

## Good practices regarding police officers

Good practices are an indispensable component of any training programme. Although they are elaborated and proven in specific national contexts, good practices can help the participants understand their impact and consider their practical adjustment in any other situation. While sharing good practices elaborated in other countries, trainers should be able to demonstrate how these practices could be implemented in each specific context.

In the present note, a brief overview of good practices will be presented in particular areas of activity related to hate crime. The note will focus in good practices with regard to police officers in the following domains: 1) Training of police officers; 2) Reporting of hate crimes; 3) Tackling hate crime; 4) Support for victims.

### 1. Training

Good practices regarding a training programme against hate crime for police officers focus on the target group and the trainers. It should be highlighted that different target groups can be chosen depending on the organisation scheme of the police or the approach to be taken in tackling hate crime. If the intersectional approach is to be followed, a good practice would consist in involving officers from all units and not only specialised police units.

**Good practice 1:** All front-line officers and others who come into contact with hate crimes, including dispatch and front desk intake officers, receive training on responding to hate crimes (Sweden: Cross-agency strategies and skill development in responding to hate crimes<sup>1</sup>).

On the other hand, the training could be addressed to police officers willing to be trained as trainers.

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<sup>1</sup> OSCE-ODIHR, Prosecuting Hate Crimes. A practical guide, 2014, p. 86.



**Good practice 2:** ODIHR TAHCLE can be provided through a “training of trainers” methodology, in which local police are trained as instructors, and they then train their colleagues<sup>2</sup>.

As to the profile of the trainers, involvement of civil society or specialised bodies could help police officers get a concrete insight of potentially victimised communities and at the same time enhance the direct cooperation between them.

**Good practice 3:** Depending on the local or the national context, trainers could come either from NGOs or specialised independent authorities and bodies. Competent police trainers from local police authorities are also involved<sup>3</sup>.

## 2. Reporting

Hate crimes are underreported for multiple reasons related to the status of the victim, the perception of the system and the lack of trust in police, or the lack of information on remedies. Many victims prefer to suffer in silence rather than to expose themselves to the prosecution process and to be obliged to be “outed” as LGBTQI persons. Victims are vulnerable and likely to suffer secondary victimisation by the police officers. Undocumented migrants in most cases cannot access police stations in order to report hate crimes as they risk to be subjected to detention and deportation.

The following good practices contribute to the victims' substantive access to police. Most of them depend on the cooperation between the police and the potentially victimised communities or people working with them.

Lack of interpretation constitutes an important obstacle for asylum seekers, migrants and refugees.

**Good practice 1:** Police could create a local directory of interpreters to assist with communication between asylum seekers and police to assist the reporting (England, Wales

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<sup>2</sup> OSCE-ODIHR, Training Against Hate Crimes For Law Enforcement,

<sup>3</sup> FRA, *Fundamental rights-based police training. A manual for police trainers*, Annex 4, Compilation of practices, 2013, p. 27.



and Northern Ireland)<sup>4</sup>.

In some States, including Greece, a hotline is created in order to enable victims to report hate crimes.

**Good practice 2:** In Greece, a countrywide hotline (11414) was established together with an online form for reporting racist crime.

Another good practice consists in providing for a third party in order to assist the victim in reporting the hate crime.

**Good practice 3:** Different schemes of providing support to victims in order to report hate crimes are available. In all cases, it involves the institutionalised co-operation between police and the community or other representative that the victim can trust (see i.e. the Catalonian police protocol against homophobic and transphobic hate violence)<sup>5</sup>. Many police services have introduced liaison officers with specific responsibility for engaging with LGBTIQI community and providing support to victims and witnesses of homophobic crime<sup>6</sup>.

### 3. Tackling hate crime

Compliance with minimum guarantees in tackling hate crime is enhanced with the establishment of a standard operating procedure for police officers. In other words, police officers have at their disposal a standard operating procedure to follow.

