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## **Allister welcomes EU Commission's commitment to examine definition of 'victim'**

**19 May 2008**

MEP Jim Allister, who has long campaigned against the definition of “victim” in Northern Ireland as anyone affected by “a conflict-related incident”, because it equates the innocent victim with the perpetrator of terrorism, has welcomed a response from the EU Commission on the subject.

Mr Allister had been pressing the Commission to take a view on the compatibility of the definition in the Victims & Survivors Order (NI) 2006 with the principles enunciated in EU Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA. In a written answer Commissioner Barrot has revealed that Brussels is commissioning a study on “Member States’ legislation, national policies, practices and approaches concerning the victims of crime”, which should be published in January 2009 and that thereafter the Commission plans a full review of victim’s rights. Commissioner Barrot has pledged, in Written Answer E-1897/08EN, that the specific issue, raised by the MEP, of equivalence between victim and perpetrator will be considered in the context of that review.

Commenting Mr Allister said, “I had hoped that the Stormont Assembly would have put right the great wrong of equating victim with perpetrator, but the veto held by Sinn Fein over legislative change soon put paid to that. Thus this obscenity continues, with no attempt to change it in the recent Victims

Commission legislation. I'm not one to place great faith in the European Commission, but at least it has committed to examine the issue. I trust it will respond positively and in this regard I would urge innocent victims' groups to lobby Commissioner Barrot accordingly."

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