

Centre of Excellence for Work against Hate Crimes and Discrimination

Concept report



MINISTRY OF JUSTICE
FINLAND

Centre of Excellence for Work against Hate Crimes and Discrimination

Concept report

Milla Aaltonen and Nada Al Omair

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Abstract

The purpose of the Capable project, coordinated by the Ministry of Justice, is to improve the effectiveness of the work against hate crime and harassment by developing the competence of professionals in various fields, in particular. One of the key objectives of the Capable project is to design a model for a centre of excellence for work against hate crime and discrimination and to pilot the possible activities of the centre. This concept report presents the needs identified in the development work and proposes a concept for the Centre of Excellence for Countering hate crimes and discrimination. Finally, the alternatives for establishing a centre of excellence will be examined.

Keywords hate crimes, centres of excellence, discrimination, hate speech

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Viharikosten ja syrjinnän vastaisen työn osaamiskeskus Konseptiraportti

Oikeusministeriön julkaisuja, Selvityksiä ja ohjeita 2023:14		Teema	Selvityksiä ja ohjeita
Julkaisija	Oikeusministeriö		
Tekijä/t	Milla Aaltonen ja Nada Al Omair	Sivumäärä	27
Kieli	Englanti		
Tiivistelmä	<p>Oikeusministeriön koordinoiman Osaavat-hankkeen tavoitteena on tehostaa viharikosten ja häirinnän vastaista työtä erityisesti eri alojen ammattilaisten osaamista kehittämällä. Hankkeen yhtenä keskeisenä tavoitteena on suunnitella malli viharikosten ja syrjinnän vastaisen työn osaamiskeskukselle ja testata keskuksen mahdollisia toimintoja. Tässä konseptiraportissa esitellään kehittämistyössä tunnistettuja tarpeita ja ehdotetaan konseptia viharikosten ja syrjinnän vastaisen työn osaamiskeskukselle. Lopuksi käydään läpi vaihtoehtoja osaamiskeskuksen perustamiseksi.</p>		
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Kompetenscenter för arbetet mot hatbrott och diskriminering Konceptrapport

Justitieministeriets publikationer, Utredningar och anvisningar 2023:14	Tema	Utredningar och anvisningar	
Utgivare	Justitieministeriet		
Författare	Milla Aaltonen och Nada Al Omair		
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Referat

Målet med projektet Kompetenta, som samordnas av justitieministeriet, är att effektivisera arbetet mot hatbrott och trakasserier i synnerhet genom att utveckla kompetensen hos yrkespersoner i olika branscher. Ett centralt mål med projektet Kompetenta är att planera en modell för kompetenscentret för arbetet mot hatbrott och diskriminering och testa centrets tänkbara funktioner. I denna konceptrapport presenteras de behov som identifierats i utvecklingsarbetet och föreslås ett koncept för kompetenscentrumet för arbete mot hatbrott och diskriminering. Till slut går man igenom alternativen för att inrätta ett kompetenscentrum.

Nyckelord hatbrott, kompetenscentra, diskriminering, hatretorik

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1 Presentation of the project and background

The purpose of the Capable project, coordinated by the Ministry of Justice, is to improve the effectiveness of the work against hate crime and harassment by developing the competence of professionals in various fields, in particular. One of the key objectives of the Capable project is to design a model for a centre of excellence for work against hate crime and discrimination and to pilot the possible activities of the centre.

The aim of the planning the centre of excellence and testing of the activities is to

- explore the need for a centre of excellence,
- map existing models in Finland and Europe,
- propose a more permanent structure and coordination, and
- test the centre's activities (training, communication, coordination) as part of the project.

This report presents different models for developing and consolidating the coordination of work against hate crime and discrimination. The report is based on other materials of the project and development work carried out during the project.

The project has previously published a background note on centres of excellence and structures for combatting hate crime and discrimination. The project has also published a report prepared by MDI for the project, which contains proposals for the concept and impact model of the centre of excellence. In addition, a separate travel report has been published for a study visit to the Spanish Observatory on Racism and Xenophobia in June 2022.

The project partners of the Ministry of Justice in the Capable project are the Ministry of the Interior, the Office of the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman and the Anti-Racist Forum. The Capable project has received funding from the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014–2020), and its term is from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2023.

