



OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

**Addressing Intolerance, Discrimination and Hate Crime:  
Responses of Civil Society and Christian and Other Religious Communities**

Expert Meeting  
Geneva, 22–23 October 2019

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*The report should not be interpreted as comprising official OSCE recommendations based on a consensus decision, an opinion of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights or of any particular OSCE participating State. The content of this report reflects opinions expressed by participants in the expert meeting which took place in Geneva on 22–23 October 2019.*

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OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)

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## INTRODUCTION

Intolerance against Christians continues to be a concern across the region of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Discrimination remains a reality for many members of different religious, ethnic or other groups, with especially detrimental impacts upon individuals and communities who are subject to other forms of discrimination, including on the basis of gender. Such manifestations of intolerance threaten both the security of individuals and societal cohesion, as discrimination and intolerant discourse often escalate into violence and wider scale conflict. Participating States of the OSCE have agreed on a broad range of commitments to address racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, discrimination and intolerance, including intolerance against Christians, Muslims, Jews, and members of other religions.

While underlining the importance of a comprehensive approach to address discrimination and hate crimes, OSCE participating States have also acknowledged specificities of different forms of intolerance. The OSCE Chair-in-Office (CiO) firstly explicitly mentioned intolerance against Christians in a high-level declaration emerging from the 2005 Cordoba Conference.<sup>1</sup> This was followed by a number of OSCE Ministerial Council Decisions that sought to develop an OSCE-wide response for countering discrimination and intolerance against Christians.<sup>2</sup> For instance, in 2005, participating States committed to fight prejudice, intolerance and discrimination against Christians, *inter alia*. In 2006, the OSCE Ministerial Council called upon the participating States to address the root causes of intolerance and discrimination “through increased awareness-raising measures that [...] [a]im to prevent intolerance and discrimination, including against Christians, Jews, Muslims and members of other religions.” In 2007, the Ministerial Council also called “for continued efforts by political representatives, including parliamentarians, strongly to reject and condemn manifestations of racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, discrimination and intolerance, including against Christians, Jews, Muslims and members of other religions.”

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<sup>1</sup> Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Cordoba Declaration by the Chairman-in-Office, OSCE Conference on Anti-Semitism and on Other Forms of Intolerance, Cordoba, 9 June 2005, <<https://www.osce.org/cio/15548>>.

<sup>2</sup> Ministerial Council Decisions 10/05, <<https://www.osce.org/mc/17462>>, 13/06, <<https://www.osce.org/mc/23114>>, 10/07, <<https://www.osce.org/mc/29452>>, and the Ministerial Council Declaration on Enhancing Efforts to Combat Anti-Semitism, Basel, 5 December 2014, <<https://www.osce.org/cio/130556>>.

## ODIHR's work on addressing intolerance against Christians

The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) provides support, assistance and expertise to participating States and civil society to promote democracy, rule of law, human rights and tolerance and non-discrimination. ODIHR's work towards tolerance and non-discrimination includes the collection of data on hate crime from governmental, civil society and non-governmental sources, and the publication of an annual hate crime report. Our hate crime data indicates that violent acts against particular groups and communities continue to be a concern in the OSCE region. For instance, in our report for the year 2017, the authorities of ten OSCE participating States reported hate crimes against Christians, and an additional 486 hate incidents against Christians were reported by civil society and intergovernmental organizations in 35 OSCE participating States.<sup>3</sup>

To address forms of intolerance and discrimination, including hate crime, against Christians, ODIHR works with national authorities to improve national systems for recording and collection of data on hate crimes, as this is an area where many countries face serious challenges. Additionally, ODIHR builds the capacity of civil society organizations to monitor hate crimes, including through specialized training on addressing hate crimes motivated by anti-Christian bias. In November 2017, in Yerevan, ODIHR organized an international training event on "Preventing and Countering Hate Crimes against Christians and Members of Other Religious Groups," that took place on the margins of the international conference "Preventing and Countering Hate Crimes against Christians and Members of other Religious Groups – Perspectives from the OSCE and Beyond."<sup>4</sup> In order to raise awareness of the issue, ODIHR produced a factsheet on hate crime against Christians, which is available in print and online in English and Russian.<sup>5</sup> Most recently, ODIHR also published its policy guide on security in the context of freedom of religion and belief.<sup>6</sup>

ODIHR convened a number of international events to address intolerance against Christians and members of other religions, including most recently the OSCE Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on "Upholding the Principles of Tolerance and Non-Discrimination including in the Promotion and Protection of Freedom of Religion or Belief,"<sup>7</sup> in April 2019, in Vienna. ODIHR also organized other events focusing on intolerance against Christians, such as the "Conference on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians," organized in 2016 in Vienna, by the German CiO and ODIHR.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> See: <<http://hatecrime.osce.org/what-hate-crime/bias-against-members-other-religions-or-beliefs>> and <<http://hatecrime.osce.org/what-hate-crime/bias-against-christians>>.

<sup>4</sup> OSCE Chair, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, "Armenian Foreign Minister, OSCE officials at Yerevan event stress need to respect fundamental rights and freedoms, counter hate crimes in preventing discrimination against Christians, members of other religions", Yerevan, 21 November 2017, <<https://www.osce.org/chairmanship/357891>>.

