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ZURICH VICTIM PROTECTION CHARTER

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Every person has the right to not become a victim of violent or sex offenses.

There is neither absolute certainty, nor "the solution" when dealing with violent and sex offenders. A society has many options for lowering the risks and for protecting its citizens. The focus on aspects of prevention in handling offenders plays a central role. Unfortunately, many countries show sizable deficits in areas of prevention:

- No effective, social lobby for subjects on victim protection.
- Political discussions are often characterized by ideologies and follow stereotypical rightist-leftist-schemata.
- For legal- dogmatic reasons, the principle of prevention is treated subordinate to that of guilt.
- This is where the Zurich Victim Protection Charter comes into play.

The Charter formulates 10 principles regarding prevention and victim protection. It's a statement against violent and sex offenses, but not against offenders. It pleads for a pragmatic strategy in dealing with offenses, offenders and risks. It demands adequate consideration of the rights and needs of (potential) victims.

The charter was formulated in Zurich in 2008 and has recently been posted on the internet with the aim of collecting enough signatures to give it political weight.

The initiators are convinced that subjects on victim protection can gain (social) political majorities and that the focus on prevention during criminal proceedings and correctional practices must receive the same status as the guilt principle. This is the central demand of the Zurich Victim Protection Charter, the contents and goals of which will be presented.