2 Needs identified in the development work

2.1 Changes in the operating environment

Discriminatory attitudes and hate speech can be based on societal, social and individual psychological reasons, for example. The phenomena and their visibility in society are affected by factors such as the **escalation of the social climate and political views and the normalisation of discriminatory attitudes** towards certain groups of people. The effects are wide-ranging. Hate speech, for example, not only affects the groups and individuals subject to the hate speech and harassment, but all parts of society. Hate speech is also used to influence societal decision-making.

Although significant development work has been carried out in recent years in the fight against hate incidents and discrimination and to promote equality, people's **experiences of hate speech, harassment and discrimination have not diminished**. For example, according to the Follow-up Survey on Hate Speech and Harassment and Their Effects on Different Minority Groups (Ministry of Justice 2022c), respondents had been subjected to hate speech or harassment two to five times during the last 12 months. **Underreporting** of experiences of discrimination and harassment is common; most victims of hate speech and harassment did not report the incident because they did not believe that anything would or could be done.

The annual report on hate crimes reported to the police published by the Police University College is the most important regular report on the number and nature of hate crimes. The number of hate crimes that have come to the attention of the police appears to have stabilised to about one thousand criminal reports per year.

There has been recent changes in the operating environment of the work against hate incidents and discrimination, for example due to **digitalisation**. The internet and social media have changed the way hate speech is spread and produced, as they offer more numerous and effective channels for spreading hate speech. According to the aforementioned Follow-up Survey on Hate Speech and Harassment and Their Effects on Different Minority Groups, in 2022 hate speech and harassment were most commonly encountered on the internet. On the other hand, the survey shows that hate speech and harassment also occur offline.

In addition, **new operators promoting fundamental and human rights and equality have been established**, for example through the National Rapporteur of Violence against Women and the mandate of the Ombudsman for Older People. The **partial reform of the Non-Discrimination Act** will also affect the authorities monitoring discrimination.

Recently, **new civil society organisations have entered the fight against discrimination**. Equality is widely promoted by many different associations and civil society organisations, and it is important to identify them and involve them in cooperation.

2.2 Needs related to the development of structures

The development of structures is aimed at implementing individual rights. If the structures do not function, for example if they do not enable effective and active cooperation between the authorities, this is reflected in the realisation of individuals' rights; individuals may not receive sufficient information about all the legal remedies available to them, or preventive action may not be effective. Deficiencies in structures can manifest as overlapping work or as gaps in the work. Previous studies have also recognised this in the fight against discrimination and hate incidents.

Improving coordination does not have to mean setting up a new fundamental and human rights body – it is enough to reinforce and reorganise existing structures. The task of the centre of excellence planned in the Capable project would be to complement the existing structures by supporting knowledge-based policies, for example by ensuring a shared outlook, the realisation of cooperation and the use of acquired knowledge.

The work to combat discrimination and hate incidents aims to implement equality and rights. The effects of hate incidents always extend further than the individual who is the subject of the act. In addition to supporting individuals and ensuring their protection, intervention in hate incidents must take place at the level of structures.

There is international pressure to develop the work against hate speech, hate crime and discrimination. International human rights monitoring bodies have issued Finland with numerous recommendations related to discrimination, hate crime and hate speech. The recommendations have called on Finland, for example, to develop coordination and the expertise of professionals. The most recent recommendations to Finland were made by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in October 2022. One of the five recommendations included in the accelerated monitoring concerned gender-based hate speech. The UN Human Rights Council also issued

recommendations to Finland on the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The Council adopted three recommendations for accelerated monitoring of implementation, including one on hate speech and hate crime.

In May 2022, the Council of Europe adopted a new Recommendation on Combating Hate Speech, and the Council of Europe's Committee of Experts on Hate Crime is currently working on a recommendation on tackling hate crime. The European Commission operates a High Level Group on combatting racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance, with a number of sub-groups. There are several working groups dealing with discrimination and equality issues.

National development work has also highlighted the need to develop coordination and cooperation in order to address these phenomena more effectively and to prevent them. National development work has repeatedly pointed out that work to combat discrimination and hate incidents is being carried out by several operators. However, the work lacks coordination, is fragmented and does not have very clear and common objectives. The lack of coordination has made it difficult to assess the impact of the activities and to obtain an overall view of the actions taken and the scale of the problem.

