

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### ***Crans-Montana fire — Support under the VSA Transition from the immediate aid phase to the more long-term aid phase***

Following the fire in *Le Constellation* bar at Crans-Montana, which caused 41 fatalities and several hundred direct and indirect victims, the VSA counselling centres have been significantly mobilised to provide support and assistance to those affected. Following an immediate aid phase extended to three months in view of the scale of the tragedy, a new administrative stage is pending: the transition to more long-term aid as provided for in the Federal Act on Support for the Victims of Crime. This transition notably entails taking account of the victims' financial capacity to determine the extent of the support to be provided by the VSA centres. The victims and their relatives were informed today about the workings of this transition and the assistance provided by the VSA centres going forward.

The fire that broke out in *Le Constellation* bar, Crans-Montana (Valais/Switzerland) has accounted for over 400 victims to date: 41 people were killed, over one hundred suffered severe burns and many others, witnesses, rescuers, etc. were also impacted by the tragedy. They all underwent intense psychological trauma.

#### **VSA centres mobilised to provide aid to victims**

Switzerland has the Federal Act on Support for the Victims of Crime (VSA) to support the victims of this type of incident. Each canton has at least one VSA counselling centre to put the Act into practice. Each centre has social workers, lawyers, psychologists, administrative staff, etc. They are financed by the cantons.

Following the Crans-Montana tragedy, the victims chose which centre they would use depending on where they live or where their child/relative was hospitalised. Several VSA centres were mobilised and resources were reinforced to offer advice, support and the maximum possible availability. The centres also financed the initial expenses arising under immediate aid (accommodation, transport, psychological support, legal aid, etc.). The VSA centres have also acted as contact points for international coordination mechanisms on behalf of those persons living outside Switzerland.

#### **Financial capacity evaluated for more long-term aid**

The victims and relatives of those persons who died were informed today of a significant stage: the transition from "immediate aid" to "more long-term aid", two phases under the VSA. This transition involves a future evaluation of the financial capacity of the victim or their relatives. The lower their financial capacity, the greater the financial assistance provided under the VSA. The aid provided under the VSA will thus be degressive after 31 March 2026 and will cease entirely for those with the highest financial capacity in conformity with the legal framework (Art. 6 VSA – SR 312.5 and Art. 1 to 3 OAVI – SR 312.51).

Three important points must be borne in mind:

- **The principle of subsidiarity** / The VSA is applied according to the principle of subsidiarity. The spirit of this Act is to support people in a precarious situation who, due to lacking financial means, would not be able to recover, regain their autonomy or enforce their rights correctly. Support under the VSA is therefore designed to compensate for the absence, incapacity or inaction of another front-line financing source (accident and health insurance, private insurance, debtor, perpetrator, etc.).  
The application of the principle of subsidiarity has been deferred until now for the Crans-Montana victims. Specifically, that means the VSA centres have until now approved all requests to provide financial support to recognised victims and cover expenses stipulated under the Act (accommodation, transport, psychological support, legal aid, etc.). The VSA centres will approach the other mechanisms (accident/health insurers, etc.) over the next few months for reimbursement of any costs, which they should have covered.
- **Prolongation of immediate aid and taking account of victims' financial capacity** / Although the immediate aid phase is usually limited (e.g. to 35 days for accommodation), it has been extended to three months (up to 31 March) for the Crans-Montana victims. Moreover, those victims still in hospital on 31 March 2026 will continue to benefit from immediate aid until they leave hospital (for accommodation costs and psychological support). The financial capacity of those persons having gone home or undergoing rehabilitation will be evaluated after 31 March to ascertain the level of aid provided.
- **Administrative support** / The VSA centres will continue to assist the victims with the various necessary administrative procedures, both within and outside Switzerland. They have been provided with documentation as of today. This documentation is also available in four languages (FR-DE-IT-EN) at [www.aide-aux-victimes.ch](http://www.aide-aux-victimes.ch). Victims who would like additional information may approach the VSA centre responsible for their dossier.

> [Download the brochure](#)

For further information please contact:

President of the Cantonal Council **Mathias Reynard**, CDSS  
President  
Tel. +41 27 606 22 00  
E-mail: [mathias.reynard@admin.vs.ch](mailto:mathias.reynard@admin.vs.ch)

**Gaby Szöllösy**, CDSS General Secretary  
Tel. +41 31 320 29 95  
Mob. +41 76 336 47 98  
E-Mail: [gaby.szoelloesy@sodk.ch](mailto:gaby.szoelloesy@sodk.ch)

**Roland Favre**

Head of the Social Benefits Coordination Office \$  
Tel. +41 27 606 48 77  
E-mail : [roland.favre@admin.vs.ch](mailto:roland.favre@admin.vs.ch)