

## **Victims in Criminal Procedure: A Review of Latvian Criminal Procedure Norms through the Prism of Minimal EU Standards**

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The current paper is focused on the legal status of victims in criminal proceedings. The author has reviewed legal norms in Latvia in this regard from the perspective of European Parliament and Council Directive 2012/29/EU (25 October 2012), to establish minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, thus replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA. The Directive includes conclusions from a study of the situation in Latvia as a part of the project "Protecting Victims' Rights in the EU: The Theory and Practice of Diversity of Treatment During the Criminal Trial." The project is being implemented by the Centre for European Constitutional Law and the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies at the University of London School of Advanced Study and funded by the European Commission. The author's thesis is that criminal procedure norms in Latvia have already enshrined a fairly high level of rights for victims, as based on the fact that for several decades, victims have been recognised as active participants in criminal proceedings. At the same time, however, several amendments to these norms are needed in order to satisfy the requirements of the Directive. Some would involve more precise or supplemented rules, but in other cases the potential changes can be seen as essential. The greatest changes will relate to the individual evaluation of victims and the individualised procedural processes which are based on the said evaluation.

**Keywords:** Victims in criminal proceedings, individual evaluation of victims, rights of victims, explanation of rights, protection of victims, legal aid to victims, compensation.