Recommendations have also highlighted the need for exchange of information between professionals to ensure that actions are in line with each other and to identify any gaps. Lack of coordination can lead to overlaps and gaps in work. One of the key objectives of professional networking should be the analysis of information and evaluation of the effectiveness and adequacy of measures. One repeated proposal in national development work has been to set up a centre of excellence or a similar body to improve coordination and competence development, in particular. The key tasks proposed for such a body include the promotion of knowledge-based management and the monitoring and coordination of the actions of public authorities and civil society.

The work against hate crime and discrimination has a strong foundation and is being carried out by many different public authorities and civil society organisations. The work has been conducted, for example, as part of the fight against discrimination and racism and as preventive police work. In addition, the work against hate crime and hate speech is linked to crime prevention.

Equality and non-discrimination are a relatively new policy sector, and as the operating environment changes, more equality expertise is needed in many different sectors. The increased emphasis on the intersectional perspective has also increased the need for equality expertise and network-based cooperation. The resources allocated to equality

work by the Government can be compared with the resources allocated to the work on gender equality. Gender equality work has a longer history, which is also reflected in resources.

The Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) operates the Centre for Gender Equality Information, a national information service that collects and disseminates up-to-date and research-based information on gender equality. The centre acts as an expert in gender equality information, responds to information requests related to gender equality and gender, cooperating with both domestic and international gender equality organisations.

The development of coordination and competence in hate crime and discrimination issues is discussed in more detail in the background note published previously.

2.3 Development of authority structures

There are different ways of organising coordination and competence development at government level. The development of many structures has been considered recently. Next, we present some of the debate on the development of structures for the work against discrimination and hate incidents.

In June 2022, the Human Rights Centre published a report on national fundamental and human rights organisations. The report contains information on fundamental and human rights structures and recommendations for their development. The report also addresses the strengths and weaknesses of the current structures. The strength of the system lies in the combination of several different operators, whose different tasks and powers complement each other. In addition, the combination of several operators protects against any attempts to weaken the system. However, having many different operators makes the system complex and fragmented, as resources are dispersed and the means of the various operators are asymmetrical. From an individual's point of view, the complexity of the system is reflected, for example, in the difficulty in exercising legal remedies. A complex and fragmented system can make it difficult for an individual to know who to contact to get access to justice.

The report highlights the need to develop structures comprehensively, considering any overlaps or gaps. In addition, the report recommends that cooperation and coordination between the operators be increased, for example by sharing control observations and monitoring information, improving communication and raising awareness.

When the aim is to improve impact and achieve a permanent change, **centres of excellence** have been found to be a more effective and efficient way of organising work in many policy areas both internationally and nationally compared to individual projects. It also helps to coordinate the actions of different operators more effectively. Currently, several expert organisations are operating in connection with the central government in Finland, such as the Centre of Expertise for Impact Investing and the Centre of Excellence for Cost Effectiveness. The Centre of Expertise in Integration of Immigrants has been operating since 2014. The advantage of centres of excellence is often considered to be their network basis, which enables open exchange of information, diverse use of expertise and flexibility. At the same time, centres of excellence define common objectives and commit operators to them.

In addition, **advisory boards and councils** focusing on different themes act as channels for cooperation and share information. For example, the Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations (ETNO) acts as a network of experts in issues related to immigration, integration, participation and influencing opportunities of immigrants, equality and dialogue between different population groups.

The National Council for Crime Prevention is an expert and cooperation body of the Government operating from the Ministry of Justice, which plans and implements measures for the prevention of crime. In 2022, a report was published on how crime prevention should be organised nationally and how it could be reformed to ensure that its efforts would have an impact on society as a whole as society changes. The report presented three development options, of which Government-led reform of the tasks and structure of crime prevention was judged to have the greatest impact. The option emphasises the functional organisation of crime prevention as part of the Government Programme and the Ministry of Justice's strategy for knowledge-based management.

In addition, the Government also has an Anti-Trafficking **Coordinator**, whose office is under the Ministry of Justice. The duties of the coordinator include coordination at the Government level and communication with other actors. The coordinator coordinates intersectoral issues related to the fight against human trafficking and participates in international cooperation related to human trafficking. The coordinator is responsible for organising the activities of the Government's Anti-Trafficking Network and also participates in the meetings of the Finnish Civil Society Platform against Trafficking in Human Beings.