<sup>5</sup> The factsheets are available at: <<https://www.osce.org/odihr/389468>>.

<sup>6</sup> Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, *Freedom of Religion or Belief and Security: Policy Guidance*, Warsaw, 2019, <<https://www.osce.org/odihr/429389>>.

<sup>7</sup> See: <[https://www.osce.org/odihr/shdm\\_1\\_2019](https://www.osce.org/odihr/shdm_1_2019)>. Previously, in June 2017, in Vienna, ODIHR and the then Austrian CiO convened the Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on the topic of "Freedom of Religion or Belief: Issues, Opportunities, and the Specific Challenges of Combatting Anti-Semitism, and Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians, Muslims and Members of Other Religions", <<https://www.osce.org/odihr/383739>>.

<sup>8</sup> See: <<https://www.osce.org/odihr/289386>>. Other high-level events on this topic include the "High-Level Meeting on Preventing and Responding to Hate Incidents and Crimes against Christians", Rome, 12 September 2011, <<https://www.osce.org/odihr/85579>>, and "Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians: Focusing

## **Event description**

In line with the existing OSCE commitments, its mandate on addressing intolerance and discrimination, as well as following its previous activities and established expertise on the topic, ODIHR organized a working-level expert meeting on “Addressing Intolerance, Discrimination and Hate Crime: Responses of Civil Society and Christian and Other Religious Communities,” in Geneva on 22–23 October 2019.

The objectives of the expert meeting were the following:

- To discuss the situation in the OSCE region when it comes to racism, xenophobia and intolerance, including intolerance based on religion or belief;
- To share information on manifestations of intolerance motivated by anti-Christian bias in the OSCE, and the role of Christian and other communities in identifying and reporting manifestations of intolerance;
- To learn about good practices of faith-based civil society organizations and religious communities in addressing intolerance and discrimination;
- To gain practical skills in understanding and identifying hate crime motivated by anti-Christian and other types of bias, and reporting, recording, investigating and prosecuting hate crimes;
- To participate in a consultation on submitting data on hate incidents motivated by anti-Christian and other types of bias to ODIHR.

The meeting gathered 21 participants (four men and 17 women) from civil society, religious communities, and intergovernmental organizations from 11 participating States across the OSCE region, with a diverse representation of Christian communities, as well as activists from Jewish and Muslim civil society organizations. The expert meeting provided a forum where the participants explored the current situation of intolerance against Christians and other communities. The participants also discussed the wider context of intolerance and discrimination in which they operate, and the efforts they undertake to address it. This summary of the expert meeting was prepared in order to further raise awareness of the issues discussed.

## **SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS**

### **Opening session**

The expert meeting was opened by Christie Edwards, Deputy Head of the Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Department of ODIHR. Edwards introduced the participants to the OSCE and ODIHR, and the OSCE participating States’ commitments to a comprehensive framework for addressing intolerance and discrimination and the promotion of tolerance through OSCE Ministerial Council Decisions. Despite these long-standing commitments, intolerance, discrimination and hate crime continue to be a concern across the OSCE region. Discrimination in vital areas of life, such as employment, education, and housing, remain a reality for many members of different ethnic, religious or other groups. Women, in particular, are disproportionately impacted by multiple forms of discrimination. Often such practices are institutional and systemic, which makes them more difficult to address and dismantle. Edwards

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on Exclusion, Marginalization and Denial of Rights,” Vienna, 4 March 2009, <<https://www.osce.org/odihr/40543>>.

concluded with the hope that this working-level expert meeting would provide a forum where representatives of civil society organizations, religious communities, and inter-governmental organizations would explore the current situation of intolerance against Christians and other communities, and the efforts undertaken to address it.

After the opening, Professor Ingeborg Gabriel,<sup>9</sup> Personal Representative of the OSCE Chair-in-Office on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination, also focusing on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians and Members of Other Religions, gave a keynote speech for the event. Professor Gabriel began by noting the common ground for all religions, as well as secular society, such as social harmony, peace and justice. She elaborated on the two main categories of human rights violations against Christians. The first category, according to Professor Gabriel, are states where violations of freedom of religion or belief (often under the guise of measures to deal with extremism) go hand in hand with human rights violations in general, and where small Christian communities are affected in particular. The second category are states with growing social polarization, which also lead to hate crimes motivated by anti-Christian bias. Professor Gabriel gave an example of an OSCE participating State where the 2016 murder of a village priest of a Christian denomination by a radicalized member of another religion sent shock waves through the country, yet she also noted how in 2018 more than a thousand anti-Christian incidents, including acts of vandalism and personal attacks, were reported to the police in the same state. Taking also into account that many such crimes go unreported, Professor Gabriel suggested that anti-Christian crimes are no longer a marginal phenomenon, in this or in other countries. Noting that many such hate crimes go underreported, Professor Gabriel welcomed the fact that ten participating States of the OSCE now record hate crimes against Christians as a specific category.

