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European STAND-UP project enlarged tools to combat hate crime

After a two-year multi-agency work bringing discrimination, intolerance, and hatred into focus, the European project STAND-UP has come to an end. The closure event, the seminar *Stand Together Against Hate: A Multi-Agency Initiative* was held in Brussels, on the 11th of January, with an introductory part of the project conducted by Giovanni Gasparani, Prosecutor office of Venice, and the keynote speech of Magdalena Adamowicz, member of the European Parliament for the European People's Party whose husband, the Polish politician Paweł Adamowicz, was assassinated in which is considered a hate crime.

The morning session included the roundtable *Navigating the Intersection of Hate Speech and Crimes* with Menno Ettema, Programme Manager and Co-Secretary to expert Committee on Combating Hate Speech, to expert Committee on Combating Hate Speech; Nataša Vučković (via online), member of the Center for Democracy Foundation (CDF); Sergio Bianchi (online), expert of the Group on Combating Anti-Muslim hatred and discrimination in the EU; and finally Simonetta Moro (online) from the Municipality of Bologna.

One of the main outputs of STAND-UP project, the EU Policy Paper: 'EU-Level Policy Recommendations on Supporting Multi-Agency Cooperation in Countering Hate Crime, Including Through the Use of Technologies' elaborated by GNCHR, was presented during the morning session by GNCHR representatives Eva Tzavala, Coordinator of the Scientific Unit, and Dr. Anastasia Chalkia, Human Rights Officer.

The six European project partners shared the afternoon session's panels on interagency cooperation to tackle hate crimes and hate speech, as well as local pilot success stories and results developed in Veneto, Athens, Andalusia, and Trentino-Alto Adige. The first included the participation of Akis Karatrandos, Research Fellow at ELIAMEP and Senior Advisor at KEMEA; Katerina Charokopou, Legal Officer at GNCHR; Viviana Gullo, Project Manager of Agenfor; FUNDEA's Research Fellow, Lucía García del Moral, and of Prof. Artinopoulou (EPLO) as a moderator. On its side, the second panel entailed the interventions of Clara Raffaele Addamo, lawyer, Prosecutor office of Trento; Viviana Gullo, Agenfor's Project Manager; Katerina Charokopou, Legal Officer of GNCHR; Giovanni Gasparini, Prosecutor Office of Venice; Prof. Artinopoulou, Director of the Institute on Crime & Criminal Justice (EPLO); Maryna Manchenko, from CESIE; and Viviana Gullo, Agenfor's Project Manager, as a moderator.

Implementing the STAND-UP multi-agency model to stop hate crimes

During its implementation period, between January 2022 and January 2024, the STAND-UP project held several activities, among them an exclusive webinar addressing hate crime in the digital era or regional courses in Italy and Greece to improve competence and technological skills to combat hate phenomena, using technologies such as Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT) to monitor hate speech, along with Virtual Reality simulations and the STAND-UP model based on a victim-centered approach. The courses were focused on multi-agency cooperation, hate phenomena, and national and European legislation, and were addressed to members of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs), Public Authorities (judiciaries, ministries, prosecutors), or associations or communities affected by hate crime or hate speech.

An anonymous form to denounce hate crimes was created and a six-month pilot was run with the implementation of OSINT-monitoring centers that generate alerts and reports when online traffic concerning hateful sentiment toward a given at-risk group surpasses average levels, based on the semantic bank for hateful sentiment and identified at-risk groups. The pilot compared levels of hateful content online with incidents of hate crime to understand the extent to which the two are reflective of each other and, thus, explore how rising tensions or growing hateful sentiment towards a given group can be the trigger for preventive action. This pilot also implemented the Blueprint for Cooperation, using a platform to share information and a model of granular access and trialing the model memoria of understanding, as well as the Victim Support Handbook for effective but sensitive investigations and prosecutions.

A Victim Support Handbook

To boost the victim-centered approach, something crucial to make victims feel safe, to openly speak of their experience and to seek help and advice, the *STAND-UP* project made public its *Victim Support Handbook* ([download here](#)) that exposes the terminology and a synthesis of the *STAND-UP* project and the technology tool OSIN used. It provides context on hate-crime victims' rights within the EU, defining who are hate crime victims, types of hate speeches and crimes and their impact, as well as a victim-centered approach to support; it establishes the role of CSOs and prosecutors, the legal framework and good practices in Italy, Greece, and Spain, and it concludes with a toolkit for analyzing a particular case of hate speech.

The Handbook is a significant tool that aims at the sustainability of support service providers like the CSOs (Civil Society Organizations), the most relevant actors in the victim support systems, and that puts on the table the importance of partnerships with the public sector, able to establish national funds.