

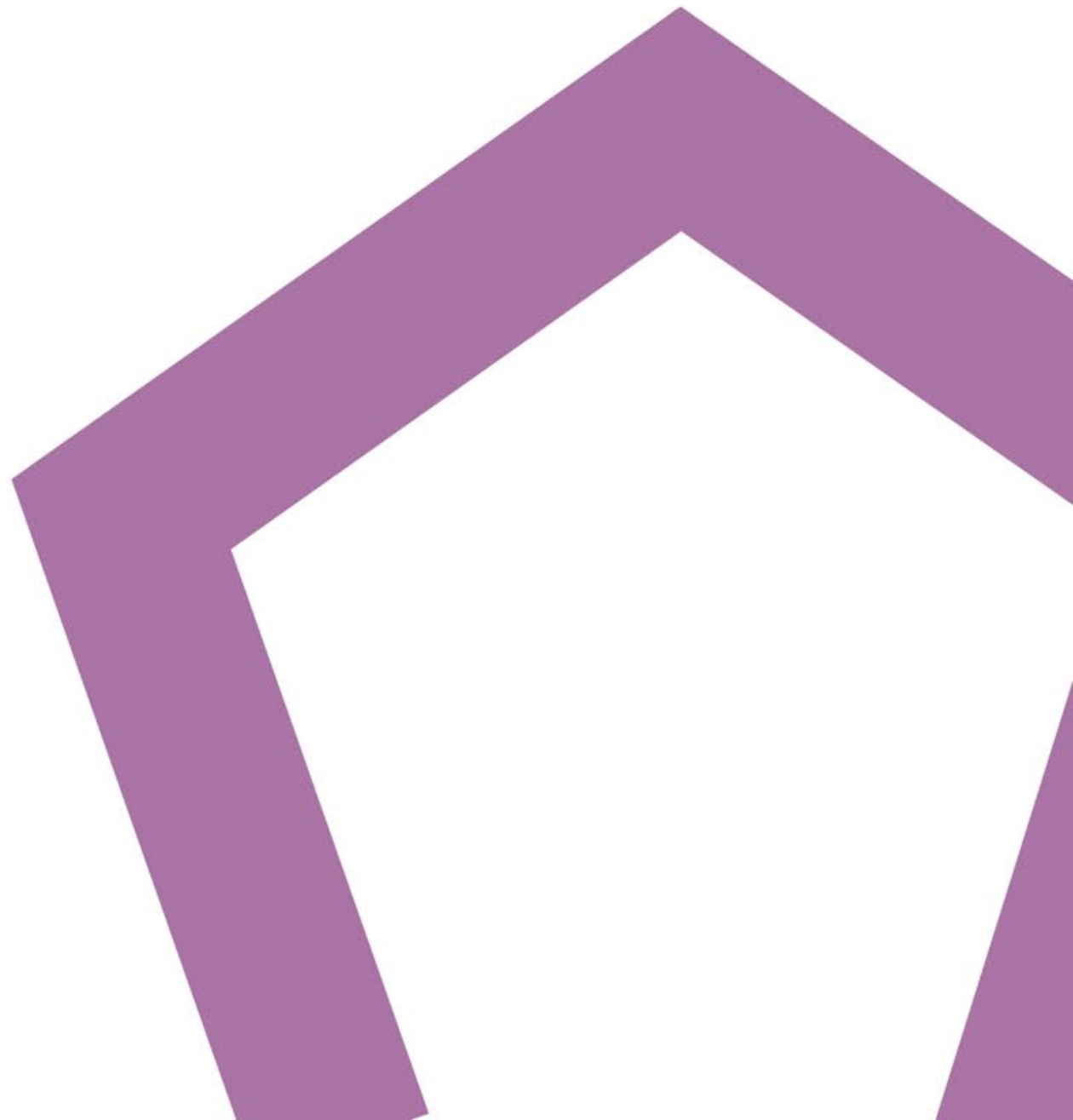


Supporting the Victims Before, During & After the Trial

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Annie Devos – Director-General

Directorate-General for the Houses of Justice (Wallonia-Brussels
Federation)



Objectives

The **goals** of the creation of Judicial Victim support services (1993 - pilot projects) :

- To improve information for victims throughout in the judicial procedure
- To humanise the way victims are received in courts and tribunals