Professor Gabriel also emphasized that becoming a victim of hate crime does not depend on belonging to a religious majority or minority at the national level. Relations between majority and minority communities can differ in different social settings; additionally, hate crimes are acts of individuals, and those individuals do not have to be representative of the communities they belong to. She also highlighted the situation of asylum seekers who converted to Christianity in their countries of origin or destination, as well as the issue of blasphemy laws. She called for a “five-Es” scheme for reflection and action: education against discrimination and for religious literacy; ethics and the need to openly discuss problems; examples of personal relations as a way of overcoming prejudice; encounters within intercultural and interreligious dialogues; and empirical studies of these phenomena. Finally, Professor Gabriel recommended that intolerance and discrimination against Christians must be documented and addressed by legal means.

In the discussion following Professor Gabriel’s presentation, the participants noted the need for alliances in addressing intolerance, discrimination and hate crime. ODIHR presented its

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<sup>9</sup> Professor Ingeborg Gabriel was appointed by the Slovak OSCE Chair-in-Office in 2019 and advised the Chairperson-in-Office. She also held the same role in 2017, during the Austrian OSCE Chair, contributing to the overall efforts of the OSCE in combating discrimination and promoting tolerance, notably through monitoring activities and targeted support to participating States. Since the 1980s, Professor Gabriel has been active in encouraging interreligious dialogue, both at an academic and diplomatic level: serving as the director of the Austrian Justice and Peace Commission and co-founding the Vienna Christian-Islamic Summer University in 2006. She is a professor of Social Ethics at the University of Vienna, Austria, serving in the Faculty of Catholic Theology since 1997, and holds a Master’s degree in Economics and International Relations from the Diplomatic Academy in Vienna. She has previously worked for the United Nations Development Programme in New York for the countries of Nepal and Mongolia.

new coalition building guide as a resource for the participants.<sup>10</sup> Participants also mentioned the need for more OSCE participating States to record and report hate crimes against Christians.

### **Setting the Stage: Introductions and Expectations**

In this session, participants introduced themselves and their work, and shared their expectations for the forthcoming workshop. The participants also agreed on the ground rules for creating a challenging yet caring mutual space for discussion. The session was moderated by Christie Edwards.

### **Addressing intolerance and discrimination: Mapping the situation in the OSCE region**

In this session, participants discussed the situation in the OSCE region when it comes to racism, xenophobia and intolerance, including intolerance based on religion or belief, from the perspective of faith-based civil society organizations and religious institutions and their responses. The session was moderated by Tatjana Perić, ODIHR's Adviser on Combating Racism and Xenophobia.

In his opening intervention, Viktor Kunderák, ODIHR's Hate Crime Officer, introduced the participants to the OSCE concept of hate crimes, the relevant international legal framework, ODIHR's mandate in the area, and its annual Hate Crime Report.<sup>11</sup> Emphasis was placed on the role of civil society organizations in the process. Finally, he discussed the situation of hate crimes committed with an anti-Christian bias.

The next speaker, Dr. Elizabeta Kitanović<sup>12</sup> of the Conference of European Churches, elaborated on different situations in which Christian churches may be vulnerable to being targeted by hate crime. This included the cases of political changes when majority churches can also be shifted into minority positions. Dr. Kitanović presented a range of the most important types of intolerance, discrimination and hate crimes in the OSCE region with an anti-Christian bias. As 70 per cent of member churches of the Conference of European Churches are religious minorities in their own contexts, it is important to raise awareness of human rights mechanisms among religious communities, including co-operation with national human rights institutions. As a good practice of her institution, Dr. Kitanović presented the publication *Religious Diversity in Europe and the Rights of Religious Minorities*.<sup>13</sup>

In his presentation, Ambassador Jakob Finci<sup>14</sup> of the Jewish Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina addressed the situation in his country and emphasized its specific context and

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<sup>10</sup> See: Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, *Coalition Building for Tolerance and Non-Discrimination: A Practical Guide*, Warsaw, 2018, <<https://www.osce.org/odihr/385017>>.

<sup>11</sup> See: <<https://hatecrime.osce.org>>.

<sup>12</sup> Dr. Elizabeta Kitanović is Executive Secretary for Human Rights of the Conference of European Churches. Dr. Kitanović completed her studies in Theology and post-graduate studies in International Affairs at the Political Science Faculty in Belgrade. She graduated from the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Serbian Government. Prior to her current post she was at first working for the Serbian Orthodox Church, and then for the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Serbian Government as Adviser for Interreligious Affairs and its PR.

<sup>13</sup> The publication is available online at:

<[https://www.globethics.net/documents/4289936/17575651/GE\\_CEC\\_5\\_isbn9782889312702.pdf](https://www.globethics.net/documents/4289936/17575651/GE_CEC_5_isbn9782889312702.pdf)>.

