



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

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Putting victims first: New European law improving rights for victims of crime has been adopted

European Commission Vice-President Viviane Reding, the EU's Justice Commissioner, today welcomed the final adoption of a new European law which will improve rights for an estimated 75 million crime victims across the EU each year. The EU directive on victims' rights was adopted today by the Council of Ministers, following an overwhelming majority vote (611 for, 9 against and 13 abstentions) by the European Parliament endorsing the new rules ([MEMO/12/659](#)). The new EU directive sets out minimum rights for victims, wherever they are in the EU (see [IP/11/585](#)).

"The criminal justice systems of the EU Member States have sometimes been too focused on the criminal and not enough on the victim. With this new European law, we will strengthen the rights of victims. Nobody wants to fall victim to a crime, but if it happens, people should be safe in the knowledge they will have the same basic rights everywhere in the European Union," said Vice-President Viviane Reding, the EU's Justice Commissioner. "Every year, an estimated 15% of Europeans or 75 million people in the European Union fall victim to a crime. And with 12 million Europeans living in another EU country and citizens making 1 billion journeys within the EU every year, this new European law will help to reduce suffering for scores of people. This is an historic achievement and a strong signal that Europe is delivering on the rights of citizens."

Background

The EU directive on minimum standards for victims was tabled by the Commission in May 2011 ([IP/11/585](#) and [MEMO/11/310](#)). Today's adoption by the Council of the EU follows a plenary vote in the European Parliament ([MEMO/12/659](#)). This came after the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers reached [an agreement](#) in June following intense negotiations mediated by the European Commission. Following publication of the directive in the EU's Official Journal, Member States will have three years to implement the provisions into their national laws.

The new EU Directive on minimum standards for victims will ensure that, in all 27 EU countries:

- victims are treated with respect and police, prosecutors and judges are trained to properly deal with them;
- victims get information on their rights and their case in a way they understand;
- victim support exists in every Member State;
- victims can participate in proceedings if they want and are helped to attend the trial;
- vulnerable victims are identified – such as children, victims of rape, or those with disabilities – and are properly protected;
- victims are protected while police investigate the crime and during court proceedings.

For more information

European Commission – victims' rights

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/criminal/victims/index_en.htm

Homepage of Vice-President Viviane Reding, EU Justice Commissioner:

<http://ec.europa.eu/reding>

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