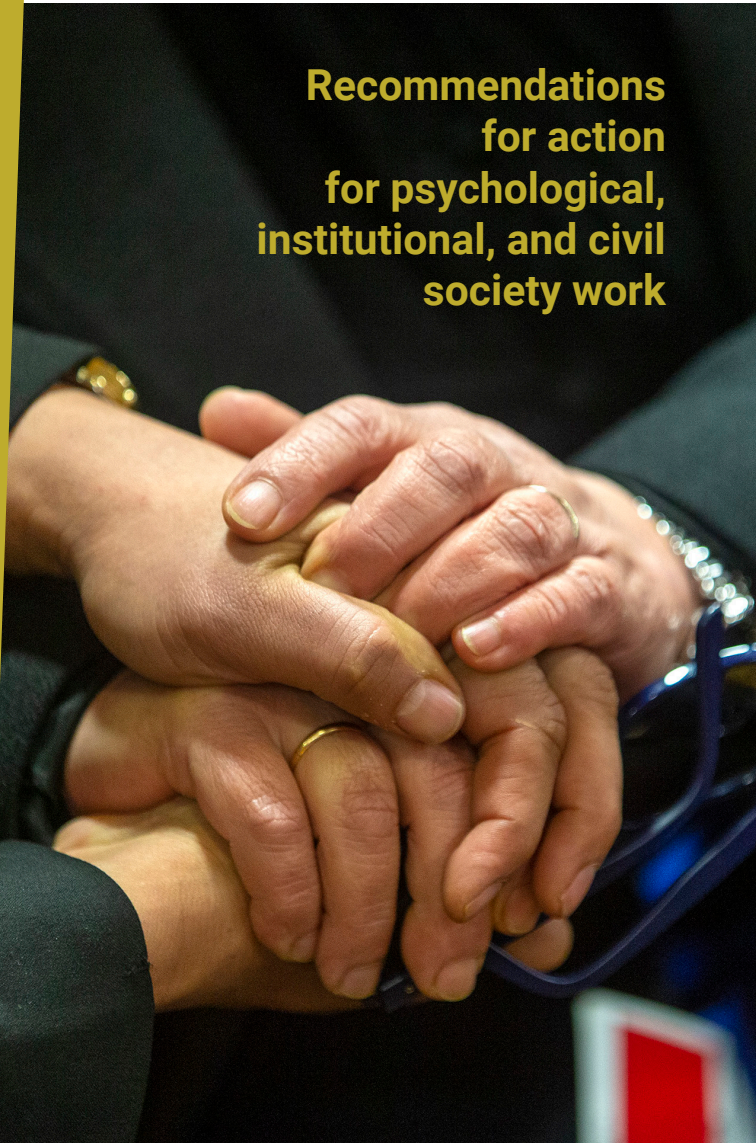


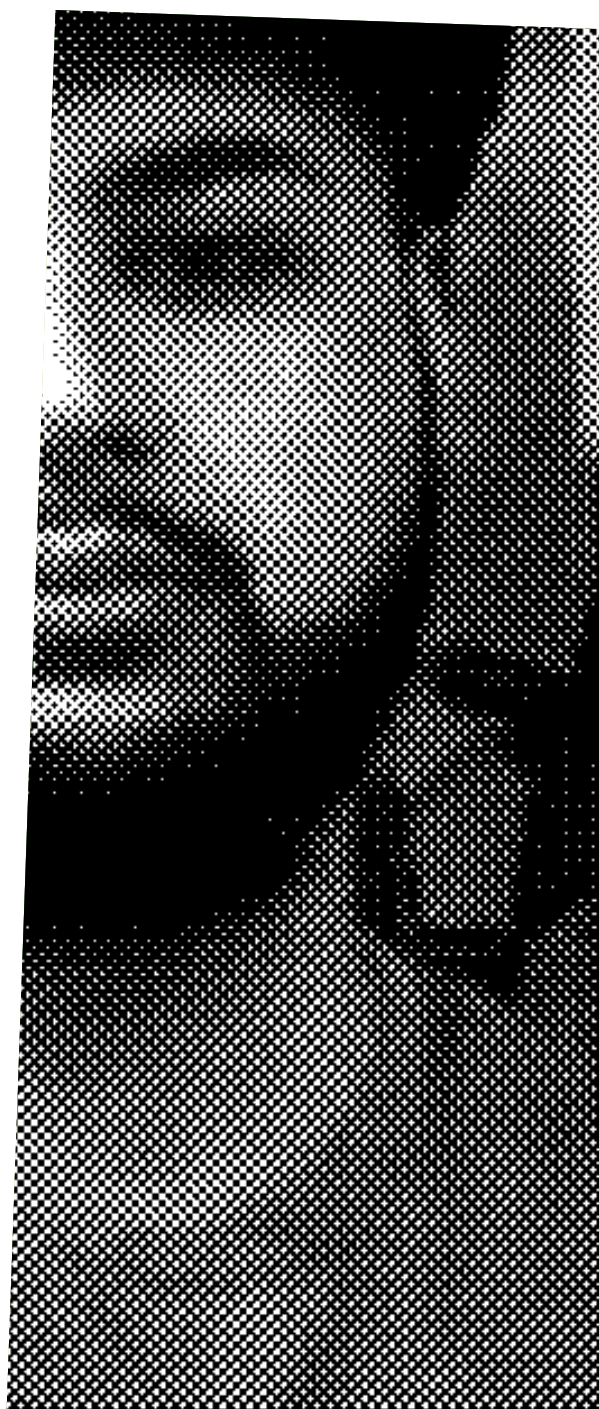
Policy paper for the project
„Strengthening
empathy.
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Initiative e.V.