<sup>14</sup> Ambassador Jakob Finci is President of the Jewish Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina. A lawyer by profession, in 1991 he was one of the founders, the first Vice-President and later President of the La Benevolencija – a Jewish cultural, educational and humanitarian society, which during the war helped all citizens of Sarajevo, regardless of their faith. Ambassador Finci is also former Executive Director of the Soros

complexity, including conflict between members of different Christian churches. Ambassador Finci also stated that it was important that state policy should not interfere in religion, and noted cases – such as the armed conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina – when religions were misused. As a possible good practice that may be replicated also in other countries, Ambassador Finci mentioned the Inter-Religious Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the decrease in the number of hate incidents based on religion in the country. He also recommended the good practice of collaboration between the Islamic Community and the Jewish Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina, who will in 2020 together mark 200 years since the Sarajevo Purim, one of the most important events in the country's history. Ambassador Finci also reflected on the upcoming fifteenth anniversary of the OSCE Conference on Anti-Semitism and on Other Forms of Intolerance, which took place in Cordoba in 2005, yet noted that unfortunately, from a broader perspective, not much progress seemed to have been made since then.

The next speaker, Elif Adam<sup>15</sup> of the Dokustelle civil society organization in Austria described the work of his organization and its foundations, focusing on monitoring anti-Muslim hate crime, hate speech, and discrimination, and providing support to victims. She presented the most common problems that the organization is facing in its work, such as police in Austria lacking understanding or awareness of hate crimes, or the imprecision of Austrian official hate crime data. According to Adam, there are some positive good practices, such as the new project of the Ministry of Interior addressing under-reporting of hate crime, yet there has also been a downslide recently regarding regulation, passed through the parliament without much discussion, on the ban of full-face headscarves, and a headscarf ban in kindergartens, which activists consider openly discriminatory, as prohibiting only Muslim headscarves while explicitly allowing for kippahs or Sikh turbans. Additionally, according to Adam, the Muslim community was not adequately consulted and represented in the process of developing other related pending laws and amendments. Adam also spoke about the importance of using an intersectional lens in addressing intolerance and hate crime against Muslims, especially in terms of gender (due to the visibility of Muslim women wearing headscarves), race and ethnicity, and othering (xenophobia). She mentioned that, even amongst the educated public and politicians, confusion persists on differentiating Islam from Islamism, and that social surveys show a strong distrust of the public towards Muslims. Adam concluded by stating that it is important to consult Muslim communities in the development of policies and practices that affect the community.

In the discussion, participants commented on the example of the Inter-Religious Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and called for the replication of this good practice. Participants stressed the important role of civil society organizations in reporting hate crime. The impact that hate crimes have on individual victims, including when property is targeted, was also discussed. Differences were drawn on the treatment of incidents committed with a religious bias compared to those with a political bias, especially since the OSCE concept of hate crimes does not encompass political ideas or affiliation as protected characteristic, yet, in some contexts, it may be hard to draw a waterproof line, since religions may be affiliated with certain

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Foundation – Open Society Fund for Bosnia and Herzegovina, and one of founding fathers and twice President of the Inter-Religious Council of BiH. For his work, Ambassador Finci received numerous national and international awards.

<sup>15</sup> Elif Adam is a social scientist who has been active in interreligious dialogue for more than ten years. She is the Chairperson of Dokustelle – Dokumentations- und Beratungsstelle über Islamfeindlichkeit und Antimuslimischer Rassismus (Documentation and Advisory Centre on Islamophobia and Anti-Muslim Racism) in Austria, which she established five years ago with a colleague. Among other services, Dokustelle monitors anti-Muslim racist attacks, supports victims, and offers empowerment seminars and workshops.

political ideas or parties. Participants also asked questions related to contributions to the OSCE Hate Crime Reporting process.

### **Manifestations of intolerance against Christians**

The focus of this session was on exploring manifestations of intolerance motivated by anti-Christian bias, including anti-Christian hate crime, in the OSCE, and the role of Christian and other communities in their identifying and reporting. The session was moderated by Viktor Kunderák.

In her introduction, Mariam Gvatzdze<sup>16</sup> of the civil society organization Tolerance and Diversity Institute in Georgia addressed the problem of terminology when referring to *minority* as opposed to *non-dominant* religions. Gvatzdze further focused on the situation in Georgia, where 84 per cent of the population identify as members of the Georgian Orthodox Church, and noted that the historical role of the Church should not justify awarding it privileges, as also confirmed by the Georgian Constitutional Court. She also spoke about instances of hate crimes against Christians in Georgia, and noted that most of such incidents are committed by Christians against other Christians, especially against Jehovah's Witnesses. Gvatzdze also mentioned the failings of the criminal justice system to investigate hate crimes effectively, sometimes even further humiliating victims of hate crime with prejudiced jokes during investigation procedures, and the lack of legal support for victims of hate crimes. It is necessary to also raise awareness of what hate crime is, as victims sometimes do not report hate crime due to their own lack of information. According to Gvatzdze, there is need for better understanding of diversity and inclusion, especially through education. An additional issue of concern was a generally unsafe environment for the work of human rights defenders, and Gvatzdze concluded by emphasizing the importance of strong civil society to addressing intolerance, discrimination and hate crime.

