

Voices for Justice Project

INTERNATIONAL REPORT

Easy-to-read document



About the Voices for Justice Project

People with disabilities
are sometimes victims of crime.
This means that other people
sometimes abuse them in different ways.
Victims with disabilities do not get justice
as much as other people.
That must change.

We want to make changes with the project

VOICES FOR JUSTICE:

Communicating with Victims of Crime with Disabilities.

If you want more Easy-to-read information on the project,
click on this link: [Voices for Justice Easy-to-read](#)



About this document



We researched the experiences of people with disabilities who are victims of crime in 7 European countries:

- Bulgaria,
- Croatia,
- Czechia,
- Lithuania,
- Romania,
- Slovakia,
- Slovenia.

We checked how the rights of victims are respected.

We wrote **national reports** for all 7 countries.

You can find links to the national reports in Easy-to-read **on page 10** of this document.

From the 7 national reports, we made 1 **international report**.

The international report is about research in all 7 countries.

In this Easy-to-read document, we write about the most important facts in all countries.

Legal documents



To compare the rights of victims of crime in 7 countries, we used important legal documents.

In those documents the rights of victims of crime are explained.

One such document is called
The **European Union's Victims' Rights Directive**.
We call it **the Directive** for short.

The Directive says:

“In applying this Directive, Member States should ensure that victims with disabilities are able to benefit fully from the rights set out in this Directive, on an equal basis with others.”

This means that all countries of the European Union must make sure that victims of crime with disabilities have all the rights from the Directive.

Just like everyone else.

This Directive gives rights to all victims with disabilities.

One such important right is the **right to information**.

Victims with disabilities have a right to receive information which they can understand and use.

Victims with disabilities also have this important right:

People must listen to them and understand them.

The most important information from the Directive is written in plain, simple language.

If you want to read it, click here:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/law/eu_victims_rights_directive_factsheet_february_2017_en.pdf



There are other important documents about the rights of people with disabilities.

There is a United Nations document which is very important for people with disabilities who are victims of crime.

It is called **International Principles and Guidelines on Access to Justice for Persons with Disabilities**.

In there, it is written what people with disabilities should expect from the justice system.

It is linked with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

If you want to read an Easy-to-read version of the document, click here:

https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Disability/SR_Disability/GoodPractices/Access-to-Justice-easy-en.pdf



What we learned in the research

It is very hard for people with disabilities to report crimes to the police.

It is hard for them to go to court and meet the judge and lawyers.

It is hard for people with disabilities to talk about what crimes happened to them.

We will now give more details on that.

For a right or rule from the legal documents, we explain how the 7 countries respect it.



1. What does the right or rule say?



Every person with a disability has the same **legal rights** as everyone else. A person with a disability has the right to be heard by the police, the courts, and the lawyers. The victim has the right to speak in the courtroom.

What happens in reality?



If the victim with a disability has a legal guardian, police, judges, and others usually speak only with the guardian. This means that they treat the guardian as a replacement for the victim. The right of the victim to participate in the process is not respected. The professionals might consider that the victim is not credible, meaning the victim is unable to testify. So the right of the victim to be heard is not respected.

2. What does the right or rule say?



The police and courts should make sure they support and make the changes needed for people with disabilities to be able to use their services.

What happens in reality?

The authorities in the 7 countries do not make these changes in their national laws, policies and practices.

They authorities do not make sure that people with disabilities have good physical access, information, or communication services.

The countries should respect universal design.

This means that services should be accessible to all people.

But they are not.

A lot of the time, the changes people with disabilities need are not available.

3. What does the right or rule say?

Adults and children with disabilities have the right to have **changes** that help them use the police and courts.

What happens in reality?

No one checks or asks what changes and support people with disabilities need so they can understand and communicate. No one demands that these rights must be respected.

4. What does the right or rule say?

People with disabilities have the right to get **legal letters and information** at the right time.

They have the right to legal information they understand.

What happens in reality?

In practice,

legal letters and information are not adapted so that victims with disabilities understand them.

