

EU action: JUSTICE for Victims

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"I don't understand what's happening..."
"I need closure..."
"I can't afford to attend the trial..."

Under the new EU laws, all EU countries would have to ensure that victims of crime and accidents are **kept informed of legal proceedings** and are **entitled to be involved in redress**.

What would this mean in practice?

- **Informing victims in language they understand**
People often don't know their rights and aren't informed about legal proceedings that will affect them. What information there is might be in a foreign language or legal jargon. Victims should be entitled to an interpreter if they need one. If they can't read, all relevant documents should be read to them.
- **Informing victims in good time of the details of their case**
Victims often want to be involved in the criminal proceedings, attend the trial, even give testimony. They can do this only if they are given consistent and reliable information about their case — such as when and where the trial will take place.

- **Informing victims of the outcome of their case**
Victims involved in a legal case should be told of the outcome of the trial. If the prosecutor has decided not to pursue the case, they should be allowed to review that decision. Knowing the outcome can be essential to the healing process, allowing them to move on with their lives. They should also be informed if the offender has been released from prison or police custody. They should never have to learn of this by chance or direct encounter.
- **Allowing victims to choose to meet offenders face-to-face**
This can give offenders the chance to take responsibility for their actions. Professionals with special training will help arrange these meetings to ensure that the victim's physical and psychological safety is always protected.
- **Providing legal aid**
Victims have a right to attend the trial about their case, even if this means providing legal aid and travel expenses. Any stolen property that is recovered should be returned to them.

From this...

"I'm Latvian and my Dad was killed while he was in Scotland. We don't speak English, and we don't understand the Scottish legal system. We don't have much money and couldn't even afford to collect his body. Nobody told us how to hire a lawyer or where to go to get compensation. My Dad was a good man, he deserved better than this."

...to this

"My wife was killed in a road accident while we were on holiday in Italy. When I went back home to France, I was kept informed about the trial and its outcome. I am blind, so they sent me the transcripts in Braille. They sent me her personal belongings and when the other driver was released from prison, they made sure I was notified. I'm devastated, but knowing all this at least gives me some peace of mind."