Next, Dr. Mattia Francesco Ferrero,<sup>17</sup> the National Point of Contact on Hate Crime of the Holy See, noted that there is still a need for more awareness and more understanding of the phenomenon of intolerance, discrimination and hate crime against Christians. He introduced the Holy See's perspective on the topic, and stressed that, on the basis of the data they gather from Apostolic Nunciatures and religious organizations, hate crimes against Christians are not a marginal problem. Dr. Ferrero mentioned the problem of under-reporting of hate crimes against Christians and its possible reasons, such as the lack of awareness among victims, lesser visibility (since the incidents involve mainly attacks against property), and the lack of training for law enforcement. Additionally, he stressed the need for building coalitions to address the

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<sup>16</sup> Mariam Gvatzdze is a human rights lawyer. She is a co-founder and Director of Strategic Litigation and Legal Aid at the non-governmental organization Tolerance and Diversity Institute (TDI), based in Tbilisi, Georgia. Her work focuses on freedom of religion, non-discrimination and minority rights. Gvatzdze is a member of the ODIHR Panel of Experts on Freedom of Religion or Belief. She also contributes to the Forum 18 News Service regarding the freedom of religion situation in Georgia. Gvatzdze holds a BA degree in law and an LLM in international law.

<sup>17</sup> Dr. Mattia Francesco Ferrero graduated *summa cum laude* in Law from Catholic University of the Sacred Heart of Milan and got a PhD in Canon and Ecclesiastical Law from the same University, where he is currently Teacher Assistant in Ecclesiastical Law. A member of the Milan Bar Association and its Human Rights Commission, he works in a law firm as a partner. Over the last years, Dr. Ferrero has developed a specific expertise in the field of hate crimes: he is trainer of trainers for ODIHR's PAHCT programme, was advisor in Italy for the ODIHR project Building a Comprehensive Criminal Justice Response to Hate Crime and, since 2017, serves as National Point of Contact on Hate Crimes of the Holy See. He is also the Vice President of the Union of Italian Catholic Jurists.

problem of underreporting. With regards to the data on hate crime against Christians reported by the OSCE participating States, Dr. Ferrero noted that it is important for the states to report hate crimes against Christians as such to ODIHR in the first place, as many states do not report this type of data, or they submit unreliable data that is not disaggregated by bias against specific religious groups. In addition to highlighting the issues of underreporting and under-recording hate crime against Christians, as well as reluctance by authorities to prosecute such cases, Dr. Ferrero recommended more awareness-raising activities among victims of hate crime, to help them recognize their experience as a relevant hate crime. He also reflected on the fact that majority churches can also be targeted by hate crime, as well as minority ones. Dr. Ferrero concluded with a call to participating States to implement OSCE commitments on intolerance against Christians, to train their law enforcement, and suggested that the OSCE develop guidelines on the security needs of Christian communities, similarly to the existing OSCE practical guide on the security of Jewish communities.<sup>18</sup>

The next speaker, Cvijeta Senta<sup>19</sup> of the civil society organization Centre for Peace Studies in Croatia, described the lessons on the intersection of ethnicity, racism and religion learnt by the Centre in the Croatian context, stemming from their decades-long work in peacebuilding between the predominantly Serbian Orthodox Serb minority and the predominantly Roman Catholic Croatian majority. Senta spoke about the need for civil society organizations to cooperate internally, as well as with government authorities and national human rights institutions on reporting hate crime. Her organization is member of a coalition of civil society organizations, including the Serb National Council, that regularly reports data on hate incidents to ODIHR. As an important aspect of the Croatian context, Senta mentioned the problem of historical revisionism and its devastating effects on victims of hate crime and their communities. In Croatia, hate crimes also target Muslim communities, mainly Croat citizens of Bosniak origin. With regards to the hate crime targeting Roma in Croatia, Senta noted discrepancies between the frequency of attacks against Roma as reported in studies, and the official data on hate crime against Roma. Studies conducted by the Centre also noted a significant link between gender and hate crime against Roma, with more Roma men (24%) that reported being physically assaulted, compared to women (10.5%).<sup>20</sup> In addition to anti-Semitic incidents, Senta also spoke about incidents against (predominantly Muslim) refugees and asylum seekers, especially women wearing headscarves. Senta thus recommended that authorities must underpin the principle of intersectionality in all equality policies, to avoid overlooking the experiences of the most marginalized groups. In her conclusion, she emphasized an intersectional approach as a powerful mobilization tool for achieving equality and solidarity when working together against intolerance, discrimination and hate crime.

In the discussion, participants called on OSCE participating States to make their reporting on hate crime against Christians as transparent and detailed as possible. The importance of secular civil society organizations which work with religious communities and record and report hate crime was highlighted. Some also called for raising awareness of the need to identify and report

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<sup>18</sup> *Understanding Anti-Semitic Crimes and Addressing the Security Needs of Jewish Communities: A Practical Guide*, available at: <<https://www.osce.org/odihhr/317166>>.

<sup>19</sup> Cvijeta Senta is one of the Organization Co-ordinators at the Centre for Peace Studies (CPS) in Zagreb, Croatia. Senta was a member of the CPS staff since 2009, working in the area of anti-discrimination policies. She has previous work experience in youth and peace-building policies and practices.