**Good practice 1:** In Catalonia, an internal instruction was issued by the Operational Sub-Director of the General Directorate for the Police. Later, it was revised in order to provide police officers with a new protocol. The protocol contains: guidelines for police officers to collect evidence, take care of victims and describe the perpetrators, in order to facilitate the enforcement of the criminal law; guidelines to protect LGBT victims of hate crime; the

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<sup>4</sup> Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), *Hate Crime Good Practice and Practical Guidance Manual*, 2005, p. 73.

<sup>5</sup> ILGA Europe, *Joining forces to combat homophobic and transphobic hate crime. Cooperation between police forces and LGBT organisations in Europe*, 2010, p. 67.

<sup>6</sup> Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), *Hate Crime Good Practice and Practical Guidance Manual*, 2005, p. 87.



obligation to tick the relevant box (on the ground of any discrimination) in the case of a report on LGBT-phobic crime, in order to allow further relevant investigation; a list of all the relevant provisions of the Spanish criminal law, in order to prevent ignorance or lack of care on the part of police officers; acknowledgement of the specificity of LGBT victims and the need to use appropriate language in order not to discriminate against or exclude them, and to deal with the difficulty they may have to report a crime due to privacy concerns; the obligation to submit a copy of the report to the Prosecutor of the Service of Hate and Discrimination Crimes; a direct contact between the Community Relations Offices and the LGBT associations, in order to promote the exchange of information to prevent certain problems<sup>7</sup>.

Some States establish specialised police units or units of prosecutors in order to maximise their expertise (the same solution is often adopted in trafficking, domestic violence or child abuse).

**Good practice 2:** Specialised units are likely to develop good practices that are afterwards disseminated to all units and to increase the visibility of hate crimes (see Greece). Nonetheless, their effectiveness depends on the staff selection processes and their training.

#### **4. Support for victims**

Support services for victims, such as medical and psychological services and/or legal counselling should be established and made available at different stages of the procedure. Police officers should be able to refer victims to support services. Police officers should establish an official co-operation with those services as they could play a determinant role in assisting the victim through the procedure.

**Good practice 1:** Lesbian Group Kontra is a non-governmental organisation advocating elimination of all forms of violence and discrimination against lesbians, bisexual women and discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. Lesbian Group Kontra directly provides psychological and legal help for LGBT victims of hate

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<sup>7</sup> ILGA Europe, *Joining forces to combat homophobic and transphobic hate crime. Cooperation between police forces and LGBT organisations in Europe*, 2010, pp. 69-70.



crimes through a hotline. Lesbian Group Kontra keeps records of all reported cases and follows the cases at all stages, from the first report to the court proceedings<sup>8</sup>.

**Good practice 2:** According to the Merseyside Model, the first officer attending the scene provides the victim of a racist incident with a Victim Pack. The victim pack contains among others: a 'Hotline' number, a useful names and addresses booklet including Victim Support Scheme, Local Authorities, Housing Associations, Citizens Advice Bureau, voluntary services, probation advice, community advice and Asylum Seeker Specialists, clear instructions on how to engage the police, contact details for all hate crime coordinators, a Self-Reporting Form, a Harassment Incident Log and advice in different languages on personal safety and security<sup>9</sup>.

**Good practice 3:** Institutionalisation of co-operation between police units and civil society offers a guarantee against secondary or repeat victimisation of hate crimes victims by police officers. Official participation of specialised police officers and representatives of the Racist Violence Recording Network in a working group established by the General Secretariat of Transparency and Human Rights in Greece is a good practice as it helps all involved parties exchange views and promote a procedure of support for victims pertaining to all stages.

The present note on good practices does not constitute an exhaustive presentation of good practices. It highlights some good practices implemented in Europe and constitutes a brief introduction to examples that have increased the capacity of police officers to respond to hate crimes.

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>9</sup> Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), *Hate Crime Good Practice and Practical Guidance Manual*, 2005, p. 58.