Preface by
Andreas Zick

Supporting victims of hate crime

Recommendations
for action
for psychological,
institutional, and civil
society work





Supporting victims of hate crime

Recommendations for action for psychological, institutional, and civil society work

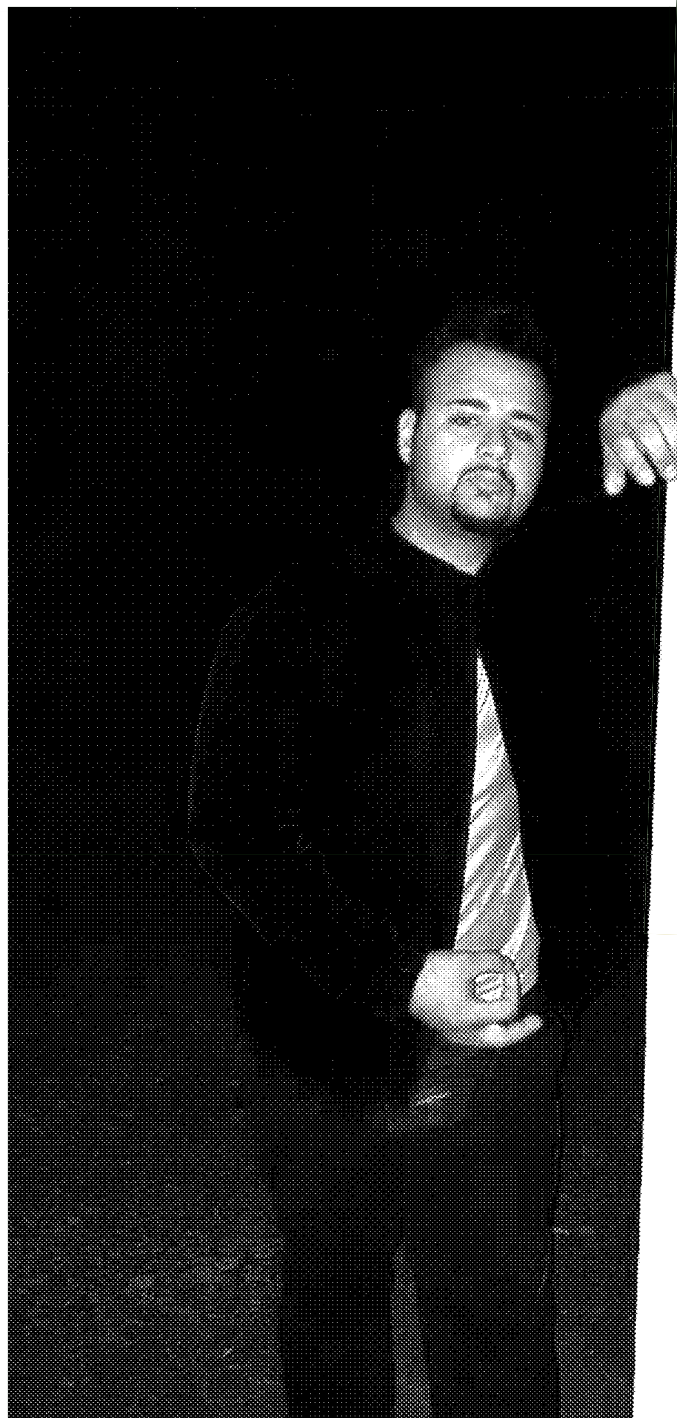
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Preface by Andreas Zick



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Disclaimer

This paper intends to use gender-neutral and inclusive language. Any specific wording is used to be inclusive and respectful. This linguistic choice does not imply discrimination or disadvantage against any group. We respect diversity and strive to make our communications accessible and engaging for all readers. However, if wording is perceived as inappropriate or non-inclusive, this is not intentional. We are open to constructive feedback to continuously improve our language and promote open, respectful communication.

To insist on trying the impossible: giving voice, strength and dignity

Preface by Prof. Dr. Andreas Zick

This policy paper ends with recommendations for action that analyse what civil society in Hanau and elsewhere needs in the wake of hatred, terror, and death. It works out which networks need to be strengthened and how, in order to provide people with protection, strength, a voice, a culture of remembrance and much more in the aftermath of an incomprehensible act of violence. It is an attempt to get a grip on the uncertainty that hatred has created and, at the same time, to strengthen the common space inhabited by the people who live there. This is to make sure that the deceased can be remembered, those who are alive can be safer in their community, and the walls and borders against hatred and violence can be tightened. In my opinion, it is about daring the impossible again and again: To give voice, strength, and dignity back to those who were attacked and degraded, to those who were to be destroyed and expelled, to those who were killed and were to be murdered in the attempt to signal that they do not belong here.

The acts of hatred in recent years, which have reached extreme proportions in Germany, are aimed at silencing people. Many who experience hate have become mute, and death generates not only anger but also an important silence that relatives of victims may need.

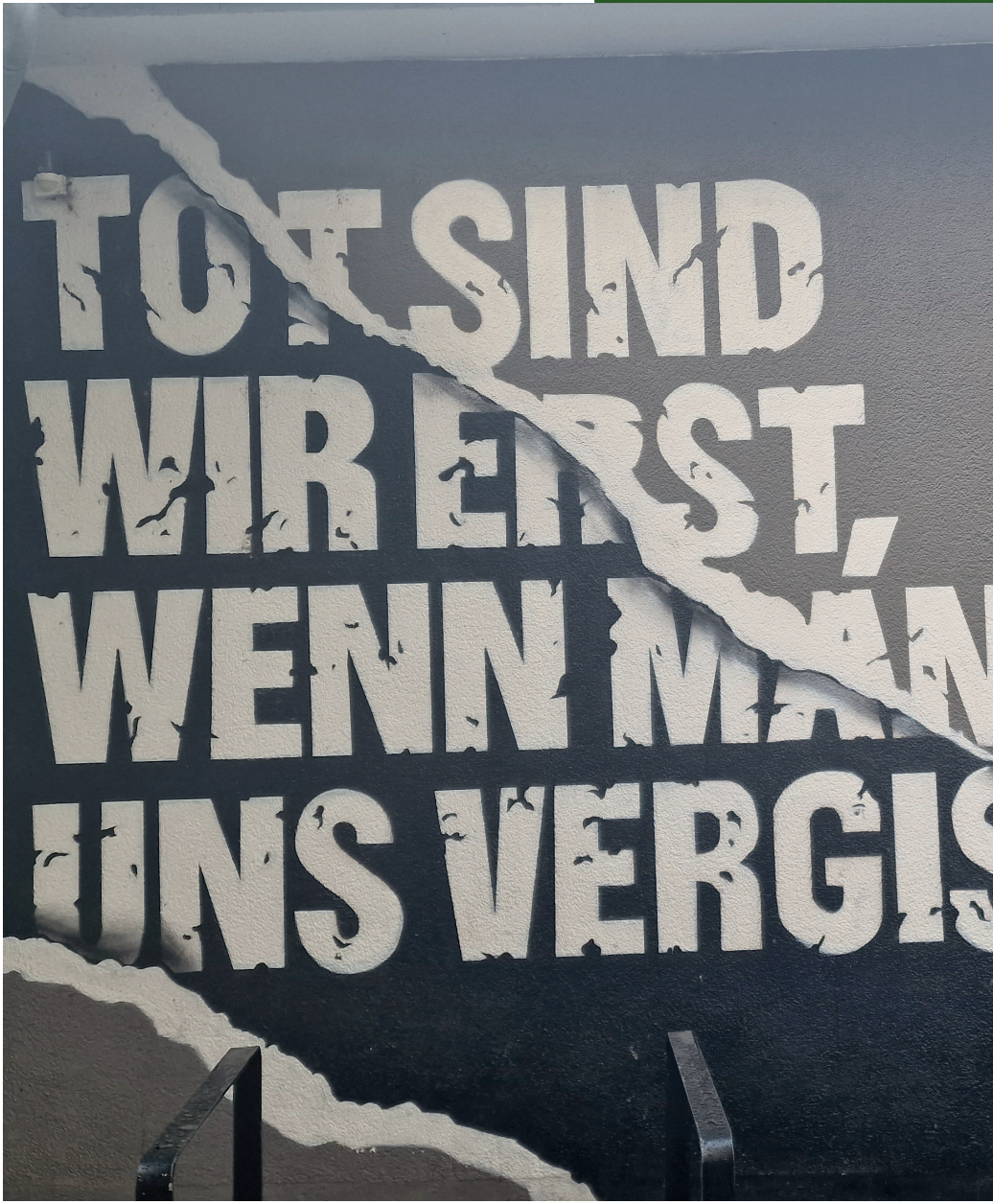
Now, however, it is important to enable and strengthen their voices and give them space. The unfathomable weakening caused by terror and the baffling attribution and labelling of inferiority through misanthropic

