



HANDBOOK

ON VICTIMS OF TERRORISM

CYPRUS

The EU Centre of Expertise for Victims of Terrorism (EUCVT) is set up and run by the European Commission. The tasks of the EU Centre are executed by a consortium led by Victim Support Europe and include ARQ National Psychotrauma Centre, Association française des Victimes du Terrorisme and Fondation Lenal.

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CONTENT

INTRODUCTION

CRISIS RESPONSE STRUCTURE IN CYPRUS

TERRORIST ATTACKS

VICTIMS' NEEDS

1. THE RIGHTS OF VICTIMS OF TERRORISM

- 1.1 Victim of terrorism – Definition under national law and Impact
- 1.2 Victims' rights to respect and recognition
- 1.3 Victims' rights to access information
- 1.4 Victims' rights to access support services
- 1.5 Victims' right to access justice – procedural rights
- 1.6 Victims' rights to protection: physical and privacy
- 1.7 Victims' rights to protection: secondary victimisation
- 1.8 Victims' rights in relation to access to compensation

2. CONSIDERING PARTICULAR GROUPS OF VICTIMS

- 2.1 Cross-border victims
- 2.2 Children

3. ORGANISING SUPPORT

- 3.1 Preparation and organisation of support for victims of terrorist attacks
- 3.2 Organisation of support for victims of terrorism

4. EUCVT

INTRODUCTION

Recently, the threat of terrorism has hung over the European Union and the rest of the world. The occurrence, on an almost regular basis, of terrorist attacks – whether by suicide bomber or other means – has shaken society to the core, especially as EU citizens are often caught up in such events outside their home borders as well as within EU borders. The impact of terrorism on individuals can be terrible whilst the recovery of victims of terrorist attacks can be affected by the way in which governments, organisations, and individuals respond to the immediate attack and by how victims are supported afterwards.

The Victims' Rights Directive, together with provisions in the Counter-Terrorism Directive (Title V) and the Directive on Compensation, provide a general framework of rights for victims of terrorism. The Counter-Terrorism Directive

goes beyond the Victims' Rights Directive to establish services supporting the specific needs of victims of terrorism. EU Member States are bound by these instruments, have the obligation to transpose them into national legislation and to ensure that they are correctly applied in practice. In doing so, each Member State must evaluate how to implement these provisions to ensure measures are appropriate to the specific situation and to national circumstances.

Cyprus does not have any experience with terrorist attacks. However, on 7 July 2012, the Cypriot authorities arrested a Lebanese-born Swedish citizen in Limassol, Cyprus. He was a member of the Shi'a Islamic militant group Hezbollah, who had been tasked with watching the activities of Israeli tourists on the island. Israel condemned the incident as an attempted terrorist attack.

Further reading:



- **On rights:**
 - Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA, *OJ L 315, 14.11.2012, p. 57–73*, hereafter referred to as [Victims' Rights Directive](#)
 - Directive (EU) 2017/541 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2017 on combating terrorism and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA and amending Council Decision 2005/671/JHA, *OJ L 88, 31.3.2017, p. 6–21*, hereafter referred to as [Counter-terrorism directive](#)
 - Council Directive 2004/80/EC of 29 April 2004 relating to compensation to crime victims, *OJ L 261, 6.8.2004, p. 15–18*, hereafter referred to as [Directive on compensation to crime victims](#)
- **On needs:**
 - Ivanković, A., Altan, L., Verelst, A. (2017) How can the EU and Member States better help victims of terrorism?
- **On psychosocial support:**
 - Vicente Colomina, Aída de (2019) Victims of Terrorism Quality Assistance Guide
- **On legal support:**
 - Victim Support Europe, APAV (2019) VOCIARE Synthesis Report
- **On organisations of victims of terrorism:**
 - RAN (2017) The power of victims of terrorism: how to give support
- **On the recognition of victims and useful figures:**
 - MEP Maité Pagazaurtundúa (2019) le livre blanc et noir du terrorisme en Europe

CRISIS RESPONSE STRUCTURE IN CYPRUS

Cyprus has, in place, national crisis management contingency plans for specific incidents. 'ASPIDA' (Shield) is the contingency plan for the management of a national crisis deriving from terrorist events.

At a national level, the main mission of the Cyprus Civil Defence is to perform various humanitarian tasks to protect the civilian population, help it recover from the immediate effects of hostilities or disasters, and provide the conditions necessary for its survival.

At the ministerial level, the Minister of the Interior, on behalf of the Council of Ministers, is responsible for the implementation of Cypriot Laws and By-Laws, and other relevant directives, and so has the overall supervision and control of the civil defence system. The Minister coordinates the services and organisations declared 'essential' for civil defence purposes. Thus, the responsibility of civil defence rests with the Ministry of the Interior.

Legislatively, the Civil Defence Force has established civil defence units in almost

all urban areas, these are mainly staffed by conscripts and volunteers. Across the various units, these Civil Defence members first receive basic training, then are positioned, and given more specific training according to their roles, in different Civil Defence divisions: first aid, the telecommunication section, the welfare section, the rescue and fire-fighting section, and the neighbourhood watch section.

The Council of Ministers approves the General Civil Defence Plan, which defines the role, duties, and responsibilities of all civil defence system components. According to these roles, duties and responsibilities, each civil defence system component (mainly the 'essential services') has to develop civil defence plans to deal with any contingency, which may arise from natural hazards or manmade disasters. In addition, the Civil Defence supports the Ministry of Education Culture, Sport and Youth in educating pupils on the measures they need to take to protect themselves following a disaster.

Further reading:



- [Overview of the National Disaster Management System](#)

TERRORIST ATTACKS

Terrorism evolves constantly as perpetrators, methods and targets are changing. The characteristics of an attack will influence the scale of the response and the impact of the attack on its victims and associated local, regional, national or international communities.

Key characteristics

Influential key characteristics include:

- scale (a single victim or large numbers of victims)
- location (open or closed environment; one or more points of attack)
- timing (within hours or on consecutive days, during the day/night/rush hour)
- weapons used
- target groups
- degree to which the terrorists are organised

Regardless of the attack characteristics, thorough preparation is required to ensure the crisis is managed in line with the EU rules on victims' rights.

Scale

The scale of the attack (the number of those killed or wounded) varies from event to event. In the Halle attack in 2019, 2 people were killed, and 2 people were seriously injured. These figures only confirm the numbers of dead and injured. Those affected will be much larger. The greater the number of victims, the more resources are required during both the emergency response phase (e.g. hospital beds) and in the longer term (e.g. in criminal proceedings, professional mental health services, information and support providers). The larger an attack, the greater the media attention will be on the victims, their families and society.

Location

In the recent past, attacks have tended to concentrate on a single localised area. However, during the Paris attacks in November 2015, six separate events took place in different locations within a short period of time. The multiple sites, in both enclosed and open venues, and numbers of victims created a chaotic environment: identification of victims and securing individual locations required complex management of the various services involved.

Timing

In the case of multiple, related, terrorist attacks, the timing of any consecutive attack(s) has usually been within a few hours of the first, for instance in 2016 the two attacks in Brussels occurred within an hour of each other. Yet, the attacks in Barcelona, on 17 August 2017, were followed by an attack in Cambrils, about 100 kilometres to the south, the next day. In Asia and the Middle East, follow-up attacks have been timed to hit first responders and helpers.

