European Commission

Overview of resources and initiatives to support progress on ensuring justice, protection and support for victims of hate crime and hate speech in the EU Member States

December 2017

The **European Commission** is working to ensure that all Member States have in place a complete transposition of the Victims' Rights Directive. A guidance document related to the transposition and implementation of the Directive was issued by DG JUSTICE and CONSUMERS in 2013 to assist Member States in this process, by clarifying the provisions of the Directive and facilitate practitioners' understanding of what is required to make the victims' rights set out in the Directive a reality in practice. At the same time, the Commission has been working with Member States to assist them implementing the standards set in the Directive, through expert meetings, supporting the establishment of a **European Network on Victims' Rights** and **funding** targeted projects on victims' rights and training of practitioners through the Justice Programme. The Commission is also working to make sure that all victims of crime have easy access to a comprehensive set of **information** about their rights, in particular through a dedicated page on the e-justice portal.

Ensuring support and protection of hate crime victims and addressing the issue of underreporting is also one of the priority areas for **funding** under the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (REC) in the area of combating racism, xenophobia, homophobia and other forms of intolerance, whose latest calls included a specific priority on supporting victims of hate crime and hate speech and addressing the issue of underreporting, including trust building between communities and national authorities.

Examples of REC awarded projects addressing the needs of hate crime victims include:

- "*HateNoMore campaign*", which led, among others, to the publication of a number of studies including «*Understanding the needs of persons who experience homophobic or transphobic violence or harassment*», «*Needs of the victims of homophobic and transphobic crime – Qualitative study*» as well as a toolkit for law enforcement bodies;

- "*Facing Facts – Making Hate Crime Visible*", which developed, among others, two online courses including a module on hate crime victim support, and is now followed up by the project "*Facing all the facts*", developing a range of activities to build the capacity of law enforcement and public authorities to take a victim-centered approach to monitoring and recording hate crime and hate speech;

- "*Come Forward: Empowering and Supporting Victims of Anti-LGBT Hate Crimes*", aimed at increase reporting and improve the access to specialized support and empower victims of homophobic and transphobic crime, by building capacity of victim support service providers, sharing good practices and strengthening cross-border and multi-agency partnerships – to be now followed up by the new project "*Call it Hate: Raising Awareness of anti-LGBT hate crime*", focussed on awareness raising and hate crime victims' empowerment;

- "*Good Practice Plus*" which strengthened understanding and partnerships across criminal justice practitioners and policy makers on good practices on providing support for hate crime victims.

The **European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)** has produced extensive research on victims of crime, including reports with a specific focus on hate crime victims such as «Making hate crime visible in the European Union: acknowledging victims' rights», «Equal protection for all victims of hate crime - The case of people with disabilities» and «Ensuring justice for hate crime victims: professional perspectives». FRA has also been leading during 2014-2016 a Working Party on Improving Reporting and Recording of Hate Crime in the EU which led to the publication of an online compendium of practices, collating practices on combating hate crime from across the EU, including in the area of improving reporting and supporting hate crime victims, with a step-by-step description to help policymakers and practitioners understand what is being done elsewhere in the EU to combat hate crime, and which elements could be adapted for use in their own national contexts.

The **Council of Europe**'s campaign "*No Hate Speech Movement*", as part of its awareness raising activities, launched a petition to invite European institutions and the member states of the Council of Europe to establish a **European Day for Victims of Hate Crime** on July 22. Information collected by the Council of Europe's **European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)** and published in regular country reports, offers a useful overview and evaluation of trends, gaps and challenges at national level, including, among others, on addressing the needs of hate crime victims.

The **Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)** of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has given particular attention to hate crime victims in the context of its work on hate crime, including in its **training programmes** and in its **reports and handbooks** (see for example the handbook «Preventing and responding to hate crimes. A resource guide for NGOs in the OSCE region» and the recent focus paper «Hate crime against people with disabilities»). ODIHR is currently working on the development of **guidance for criminal justice authorities** when working for and with hate crime victims.

Many civil society organizations have been carrying out research and exchanging knowledge and best practices in this area. Some of these projects led to the compilation of **practical guidelines** on providing support and protection for hate crime victims, such as, for example, «Hate Crime Victim Support in Europe - A practical guide», which shares the experience and knowledge of independent hate crime victim support providers and academics from across Europe, to provide practitioners, criminal justice professionals, civil servants and policy-makers with knowledge about supporting and counselling victims of hate crime, including useful practical case study illustrations. The guide was compiled by the German civil society organisation RAA Saxony, as part of their project "*Guidelines and Support Standards for Victims of Hate Crimes*". Other European level publications by civil society organisations in this field include «Face to face with bias violence - guidelines for social workers», published by the Czech civil society organisation In IUSTITIA as the result of a cooperation with other civil society organisations from 5 countries, to provide social workers with knowledge on how to identify bias motivated crime, react to it appropriately and support victims.

Remarkable **scientific research** has also been published on hate crime victims' needs and support by European academics and academic institutions, including, for example, the publications of the Centre for Hate Studies of the University of Leicester, but also **handbooks** addressed to practitioners, such as «Supporting Victims of Hate Crime - A Practitioner Guide».