prejudice and racism result in the need to strengthen influence, i.e. empowerment. This paper explains challenges and analyses opportunities.

Terror, hatred, racism, and misanthropy aim at destroying the dignity of people. These do not have to establish or create this dignity themselves. It is this fundamental right within our democracy that is threatened along with people themselves. It is therefore perhaps all the more important to restore and guarantee this dignity. And that is not only the task of those whose dignity has been violated and whose voices have been silenced.

It is good and right to analyse the current situation to make precise and accurate recommendations based on evidence and knowledge; perhaps even recommendations that other places, too, need. Before they are read, it is important to consider that these need responsibilities and people in charge and that the diffusion of responsibility is a great danger, which Hanau knows. Promises must be realised because otherwise the uncertainty that remains from terror will be followed by an uncertainty that allows terror to triumph out of ignorance.

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Mural of Ferhat Unvar with his quote „We are only dead, when we are forgotten“ at the entrance of the office of the Educational Initiative Ferhat Unvar e.V.



Serpil Temiz Unvar,
Founder of the Educational Initiative
Ferhat Unvar e.V.

Preface by Serpil Temiz Unvar

„We are only dead when we are forgotten,“ said my son Ferhat. With the Ferhat Unvar Educational Initiative e.V., which was launched nine months after the right-wing terrorist attack in Hanau on 19 February 2020, we struggle not only against forgetting and for dignified remembrance but also for a space where victims of racism and discrimination, especially young people, can feel safer and empowered.

Following the horrific death of these young people, the Educational Initiative was established with the aim of bringing about change and fighting to ensure that no mother or family go through such trauma again. Education is the key to this. The future is anchored in education and tomorrow's society can be reached in today's schools.

Over the past three years, the Educational Initiative has created a network of relatives of victims, active youth, teamers, and experts working in the fields of anti-discrimination, counselling, and education through various offers such as youth meetups, workshops, and seminars as well as nationwide and international networking efforts.

From the very beginning, I wanted to bring many people together. To mark the third anniversary of our foundation, we organised an event as part of the project „Strengthening empathy. Connecting networks.“ We initiated an online meeting with experts from academia, civil society, counselling, education, and representatives

of official institutions. On 1 December 2023, the participants gathered online to discuss needs and gaps in dealing with victims, relatives, and survivors of hate crimes.

Hanau was not an isolated incident. The attack on 19 February, which claimed the lives of nine people, was part of a chain of numerous hate crimes and attacks in the history of the Federal Republic of Germany. In many of these cases, victims and bereaved families did not receive sufficient support, be it institutional, psychological, or civil society support. The burden of investigating and coming to terms with these cases often remains on the shoulders of the relatives, survivors, and bereaved. The gaps in support for those affected were analysed at the expert network meeting. The team from the Ferhat Unvar Educational Initiative summarized the results to produce this policy paper. The aim is to provide institutions, authorities, civil society, and employees in the field of psychosocial work with recommendations to close gaps and avoid mistakes when dealing with victims and survivors.

As the Ferhat Unvar Educational Initiative, we would like to continue to work together in this nationwide network and follow and document the actions of the various actors.

In the future, we would like to intensify this work at the international level. After the attack on 19 February, I searched for other mothers who had experienced similar suffering. I met mothers and families from Greece, Spain, France, Italy, and other countries. Even though we did not have a common language, we still felt connected through our experiences and struggles. It made me realise, once again, the importance of victim-oriented

justice approaches and victim-centred civil society work. We must not ignore those affected - their perspectives must be at the centre if anything is to change.

I would like to thank all the supporters and contributors to this project. My heartfelt thanks go to Reem Alabali-Radovan, Minister of State for Migration, Refugees, and Integration and Federal Government Commissioner for Anti-Racism, for supporting our project „Strengthening Empathy. Connecting networks.“ and to all participants of the project and of the Ferhat Unvar Educational Initiative.

When the Educational Initiative was founded, I always asked those who wanted to be part of it: „Will you join?“ Since then, many people have joined our endeavour and we have learned and achieved a lot. Now the question is: „Will all of you join, too?“

Participant of the Educational Initiative Ferhat Unvar e.V. during a Workshop



1. Introduction

In addition to political education, raising awareness of the perspectives of victims of hate crimes is a focus of the work of the Ferhat Unvar Educational Initiative. In our work in recent years, it has become clear that it is more difficult to be heard and to realise goals - such as conducting appropriate remembrance work or rendering the needs of survivors of victims of hate crime visible - as a lone campaigner. Strong networks and alliances are needed to bring about change in society. One challenge is to bring victims of hate crimes, civil society organisations that advocate for the needs of these victims, and policymakers together. Nationwide and international networks that regularly discuss the concerns of these three target groups are needed.

The aim of the project „Strengthening empathy. Connecting networks.“ was to assemble such a network, which not only consists of victims of discrimination and hate crimes, but also includes civil society organisations, local and national politicians, and supporters of the Ferhat Unvar Educational Initiative, who, for various reasons, usually work separately from each other.

Through its work in recent years, the Educational Initiative established and maintained intensive contact with relevant actors from the fields of anti-discrimination, victim support, racism and extremism research, and politics. As part of this project, some of these experts

came together to jointly identify gaps and challenges in anti-discrimination work and support for victims (relatives or survivors of terrorist violence and other hate crimes, including right-wing extremism). From these discussions, we derived needs for action and demands.