Weapons

Bombs are not the only weapon used by terrorists: trucks are driven through crowds; airplanes are taken down by missiles; suicide vests, knives, firearms, chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear (CBRN) agents etc. are used. Each weapon impacts its victims differently and will require a different response: for example, the truck attack in Nice initiated a new approach in defining victims eligible for compensation and the French government delineated zones around the attack location to help establish victim lists.

Target groups and organisation

Various ideologies motivate terrorists to carry out attacks: e.g. antisemitism (Halle, Germany in 2019), jihadism (London, UK in 2019), right-wing extremism (Hanau, Germany in 2020), etc. Europol's annual Terrorism Situation and Trend (TE-SAT) Report lists jihadist, ethno-nationalist and separatist, left-wing and anarchist, right-wing and single-issue terrorist groups, in addition to a new grouping of attacks committed by informal organisations or lone wolves.

Cyberterrorism

The internet can also be used for terrorist purposes: by threatening individuals, organisations or governments with violence that may result in bodily harm or loss of life, or by large-scale disruption of computer networks. These forms of terrorism are not explicitly addressed in this handbook. However, preparation for such attacks, and support of their victims, are similar to 'offline' terrorist attacks.

Further reading:

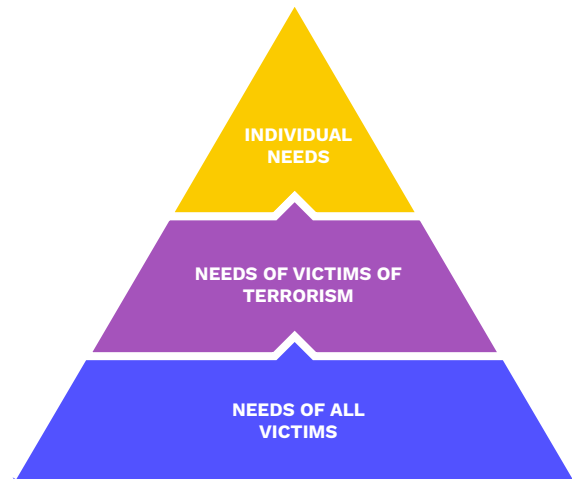


- [Europol \(2020\) TE-SAT Report](#)
- [Institute for Economics and Peace \(2019\) Global terrorism index](#)

VICTIMS' NEEDS

As specified in Recital 27¹ of the Counter-terrorism Directive, Member States should adopt measures of protection, support and assistance in responding to the specific needs of victims of terrorism, in accordance with the Victims' Rights Directive and as specified by the Counter-terrorism Directive. The measures on protection, support, and assistance to victims of terrorism are further developed in Title V of the Counter-terrorism Directive.

Recital 16 of the Victims' Rights Directive specifically addresses the needs of victims of terrorism, who have suffered injuries – whether physical or psychological – from attacks that were intended to harm society. They may need special consideration, support and protection due to the nature of the crime committed against them. Member States should pay attention to the needs of victims of terrorism, and should seek to protect their dignity and security.



Layers of needs

To understand the needs of victims of terrorism, it is important to comprehend that there are different layers of needs. The first layer consists of the needs of all victims of crime. The second layer consists of specific needs due to the nature of the terrorist attack. The third layer of needs depend on personal and environmental factors of the individual victim.

Emergency support to meet victims' needs immediately following a terrorist attack is critically important: survivors need to be safe and secure, receive emergency medical – and psychological – aid, food and drink. Member States shall ensure that support services addressing the specific needs of victims are in place and easily accessible immediately after a terrorist attack, and for as long as necessary.

¹ Under EU law, Recitals provide background information and reasoning for the inclusion of particular Articles in legislative acts.

Non-urgent needs of all victims of crime are divided into five major categories:



Needs of victims of terrorism

Once emergency care has been given to victims of terrorism, their specific needs, as related to the above five categories, can be evaluated. These needs may differ from, or be more intense compared to, victims of other intentional crimes:

1. Recognition and respect: as victim of terrorism.
2. Support: medical care, specialised psychological-trauma care, information, practical assistance, legal assistance, communication (media) support, peer support, etc.
3. Protection: physical protection, protection from secondary victimisation.

4. Access to justice: safe participation in the criminal justice process.
5. Compensation and restoration: financial compensation and help with the financial impact of a terrorist attack. Restoration includes overall recovery and restorative justice processes.

Individual needs

Individual victims' needs will depend on personal characteristics (previous victimisation or stressful life events); (mental) health; social network; socio-economic situation; cross border situation; and daily stressors. These needs will evolve over time, therefore, responding to the needs of victims of terrorism requires an individualised victim-centred approach.

Further reading:



- Dolci, L. (2018) A Victimless Crime? A Narrative on Victims of Terrorism to build a case for support
- INVICTM (2018) Symposium Report: Supporting Victims of Terrorism
- RAN (2018) Enhancing the resilience of victims after terrorist attacks

1. THE RIGHTS OF VICTIMS OF TERRORISM

1.1 VICTIM OF TERRORISM – DEFINITION UNDER NATIONAL LAW AND IMPACT

DEFINITION UNDER EU LAW Victim of Terrorism

Under the Counter-terrorism Directive, a victim of terrorism is defined as follows, in line with the definition offered by the Victims' Rights Directive:

- a natural person who has suffered harm, including physical, mental or emotional harm or economic loss, insofar as that was *directly* caused by a terrorist offence, or
- a family member of a person whose death was *directly* caused by a terrorist offence **and** who has *suffered harm as a result* of that person's death.

Note: the use of the word 'victim' is not always appreciated by those who survived or were otherwise affected by terror attacks, they may not identify themselves as victims despite severe trauma, but may see themselves as 'survivors', which indeed they are. However, for practical reasons, this handbook will identify those involved by the word 'victim'.

Terrorist offence

The Counter-terrorism Directive lists the intentional acts that shall be criminalised as terrorist offences by Member States. These acts are discussed in detail in Subchapter 1.1 of the EU Handbook on Victims of Terrorism.

DEFINITION UNDER CYPRIOT LAW Victim of Terrorism

According to the 'Combating of Terrorism and Victims' Protection Law 75(I)/2019', a victim of terrorism is defined as: (a) a natural person who has suffered harm, including physical, mental or

emotional harm or economic loss, insofar as that was directly caused by a terrorist offence, or (b) a family member of a person whose death was directly caused by a terrorist offence and who has suffered harm as a result of that person's death.

Terrorist offence

Cypriot legislation does not define the term 'terrorist offence'. However, it does add a caveat to the definition of 'terrorist group' to the definition provided by the Counter-terrorism Directive. This caveat states that a terrorist group must be on the lists of natural or legal persons or other groups, which have been subject to anti-terrorism sanctions or other measures. These lists are created in compliance with the UN Security Council, or the Council of the EU, resolutions and are updated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

IMPACT OF TERRORIST ATTACKS ON VICTIMS

All victims of all violent crimes face physical, mental health, and financial consequences; however, the impact on those present at a terrorist attack means the violence of their experience is different from that of their peers.

Physical consequences

Terrorists intend for their attacks to cause many casualties, as indicated by the weapons they use (firearms, explosives, etc.). Hence, the fatality rate in a terrorist attack is relatively high and injuries tend to be severe.

