

Assistance to victims of Crimes

Abstract

This thesis is focused on the assistance to victims of crimes. It examines the topic especially on the legal level, from various points of view. It deals with the assistance to victims in terms of legislation, mainly domestic, but also foreign, then it examines the application of legislation in practice and further it analyzes the findings while including suggestions for possible improvement.

The goal of this thesis is to evaluate the Victims of Crime Act, whether its written form or its application in practice and to propose possible amendments in order to improve the role of the victim, which is after all an unwritten purpose of the Victims of Crime Act.

This thesis is divided to an introduction, five separate chapters and a conclusion. In its first chapter, the thesis is focused on the person of the victim, purely from the point of view of the legislation. It defines direct and indirect victim, as well as particularly vulnerable victim. Finally it describes differences between a victim and an injured party.

The second chapter represents a key part of the thesis since it is focused on the Victims of Crime Act itself and the rights arising out of it for victims. Step by step the chapter analyzes the right to professional assistance, right to information, right to protection from imminent danger, right to protection of privacy, right to prevention from the secondary harm and right to financial assistance. For each right, partial errors, which should be resolved by the legislator, are pointed out.

The third chapter analyzes the application of the Victims of Crime Act in practice while using the findings of two research studies and points out the major shortcomings that can occur while offering assistance to victims of crime in real life. The lack of information of the vast majority of population is seen as a fundamental error. Furthermore the chapter points out the unsatisfactory training of entities which provide the assistance and the insufficient level of cooperation between these providers.

The fourth chapter presents an inspiration from abroad. The inspiration may help find a direction of changes to take in the future. Canada was chosen as the inspiring country, since it has maintained a high standard of victim assistance for a very long time. The chapter is divided into 2 parts - part of the legal regulation and again application in practice.

The fifth chapter is a synthesis of the previous chapters and an important part of the thesis. The findings of the previous chapters are taken into account in the fifth chapter with an effort to suggest possible improvements, both *de lege ferenda* and in the application of Victims of Crime Act in practice.

Key words: Victim, Victims of Crime Act, Application in Practice