

**JOINT STATEMENT
of the Representatives
of the Republic of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of
Croatia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro,
Republic of Turkey and Ukraine**

Zagreb, Republic of Croatia, 28 November 2012

Taking into account the importance of the accession process to the EU for the countries in South-East Europe as well as common endeavour of the Member States of the European Union and their Eastern European Partners to support political and socio-economic reforms contributing to prosperity of the entire European continent based on Eastern Partnership launched in 2009 (at a summit held in Prague);

Emphasizing the high importance of strengthening position of victims in criminal judicial system;

Recalling the resolution of the UN General Assembly (GA/RES/50/34) in 1985 which called upon Member States to take the necessary steps to give effect to the provisions contained in the Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power;

Considering the Council of Europe Recommendation on the position of the victim in the framework of criminal law and procedure (Recommendation 85/11), Council of Europe Recommendation Rec (2006) 8 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on assistance to crime victims; Recommendation No. R (87) 21 on the assistance to victims and the prevention of victimization, intended to complement the European Convention on the Compensation of Victims of Violent Crime and Recommendation No. R (85) 11 on the position of the victim in the framework of criminal law and procedure; European Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism and the Council of Europe Convention on Action against trafficking in Human Beings; Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse; Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against and

domestic violence; Guidelines of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on Child Friendly Justice;

Considering the Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 Establishing Minimum Standards on the Rights, Support and Protection of Victims of Crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA;

Taking into account the Draft of the UN Convention on Justice and Support for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power; UNODCCP The Guide for Policy Makers and the Handbook on Justice for Victims (1999); Statute of Rome in 1998 (and later the Rules of Procedure and Evidence) to establish the International Criminal Court; Convention on Trans-national Organized Crime (2000) and its optional protocol (2002) on trafficking that include specific sections for victims; ECOSOC adoption in 2002 of the Guidelines on Restorative Justice; ECOSOC adoption in 2005 of the Guidelines for Child Victims and Witnesses; ECOSOC acceptance in 2002 of crime prevention guidelines; UN General Assembly adoption of the Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Rights to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law in 2005;

Determined to support the Rule of Law reforms, strengthening the rights and protection of victims with special emphasis on disadvantaged and vulnerable groups;

The Representatives of the Republic of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of Croatia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Republic of Turkey and Ukraine, participants in the Plenary Session of the Conference “Judicial Reform and the Empowerment of Victims” held in Zagreb, Republic of Croatia, on 28 November 2012, have gathered with a view to sharing experiences and enhancing cooperation regarding the incorporation of victim empowerment in a broader Judicial Reform Agenda;

I. The participants have agreed that empowerment of victims is a priority of their judicial reforms, and underlined that it is required to take measures and activities at national level, aimed at:

- Establishment of witness-victims support systems required by EU Directive on minimum standards,

- Development and improvement of special programmes integrated with judicial system on meeting the needs of vulnerable victims – such as children, victims of rape, or persons with disabilities – and are properly protected,
- Establishment of special coordination bodies responsible for inter-governmental cooperation on development of overall witness-victims support system,
- Undertaking assessment on needs of victims,
- Implementing the recommendations of international organisations and fulfilling the commitments arising from the ratified international documents in the field of strengthening position of victims in criminal judicial system,
- Considering the need to enact a special charter on the rights of victims (“Victim`s Bill of Rights”),
- Organizing and implementing specialised trainings for officials in criminal justice system on international standards regarding witness-victims’ rights and needs of victims,
- Support awareness-raising among citizens about rights of victims who should be treated with respect and dignity and their importance for criminal justice system
- Establishment of cooperation between the criminal justice system and non-governmental organisations dealing with victim.

II. The participants have agreed to continuously take measures at international level, aimed at:

- Development of international cooperation on empowerment of victims through joint projects and activities which can improve national measures,
- Organizing international meetings for exchange of experience and informing on global trends regarding empowerment of victims,
- Strengthening institutional cooperation between countries regarding the facilitating the position of victims and witnesses in crime with cross-border elements.

On the basis of this:

We, the Representatives of the Republic of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of Croatia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Republic of Turkey and Ukraine are unwavering in the determination of the states we represent for a comprehensive, systemic and efficient action in developing of rule of law as an area of freedom, security and justice, where victims' rights are recognized and respected.

Reaffirming our invitation to the governments, international institutions and organisations and to the civil society, welcome all representatives of authorities, institutions and organisations that join us by acceding to a reinforced cooperation in strategising and implementing the reforms in judiciary with special view on victims of crime by establishing maximum coordination, which will contribute to development of democracy, protection of human rights and freedoms and stability and prosperity of our countries.

Done in Zagreb, Republic of Croatia, 28 November 2012