Mental health consequences

Victims experience fear and anxiety after a terrorist attack at levels that may not incur psychological problems, but that may have behavioural, relational and financial consequences. Post-traumatic stress is often diagnosed in victims following a terrorist attack. Victims may re-experience the event, have repeated and unwanted intrusive thoughts, hyper arousal, emotional numbing and/or avoidance of stimuli reminding them of the traumatic experience.

Financial consequences

Victims of terrorism may incur severe injuries, that are linked with a (higher) probability of developing a psychological disorder. This implies that the costs related to victimisation will be higher (for the victims, their property, their insurers and/or the government).

Future events

While the risk of involvement in another terrorist attack is relatively small, the perception of this risk may be high. Consequently, victims may experience feelings of insecurity, especially if they suffer from a Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Perceived risk and the presence of PTSD contribute to psychological damage caused by terrorism.

Risk groups

Previous physical or psychological trauma, existing mental disorders, lack of social support and low socio-economic status may lead to a greater psychological impact on victims. Children and minority groups have a higher risk of developing psychological problems. Children are at risk when they are too young to be able to express their symptoms verbally or when the ability of parents to support them is diminished. Minority groups have a higher risk when their health literacy is low or if they have experienced similar trauma in the past.

Loss and grief

The sudden loss and violent death of a loved one in a terrorist attack may lead to complicated psychological reactions in family members, which may be further aggravated by the specifics of a terrorist attack: e.g. having to identify a severely damaged body.

Further reading:



- Letschert, R.M., Staiger, I., Pemberton, A. (2010) Assisting victims of terrorism: towards a European standard of justice
- Damiani, C., Victime et traumatisme, in Tigrane Tovmassian, L., & Bentata, H. (2013) Le traumatisme dans tous ses éclats, p. 61-70
- Ivanković, A., Altan, L., Verelst, A. (2017) How can the EU and Member States better help victims of terrorism?
- German Presidency Report (2020) State of play regarding support to victims of terrorism, particularly in cross-border situations
- European Commission (2020) Report on transposition of Directive (EU) 2017/541

1.2 VICTIMS' RIGHTS TO RESPECT AND RECOGNITION

THE RIGHTS UNDER EU LAW

Recognition and respect underpin the healing process of victims as individuals and community members. Under EU law, Member States must ensure that victims are treated in a respectful manner by all those they come into contact with. Recital 16 of the Victims' Rights Directive mentions that victims of terrorism often need social recognition and respectful treatment by society.

Recognition and respect are established by ensuring that actors appreciate the victims' situation, their individual and group circumstances, the nature of the attack and how that can influence victims' behaviour.

The first step towards recognition and respect of victims of terrorism is their identification, while subsequent commemorative events and memorials form an integral part of the healing process for victims of terrorism, their families and all those affected.

Identification of victims and information about victims

The Counter-terrorism Directive requires Member States to have mechanisms and protocols in place that will activate support services for victims of terrorism immediately after an attack and that will facilitate the identification of victims and their families. In the aftermath of a terrorist attack, especially those involving a large number of victims, it is key to establish mechanisms of gathering information from the scene that serves multiple purposes. Identification is necessary to complete several key actions, including to:

- Establish the identity of the deceased and injured;
- Cross-refer these identities to the information received from the concerned

public, friends and family members, who fear that their loved ones were at the scene;

- Enable the authorities to make sure that the loved ones are informed about the loss of life or injury of those who were identified at the scene;
- Inform external countries about the fate of their nationals.

Recognition

Society (local, regional or national government; politicians; media; support providers, and justice/law enforcement actors) can recognise victims of terrorism in many ways: formal written acknowledgement of status as (indirect) victim, remembrance ceremonies, memorials, financial compensation, and/or granting of specific rights. In its EU Strategy on victims' rights, the Commission urges Member States to ensure proper recognition for all victims of terrorism, especially since terrorist attacks are directed at the state and society as a whole.

Commemorative events and memorials form an integral part of the healing process for victims, their families and all those affected. While states may face competing community ideas in the preparation and delivery of such events, it is the wishes and input of the victims that are decisive in the development and realisation of any commemoration: this may be one of the few times victims come together.

Commemoration events provide victims as well as the general public with the opportunity to express feelings and opinions; to experience and receive social support; to show societal acknowledgment and to give meaning to the attack. If done properly, the commemoration can contribute to the victims' recovery process, however, as acts of remembrance may 'dilute' over time, changes in frequency and form should be discussed with the victims. The aim should be to invite all victims and all responders, even those who will not be able to attend due

to injuries or geographical distance. Financial reasons should not weigh in on the victims' decision to attend anniversaries.

Respect

Treating victims with respect can significantly influence victim satisfaction with government and criminal justice systems. Fundamental to respectful treatment are:

- the way professionals interact with victims and
- the procedures and infrastructures in place.

The cultural and religious backgrounds of the individual victim of terrorism determine, to a large extent, what the victim considers respectful treatment.

Respect begins with empathy. Understanding the victims' situation empowers professionals to act in an empathetic manner. However, compassion should be moderated by sufficient professional distance to provide the best possible support.

Respect is not only important for individual victims, but also for the entire group victimised. It is particularly important for vulnerable victims or minority groups, the elderly, children and people with disabilities.

Victim registration – a necessary pre-condition for recognition and respect

To ensure respect and recognition for all victims, especially in attacks affecting a large number of people, it is fundamental for the authorities to plan and execute a rigorous victim registration procedure. This procedure should be designed in such a way as to centralise victim information – including the information and contact details of concerned family members, witnesses and bystanders, first responders and other persons, who might have been impacted by the attack in different ways.

AN OVERVIEW OF RIGHTS IN CYPRUS

The right to respect and recognition for victims of terrorism is covered in the Combating of Terrorism and Victims' Protection Law 75(I)/2019. Within this law, several articles also refer to the Law on the Establishment of Minimum Standards on the Rights, Support and Protection of Victims of Crime of 2016 (Law 51(I)/2016) and the Law on Compensation to Victims of Violent Crimes of 1997 (Law 51(I)/1997). Article 4 of Law 51(I)/2016 states that every service and non-governmental organisation involved shall treat victims with respect and sensitivity, based on the principle of non-discrimination, using a tailored and professional approach. Special consideration is given to the protection needs of, and support to, child victims, persons with disabilities, and victims of terrorism.

THE NEEDS OF VICTIMS OF TERRORISM RELATED TO THESE RIGHTS



EXAMPLES OF NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES OR INTERNATIONAL GOOD PRACTICES

Identification of victims and information about victims

In France, the handling of the bodies of the deceased is the exclusive responsibility of the investigating services, which organise procedures leading to the victims' identification, registration, and transportation under the direction of the competent public prosecutor. Relatives, to whom a death is announced, regularly point out the importance of this crucial moment and the need to pay the utmost attention to it, given that any consequences that follow can mark one's whole life.

Commemoration events

On 11 March each year, the European Remembrance Day for victims of terrorism is organised with victims and for victims together with the European Commission.

Monuments

Monuments create a physical place where victims can gather to share their individual loss with society.