Through a closer cooperation of this dynamic, nationwide network, which met online for the first time on 1 December 2023, we aim to secure and transfer knowledge, tools and other resources that will enable members of the network and their multipliers to make the results of the project applicable nationwide. This policy paper is the first result of this collaboration. Chapters 2 and 3 contain the results of the needs assessment and the working groups at the expert network meeting. These were used to formulate the joint recommendations for action summarised in Chapter 4.

HAWAII

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UNRELLIANT



2. Preliminary needs assessment and general analysis

The explosive nature of hate crime is demonstrated not only by statistics - 2093 right-wing attacks in 2022 (VBRG, 2023) - but also by reports from actors who face various difficulties in the fight against discrimination. The exchange in the nationwide network aimed to bring together these experiences and expertise. The exchange intended to focus on discussing challenging aspects of working with victims of hate crimes. From the start, the Ferhat Unvar Educational Initiative has been able to assess possible needs in the everyday realities related to supporting victims of hate crime by establishing a nationwide network of relevant actors in an initially loose exchange through discussions, meetings, and joint events.

Based on these initial processes, the project team of the Educational Initiative identified three areas of work ahead of the nationwide expert network meeting to be observed and evaluated with particular attention to their impact in supporting and cooperating with those affected by hate crime:

- Psychosocial support for victims of hate crime
- Failure at the institutional level and approaches for a victim-centred justice system
- Raising awareness through victims' initiatives and civil society organisations

Experts and activists from our network were invited to take part in the expert network meeting on the respective topics.

An online survey was conducted in advance based on the insights gained from the close dialogue within the network to conduct an initial analysis of needs and prepare for the expert network meeting. Concerning the above-mentioned working groups, questions were asked about the challenges faced by the stakeholders. The participants were also asked about improvement needs. Finally, wishes and suggestions for the emerging network were collected.

In general, the survey identified the divergence between the political, i.e., legislative, and executive levels as a difficulty in this area.

This is due, among other things, to a lack of awareness about racism in institutions (e.g. schools, citizens' offices, housing, and youth welfare offices).

Access to more financial resources was emphasised as another urgent and essential need. These are necessary to enable further training measures, stabilise support structures and redistribute responsibilities among people working in fields related to anti-discrimination and supporting victims of hate crime.

Furthermore, there is a lack of accessible, low-threshold opportunities to establish and maintain meaningful contact with relevant stakeholders.

The desire for a jointly constructed and structured network of politically committed people with financial and human resources is therefore very clear. The interviewees emphasised their expectation towards



institutions and local authorities concerning an improved infrastructure and unbureaucratic, fast ways of providing support. These supporting municipalities and institutions should in turn receive support from the institutional levels above them.

Clarity, transparency, and a multi-perspective approach that is characterised by an intersectional perspective are particularly important for such a jointly structured network. This means that the interplay of several forms of discrimination, for example, racism, ableism, sexism, queerphobia or antisemitism, need to be included in the network's work.

As far as communication channels and the sustainability of collaboration in the network are concerned, it is of fundamental importance to organise these in a low-threshold and digital form, e.g. with a mailing list or a regular newsletter that provides information about the network's work.

The requirements naturally vary in the three different areas of work and impact formulated at the beginning:

Psychosocial support for victims of hate crime

There are already many contact points and actors in this area who have gained expertise in counselling and psychosocial support for victims of hate crime. The perception of the quantity of these contact points and actors is generally assessed differently by those affected. The utilisation of such contact points is not always satisfactory. Accessibility and provision in rural areas

in particular are seen as inadequate. It is perceived as rather difficult to accessibly identify contact points and counselling services. Projects such as the „Community-based Counselling” initiative led by the German Federal Government Commissioner for Anti-Racism have already made some improvements in this respect. However, visibility and awareness of the available counselling centres need to be increased. Young people who are considered “digital natives” are at an advantage, as they often find it easier to navigate online and thus locate services more smoothly.

It was considered helpful to improve the visibility of contact centres by increasing their public presence and expanding them nationwide. In addition, there is a need for funded low-threshold offers for victims who do not have advanced German language skills

Dealing with failure at institutional level and approaches for a victim-centred justice system

At an institutional level, there is a strong need for reflection on and confrontation of internal discriminatory structures. The practices and working methods of employees within various institutions need to be scrutinised for discriminatory attitudes and practices.

At the same time, the institutions, offices, and other executive bodies require greater financial and social support.

The legal framework for institutional support for victims of hate crime serves to protect victims. These support structures need to be comprehensively

expanded so that, for example, the options for action regarding the evaluation of the nature of crimes can be better implemented.

In this context, the approach of victim-oriented justice, which emphasises partiality in favour of potential victims, plays a major role.

Raising awareness through victims' initiatives and civil society organisations

Stakeholder initiatives and civil society organisations are strongly represented in the network, not least because the Ferhat Unvar Educational Initiative operates in this field.

However, the services, programmes and projects in this area are not sufficient. Short project timeframes make it difficult to provide sustainable support for victims and to establish a permanent and effective network of actors. Many victims' initiatives were funded on a large scale for the first time by the German Federal Government's Anti-Racism Commissioner. These projects need to be stabilised via permanent funding.

To summarise, the needs and aspects that require expansion and improvement, as well as the current conditions under which stakeholders carry out their important work, must be treated as urgent. There is an acute need for action.

Based on this analysis, the further expansion and strengthening of networks are a central concern of the

project team. Regular dialogue and joint activities can be useful steps in the development of continuous and sustainable networks.

Furthermore, this work can increase awareness about hate crime and promote multi-perspective views, awareness, and efforts for prevention.

Important participants in this work are victims and the organisations representing them. These can also be people who suffer multiple layers of discrimination, such as women and people from the queer community affected by racism and antisemitism, disabled people's associations, minority communities, unemployed people's associations, workers, refugees, and migrants. However, people who are not affected by discrimination should also be held accountable and take responsibility.

3. Results from the working groups

At the expert network meeting, needs, gaps, and proposed solutions in the three areas - psychosocial support, the role of institutions, and civil society - were discussed in more detail in working groups. The following sections summarise the most important points of the exchange in the working groups.



3.1 Psychosocial support for victims of hate crime

„Ben oradaki çocukların hepsini tanıyordum. Hiç biri işsiz güçsüz değildi“ [„I knew all those young people, who were there. None of them were unemployed.“], said Serpil Temiz Unvar, mother of Ferhat Unvar, who was killed in Hanau, after the attack on 19 February 2020, in front of the cameras. This statement reflects that people, especially people with migration backgrounds, feel that they are allowed to live (or survive) here only if their existence is linked to some form of work performance. A few days after the attack, one part of society in Germany celebrated carnival, while another part was in deep mourning. These reactions show how the ‘grief of others’ can be made invisible - especially the grief that arises after racist attacks and hate crimes. The othering and silencing of the voices and feelings of marginalised people in society also exist in the context of racially motivated hate crimes in Germany.