<sup>20</sup> Suzana Kunac, Ksenija Klasnić, Sara Lalić, *Roma Inclusion in the Croatian Society: A Baseline Data Study*, Zagreb, 2018, pp. 254–6, <[https://www.cms.hr/system/publication/pdf/109/Roma\\_Inclusion\\_in\\_the\\_Croatian\\_Society.pdf](https://www.cms.hr/system/publication/pdf/109/Roma_Inclusion_in_the_Croatian_Society.pdf)>. This data relates to the numerical toll on the Roma community, and tells only a partial story of the full gendered impact of hate crimes on Roma communities, especially Roma women.

hate crime among the hierarchies of religious communities. Good examples of continuous co-operation between some civil society organizations and minority religious communities in Georgia, and trust building that took place over the years, were mentioned. Participants also mentioned that some Christian organizations are targeted by hate crime by association because of their work with refugees, yet they may not report these crimes in the interest of keeping “social peace.” In that sense, participants concluded by highlighting the importance of protecting victims and those reporting hate crime from retaliation.

### **Good practices in preventing and addressing intolerance and discrimination**

The final panel discussion of the day presented various good examples of initiatives of religious communities and faith-based civil society organizations on addressing intolerance and discrimination. The session was moderated by Christie Edwards.

In her introductory presentation, Reverend Leslye Dwight<sup>21</sup> of the Community of Hope African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church in the United States introduced the participants to the development of the A.M.E. church as a predominantly African-American Methodist denomination, seeking independence from the bias and inequality of white Methodists. She described the current situation of racism in the United States as tense, with the infringement of rights of many African-Americans, and threats to the pastors and congregations of Black churches. After emphasizing the political climate as particularly affected by a harmful narrative for people of colour, she also highlighted a number of systemic issues, which include a disproportionate number of minorities in incarceration, and their high unemployment rates. In light of these systemic issues, Rev. Dwight’s church takes action at a local level to address priority concerns for everyone in their community by raising awareness of the importance of civic participation. For instance, her church organized townhall meetings with lawmakers to enable the people who are not usually heard in decision-making processes to share the impact of national budget decisions. Furthermore, in neighborhoods without consistent access to healthy food, they started urban gardens for people to grow their own food and vegetables. The A.M.E. church also cultivates strong advocacy relationships with decision makers, and works with state legislators to lobby for protection of child victims of sex trafficking, where African-American youth are disproportionately affected. “We cannot stand on platforms on Sunday mornings and preach, but not do the work towards tangible change in our communities,” said Rev. Dwight, and recommended awareness, advocacy, and action as key tools for addressing intolerance against minorities.

The next presenter, Martin Leng,<sup>22</sup> from the Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) described his organization’s activities which focus on responding to anti-migrant hate on the

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<sup>21</sup> Reverend Leslye Dwight serves as the Minister of Social Justice at Community of Hope A.M.E. Church under the leadership of Rev. Tony Lee, Senior Pastor. She is an ordained elder in the Washington Annual Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. A Magna Cum Laude graduate, Rev. Dwight earned her Master of Divinity from Payne Theological Seminary. She is champion for human rights whose activism efforts led her to preach the gospel to the poor, heal the broken-hearted, preach deliverance to the captives, recover sight to the blind, and set at liberty those who are bruised (Luke 4:18).

<sup>22</sup> Martin Leng is the Communications Co-ordinator at the Quaker Council for European Affairs, which advocates for peacebuilding and human rights at the European level. He is responsible for their strategic communications, outreach and the #ChooseRespect project. Martin previously worked on peacebuilding policy in Brussels, building on his academic background in EU international affairs and diplomacy. Founded in Brussels in 1979, QCEA works on behalf of the Quaker community in Europe to promote peacebuilding and human rights at the European level through a blend of policy research, political advocacy and “quiet diplomacy.”

internet. Leng highlighted the dilemma of the positive and useful aspects of the internet, which are also the same ones which allow for hatred to flourish online. According to Leng, addressing the latter is important since violent acts, such as hate crime, begin with hateful discourse. In particular, hate speech against migrants and refugees has become a huge challenge, particularly on the internet where it can be spread easily and anonymously. Leng also quoted experts in the field who advocate against viewpoint regulation, and instead recommend developing positive narratives around refugees and migrants, and enabling the third-party engagement of non-governmental organizations. The QCEA approach proposes to help the public understand the issues at stake, and thus have them make informed opinions and choices. As an example, their community campaign #ChooseRespect<sup>23</sup> countered hate speech against migrants and refugees specifically in the context of the European Parliament elections in May 2019, in a situation where seats in the election could have been won by candidates from populist parties, further entrenching xenophobia in European politics. The website of the QCEA campaign was a resource which sought to provide European Parliament's voters with the tools to make informed opinions about migration policy, and to counter anti-migrant hate speech wherever they may encounter it. The #ChooseRespect campaign provided a migration myth-buster, a counter-narrative toolkit, and a [Hate Speech Tracker](#), bringing to light examples of anti-migrant hate speech by candidates and Members of European Parliament. Leng concluded with lessons learnt through the project: that constructive conversations work, and civility matters (even if one-sided); that trusted voices are essential, and that hateful narratives also frequently appeared to be co-ordinated. After this pilot campaign, the QCEA is discussing its next steps in this thematic area.