Further reading:



- Ivanković, A., Altan, L., Verelst, A. (2017) How can the EU and Member States better help victims of terrorism?
- European Commission (2020) EU Strategy on victims' rights (2020-2025)
- VSE (2019) Remembering Victims of Terrorism: A guidance document
- Michael, I., Argyridou, C. & Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family (2019) VOciare National Report Cyprus

1.3 VICTIMS' RIGHTS TO ACCESS INFORMATION

THE RIGHTS UNDER EU LAW

The Victims' Rights Directive and the Counter-terrorism Directive set out the following minimum scope of a victims' rights to access information:

- the information should be easy to understand and available in multiple formats. In choosing the distribution medium particular attention should be paid to reaching vulnerable groups;
- the victims' right to receive advice and information on relevant legal, practical or financial matters as an integral part of the support offered to victims after a terrorist attack;
- the victims' right to receive information from the first contact with a competent authority;
- the victims' right to receive information on the investigation and justice procedures with regard to their case;
- the victims' right to understand and be understood.

AN OVERVIEW OF RIGHTS IN CYPRUS

National law provides that the victim is informed According to Law 51(I)/2016 and the Cyprus Police Guide to Victims' Rights, police officers are obliged to follow appropriate measures to help victims understand and be understood. Victims should be helped to understand information provided to them from their first contact with a public authority and during any future contact with an appropriate authority, in the context of criminal proceedings related to their victimisation due to a terrorist attack. Additionally, measures are taken

to assess the communication needs, and constraints, of each individual victim including those with disabilities, migrants, minorities, etc. As stated in the legislation mentioned above, the police shall make sure that all communication with the victim is delivered in simple, easy to understand oral or written language, taking into consideration the victim's individual characteristics, including any form of disability that may affect the victim's aptitude to understand or be understood.

The same law states that every service involved, including non-governmental organisations, shall provide (without unnecessary delay and in a language/format understood by the victim, including Braille or sign language) the victim with the following information: the type of support the victim can obtain and from whom; the procedures for reporting a criminal offence and the victim's role in such procedures; the manner and the conditions under which the victim can obtain protection, access compensation, and interpretation and translation services; special measures if the victim resides in another EU Member State; the procedures for making complaints where the rights of the victim have not been respected by the service involved; the victim's contact details for communicating about his/her case; and the terms and conditions of expense reimbursement as a result of his/her participation in the criminal proceedings.

THE NEEDS OF VICTIMS OF TERRORISM RELATED TO THESE RIGHTS



EXAMPLES OF NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES OR INTERNATIONAL GOOD PRACTICES

In practice, it is essential that information is made available to victims of terrorism at all times. Information reassures victims, helps them understand and make decisions, and aids their recovery. The provision of adequate, timely information about the terrorist attack and its consequences is important to victims and their family members.

State authorities play a crucial role in providing accurate information after an attack. Government information is more effective when it is co-ordinated with civil society actors, media companies, social media, etc.

Information can be divided into:

1. rights and services, actions and expectations – as required by EU rules;
2. factual and topical information regarding the attack, the current situation, and the condition of loved ones;
3. dealing with the attack (involving reassurance and psycho-education on normal reactions and practical suggestions to encourage healthy behaviour).

Information centres

It is recommended that victims of terrorism are provided with a centralised, single contact point that coordinates the work of all those involved in the support and protection of victims. Additionally, a dedicated website, providing all relevant information, can act as – or be supported by – a one-stop-shop, a centre where a range of services (e.g., psychosocial, legal, medical and financial) is provided in the immediate aftermath of an attack.

In June 2021, during the forest fires in the Limassol and the Larnaca areas, the Social Welfare Services in cooperation with the Civil Defence, provided immediate assistance and social care, including temporary hotel accommodation, to those affected. In addition, the Social Welfare Services visited the affected areas to assess the situation and to provide assistance and support to the elderly and the vulnerable as well as to families.

Further reading:



- Ivanković, A., Altan, L., Verelst, A. (2017) How can the EU and Member States better help victims of terrorism?
- German Presidency Report (2020) State of play regarding support to victims of terrorism, particularly in cross-border situations
- Cyprus Police (2017) Crime victims: Victims' rights, support and protection
- Michael, I., Argyridou, C. & Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family (2019) VOCIARE National Report Cyprus

1.4 VICTIMS' RIGHTS TO ACCESS SUPPORT SERVICES

THE RIGHTS UNDER EU LAW

The Victims' Rights Directive and the Counter-terrorism Directive set out the following minimum scope of a victims' rights to access support services:

- Ensure victims' access to generic and specialist support services that are confidential, free of charge and easily accessible;
- Provide at least the following support to victims of terrorism: emotional and psychological support, assistance regarding compensation claims and provision of adequate medical treatment;
- Facilitate referral of victims to support services by the competent authority.

This subchapter focuses on the rights to access support services, as established mainly by the Victims' Rights Directive. Chapter Three describes the organisation of support in the specific context of terrorist attacks and other crisis situations in light of provisions in the Counter-terrorism Directive.

AN OVERVIEW OF RIGHTS IN CYPRUS

Victim support services in Cyprus are ensured by both public authorities and civil society, which specifically aim to provide general or specialised support to victims of crime (ΣΠΑΒΟ (SPAVO) the Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family). At State level, victim assistance services are usually provided by the relevant authorities, such as the Police and the Social Welfare Services (SWS), and they are free of charge. Victims can obtain protection, accommodation, food, regular meetings with psychologists, and free legal services, if the victim cannot afford to pay for a lawyer. Since there is no national generic victim support service in Cyprus, the SWS is responsible for providing such support (including to victims of terrorism), protecting the vulnerable, and strengthening social protection and integrity.

At the State level, the SWS and the Police offer support, and refer victims, to specialised services as required. According to Law 51(I)/2016, the SWS are the competent authority to ensure that victims receive help from appropriate support services. Additionally, the SWS shall ensure that the victims receive: a) information, advice and support relevant to their rights; b) information on any existing relevant specialist support services; c) emotional and psychological support, referral to the Mental Health Services and/or to the Educational Psychology Service of the Ministry of Education and Culture if the victim is a student; and d) information on other services, such as psychological support services, housing, financial support and medical services.

THE NEEDS OF VICTIMS OF TERRORISM RELATED TO THESE RIGHTS



EXAMPLES OF NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES OR INTERNATIONAL GOOD PRACTICES

As each victim will undergo a different recovery process, victims' needs change over time and the assistance and support provided has to be adapted to meet these changes.

Victims, especially if they have to deal with serious (mental) health problems after a terrorist attack, will face difficulties in absorbing information. Information on (organisations that provide) assistance and support will be more effective when it is provided on different occasions. Ideally, those offering help will be proactive: reaching out to victims on a regular basis, finding ways and opportunities to connect with them. Victims need information on available services, but should not be coerced into using them.

Victim assistance centres

It is beneficial to set up a victim assistance centre after large-scale terrorist attacks: a one-stop-shop, where victims can go to get information and support.

Central contact point within government

According to the ASPIDA Contingency Plan for terrorist crisis management, which refers to the IPIΣ (IRIS) plan (Police Media and Communication Management Plan during a Crisis), the police should establish a specific reception centre to provide information and immediate support to victims' relatives. Additionally, the Cyprus Police Press Office should be available 24/7 for communicating information to the public (including victims).