An important area of work for the Ferhat Unvar Educational Initiative e.V. is raising awareness of the perspective of victims of racism, discrimination and hate crimes. The following section works out the needs of those affected and suggestions for psychosocial and therapeutic work. At the same time, it summarises the results of the working group from the expert network meeting on 1 December 2023.

According to the definition by the Federal Ministry of the Interior and for Home Affairs (BMI), hate crimes are “criminal offences that are motivated by group-related prejudices” (BMI/BKA, 2022, 9). According to the concept of group-related misanthropy (GMF),

group-related prejudices have an ideology of inequality at their core. “The more strongly a prejudice against one group is agreed with, the higher the probability of devaluing other groups as well; the devaluation and assertion of inequality are syndromic” (Zick, Berghan, Mokros, 2019, 69). In other words: prejudice rarely comes alone. The prejudice-based motivation for hate crime is also the decisive point for categorising it as such. According to a recent report by the German Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency (ADS) and a joint statement by the Federal Commissioner for Anti-Discrimination and Minority Rights and the Federal Victims’ Commissioner in September 2023, there has been an increase in hate crime in Germany, which is being observed with concern at many levels (ADS, 2023). According to the German Federal Ministry of the Interior, this is an increase of 116.33% in the area of hate crime compared to 2020 and 2021 (BMI/ BKA, 2022, 9). It can also be observed that organised right-wing extremism is on the rise in Germany and that Germany has “the highest number of right-wing extremist attacks in absolute terms” compared to other European countries (Zick & Mokros, 2023, 55). Right-wing extremism produces terrorist cells with inhuman and “ethno-nationalist ideology” (ibid.). The perpetrators in “Hanau (19 February 2020) and many others used this to legitimise their actions” (ibid.). The statistics on hate crime “are serious overall”, attests the Expert Commission on Integration Capability (FKI, 2020, 68).

At the expert network meeting on 1 December 2023, gaps in psychosocial support for victims of hate crimes and concrete steps that could be relevant for support were discussed. This provided initial indications for further needs analyses and scientific studies in the field of psychological racism research. The following figure

provides an excerpt of the responses (see Figure 1). Certainly, the contributions mentioned are not complete with regard to the needs of those affected. However, these contributions provide an important initial insight into possible fields of action and perspectives that are considered relevant in psychosocial work.

pflichtangebote an schule
beratungsstellen bekannte
networking hilfe telefon
niedrigschwellige angebo
flächendeckend beratung
mehr öffentlichkeit
präsenz jugendeinrichtung
anlaufstellen an schulen
aufsuchende angebote
polit gemeinwesenarbeit

Responses of the participants to the question of concrete steps towards support for victims of hate crime

As a participating state in the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Germany has committed itself to “taking measures to combat hate crimes” (OSCE/ODIHR, 2021, 4) with “Decision No. 9/09 Combating Hate Crimes” and “Decision No.13/06 Combating Intolerance and Discrimination and Promoting Mutual Respect and Understanding” (OSCE/ODIHR, 2006 and 2009). The OSCE is an organisation that serves as a “system of collective security” (BdV, 2023). Within this framework, the participating states have agreed to “protect hate crime victims, encourage reporting, provide hate crime victims with effective access to justice and assistance, support organizations assisting victims and build the capacity of law enforcement to interact with victims of hate crimes” (OSCE/ODIHR, 2021, 4). At this point, Germany’s responsibility

as a participating state must also be recalled, with an urgent appeal to protect and support victims of hate crimes. The current situation of them in Germany is very precarious. The experiences of many relatives, but also those affected by the attack in Hanau, should be noted here. “I didn’t receive any psychotherapeutic support,” said Serpil Temiz Unvar when asked whether she was supported by a professional psychotherapist.

Immediately after the attack in Hanau, young people in Hanau were asked by tabloid media in front of running cameras: “What happened?”, “What did you experience and see?” It was clear that the victims were still in a state of great shock and certainly did not need a social media display of themselves and their experiences, but a professional setting with specialised staff - a place and space with safety, protection, and trust. In addition to the physiological consequences, the most significant effects of hate crimes on victims “is post-victimization socio-emotional and psychological distress” (OSCE/ODIHR, 2021, 12). It should be noted that “the need for emotional and psychosocial support is the broadest need of many hate crime victims” (OSCE/ODIHR, 2021, 21). Victims (including those affected by the attacks in Hanau) report sleep, concentration, and memory disorders. “I have to remember what my name is (...). Sometimes you confuse the numbers, or your sight becomes blurred (...). You live in a kind of trance - all because of insomnia.” This is how Çetin Gültekin, the brother of Gökhan Gültekin, who was murdered in Hanau, describes his current state in the ZDF documentary film trilogy (Vogel, 2023). It should be noted that some of those affected may need special (trauma therapy) and continuing psychosocial support “to help them deal with the lasting impact and consequences of the crime” (OSCE/ODIHR, 2021, 21). This

may include short-term and long-term psychological counselling in an individual or group setting - for psychosocial stabilisation, for practising relaxation measures (progressive muscle relaxation according to Jacobson), to improve regeneration, and to alleviate physiological and psychological symptoms.

The need for a victim-centred approach is central to comprehensive psychosocial support when working with victims of hate crime. This approach focuses on the perspective and needs of the people affected by discrimination, hatred, racism, and violence. The victim-centred approach is “based on an individualized approach to each hate crime victim that takes into account the nuances of intersectionality” (OSCE/ODIHR, 2021, 6). Intersectionality is understood as “context-specific, object-related and social practice-based interactions of inequality-generating social structures (i.e. of power relations), symbolic representation and identity constructions” (Winker & Degele, 2010, 15). Intersectionality thus describes the interaction and overlapping of, for example, sexism, racism, and classism. To describe intersectionality, Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) often uses a crossroads to illustrate the interaction of different forms of discrimination. Various lines of difference, or even group affiliations, interact with and create new, intersectional discrimination.

An intersectional perspective is important in victim-centred work because the impact of hate crimes can affect and shake up many areas of the lives of those affected (work, mental and physical health, place and conditions

of residence, etc.) in different ways. One example of this is the everyday stressor that those affected and their relatives in Hanau must experience daily - they live in the same neighbourhood as the perpetrator's father. The harassment of those affected in Hanau (for example through letters from the perpetrator's father) creates a stressful environment that makes it even more difficult to come to terms with the situation. Even more serious: the creation and establishment of safe spaces as part of the phase of processing the events are acutely jeopardised by racist microaggressions.