This means the information is not accessible to victims with disabilities.

The communication is not adapted to them.

A lot of barriers exist for them.

Such barriers can be environment or bad attitudes.

Some people with disabilities face strong barriers.

For example:

People with disabilities who live in institutions are isolated from the outside world.

It is difficult to talk to the police or to lawyers.

The staff in institutions supervise and direct them.

5. What does the right or rule say?

People with disabilities have the right to free legal help.

This is called **legal aid**.

What happens in reality?

Free legal aid depends on some things, like the type of the crime.

The victim can apply for free legal assistance.

This is not an easy task.

It involves dealing with documents.

It needs to be completed on time.

In reality, legal aid is often

very hard to get for people with disabilities.

6. What does the right or rule say?



People with disabilities have the right to **complain**.

They have the right to justice if they are hurt or if their human rights are abused.

The police and courts should investigate things well.

The police and courts should punish anyone who harms people with disabilities.

What happens in reality?

Sometimes other people abuse the human rights of people with disabilities.

Some of these violations and crimes are:

- torture,
- ill-treatment.

Sometimes this is not recognised in national criminal or civil legislation.

It is difficult for victims to report human rights abuses.

It is difficult for victims to start legal proceedings.

7. What does the right or rule say?



The police, judges, lawyers, and other professionals working for the law need **training**.

The professionals need training on the rights of people with disabilities.

What happens in reality?



We did not find any specialist training for professionals who work working with victims with disabilities.

We did not find any training for people with disabilities.

We did not find any training for their families.

What do we want to change?

Some facts in the European Union's Victims' Rights Directive are not explained well enough.

They are not strict enough.

They are not clear enough.

The Directive should be **clear and strict** about:

- the rights of people with disabilities who are victims of crime,
- how to remove barriers that people with disabilities face.

The European Union should **plan** some things.

It should plan on how to make sure

that the rights of victims with disabilities are met.

All European Union countries should respect that plan.

Professionals in the justice system should have **training**.

The professionals must learn how to communicate with people with disabilities.

They must know how to respect their rights.

People with disabilities should train the professionals.

People with disabilities should be present at the training.

Professionals who are working

with people with disabilities who are victims of crime

need more support.

All European Union countries

should **respect** The Victims' Rights Directive.

The European Union should **check** that all countries do that.



National reports in Easy-to-read



For **Bulgaria**, click here: https://validity.ngo/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/ETR_Bulgaria_Voices-for-Justice-1.pdf

For **Croatia**, click here: https://validity.ngo/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/ETR_Croatia_Voices-for-Justice.pdf

For **Czechia**, click here: https://validity.ngo/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/ETR_Czechia_Voices-for-Justice.pdf

For **Lithuania**, click here: https://validity.ngo/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/ETR_Lithuania_Voices-for-Justice_PSP.pdf

For **Romania**, click here: https://validity.ngo/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/ETR_Romania_Voices-for-Justice.pdf

For **Slovakia**, click here: https://validity.ngo/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/ETR_Slovakia_Voices-for-Justice.pdf

For **Slovenia**, click here: https://validity.ngo/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/ETR_Slovenia_Voices-for-Justice.pdf

More information about the project



The full, **formal name** of the project is:

Information and Communication:

Cornerstones of justice for victims of crime with disability

(878604 — InfoComPWDs).

Many organisations work on the project.

They are called **partners**.

9 organizations from 7 countries work in this project:

- Validity Foundation from Hungary is the project coordinator.
- From Bulgaria: Chance & Support Association.
- From Croatia: Victim and Witness Support Service, VWSS.
- From Czechia and Slovakia: FORUM for Human Rights.
- From Lithuania: Mental Health Perspectives, PSP.
- From Romania: Centre for Legal Resources.
- From Slovenia: PIC – Legal Centre for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment, Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia, IRRSV, and University of Ljubljana.



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You can contact us

Click on our website: www.validity.ngo/projects-2/voices-for-justice/

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Disclaimer

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