Further reading:



- Ivanković, A., Altan, L., Verelst, A. (2017) How can the EU and Member States better help victims of terrorism?
- German Presidency Report (2020) State of play regarding support to victims of terrorism, particularly in cross-border situations
- Michael, I., Argyridou, C. & Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family (2019) VOciare National Report Cyprus
- Website of the Social Welfare Services

1.5 VICTIMS' RIGHT TO ACCESS JUSTICE – PROCEDURAL RIGHTS

THE RIGHTS UNDER EU LAW

The Victims' Rights Directive and the Counter-terrorism Directive set out the following minimum scope of a victims' rights to access justice:

- the right to be heard;
- the right to access legal aid, where victims have the status of parties to criminal proceedings;
- the right to reimbursement of expenses resulting from their active participation in the proceedings.

AN OVERVIEW OF RIGHT TO ACCESS TO JUSTICE IN CYPRUS

Victims in Cyprus are not given the status of parties to criminal proceedings and therefore do not benefit from the right to access legal aid. During the criminal proceedings the victim has the status of the main prosecution witness. The legal guidance, assistance, and advice of the victim is granted by the Public Prosecutor who

is responsible for presenting the case before the court. Within this framework, the victims may provide evidence for their case. The prosecuting authorities and any other department involved shall take appropriate measures to ensure that, in coordination with each other, the victim is examined and interrogated only in so far as is necessary for the purposes of the criminal proceedings and in accordance with criminal procedural rules. Furthermore, the State compensates any victim, who cooperates with the prosecution authorities as a witness in criminal proceedings, for costs to which he/she is subject because of his/her participation in the criminal proceedings.

The reimbursement of expenses is included in the sentence of the accused in the form of 'punitive compensation', and this is part of the court procedures. The money will be collected by the court and delivered to the victim, though there is no specific deadline for this to be carried out. If the victim wishes to claim civil compensation, procedures are initiated at the civil court where the victim can claim compensation from both the offender and the State.

THE NEEDS OF VICTIMS OF TERRORISM RELATED TO THESE RIGHTS



EXAMPLES OF NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES OR INTERNATIONAL GOOD PRACTICES

Large scale attacks

Criminal proceedings and trials for large scale attacks are complex. Large numbers of victims and witnesses are involved, and all share the right to participate in the trial. States may need to establish special measures to facilitate this participation, which may include holding trials in larger secure locations to accommodate all those involved.

Where criminal proceedings about terrorist attacks and other disasters account for large numbers of victims, there may be a need for more support compared to other criminal proceedings.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT TO VICTIMS DURING CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS FOR LARGE SCALE ATTACKS – GOOD PRACTICE:

In the context of the trial for the Madrid attacks of 11 March 2004, one of the largest ever held in Spain, a special pavilion was set up for social workers, psychologists, and

other support staff/members of associations to provide emotional and practical assistance to victims attending the trial in person.

Public inquiries

Victims of terrorist attacks, as other victims, express a need for truth. They want to know what happened, how it happened, who was involved and why. The instigation of formal criminal procedures takes time and victims are often left without answers. A public inquiry can serve as an alternative means of answering the questions of victims and society as a whole.

Further reading:



- Ivanković, A., Altan, L., Verelst, A. (2017) How can the EU and Member States better help victims of terrorism?
- German Presidency Report (2020) State of play regarding support to victims of terrorism, particularly in cross-border situations
- Michael, I., Argyridou, C. & Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family (2019) VOIARE National Report Cyprus

1.6 VICTIMS' RIGHTS TO PROTECTION: PHYSICAL AND PRIVACY

THE RIGHTS UNDER EU LAW

The Victims' Rights Directive and the Counter-terrorism Directive set out the following minimum victims' rights to protection, in particular physical protection and privacy:

- Availability of measures for the protection of privacy, personal integrity and personal data of victims and their family members, particularly in the context of criminal proceedings. In balancing these measures against the pluralism and freedom of the media, self-regulatory measures should be encouraged;
- Availability of measures to protect victims and their family members from intimidation and retaliation as well as from the risk of emotional and psychological harm;
- Requirement for an individual assessment of victims' protection needs to determine whether and to what extent the victim would benefit from special measures in the course of criminal proceedings.

AN OVERVIEW OF RIGHT TO PROTECTION IN CYPRUS

According to Law 51(I)/2016, a victim wishing to cooperate with the prosecution authorities, in the context of the criminal proceedings, shall be considered as a witness in need of protection within the meaning given to the term by the Witness Protection Laws (Law 95(I)/2001 and 15(I)/2014) and, where necessary, shall be placed in the Witness Protection Scheme and Co-operators of Justice. Victims protected under the Witness Protection Law will be accorded special treatment, which protects the victim from secondary and repeat victimisation, and the risks of emotional or psychological harm, possible revenge or retaliation.

THE NEEDS OF VICTIMS OF TERRORISM RELATED TO THESE RIGHTS



EXAMPLES OF NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES OR INTERNATIONAL GOOD PRACTICES

Government and the media

While governments may agree that the (social) media, with its various roles, can be a strategic resource at times of crisis, finding the right tone in communicating with the media is a challenge. To be able to practise reliable, respectful messaging, to prevent the spread of rumours and to contribute to the recognition of those affected by terrorist attacks, government officials must work hard to communicate with the media.

To make communication more manageable, state authorities can proactively approach the media in the aftermath of a terrorist attack. However, to make the best of the relationship, communication frameworks should be defined, key messages prepared, and the timing of press releases coordinated.

There must be a balance between respecting the privacy and needs of victims and their relatives, and informing the public through media channels. Information from government sources must respect the dignity and security of victims, particularly children. Secondary victimisation must be avoided. In the medium- to long-term, personalised information should be made available to victims and relatives prior to a formal report being made publicly available through media channels.

According to the IRIS (ΙΡΙΣ) Police Plan, during any massive crisis events, or events with an international impact, official information would be submitted via the Cypriot police website. A

safe media zone should be created near the site of the event, where police spokespeople should periodically update the media on the incident. According to the Plan, police spokespeople should avoid giving the press sensitive information.

Victims and the media

It is difficult to balance the freedom of the media, the general populations' need for information and the privacy protection of victims. While speaking out in the media can be empowering for victims and helpful to the general public, intrusive media attention may violate their privacy and negatively affect the lives of those portrayed, even in the future. Information may be(come) distorted or manipulated, by journalists or others using news footage.

For example, in the aftermath of an attack or disaster, broadcast and print media show images of the scene of the attack and, potentially, of victims and witnesses. These images will likely be shown again in light of commemorations and remembrance activities of this attack or disaster, which is retraumatising to victims and victims' families. It is advised that victim support organisations are sensitised about the recurrence of distressing images in order that this can be dealt with in a victim-sensitive manner.

It is difficult to restrict harmful information flows on social media channels. However, these can be useful tools for victims and law enforcement agents in the aftermath of an attack. For example, Twitter users started posting pictures of cats after a request from the Belgian authorities not to share information on ongoing police activity during the Brussels lockdown following the Paris attacks in November 2015.

Further reading:



- Ivanković, A., Altan, L., Verelst, A. (2017) How can the EU and Member States better help victims of terrorism?
- UNESCO (2017) Terrorism and the Media: A handbook for journalists
- BBC: Belgians tweet cat pictures during #BrusselsLockdown
- Michael, I., Argyridou, C. & Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family (2019) VOciare National Report Cyprus

1.7 VICTIMS' RIGHTS TO PROTECTION: SECONDARY VICTIMISATION

According to the Victims' Rights Directive and the Counter-terrorism Directive, Member States should ensure that measures are available to protect victims and their family members from secondary victimisation.