The following recommendations for action for psycho-social work with victims have emerged from the analysis so far:

Visibility of support services: victims of hate crime should not have to meticulously search for help in an emergency; rather the support system (especially the emergency system) should function in such a way that these offers are made visible and accessible to victims (for example, through the presence and provision of information in diversity-sensitive language).

Proactive support services: Hotlines set up by state structures following hate crimes are only of limited help since they are not offered proactively. Victims often do not know who they are calling ("Who is behind this phone number?") and, following a loss of trust in state and institutional structures, the use of hotlines is not guaranteed. Proactive support services with clear visibility and low-barrier access (e.g. on a linguistic, geographical, or cultural level), such as the „Community-based counselling against racism“ project run by the German

Federal Government's Anti-Racism Commissioner, need to be expanded.

Online counselling system: An online counselling system (for example in the form of apps or as an anonymous chat option), particularly for adolescent victims, could be tested and evaluated.

Racism sensitisation in psychological work: Psychological research classifies racism as an enormous stressor that can have a significant impact on mental health (Clark et al., 1999; Sue et al., 2007). The training of psychologists and psychotherapists in racism sensitisation in teaching, training and further education is therefore essential.

Pool of psychotherapists trained in racism sensitisation: Referral to psychotherapists with racism-sensitive training is essential, especially in cases of traumatic symptoms or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Permanently secure funding for the psychosocial care of those affected: Permanent and uninterrupted funding of psychosocial care for work with affected persons must be urgently established, as interruptions and fragmented work can have a negative impact on those affected.

Establishment of self-help groups: The social cure approach confirms the positive effects of community and meaningful group membership (Finn et al., 2023). The so-called social cure effects could be strengthened in self-help groups for victims of hate crimes. To this end, the nationwide expansion of (multilingual and diversity-sensitive) self-help groups could be promoted.

Solidarity remembrance work, especially in schools and educational institutions: Schools and educational institutions could focus more on solidarity remembrance

work and campaigns, e.g. during the „International Weeks against Racism“, and organise related events for different levels and grades.

School psychological and educational support for school-age children affected by racism: Psychosocial care for those affected by hate crimes must also focus more on those of school age. Children and young people are a particularly vulnerable group in this context. Studies show that the experience of racism also has negative consequences for children's mental health (Pachter & Coll, 2009).

Summary

At the end, Serpil Temiz Unvar appeals to everyone: „Benim çocuğum lütfen boşuna ölmesin. Öbür gençler için sizden gerçekten yardım istiyorum.“ [„Please don't let my son die in vain. I really ask you for help for the other young people.“]. In a public letter to former German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Serpil Temiz Unvar called for the names of the people murdered in Hanau not to be forgotten. „The names must be learned in school and be visible on the streets.“ It is an appeal by a relative and a victim - to the structures as well as to the centre of society and all structural-institutional apparatuses.

Text: Zeynep Demir

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Her research focuses on migration, discrimination, and racism.



3.2 Dealing with failure at the institutional level and approaches for victim-oriented justice

Saving a person's life, protecting survivors, and preserving human dignity are always more important than being able to reconstruct the course of crime events. The demand for this seemingly self-evident premise, which was repeatedly voiced in the work with the network of experts, clearly articulates criticism of the authorities' prioritisation tendencies. Above all, the deeply rooted structures within authorities, which are characterised by prejudice, are cited as the reason for institutional failure. There is a great need to critically scrutinise internal discriminatory processes and attitudes.

From the exchange in the second working group, it emerged that failure at an institutional level, is also an international problem. This finding supports the view that failure is a structural and not merely a local or isolated problem, as the investigation of the NSU (National Socialist Underground) has also shown.

It therefore comes as no surprise that the recently published final report of the Committee of Enquiry for the Hanau case negates any failure on the part of the authorities before, during and after the night of the crime on February 19, 2020, once again letting victims down. Serpil Temiz Unvar responds with the demand to continue fighting together and never forget. In her

statement on the report, the mother of Ferhat Unvar said that it is shocking that people are losing their lives due to „systematic and thus far uncorrected mistakes“ and that no consequences are being drawn. Nothing is given for free; we must continue to fight for education.

The statement underlines what was also clearly stated by the group of experts: without initiative from the civic population, hardly any processes are initiated, and failures by authorities are not investigated.

The question remains as to what options remain for civic population. Stringent monitoring of hate crimes existstosomeextent, but as with the enquiry committees, the question of consequences remains unanswered. The civilian response to the attack in Hanau has at least been able to show that by focusing on those affected, a victim-oriented direction can be taken, whereas in the past the focus had been put on the perpetrators instead. Nevertheless, it remains the case that discriminatory structures are deeply rooted in authorities and only reflect social changes with a time lag. This poses a challenge, as it takes far-reaching and lengthy processes before anything changes in public authorities. Looking at the history of the Federal Republic of Germany, it is not surprising that racist thought patterns have been able to establish themselves and become entrenched in parts of certain authorities over decades. As a result, there is a high internal need for financial and social support for authorities and individual offices to enable them to come to terms with the past through sensitisation, reflection, and further training. These processes must be supported externally, as police complaints centres, for example, can hardly investigate themselves.

However, the fact that institutional and official failures are rarely analysed by the state means that the responsibility remains with the civilian population and the bereaved. However, the latter in particular need a safer space in which they can receive psychosocial support and from which they can act on their initiative if they wish. As the inherent official structures do not make this possible, there is a high demand on organisations, institutions and associations that fight for a victim-oriented justice system. As the name suggests, the focus of victim-oriented justice must be the victims. Until this is achieved at the official level, civil society must attempt to facilitate complaint processes for relatives, the bereaved and survivors and to counteract potentially re-traumatising experiences. In this way, a safer space is to be created that can offer an institutionally supported interface between victims and the authorities.

Racist, anti-queer, ableist, misogynistic, antisemitic and many other inhumane ideologies are handed down and socialised in many areas. There are vehement calls for targeted training courses to raise awareness. Although there are internal efforts to reappraise structures, these can hardly be implemented across the board and can be described as a “fig leaf” – because changing structures requires a lot of resources. In addition to time and financial resources, the expert group also mentioned the factor of dependency on and within authorities. Public authority structures are bound by hierarchies and legislative periods that make bottom-up demands almost impossible. One very challenging option could be to start around education and thus create a broader awareness.