In addition, a Report on the Coordination of Anti-Trafficking Work within the Government was published in 2022. The aim of the report was to assess the current activities and to identify alternative ways of coordinating work against human trafficking at government level. According to the report, national coordination of anti-trafficking work is needed

on a permanent basis, and the resources for coordination must be increased. In fact, the resources of the Anti-Trafficking Coordinator are to be increased based on the report's recommendations.

3 Conceptualisation process of the centre of excellence

The development of the model for the centre of excellence was carried out in cooperation with project partners and other stakeholders. In addition to dialogue and co-creation with domestic stakeholders and development partners, similar centres of excellence in Europe were examined during the development of the model.

To support peer learning, a study visit was made to the Spanish Observatory on Racism and Xenophobia (OBERAXE) in June 2022. The primary purpose of the study visit was to learn about the tasks and activities of OBERAXE, which coordinates activities against hate speech and hate incidents and the related knowledge base. A separate travel report was drawn up on the study visit.

Before the study visit, a joint workshop was organised for those going on the visit to discuss the main objectives of the visit and to identify the most important aspects to investigate in the alternative forms and tasks of OBERAXE. In the context of this workshop, it was noted that the biggest change is required to create an operational structure and to advance joint efforts to promote a more integrated and evidence-based approach to combatting hate incidents, hate crime and similar forms of discrimination. In particular, it was noted that Finland needs better awareness, a better knowledge base and situational sensitivity on the phenomena of hate speech and hate incidents, as well as on their adverse impacts and costs. Information is needed both in Finnish society as a whole and among individuals, organisations and various groups. From the point of view of those operating in networks, the most important advantage of such a centre of excellence supporting the production, transmission and utilisation of information would be a better coordinated and comprehensive knowledge base and a shared outlook built on that base. Another benefit would be the identification and implementation of more effective and efficient measures to address hate incidents.

In addition, three workshops were organised between May and September 2022 for the conceptualisation of the centre of excellence to discuss the societal need for it, its tasks and expected and desired impacts.

The first workshop in late May started with the phenomenon and the related societal need and changes in the operating environment. The concept of the centre of excellence was planned based on the discussion that took place. The aim of the work was to clarify the purpose of the centre of excellence, that is, the changes sought, the target groups and the benefits and impacts.

The second workshop refined ideas from the previous workshop and discussed the key findings of the study visit to Spain. The workshop focused on the following perspectives on the operations of the centre of excellence: own agency or serving as a platform, content priorities, strategic choices and forms of operation.

The last workshop, held in September, discussed the draft final report. The report was worked on further based on the discussion.

In addition, a round-table discussion was organised in August with a wide range of operators. The round-table discussion presented the alternative models of a database, a collaboration platform and an influencer. In addition, lessons learned from the Spanish study visit were shared.

The round-table discussion considered acting as a cooperation platform as particularly important, but serving as a database and the influencer model were also considered important. Of the concrete tasks, acting as a platform, bringing together operators in the field, training trainers and the role of a facilitator received support in the discussion.

4 Proposed concept for the centre of excellence

4.1 Tasks

The main tasks of the centre of excellence were identified during the conceptualisation process as the compilation and transfer of situational information and related information from research and monitoring for the use of operators in the network and to society at large, the provision of a cooperation platform (including the development of know-how especially in relation to the cross-administrative and multidisciplinary dimensions of the phenomenon), and influencing legislation and decision-making with information.

Tasks:

1. acting as a databank and transmitting information, synthesiser of research and monitoring data;
2. acting as a cooperation platform in equality issues, initiator in initiatives against hate crime and discrimination, a catalyst and provider of cooperation places;
3. role of an influencer especially at the national level, communicator of the objectives of legislation and decision-making, interpreter and presenter of the equality perspective in all policies and all legislation.

The conceptualisation proposed that the centre of excellence be tasked with **bringing the development needs identified based on the outlook to a common development platform and conducting advocacy work on this basis.**

Network-like activities in acting as a database and information broker are already taking place, for example in projects and in the work of the Discrimination Monitoring Group. In addition, the Equality.fi website compiles monitoring information on discrimination and material on the promotion of equality. Many different entities produce information on phenomena related to hate incidents, but the information is not being systematically compiled or used to form a common outlook.

In terms of acting as a cooperation platform and in the role of an influencer, the network-based activities are even more fragmented.