Terrorist attacks result in deaths, physical and psychological injuries or material damages that affect those involved. This is called primary victimisation: the direct consequences of the violent act. If, in the aftermath of an attack, victims receive poor or inadequate assistance from the staff and institutions in charge of their care (public authorities, first-responders, state security forces, social workers, lawyers), their suffering can be aggravated. This is known as secondary victimisation, re-victimisation or double victimisation.

Causes

The effect of an attack on victims can be magnified in many ways:

- repetition of statements in police interviews;
- lack of information;
- government, police or hospital staff engrossed solely in the immediate events without attending to the shock suffered by the victims;
- experts questioning the credibility or mental health of victims;
- delay in judicial procedures, confrontation with terrorists in the court room, having to recount publicly and in detail their traumatic experience;
- media exposure;
- lack of support from colleagues/peers in the workplace, school, university.

Solutions

It should be kept in mind that many solutions reflect the understanding that victims of terrorism are in an abnormal situation and require greater care. Such solutions can include the training of professionals on how to engage with victims of terrorism, specific procedures, nomination of staff solely for these cases, forward planning and ensuring victims' participation.

AN OVERVIEW OF RIGHT TO PROTECTION FROM SECONDARY VICTIMISATION IN CYPRUS

There is no legislation on the right to protection from secondary victimisation for victims of terrorism in Cyprus. However, the Protocol on the Management of Child Victims of Sexual Abuse lists some provisions for the prevention of secondary victimisation in Cyprus. One of these provisions is that Cypriot police officers carry out videotaped interviews in the investigation of sexual violence against children. Interviews with a child are conducted only by specially trained members of the police (also referred to as interviewers), who use a specialised method of interviewing. If interpretation or specialist assistance is needed for a child with a disability, an interpreter or specialist may be present. Additionally, the Office for Combating Human Trafficking follows protocols that are based on the UN's 'Toolkit to Combat Trafficking in Persons'. These protocols contain guidelines that aim to minimize secondary victimisation.

THE NEEDS OF VICTIMS OF TERRORISM RELATED TO THESE RIGHTS



EXAMPLES OF NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES OR INTERNATIONAL GOOD PRACTICES

CASE STUDY: MEASURES AGAINST SECONDARY VICTIMISATION IN FRANCE

In France, the Ministry of Home Affairs adopted a charter laying out rules for the police on how to provide support to victims and to ensure that victims are recognised and treated in a respectful, sensitive, tailored, professional and non-discriminatory manner. Additionally, at

the initiative of the Ministry of Justice, victims of terrorism referent persons have been designated and trained in victim support in each department of the French Republic, to provide victims with a quicker and more considerate response to their specific care needs.

Further reading:



- Ivanković, A., Altan, L., Verelst, A. (2017) How can the EU and Member States better help victims of terrorism?

1.8 VICTIMS' RIGHTS IN RELATION TO ACCESS TO COMPENSATION

THE RIGHTS UNDER EU LAW

The Victims' Rights Directive, the Counter-terrorism Directive and the Compensation Directive set out the following minimum scope of a victims' rights in relation to compensation:

- the Member States' obligation to set up a compensation scheme for victims of violent intentional crimes committed in their respective territories, which guarantees fair and appropriate compensation to victims and applies to cross-border situations;
- Provision of advice, support and assistance to victims, including cross-border victims, regarding compensation claims.

AN OVERVIEW OF RIGHTS IN CYPRUS

The Compensation for Victims of Violent Crimes Law of 1997 foresees that the State will pay compensation to victims or their dependents (when the victim's death is a result of the criminal offence) if they cannot claim compensation from the perpetrator or cannot receive compensation from other sources. The Law further stipulates that when compensation from other sources is less than that outlined in law, the State will supplement the difference. In practice, compensation from the offender may take the form of 'punitive compensation' and may form a part of the criminal process. If the victim wishes to claim civil compensation, procedures are initiated at the civil court, where the victim can claim compensation from both the offender and the State.

THE NEEDS OF VICTIMS OF TERRORISM RELATED TO THESE RIGHTS



EXAMPLES OF NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES OR INTERNATIONAL GOOD PRACTICES

EMERGENCY PAYMENTS AND COMPENSATION TO VICTIMS OF TERRORISM – GOOD PRACTICE:

In France, between 24 and 48 hours after a terrorist attack, the Guarantee Fund for Victims of Terrorist Acts and Other Offences (FGTI) pays a provisional compensation sum to cover immediate costs. Thereafter, and at the latest within one month from receiving a

valid claim from the victim, the FGTI will pay out an initial amount with additional amounts paid based on costs incurred and foreseeable final damages. Additional types of harm have been recognised for compensation payment eligibility, such as anxiety.

Further reading:



- Ivanković, A., Altan, L., Verelst, A. (2017) How can the EU and Member States better help victims of terrorism?
- VSE (2019) A Journey from Crime to Compensation
- German Presidency Report (2020) State of play regarding support to victims of terrorism, particularly in cross-border situations
- Michael, I., Argyridou, C. & Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family (2019) VOIARE National Report Cyprus

2. CONSIDERING PARTICULAR GROUPS OF VICTIMS

2.1 CROSS-BORDER VICTIMS

THE RIGHTS UNDER EU LAW

The Victims' Rights Directive, the Counter-terrorism Directive and the Compensation Directive set out the following minimum scope:

- Appropriate measures should be taken to minimise the difficulties faced where the victim is a resident of a Member State other than that where the criminal offence was committed;
- Expenses, incurred as a result of their active participation in criminal proceedings and according to their role in the relevant criminal justice system, should be reimbursed;
- Member States should ensure that victims of terrorism, who are residents of a Member State other than that where the terrorist offence was committed, have effective access to information as well as access to support services;
- Appropriate action should be taken to facilitate cooperation between Member States to improve victims' access to the rights.

AN OVERVIEW OF RIGHTS IN CYPRUS

All victims of a terrorist offence committed in Cyprus have access to information on their rights, available support services and compensation schemes, regardless of whether the victim resides in another Member State. Additionally, all victims of a terrorist offence shall have access to the assistance and support services, even if the terrorist offence was committed in a Member State other than that of their domicile. The Social Welfare Services shall take appropriate measures to facilitate cooperation with competent authorities or bodies providing specialised support in other Member States. The police may take a statement either in the country or by travelling abroad or with the use of video conferencing equipment. Moreover, the victim has the right to reimbursement of travel and accommodation expenses, where necessary, for their attendance during the trial period. The Social Welfare Services are also responsible for ensuring that all victims have access to the assistance and support services in Cyprus, even if the terrorist offence was committed in another Member State.

Compensation schemes

The Compensation for Victims of Violent Crimes (Cross-border Situation) Regulations 328/2006 ensure that access to compensation by victims of violent intentional crimes in cross-border situations is facilitated through a system of cooperation and mutual assistance between the Member States, irrespective of the country where the crime has been committed or where the victim resides. Victims may always turn to the competent authority in their Member State to find the information needed to submit an application, with all relevant documents, to obtain compensation, thus overcoming common practical and linguistic difficulties in cross-border situations.