The alarming amount of 2093 politically motivated right-wing attacks in 2022 (only in eastern Germany, Baden-Württemberg, Berlin, Hamburg, North Rhine-Westphalia, and Schleswig-Holstein) (VBRG, 2023) shows the urgency of a victim-oriented justice system to provide victims with the support they need in safer spaces, while civil society deals with powerlessness and contradictions and opportunities for action can be expanded at the same time.

Given the structurally anchored power relations that contribute to this violence, the question of transformative justice should also be at the forefront. This means that justice may not be something that simply needs to be „restored“, but that the structures within which hate crimes and violence occur are not safe and just in the first place. Discriminatory and racist structures need to be addressed and overturned. Only through transformation, i.e. fundamental change, can lasting justice be established and violence averted. Civil society actors and activists have a special role to play here.



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3.3 The role of victims' initiatives and civil society organisations

Civil society is active in various fields of anti-discrimination work and work for and with victims of hate crimes. This includes prevention, education, counselling, awareness-raising, and remembrance work. The needs assessment in our project also focused on the challenges civil society faces in supporting victims and people affected by discrimination. At the expert network meeting, the third working group discussed problems and gaps in civil society and exchanged suggestions for solutions. As a result of the discussion, it was assessed that obstacles in civil society work often have structural causes that require structural solutions.

A vibrant democracy needs a strong civil society and thrives on structures that stand up for justice and against hatred, violence, and discrimination. Civil society actors can only work effectively and sustainably if they are safely, adequately, and reliably funded and supported. At the nationwide exchange, the fact that many associations and organisations are forced to work on project bases was frequently raised as a problem in this context. This often results in several challenges.

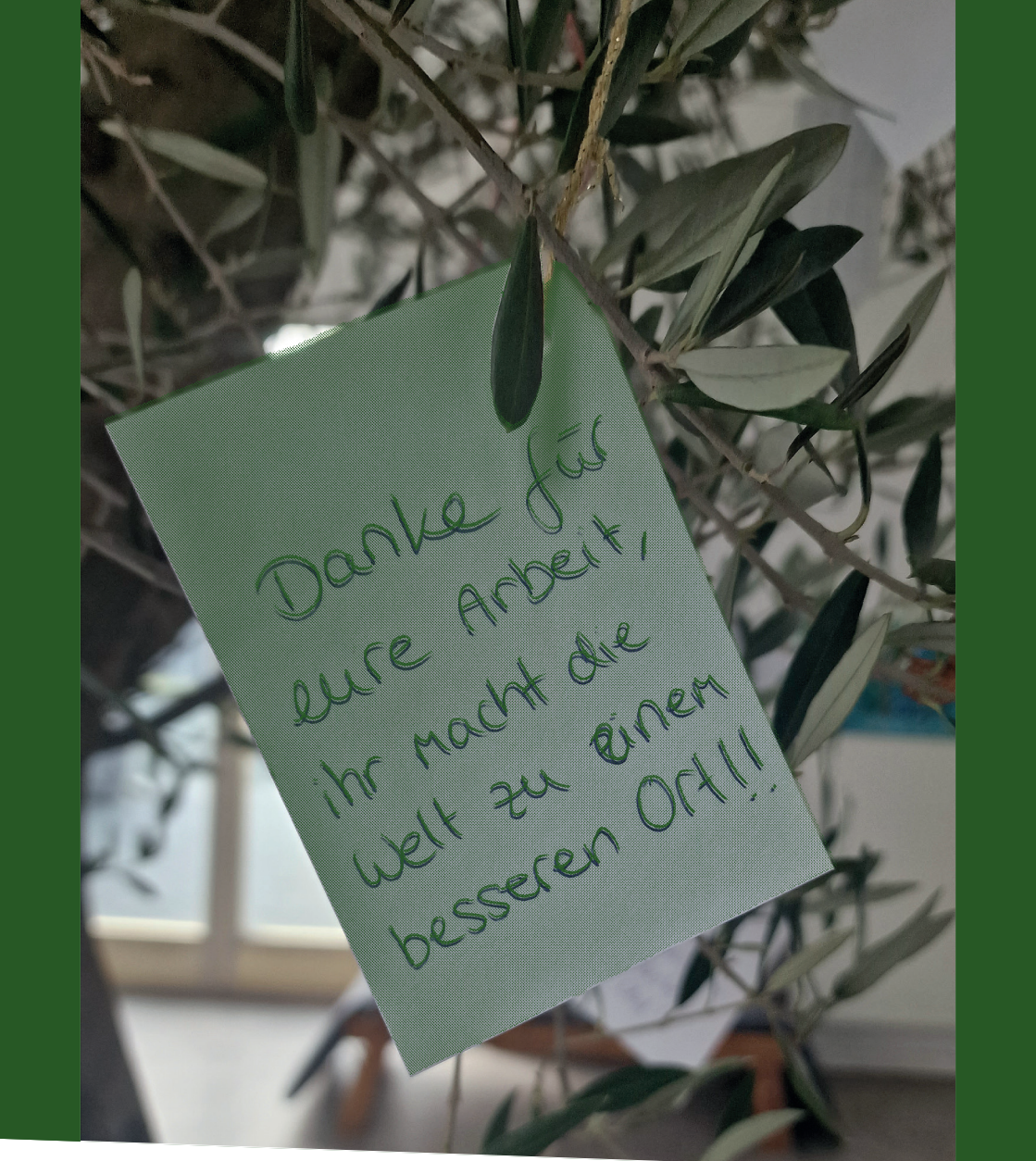
Due to limited project durations, there is a high fluctuation of employees, who often work under precarious conditions. This results in a loss of valuable knowledge and experience and makes it difficult to consolidate projects and activities - whether in the field of education, prevention work or counselling. This often results in selective offers, which are important and can be very effective, but cannot develop into permanent processes.

Among other things, this harbours the risk that those affected cannot be supported, advised, and cared for in the long term, but are instead only provided with „fire-fighting“ measures and short-term services on a provisional basis.

Whether in raising awareness through political education, counselling or empowerment or prevention work - working with victims requires continuity and trust. When dealing with those affected, victims and survivors, but also in prevention and awareness-raising work, constantly changing structures are not conducive. For civil society to respond to their needs and perspectives and thus further develop professional expertise, more planning security, but also time and resources are needed. A lot of these are lost in the project-based work of civil society where they are used for the time-consuming acquisition of and application for funding.

However, not only concepts and projects that have been developed, but also alliances and networks that have been created run the risk of disintegrating as a result of these working conditions. Frequent changes in staff prevent stable, long-term networks from forming and developing. Especially the areas mentioned in this paper - psycho-social support, institutional actors, and civil society - should work more closely together in the work with and for victims. The high fluctuation, and the temporary, project-based, and precarious work of employees in the civil society sector pose an obstacle.

