



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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PRESSE 412

## **Council endorses minimum standards for crime victims across the EU**

The Council adopted today<sup>1</sup> a directive establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime ([PE-CONS 37/12](#)), and replacing the current Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA on the standing of victims in criminal proceedings.

The new directive establishes minimum standards for the level of protection, support and access to justice for victims in all EU countries. It contains obligations for the member states to provide information to victims, such as information on a decision not to proceed with the case, and to provide the information in a language the victim understands. Furthermore the directive ensures that every victim is offered protection measures during the criminal proceedings in accordance with their needs, and that support measures are available to victims and their families.

According to the new provisions, all victims (and to a certain extent also their family members) will have an individual assessment to identify specific protection needs and to determine whether and to what extent they would benefit from special measures in the course of criminal proceedings. This assessment should take into account the personal characteristics of the victims such as age, gender, race, religion or sexual orientation, and the nature and circumstances of the crime.

The directive will also oblige member states to ensure that not only victims but also their family members have access to confidential victim support services, free of charge, in accordance with their needs and the degree of harm suffered.

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<sup>1</sup> At the meeting of the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council.

# **P R E S S**

Member states will have three years after the entry into force of the directive to adopt the necessary national provisions. The United Kingdom and Ireland have decided to opt-in in the adoption of this directive. Denmark is not taking part and will not be bound by it or subject to its application.

The Commission submitted its proposal on May 2011 as part of its legislative package to strengthen the rights of victims in the EU which also includes two other elements: a communication on strengthening victims' rights in the EU and a proposal for a regulation on mutual recognition of protection measures in civil matters, which is still under discussion within the preparatory bodies of the Council.

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