Finally, Stanka Janković<sup>24</sup> of the Ecumenical Humanitarian Organization (EHO) from Serbia described the work of her non-governmental organization, whose specific situation entails operating as a religious organization in a secular country, as well as being an organization founded by ethnic and religious minority churches in a country with a Serbian Orthodox majority. In their social activism, they also work hard on gaining trust of impoverished local (mainly Muslim) Roma communities, and Janković emphasized the important role of transparency for organizations doing such work. In Serbia, Roma often live in irregular settlements on the outskirts of cities and communities, deeply affected by prejudice by the majority population. Janković presented the years-long experience of the organization in improving living conditions, education (including intercultural education), and community mobilization in Roma settlements. As Roma voices are usually unheard, EHO often brings politicians to Roma settlements to sensitize them to issues of the local communities. The practice of EHO's work proved that activities supporting Roma communities must be intersectional because of the complexity of the issues faced by these communities. According to Janković, this is particularly important as she perceived the hate speech and hate crime against Roma to be increasing.

In the discussion, participants discussed the short-term and long-term wins of the A.M.E. church in addressing intolerance and discrimination at the local and national level. Some questions touched on gender issues and the situation of women from Roma communities, who are discriminated on grounds of both their ethnicity and their gender. Participants also

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<sup>23</sup> See: <<https://www.chooserespect.eu/>>.

<sup>24</sup> Stanka Janković is Project Co-ordinator at the Ecumenical Humanitarian Organization, an inter-church non-governmental organization in Serbia, where she is responsible for education and community mobilization. Ms. Janković is a long-term Roma activist, feminist, member of the Team for Roma Inclusion of the City of Novi Sad, expert on intercultural education, co-author of the book *Roma Women's Biographies*, and pedagogical assistant.

discussed situations where balance needs to be sought between respecting freedom of expression and addressing intolerance and discrimination. A participant also shared a good example of a learning platform on freedom of religion or belief.<sup>25</sup>

## **Wrap-up**

The event closed with main conclusions summarized by Tatjana Perić. Christian communities play an important role in addressing discrimination and hate crimes faced by all communities, and governments have a central role to play in ensuring access to justice for victims of hate crime motivated by anti-Christian bias. This includes identification and recording of hate crimes as such; assessment of the victims' needs; and robust support mechanisms for victims, through governmental or non-governmental institutions. Developing effective responses to counter these crimes is dependent on collecting reliable data. As states, civil society groups and individuals recognize hate crime against Christians and its impacts, increased awareness, reporting by victims, recording by states and civil society monitoring will help reveal the full magnitude of the problem and enable policy-makers to identify the appropriate responses. Additionally, data on anti-Christian hate crime should be recorded in a manner that allows for disaggregation by sex/gender, to show how hate crime affects Christian men and women differently. This quantitative measurement, together with qualitative and mixed indicators, can serve to better understand and address hate crimes, including from a gender perspective. ODIHR welcomes the contributions of religious communities and civil society organizations to its annual Hate Crime Reporting.

WEDNESDAY, 23 OCTOBER 2019

In the introduction to the second day of the expert meeting, Dr. Claudie Fioroni of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) spoke on the connection between freedom of religion or belief and other human rights, and presented the 2017 Beirut Declaration on “Faith for Rights”<sup>26</sup> and the related commitments<sup>27</sup> by faith-based and civil society actors working in the field of human rights. This initiative follows in the footsteps of the Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence,<sup>28</sup> offering recommendations on implementing the prohibition of incitement to hatred in the areas of legislation, jurisprudence and policies.

## **Case studies: Identifying, recording and reporting hate crimes motivated by anti-Christian bias**

In this practical training session, participants heard about the OSCE concept of hate crimes and the impact they have on individuals, communities and societies, with the facilitation by Viktor Kunderák. Effective ways to recognize and report hate crimes using a simple bias indicators checklist were presented, with the focus on potentially contributing to ODIHR’s annual Hate Crime Report. Through several case studies tailored to the needs of the event, participants had the opportunity to make use of the acquired knowledge and collectively solve particular difficulties related to anti-Christian hate crimes. The participants also discussed the obstacles to reporting, recording, investigating and prosecuting anti-Christian hate crimes.

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<sup>25</sup> FORB Learning Platform, <<https://www.forb-learning.org/index.html>>.

<sup>26</sup> <<https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Press/21451/BeirutDeclarationonFaithforRights.pdf>>.

<sup>27</sup> <<https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Press/21451/18CommitmentsonFaithforRights.pdf>>.

<sup>28</sup> <[https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Opinion/SeminarRabat/Rabat\\_draft\\_outcome.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Opinion/SeminarRabat/Rabat_draft_outcome.pdf)>.

## **Optional Consultation on Submitting Data on Hate Incidents Motivated by Anti-Christian and Other Types of Bias to ODIHR**

The consultation with participants on ODIHR's annual Hate Crime Reporting, its process, and the benefit thereof was facilitated by ODIHR's Viktor Kunderák and Tatjana Perić. ODIHR received positive feedback on its reporting work by civil society organizations who already contribute to the reporting process, as well as indications of possible future contributions by organizations who have not been actively involved in the process up to date.

