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Prof Dr Holger Matt
European Criminal Bar Association
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Our ref: 314491

25 January 2012

Dear Prof Dr Holger Matt

Subject: Draft Directive establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime

Thank you for your letter dated 25 October 2011 addressed to the Minister. I am replying on behalf of the Secretary of State as an official who is working on the draft Directive which your letter concerned. Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding.

To update you on the progress of the Draft Directive, I can say that a general approach was agreed at the Justice and Home Affairs Council on 14 December 2011. Negotiations with the European Parliament are expected to commence shortly.

Thank you also for the statement from the European Criminal Bar Association that you enclosed with your letter. Your comment on the importance of ensuring that measures to improve a victim's experience and ability to give evidence during a criminal trial must not be at the expense of the defendant's right to a fair trial is something we strongly support. We are satisfied that this is reflected in the text agreed by the Council.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Nicholas
Victim and Witness Unit