

EU action to champion victims' rights

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What's the problem?

Throughout the EU, more than 75 million people are victims of serious crime every year, and 40 000 die in car accidents.

Such events can have devastating physical, emotional and financial consequences for victims and their families.

When they happen **abroad**, different cultures, languages, laws, and deadlines can create insurmountable complications. Who do victims turn to for help? What are their rights?

One of the EU's founding principles is that people should be treated with respect and sensitivity and without discrimination in all circumstances, in all EU countries — and certainly when facing a crisis.

Unfortunately, this is not always the case — **laws across the EU can be patchy, vague and unenforceable**, and they don't always meet victims' needs.

Whether a person has been the victim of a mugging, robbery, home break-in, assault, rape, harassment, hate crime, terrorist attack, or human trafficking — everyone shares the same **basic needs**:

- to be recognised and treated with **respect** and dignity
- to receive **protection**
- to receive **support**
- to have access to **justice**.

What is the EU doing about it?

Championing victims' rights across the EU is a key priority for the European Commission. Thanks to the Lisbon Treaty, the Commission can now put **effective EU law** in place to achieve this.

As a first step, it has proposed rules so that all EU countries have **minimum standards on rights, support and protection** for crime victims. The new law will ensure victims get:

- the recognition and the respect they deserve
- the same level of protection, support and access to justice throughout the EU, no matter where in the EU they come from or live.

Next steps will include other legislative proposals to ensure that victims' rights actually are **upheld in practice**.