

OSCE SUPPLEMENTARY HUMAN DIMENSION MEETING

14 – 15 April 2016

Side Event - Support for Victims of Hate Crime in Europe – Standards and Tools

Statement by the convenor: **Sächsische Beratungsstellen für Betroffene rechtsmotivierter und rassistischer Gewalt des RAA Sachsen e.V., Robert Kusche**

ENGLISH only

http://raa-sachsen.de/index.php/internationales_beitraege/release-statement-hate-crime-victim-support-in-europe-a-practical-guide.html

Statement “*Hate Crime Victim Support in Europe – A Practical Guide*”

Right-wing, racist, homo- and transphobic violence, and violence in which people are attacked because of their religion and even because of a disability they might have, are widespread problems in Europe—according to OSCE figures. Criminal acts of such violence are often referred to as ‘Hate Crimes’. Independent data show a dramatic increase of these crimes during the last few years. In Germany, against the background of refuge given to thousands who have fled the violence in Syria and Iraq and elsewhere, racist and right-wing attacks doubled in 2015.

Hate crimes send a discriminatory message—and not only to the victim. Each act of hate crime sends a threat to the victim’s community as well as a threat to the democratic societies of Europe and against their democratic values.

The impact of Hate Crime is usually particularly serious for those who are directly affected. Scientific studies show that Hate Crimes can potentially inflict greater harms compared with similar but otherwise-motivated crime. To overcome the manifold impact specialist professional support is often needed. Although the demand for professional Hate Crime Victim Support is high there is limited specialist support on offer across the OSCE region.

The German civil society organisation RAA Saxony and their project “[Guidelines and Support Standards for Victims of Hate Crimes](#)”, gathered together specialist victim support providers from across Europe to share knowledge about good practice. In 2015 RAA Saxony invited 23 independent civil society Hate Crime Victim Support organisations from 18 European OSCE-countries, along with several academics, to two symposia in Berlin to share their knowledge and expertise. The goal was to combine and share practitioner understanding about supporting and counselling victims of hate crime.

The short book, [Hate Crime Victim Support in Europe – A Practical Guide](#), presents the knowledge gathered and provides useful practical case study illustrations of supporting hate crime victims. This comprehensive guide shares the deep experience and knowledge of hate crime victim support providers with a broader audience. It also provides practitioners, criminal justice professionals, civil servants, policy-makers and politicians a comprehensive approach about how to fulfill EU [Directive 2012/29/EU on establishing minimum standards on rights, support and protection of victims of crime](#) and the OSCE decision [No. 9/09 on Combating Hate Crimes](#).

Dr Michael Privat, Director of the European Network Against Racism (ENAR), in endorsing the guide stated:

“No doubt this guide will be pioneering in making the voices of victims heard, and ensuring that they are properly cared for...the guide is comprehensive, written in an accessible language, and addresses both long-time practitioners and newcomers to the field. Although civil society organisations are its primary target audience, civil servants in the judiciary, judges, police officers, lawyers, and all those working on healing processes (medical doctors, nurses, psychologists, social workers, counsellors) will also considerably benefit from the content and perspectives presented in this guide—its victim-centred approach in particular.”

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- The book *Hate Crime Victim Support in Europe – A practical Guide* published by RAA Saxony is available in English and can be ordered for a shipping fee of 6 Euro (international shipping). Please contact: support-standards@raa-sachsen.de
 - The book can be downloaded free of charge [here](#) and at www.h8hurts.eu
 - The Symposia were funded by German Foundation “[Remembrance, Responsibility and Future](#)” (EVZ). Printing of the book was supported financially the [Amadeu-Antonio-Foundation \(AAS\)](#) in Germany