Participation in criminal proceedings

There seems to be no legislation on the participation in criminal proceedings for cross-border victims of terrorism in Cyprus.

Translation of official documents

In Greece, victims will receive, upon request, a written acknowledgement of their formal report in Greek, or a translation, free of charge, of the written acknowledgement in a language that they can understand, in case they do not understand Greek. Victims who do not understand Greek may also file their

report in a language that they can understand and be provided with linguistic assistance. For this purpose, the competent officer who receives the complaint is obliged to inform the victim about their right to receive a written acknowledgement of their complaint.

THE NEEDS OF VICTIMS OF TERRORISM RELATED TO THESE RIGHTS



EXAMPLES OF NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES OR INTERNATIONAL GOOD PRACTICES

CASE STUDY: EMERGENCY PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED TO ITALIAN VICTIMS OF A TERRORIST ATTACK ABROAD

On 18 March 2015, a terrorist attack took place at the Bardo Archaeological Museum in Tunisia. Among the victims, from a MSC cruise tour group, four Italian citizens were killed and eleven were injured.

Immediately after the attack, the Italian EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing) Association identified six English and French speaking psychotherapists, who were dispatched directly to Tunisia to support the victims and their families, as well as other passengers from the cruise. Two more EMDR specialists, in cooperation with the ship's HQ Health Department, boarded the vessels to be able to reach the tourists, who returned to the ships and continued

their cruise as well as the other passengers who remained in Tunis.

Two of those killed and several of the wounded were from Turin. A few days after the terrorist attack, the Municipality of Turin entrusted the association of volunteers, Psychologists for the People (*Psicologi per I Popoli Torino*) with the task of providing psychological support to the survivors and their families. The group was composed of five professionals, selected on the basis of their skills, who worked for about a year before the Mental Health Service took charge. The team relied on the municipal Civil Protection which already had a group of emergency psychologists.

Further reading:



- Ivanković, A., Altan, L., Verelst, A. (2017) How can the EU and Member States better help victims of terrorism?
- German Presidency Report (2020) State of play regarding support to victims of terrorism, particularly in cross-border situations
- Michael, I., Argyridou, C. & Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family (2019) VOIARE National Report Cyprus

2.2 CHILDREN

THE RIGHTS UNDER EU LAW

The Victims' Rights Directive and the Counter-terrorism Directive set out the following minimum scope:

- Member States should ensure that the child's best interests are their primary consideration and that the specific protection needs of child victims are assessed;
- Special protection measures for child victims should be available in light of judicial proceedings;
- The public dissemination of information that could lead to the identification of a child victim should be prevented.

IMPACT OF TERRORIST ATTACKS ON CHILDREN

Most children respond sensibly and appropriately to disaster, especially if they experience protection, support, and stability from their parents and other trusted adults. Like adults, they may exhibit a wide range of reactions in the aftermath of a terrorist attack: headaches and stomach pain. It must be noted that children's fears may also stem from their imagination as, unlike adults, they are less able to judge which fears are real and which are not; however, their fears should be taken seriously. Information for children and adolescents should be provided in an age-appropriate manner. For child survivors of terrorism: remember to also ask about the health and wellbeing of their brothers and/or sisters.

Even though Cyprus does not have experience with terrorist attacks, the island has dealt with general crisis situations within the school environment. In addition to articles 11(1)(c), 11(2)(a), 17(4)(a)(b), 21(5) and 23 of the Minimum Standards

on the Rights, Support and Protection of Victims of Crime Law 51(I)/2016 that define special protection measures for children, the Educational Psychology Service of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth has developed a Manual of Operation for Crisis Intervention in Schools. The Manual finds that children's responses to a traumatic event may vary according to both the physical proximity to the event, and its emotional proximity (e.g. emotional involvement, such as injury or death of a loved one).

A child's reaction to a traumatic event is influenced by its developmental level, general emotional state, parental support, parental presence during the event, and how adults (teachers, parents, siblings) react. Furthermore, the Manual advises that children experiencing a crisis have to deal with four main psychological tasks:

1. Accept the fact that it happened;
2. Identify and express emotions appropriately;
3. Regain a sense of mastery and control, in accordance with their age;
4. Adopt roles and activities suitable for their age.

The Manual also clarifies that post-traumatic stress symptoms in children may bring emotional, cognitive, and behavioural changes after a child is exposed to violence, threats, injury, or death. Children may exhibit symptoms connected with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) following any exposure to trauma. These symptoms may include disturbing memories, repeated nightmares and dreams of death, bad thoughts about the future, emotional avoidance, or psychosomatic symptoms. Additionally, reactions of grief and sorrow, separation anxiety, school phobia, school absence, and learning difficulties may appear as symptoms in children after a traumatic event.

THE NEEDS OF VICTIMS OF TERRORISM RELATED TO THESE RIGHTS



EXAMPLES OF NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES OR INTERNATIONAL GOOD PRACTICES

Children as direct victims

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the Manual of Operation for Crisis Intervention in Schools was written in 2012 by educational psychologists working in the Service and is a guide for school-based professionals, e.g. teachers, educational psychologists and others. The manual provides information, strategies, and guidelines on how to deal with any given school-centered crisis and gives clear directions on how the school crisis team will effectively function in a crisis. It is important to say that in the past, nearly all Educational Psychologists working in the Service have been trained, by an international training team of psychologists and other professionals, on how to intervene in school emergency crisis.

Interaction between TV broadcasting or written media and children

In the Manual for Crisis Intervention in Schools, a section is included on how duties are allocated to each sub-group of professionals working in the field of crisis intervention in schools. Those responsible for media communication are told how to create and present TV or social media announcements. The aim is to make announcements, focusing on the actual event, whilst avoiding further psychological trauma or confusion to the children or adolescents. A

spokesperson is identified and authorised by the team to speak for the event; this should be someone with the right skills, the right position and the right training to speak in public, who knows how to make announcements and how to prepare for a television interview. The purpose is to promote public awareness, shape public opinion, influence decision makers and mobilise public support and resources.

Clinical strategies for responding to crises

According to the Manual, the clinical functions and strategies for teachers and educational psychologists responding to crises may vary and may include the following:

1. *Teachers in the school:* the teachers usually refer to educational psychologist on how to speak with the children and their families, and on what information to reveal after a traumatic event takes place in the school. They may also ask about children's typical reactions to crises. Educational psychologists try to create a safe environment by providing teachers and parents with information, discussion, and strategies to help children in crisis situations.
2. *Intervention with children:* a priority for educational psychologists who work in schools, is to help any children who have experienced a crisis or traumatic event. They apply traditional therapeutic techniques, which can also be applied in crisis counselling, such as active listening, showing empathy, and establishing trust.

3. *Support to other professionals:* additional attention is given to teachers and other adults (parents, family) in the case of a traumatic event. All professionals working with schools during a crisis are also expected to work with caregivers. They are aware of adult responses to trauma and can counsel them: to normalise their reactions, to coordinate professional groups as a technique of crisis intervention and can judge when referrals are needed.
4. *Identifying children who may need follow-up counselling or psychological therapy:* professionals use tools and screening tests for populations affected by a traumatic event to decide which children may need individualised therapeutic care. If a child shows suicidal tendencies or emotional disorientation, they will be referred for more intensive psychological therapy.

