

Department for Democracy and Public Law, Autonomy and Equality unit

Peer Action against Hate Project

## Decision to appoint the Peer Action against Hate project

### Appointment

Today, on the third of March 2023, the Ministry of Justice has established the Peer Action against Hate project, which aims to improve the effectiveness of addressing racism, discrimination and hate crimes through peer learning with the support of authorities and civil society actors.

On the third of March 2023, the Ministry of Justice launches a two-year project, Peer Action against Hate, funded by the European Commission's Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) programme.

### Term

1 January 2023–31 December 2024

### Background

Hate speech and hate crime are a social problem despite the fact that many measures have been taken to identify, tackle and prevent them, for example in projects coordinated by the Ministry of Justice. In recent years, projects such as Against Hate, Facts Against Hate and Capable (Osaavat) have developed data collection, local cooperation and the expertise of professionals in various fields. Many international bodies monitoring the human rights situation have drawn attention to the increase in hate speech and called on Finland to step up its efforts.

Peer Action against Hate is based on the aforementioned previous projects and continues their strategic work against hate speech and hate crimes. The Capable (Osaavat) project conceptualised a centre of excellence for work against hate crimes. The piloting of the centre of excellence will continue in the Peer Action against Hate project, for example in the form of the establishment of a virtual centre of expertise. Within the Government, the Ministry of Justice is responsible for coordinating the task of promoting equality, and the activities of the Peer Action against Hate project are also linked to this basic task, for example through a mentoring programme between authorities.

The challenges of racism, hate speech and hate crime have also been identified and recognised at the highest level in the European Union, for example in the EU Anti-racism Action Plan 2020–2025. The Peer Action against Hate project supports the national implementation of the EU Anti-racism Action Plan by creating opportunities for national and international peer learning between different operators.

### Objectives

The aim of the project is to strengthen the capacity of the authorities to combat hate and intolerance, to strengthen the role and capacity of civil society in addressing hate crimes, to increase awareness of support mechanisms and reporting channels, to strengthen the capacity of professionals to combat hate and intolerance, to identify the needs of victims of hate crimes, to share experiences of effective means of communication and to improve peer learning and peer support.

### Task

The activities of the project are divided into four work packages. The Ministry of Justice participates in all of them.

**Project activities:**

### **Work package 1: Project coordination and administration**

Responsible parties: Ministry of Justice and Centre for Peace Studies (Zagreb, Croatia)

This work package comprises the project's general coordination and management, including financial monitoring and constant reporting in the Commission's project portal.

Actions:

- Progress report
- Internal evaluation workshops
- Coordination network

### **Work package 2: Peer-to-peer learning programme for public authorities**

Responsible party: Ministry of Justice

The objective of the work package is to share experiences of effective means of communication and to enhance peer learning and peer support, to develop the capacity of the authorities to combat hate and intolerance, and to increase the awareness of the authorities of the materials and tools available.

Actions:

- Mentoring programme and secondments of civil servants
- Virtual transnational peer-to-peer workshops
- Study visit to another EU country
- National round-table

### **Work package 3: Improving communication skills and methods to enhance effectivity**

Responsible party: Setari and Ministry of Justice

The objective of the work package is to share experiences of effective means of communication and to strengthen peer learning and peer support, to strengthen the role of civil society and its opportunities to combat hate and intolerance, and to support the authorities by increasing their knowledge of the materials and tools available.

Actions:

- Setting up a peer-to-peer network of communication experts and network meetings
- Compiling conclusions from strategic communication and creating a virtual centre of expertise
- Identification of development needs
- Creating tools for effective communication
- International virtual round-table discussion on effective communication tools and strategies to tackle different forms of hate crime, harassment and harmful prejudice against different groups

### **Work package 4: Filling the gaps in victim support services**

Responsible parties: Centre for Peace Studies (Zagreb, Croatia) and Ministry of Justice

The objective of the work package is to increase knowledge of support mechanisms and reporting channels, to strengthen the expertise of experts in addressing hate crime and harmful prejudice, to identify the needs of victims of hate crime, and to support the authorities by increasing knowledge of the materials and tools available.

Actions:

- Mapping of victims' needs
- National round-table discussions
- Developing a virtual tool to support victims
- Training courses

### Organisation

The project is coordinated by the Ministry of Justice, and the project partners include the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Setary, the Centre for Peace Studies (Zagreb, Croatia) and the Irish Network Against Racism (INAR).

Representatives of the project partners form the project management team, which is responsible for ensuring the progress of the project as a whole.

The Autonomy and Equality unit of the Ministry of Justice is responsible for general project management and serves in an expert and support role in all work packages.

By temporary commission, Milla Aaltonen has been appointed as the project manager for the Peer Action against Hate project from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2024 to carry out the activities under the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice and to manage the project's administration and overall coordination. Nada Al Omair is substituting for Milla Aaltonen from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023.

Other experts serving in the project:

- Katriina Nousiainen, Senior Specialist, Department for Democracy and Public Law/Autonomy and Equality

### Costs and financing

The budget for the project is EUR 470,513.24.

The project has received funding from the European Commission's Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) programme. The EU contribution to the project is EUR 423 461,90, which accounts for 90% of the total funding of the project. The rest of the project funding is national funding.