A civil society that is permanently and reliably funded could provide more appropriate support to victims and



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better influence decisions and processes at a political and institutional level. At the end of 2023, when this policy paper was being written, many civil society initiatives were shaken by the news that the German Federal Government would not be determining a budget for 2024. Many victim counselling and contact points and initiatives that campaign against violence and discrimination had to reckon with even more uncertainty and, in the worst case, a loss of urgently needed funding. Currently, there is also no prospect for the German Democracy Promotion Act, which was announced in 2023 and promises to secure civil society projects in the long term, to be implemented.

The repeated calls from civil society to implement the Democracy Promotion Act and thus take a first step towards ensuring the long-term sustainability of projects in areas such as anti-discrimination and victim counselling should be supported. This will not only ensure that those affected receive long-term support, but also that their perspectives and needs are heard and addressed in civil society work. It could also facilitate the establishment of networks and cooperation between actors from different areas.

It is mainly civil society, including victims and survivors, that has carried out remembrance and awareness-raising work in Germany in recent decades. They must receive sufficient and, above all, long-term support, and resources to counteract violence and hate crimes.

Finally, it should be mentioned that a large part of civil society work takes place outside of funded projects and is carried out by activists, not in the context of their paid work, but in addition to their main jobs. However, these could also be relieved by the permanence of networks and support structures for victims. Ultimately, society

as a whole benefits from a strong, organised network of initiatives and individuals who campaign against discrimination and violence and fight for dignified remembrance of the victims of hate crimes.

4. Recommendations for action and conclusion

This policy paper brings together perspectives and inputs from the psychosocial, institutional, and civil society sectors. Many of the recommended implementation strategies have emerged from the dialogue between the working groups and overlap.

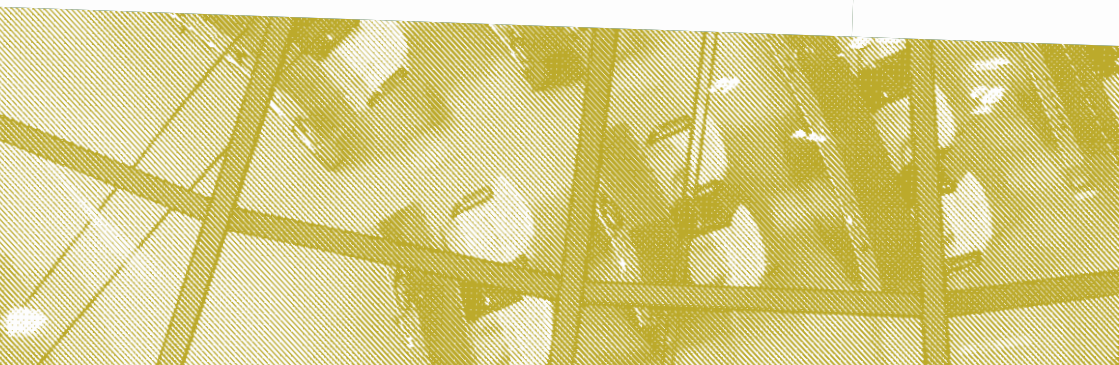
The following list shall provide an overview of the recommendations for action formulated in this policy paper for dealing with and working with victims of hate crimes that have emerged across all topics as part of the needs assessment.

1. The provision and expansion of visible, low-barrier and diversity-sensitive services must ensure better access to the support and counselling system for victims. For those of school age and young people, school psychological support options or online services should be visibly available and offered proactively.
2. Sensitisation to the psychological effects of racism and other forms of discrimination must be an integral part of basic and further training in educational, psychological, and psychotherapeutic work. Especially in the immediate aftermath of violent crimes, in the case of traumatic symptoms or post-traumatic stress disorder, those affected by hate crimes should have access to psychotherapeutic professionals who have been trained in dealing with racism.

3. Whether in victim counselling centres, psychological work, educational work or prevention work, there is a need for permanently secured funding for services that serve to support victims. Fragmented work characterised by interruptions and fluctuation, which cannot create a sustainable support structure, can harm victims.
4. A society of peaceful, respectful, and democratic coexistence needs a strong civil society that can use all its potential in areas such as anti-discrimination, education, remembrance culture, violence prevention and counselling. Sustainable support for democratic projects, programmes and activities must be guaranteed. This includes the availability of funds, resources and specialised staff who are not employed on a precarious and temporary basis, but in secure employment relationships. In this way, permanent services to support victims and the expansion of a long-term organised democratic network that campaigns against hate and violence can be secured. A well-connected and organised civil society can and should contribute to ensuring that the perspective of victims is at the centre of all areas. Nevertheless, those who are not affected must also be held accountable and take responsibility.
5. Remembrance work in the spirit of solidarity, one that is orientated towards the needs and wishes of victims, is needed. Dignified remembrance of victims of right-wing hate crimes in public spaces, for example in schools, should be made possible without obstacles.

6. Considering that violence and hate crimes are also rooted in discriminatory social structures, the focus must not only be on individuals. Structurally anchored power relations should be scrutinised and overturned as a whole. This includes addressing misanthropic and discriminatory ideologies within institutions (e.g. in the police) and monitoring institutional failures in cases of hate crime.

These recommendations and strategies for action emerged from the overall assessment of the results of the individual areas, i.e. psychosocial support, institutional responsibility, and civil society. This analysis highlighted the need for stakeholders in this area to work more closely together at these interfaces. For this reason, the expert network meeting as part of this project is primarily to be seen as a prelude to further networking in the coming years. The perspective and inclusion of victims should be of central importance in all processes. The Ferhat Unvar Educational Initiative is an initiative that was created, among other things, by the voice and pain of an affected mother. Recognising, appreciating, seeing, and hearing the voices of those affected should be adopted as a political mission for victim support.



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General information on the Ferhat Unvar Educational Initiative

The Ferhat Unvar Educational Initiative e.V. is a non-profit association that was founded in response to the terrorist attack in Hanau on 19 February 2020. Its mission is raising awareness of racism, sexism, antisemitism, ableism, and other forms of discrimination in the form of workshops and other educational offers. To founder Serpil Temiz Unvar, this is a way of keeping her son Ferhat's memory alive.

The aim of the expert network meeting was to bring together stakeholders from the fields of anti-discrimination, victim support, extremism research and politics to jointly identify gaps and challenges in anti-discrimination work and support for victims. To this end, we conducted a nationwide expert network meeting.

QR code for the newsletter: All current information about the network and further projects can be found in our newsletter, which you can subscribe to using this QR code.



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