Basic information

1999/2122(COS) COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic) Freedom, security and justice : assistance, compensation and access to justice for crime victims. Tampere, 1999 **Subject** 7.40.04 Judicial cooperation in criminal matters	Procedure completed

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
LIBE Citizens' Freedoms and Rights, Justice and Home Affairs	SÖRENSEN Patsy (V/ALE)	29/07/1999

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
JURI Legal Affairs and Internal Market	CEDERSCHIÖLD Charlotte (PPE-DE)	23/09/1999
CULT Culture, Youth, Education, Media and Sport	GARGANI Giuseppe (PPE-DE)	12/10/1999
FEMM Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities	ERIKSSON Marianne (GUE/NGL)	21/09/1999

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
Justice and Home Affairs (JHA)	2203	1999-10-04

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
14/07/1999	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1999)0349	Summary
13/09/1999	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
04/10/1999	Debate in Council		
19/04/2000	Vote in committee		Summary
19/04/2000	Committee report tabled for plenary	A5-0126/2000	

14/06/2000	Debate in Parliament		
15/06/2000	Decision by Parliament	T5-0279/2000	Summary
15/06/2000	End of procedure in Parliament		
01/03/2001	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	1999/2122(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 148
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	LIBE/4/11122

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A5-0126/2000 OJ C 059 23.02.2001, p. 0005	19/04/2000	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T5-0279/2000 OJ C 067 01.03.2001, p. 0185-0304	15/06/2000	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(1999)0349	14/07/1999	Summary

Freedom, security and justice : assistance, compensation and access to justice for crime victims. Tampere, 1999

1999/2122(COS) - 14/07/1999 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: examination of the ways to offer legal protection to crime victims in the European Union in the context of a debate open to all parties concerned. CONTENT: Given the increase in organised crime and the internationalisation of crime, it is becoming clear that a joint European response in order to offer citizens true access to justice and legal protection must be provided, as well as measures to improve victims' rights. Up to now, little has been done in this field, but it is planned that a survey of compensation schemes and an assessment of the feasibility of taking action within the Union will be addressed within five years. The Commission is of the opinion that the rights of victims of crime would only be partially addressed by dealing with the compensation issue in isolation. Prevention of crime and the stages preceding victim compensation - assistance to victims and the standing of victims in the criminal procedure - are equally important and need to be exhausted before the victim comes even close to the compensation systems. Points for consideration in the form of proposals are put forward in the Communication for each stage in this process. This document sets out a discussion framework concerning this aspect of access to justice, as a contribution by the Commission to the process of establishing an area of freedom, justice and security, ahead of the European Council meeting in Tampere, in October 1999. The Commission believes that the following should be considered: 1) Prevention of victimisation: inviting Member States to echange best practices on crime prevention. 2) Assistance to victims:

easy accessibility of assistance services provided for domestic and foreign victims, with agreed standards and under quality control, offering immediate material, medical, pyschological and social assistance, free of charge at the point of delivery; information on first aid, the availability of other forms of assistance and on the procedure that will follow; a telephone hotline, or a network of hotlines, bringing together assistance services in the EU, in order to make all relevant information available in several languages. 3) Victims' access to and standing in their own process: treatment of victims with respect and dignity at all levels of the criminal procedure, including the protection of their privacy and safety; the availability of contact persons in court to assist victims and witnesses with matters in relation to the procedure and/or, depending on the jurisdiction, other services available for support and advice; the use of e.g. fast-track procedures, and possibilities for leaving statements beforehand or from the home country, in order to make it possible for a foreign victim to participate adequately in a procedure; the availability of court premises, such as separate waiting rooms, assuring that a victim or witness does not have to confront the offender more than necessary; the restitution of stolen property to victims as early as possible; additional research and experiments in victim-offender mediation with evaluation of the particular interests of victims, as well as practical arrangements formediation. 4) Victims' access to compensation: ratification by all EU Member States of the 1983 Convention on Compensation to Victims of Violent Crimes; compensation to victims as early as possible, e.g. through advance payments; assistance to victims in the debt collection of damages from the offender; cooperation between the Member States, where relevant, to facilitate applications for state compensation, by letting victims apply via the compensation authority in their home country. 5) Information, language and training: a survey among travellers on their experience of crime through Commission programme funding; the development of a framework for education and training and the promotion of exchange of good practice in such training, not least multicultural training, in transnational initiatives of the relevant industries and those resulting from EU-funded initiatives and programmes; the possibilities of providing multi-language information relevant to crime victims through existing EU-conduits, such as the Europe Direct and the Dialogue with Citizens initiative. Responses to the various proposals set down in this Communication should be sent to the Justice and Home Affairs Task Force, c/o the Secretariat General at the European Commission at the latest by 31.12.1999.

Freedom, security and justice : assistance, compensation and access to justice for crime victims. Tampere, 1999

1999/2122(COS) - 15/06/2000 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution drafted by its rapporteur Patsy SORENSEN (Green/ALE, Belgium) on the Commission Communication on crime victims in the EU. Parliament welcomed the communication and called for measures to improve the situation of victims. The Commission should not, however, confine itself to calling on the Member States to exchange best practices but should also take advantage of the forms of action offered by the Treaties. It suggests concrete measures that can be taken and expects the Commission to focus on a list of areas as regards these measures. These areas include: -acknowledgement that family and dependents are also victims -the right to an interpreter -the necessary material and medical assistance -the adoption of special protective arrangements for minors. The Commission is urged to devote special attention to the need for training police and judicial officials with regard to sex offences. A coordinated European system of victim services programmes should be established. The fact that terrorism generates a special category of victims must be considered in formulating definitions.