Its intervention is part of the **Victim policy** developed in Belgium which has 2 aims :

- Avoid secondary victimisation resulting from judicial intervention
- Enable the victims to overcome their trauma and find a new balance as quickly as possible



Missions

Intervention at all stages of criminal proceedings

- during the investigation
- during the trial
- during the execution of the prison sentence/internment

Intervention on request :

- of the magistrate in charge of the file (« saisine »)
- of the victim or a relative / possibly via an other service (with agreement of the magistrate)

Missions

Throughout the **judicial procedure**

Information

- **General** : victim's rights and judicial procedure
- **Specific** : procedure in progress, status of the case

Referral

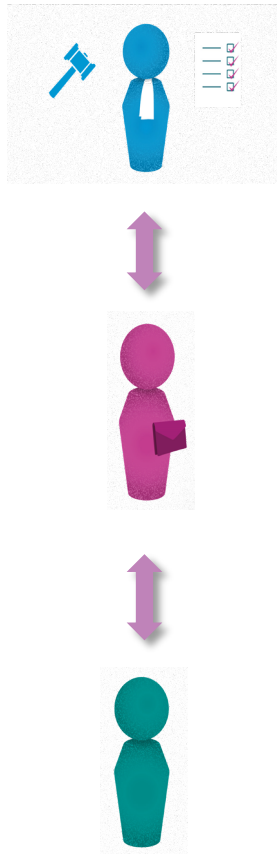
Depending on the needs and difficulties
(f.i. psychological support or legal advice)

Assistance

Care and support at different steps of the judicial procedure
(f.i consulting the criminal file, handing in the personal belongings, attending court hearings, etc.)

Structural missions

- **Raising awareness**
- **Report**
- **Concertation structures**



Specific Missions

Information

- Procedures for execution of the prison sentence
- Victims' rights
- Court decisions and conditions imposed in the interest of the victim
- Steps to be taken in case the offender does not comply with the conditions

Assistance

- Filling a victim form in to enable the victim to be involved in the procedures
- Drafting of conditions that the victims wants to be imposed in their interest
- Hearings of the execution sentence court

Some data (2023)

10,324 new cases
(344 EPS cases +
289 psychiatric
detention cases)

In total :
12,134 victims

During the Execution of the Prison Sentence (EPS)



Brussels Attacks - Trial

Before the trial

- ✧ Outreach and contacts with victims at different stages of the judicial investigation
- ✧ Information (incl. collective info sessions), assistance to victims during several steps, including consultation of the criminal file and of the images of the attacks

Preparation of the trial

- ✧ Consultation of the victims/associations of victims and gathering experience from French colleagues (Paris trial) to best meet the victims' needs
- ✧ Information of the victims and visits of the trial site (Justitia) for victims
- ✧ Information brochure for victims published in 4 languages



Brussels Attacks - Trial

During the trial

- Rest area for victims in the Justitia and interview rooms
- Daily presence of psychologists and justice assistants (information, emotional support, etc.)
- Victims' testimonies : support in the witnesses' waiting room and at the victims' side during their testimonies, when needed
- Presence of an emotional support dog



Brussels Attacks - Trial

Around the trial

Victim support associations, including two associations active in the field of restorative justice

Mediante

Restorative dialogue between parties affected by a crime – specific methodology for terrorist attacks

Retissons du Lien

Gathers victims of the Paris and Brussels attacks, families confronted with radicalism that leads to violence and front-line workers

- “How can we still make community” ?
- Key events alongside the trial (collective work), restorative circles, etc.



Brussels Attacks - Trial

Around the trial



10-episode podcast

Interviews all the stakeholders (magistrates, lawyers, victims and relatives, support services and associations, interpreter, etc.)



Conclusions

The principles of the **Community Justice Code** include :

- ✧ Placing the individual at the centre of all interventions;
 - ✧ Taking into account the needs of the victim as a whole; and,
 - ✧ Adopting a restorative justice approach
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- ✧ Taking care of the victims from the **early beginning**
 - ✧ Giving a place to victims **during the entire process**
 - ✧ Importance of listening to their needs
 - ✧ Giving them the opportunity to express themselves
 - ✧ Working on restoring the bond and repair the harm done
 - ✧ **Not using victims** at any stage of the procedure, including during the rehabilitation





Questions ?