## **ANNEX I: AGENDA**

Tuesday, 22 October 2019

9:00 – 9:30 **Welcome**

Christie Edwards, Deputy Head, Tolerance and Non-Discrimination, ODIHR

### **Keynote Speech**

Professor Ingeborg Gabriel, Personal Representative of the OSCE Chair-in-Office on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination, also focusing on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians and Members of Other Religions

9:30 – 10:15 **Setting the Stage: Introductions and Expectations**

Moderator: Christie Edwards, Deputy Head, Tolerance and Non-Discrimination, ODIHR

10:15 – 10:30 Break

10:30 – 12:00 **Addressing Intolerance and Discrimination: Mapping the Situation in the OSCE Region**

Moderator: Tatjana Perić, Adviser on Combating Racism and Xenophobia, ODIHR

Speakers:

- Viktor Kunderák, Hate Crime Officer, ODIHR
- Dr. Elizabeta Kitanović, Executive Secretary for Human Rights, Conference of European Churches
- Ambassador Jakob Finci, President, Jewish Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Elif Adam, Chairwoman, Dokustelle – Dokumentations- und Beratungsstelle über Islamfeindlichkeit und Anti-muslimischer Rassismus, Austria

12:00 – 13:00 Lunch

13:00 – 14:30 **Manifestations of Intolerance against Christians**

Moderator: Viktor Kunderák, Hate Crime Officer, ODIHR

Speakers:

- Mariam Gvartadze, Director of Strategic Litigation and Legal Aid, Tolerance and Diversity Institute, Georgia
- Dr. Mattia Francesco Ferrero, National Point of Contact on Hate Crime of the Holy See
- Cvijeta Senta, Organization Co-ordinator, Centre for Peace Studies, Croatia

14:30 – 15:00 Break

15:00 – 16:30 **Good Practices in Preventing and Addressing Intolerance and Discrimination**

Moderator: Christie Edwards, Deputy Head, Tolerance and Non-Discrimination, ODIHR

Speakers:

- Reverend Leslye Dwight, Minister of Social Justice, Community of Hope A.M.E. Church, United States (via Skype)
- Martin Leng, Communications Co-ordinator, Quaker Council for European Affairs
- Stanka Janković, Project Co-ordinator, Ecumenical Humanitarian Organization, Serbia

16:30 – 17:00 **Wrap-up**

Tatjana Perić, Adviser on Combating Racism and Xenophobia, ODIHR

Wednesday, 23 October 2019

9:00 – 10:30 **Case Studies: Identifying, Recording and Reporting Hate Crimes Motivated by Anti-Christian Bias**

Viktor Kunderák, Hate Crime Officer, ODIHR

10:30 – 11:00 Break

11:00 – 12:30 **Optional Consultation on Submitting Data on Hate Incidents Motivated by Anti-Christian and Other Types of Bias to ODIHR**

Viktor Kunderák, Hate Crime Officer, ODIHR

Tatjana Perić, Adviser on Combating Racism and Xenophobia, ODIHR

12:30 – 14:00 Lunch, followed by departures

## **ANNEX II: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

### **Elif Adam**

Chairwoman, Dokustelle – Dokumentations- und Beratungsstelle über Islamfeindlichkeit und Anti-muslimischer Rassismus, Austria

### **Reverend Leslye Dwight**

Minister of Social Justice, Community of Hope AME Church, United States

### **Ellen Fantini**

Executive Director, Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians in Europe (OIDAC)

### **Dr. Mattia Francesco Ferrero**

National Point of Contact on Hate Crime of the Holy See, Permanent Mission of the Holy See to the OSCE

### **Dr. Claudie Fioroni**

Associate Human Rights Officer, Anti-Racial Discrimination Section, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

### **Ambassador Jakob Finci**

President, Jewish Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina; Chairman, Inter-Religious Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina; Honorary President, Religions for Peace

### **Professor Ingeborg Gabriel**

Personal Representative of the OSCE Chair-in-Office on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination, also focusing on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians and Members of Other Religions; Professor for Social Ethics, University of Vienna, Austria

### **María García**

President, Observatory for Religious Freedom, Spain

### **Mariam Gvartadze**

Director of Strategic Litigation and Legal Aid, Tolerance and Diversity Institute, Georgia

### **Stanka Janković**

Project Co-ordinator, Ecumenical Humanitarian Organization, Serbia

### **Dr. Elizabeta Kitanović**

Executive Secretary for Human Rights, Conference of European Churches

### **Martin Leng**

Communications Co-ordinator, Quaker Council for European Affairs

### **Chian Yew Lim**

Human Rights Officer, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

### **Şafak Pavey**

Senior Adviser, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

**Cvijeta Senta**

Organization Co-ordinator, Centre for Peace Studies, Croatia

**Xenia Sergazina, PhD**

Expert, SOVA Center for Information and Analysis; Associate Professor, Russian State University for the Humanities, Russian Federation

**Professor Marcela Szymanski**

Editor-in-Chief of the report “Religious Freedom in the World”; Head of EU Office and Advocacy, Aid to the Church in Need International, Pontifical Foundation

**Karina Walinowicz**

Director, Ordo Iuris Center for Religious Freedom, Poland

**OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR):**

**Christie Edwards**

Deputy Head, Tolerance and Non-Discrimination

**Viktor Kunderák**

Hate Crime Officer

**Tatjana Perić**

Adviser on Combating Racism and Xenophobia