Cyprus has set up a 'Children's Home', according to the 'Barnahus' standard, to support child victims of sexual abuse. This could also be used to help child victims of a terrorist attack.

Further reading:



- Ivanković, A., Altan, L., Verelst, A. (2017) How can the EU and Member States better help victims of terrorism?
- Manual of Crisis Intervention in Schools (2012) Educational Psychology Service, Ministry of Education, Culture Youth and Sports, Cyprus

3. ORGANISING SUPPORT

3.1 PREPARATION AND ORGANISATION OF SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS OF TERRORIST ATTACKS

THE RIGHTS UNDER EU LAW

The Victims' Rights Directive and the Counter-terrorism Directive set out the following minimum requirements for the preparation and organisation of support for victims of terrorist attacks:

- Organise training on how to interact with victims and on victims' needs for practitioners that come into contact with victims;
- Ensure that mechanisms or protocols are in place allowing for the establishment of support services for victims of terrorism within the framework of the national emergency-response infrastructures;
- Ensure a comprehensive response network tailored to the specific needs of victims of terrorism.

It should be noted that the availability of an extensive response network depends on Member States' past experience in terrorist attacks and some Member States have not yet developed

protocols for the establishment of a specific response network. Where such a response network is not available, it is our understanding that existing crisis response structures can be adapted to terrorist attacks.

AN OVERVIEW OF RIGHTS IN CYPRUS

The contingency plan 'ASPIDA' (Shield) covers the management of any crisis deriving from terrorist events at the national level.

PREPARATION AND TRAINING – NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES OR INTERNATIONAL GOOD PRACTICES Planning and co-operation

Cyprus is currently in the early stages of establishing procedures for managing victims of terrorism. The authorities do have a multi-agency manual of Operation for Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking.

Training

CASE STUDY: TRAINING ON INTERACTING WITH VICTIMS IN GERMANY

In Germany, members of the Secretariat of the Federal Government Commissioner regularly receive training on subjects such as the interaction with traumatised victims, cultural sensitivity, and updates on support

offers. Furthermore, there is a regular 'best-practice' exchange with representatives of the country's central contact points and victim commissioners.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE PHASE/ MEDIUM- AND LONG-TERM – NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES OR INTERNATIONAL GOOD PRACTICES

CASE STUDY: EMERGENCY AND LONG-TERM SUPPORT IN FRANCE

In France, the Cellule Interministérielle d'Information du Public et d'Aide aux victimes (C2IPAV or infopublic) is activated in the immediate response phase, if an attack has affected a large number of people. Infopublic offers support to victims and their family members immediately after a terrorist attack, it cooperates closely with local authorities and local victim support organisations to set

up a family reception centre where victims and family members are registered and receive information and help from social workers, lawyers and trauma psychologists as needed. In the longer term, an office located within the French Ministry of Justice, Bureau d'aide aux victimes (BAVPA or Victim Support Office), will take over the coordination of support to victims.

3.2 ORGANISATION OF SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS OF TERRORISM

THE RIGHTS UNDER EU LAW

The Victims' Rights Directive and the Counter-terrorism Directive set out the following minimum requirements for the organisation of support for victims of terrorist attacks:

- The availability of support services immediately following a terrorist attack and for as long as necessary. These support services should be confidential, free of charge and easily accessible to all victims of terrorism;
- The establishment of free confidential specialist support services in addition to, or as an integrated part of, general victim support services; victim support organisations should be able to call on existing specialised entities providing such care, as necessary;
- Ensure that mechanisms or protocols are in place that allow for the activation of support services for victims of terrorism within the framework of the national emergency-response infrastructure.

AN OVERVIEW OF RIGHTS IN CYPRUS

The Cyprus Civil Defence force has access to an active network of experienced trained volunteers who participate in mass crisis support efforts.

The Social Welfare Services (SWS) have implemented articles 24-26 of the Directive 2017/541 on Combating Terrorism within the legal

framework of Law 51(I)/2016 on the Minimum Standards on the Rights, Support and Protection of Victims of Crime, which came into force in April 2016 to harmonise with the EU Victims' Rights Directive. According to article 10 of Law 51(I)/2016, the SWS are directly responsible for providing free confidential support services to victims, as per their needs.

According to article 11 of the Law 51(I)/2016 the SWS need to ensure that victims receive:

- a. Information, advice and support relevant to the exercising of their rights, including
 - i. The actionable right to compensation from the offender, for criminal offences committed against them and
 - ii. Their role in the criminal proceedings, including preparation for attendance at the trial as a witness, in cooperation with the Mental Health Services and the prosecution authorities;
- b. Information on any existing relevant specialist support services in place or from referral thereof;
- c. Emotional support and, where needed, psychological support, referral to the Mental Health Services and/or Educational Psychology Service of the Ministry of Education and Culture, where the victim is a student;
- d. Networking with other services, such as psychological support services, housing, financial support and medical services.

THE NEEDS OF VICTIMS OF TERRORISM RELATED TO THESE RIGHTS



EXAMPLES OF NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES OR INTERNATIONAL GOOD PRACTICES

Whilst it is evident that victims have a right to support, it is not always clear how that support should be organised in any given country: who should provide it, how should it be made available, and what services should be offered? There is no one-size-fits-all answer to these questions. Each Member State will find solutions that take into account their specific national circumstances. Victim support can be provided by the state, by victim support organisations, or by a combination of both.

Victims' associations

Peer groups are valued because of their understanding and shared experience of those involved. Peer groups can therefore provide support that is particularly beneficial to those affected. These groups are largely formed spontaneously thanks to individual contacts between those affected, experiences they exchange and mutual support.

Certified psycho-trauma experts

The EUCVT has compiled a list of Psycho-trauma experts, based in Europe, who have all been invited to join the online expertise Hub with a view to exchanging best practices and increasing expertise at the national level.

4. EUCVT

In January 2020, the European Commission set up the EU Centre of Expertise for Victims of Terrorism (the EUCVT) as a two-year pilot project to offer expertise, guidance and support to national authorities and victim support organisations.

Expertise is available on all matters related to victims of terrorism: e.g. on their needs, their rights according to EU legislation, the psychological consequences of terrorist attacks and therapies available for victims, and judicial processes.

During the term of the pilot project, national authorities (departments of justice, of health, of the interior; national organisations of the police, public prosecution or law courts; national first responders; NGOs that support victims of terrorism) may contact the EUCVT for expertise, guidance and/or support.

The EUCVT is unable to provide direct help and assistance to individual victims of terrorism. However, victims that contact the EUCVT will be referred to the authority or service provider in the appropriate Member State (or in other countries as required) that can support them.

Website

- Basic information on the rights of victims, on the needs of victims and on available support for victims of terrorism is available on EUCVT's website.
- The website also contains key documents on victims of terrorism, links to online resources, video statements of victims of terrorism and the professionals involved in their support.

Experts

- The EUCVT has an extensive network of experts, including victims of terrorism, practitioners and researchers from Member States and around the world. The EUCVT will connect you with the relevant experts as required.
- EUCVT experts are available, at short notice, to deliver advice in person in EU Member States. The costs involved shall be borne by the Member State making the request for assistance.

Contact details

eucvt@victimsupporteurope.eu

Further reading:

 [EU Centre of Expertise for Victims of Terrorism](#)

