possible measures to be taken at Community level to improve state compensation to crime victims in the EU. The following questions are considered: - What European norms are relevant for addressing state compensation at Community level? - What opportunities for obtaining state compensation currently exist in the EU? - How could such opportunities be strengthened through a Community initiative? - How could access to state compensation be facilitated in cross-border situations? The paper provides an overview of state compensation schemes in the Member States. These, together with a consideration of cross-border situations, would appear to confirm that a Community initiative on compensation could provide real added value. Such an initiative could constitute an important building stone in the construction of an area of freedom, security and justice, creating a basic level of protection for all residents of the EU, easily accessible regardless of where in the EU they may become victims of crime. In relation to common minimum standards on matters such as eligibility criteria, losses covered and the amount of compensation, it is clear that each component of such a standard raises considerations difficult in themselves, and highlighting the differences existing between Member States. Cross-border situations are very relevant for the assessment of different solutions. The objective of improving access to state compensation to cross-border victims appears more straightforward. The objectives of providing a safety net and limiting unfair effects are closely linked to the objective of facilitating access to state compensation for cross-border victims. The Commission remarks that, for some Member States, making progress in the possibility for crime victims of getting state compensation will involve increased budgetary and administrative resources, which is clearly a factor to be considered.