4.2 Impact model

The impact model presented here is based on a previous report by MDI. When identifying impacts, it is important to note that it is typical of network-based work that impacts are created through complex impact dynamics and over a long period of time. Activities in networks can adapt to changes in the operating environment more easily and can be even more proactive than hierarchically aligned development.

The generation of impacts is affected not only by activities but also by changes in the operating environment of the networks (e.g. economic and political changes). The impact model helps to understand the logic behind the impacts.

Assessment of the impact of the centre of excellence's activities would focus on the results and impact of the activities on select target groups, not on society as a whole. Impact in socially complex issues inevitably requires taking into account the combined effects of many actions and operators. This applies to the fight against hate incidents, and we have also learned from international examples that the phenomenon is unpredictable and changeable.

For this reason, it is particularly important to monitor the development of the situational picture and to anticipate the effects of unexpected social change phenomena. A linear or highly predefined approach is ill-suited to responding to such a phenomenon. On the other hand, continuity and sufficient resources are prerequisites for effective action.

The MDI report identifies the following means by which the activities of centres of excellence can generate added value and improve efficiency:

- producing the information needed to manage networks, projects and programmes and helping to see whether we are on the right track, doing the right things and doing things correctly, that is, productively, efficiently and effectively;
- increasing the common understanding of different operators of what the activities are aimed at and what kind of (one's own) actions are used to create the desired impacts;
- helping to understand the logic behind the impacts and to be "patient" with the impacts;

- increasing public organisations' understanding of and skills in systemic governance and, in this context, recognising the potential for feedback and corrective actions and avoiding excessive simplification of assumptions of impacts of activities (such as assuming cause-and-effect relationships to be too linear, simple and quick to form);
- helping to identify effective and efficient practices and means and to make corrective actions proactively;
- increasing motivation to do things and the cohesion and positive spirit of development of different operators;
- reducing the need for separate external evaluation and consultation.

The task of the centre of excellence would be broad and multidimensional: to improve the situational awareness and information required to combat hate incidents, to reinforce cooperation and the cooperation platform, and to ensure that the root causes and adverse impacts of hate phenomena are addressed in the Government's policies and societal influencing.

In addition to the national level, it is essential to take into account regional and local operators and executive work in municipalities, close to people. It is important to take into account, for example, schools, parishes, associations and local authorities also in the activities of the potential centre of excellence, as their activities are visible to citizens and present in their day-to-day lives. The third and fourth sector are active in eradicating hate speech from society and people's lives, and companies also promote the theme in many ways, for example when implementing their corporate social responsibility.

However, the main target group of the centre of excellence would be the Finnish Government and its bodies. Non-governmental organisations, local government and municipalities would be subject to co-creation.

The understanding of impacts and effectiveness should start from the objective. Introducing and disseminating new and sustainable solutions for preventing hate incidents through networks and a credible and realistic view to reducing hate crime and related underreporting would be realistic but ambitious goals for the planned centre of excellence.

Although many operators are already working to promote these themes and activities, they are not fully under the authority or responsibility of any single operator, and their implementation in practice would require cooperation between different social sectors and divisions. This means that the task of the new centre of excellence responds to an existing and identified gap in the field of societal influencing.

The results, impacts and effectiveness of the centre of excellence's activities in accordance with the impact model would be generated through tasks. The production of information enables a more diverse understanding of phenomena and a more accurate shared situational picture. Actions and practices that better correspond to the situational picture are implemented through acting as a cooperation platform. Advocacy work can help the social atmosphere and public policy to take hate incidents as a phenomenon better into account in decision-making.

4.3 Structure

Cross-sectoral coordination and competence development have been organised on different themes, for example as advisory boards, in accordance with the centre of excellence model or by appointing a coordinator.

The conceptualisation of the centre of excellence started with the design of a model that could respond to changes in the operating environment and the needs that emerged in activities. Although the term 'centre of excellence' was used in the conceptualisation, planning was carried out based on societal need and with a focus on tasks and impacts. The focus of the planning was primarily on analysing which activities can respond to the needs and changes in the operating environment, that is, how to address, prevent and reduce hate incidents and discrimination, and how to promote equality. After the tasks have been clarified, it is possible to consider in more detail which structure would best support the achievement of the desired impacts.

Next, we analyse the strengths and weaknesses of three different structures (network, coordinator, centre of excellence) from the perspective of the tasks and impact model outlined for the centre of excellence. All of the models contain some of the same strengths (such as the benefits of network-based work), and the evaluation of the models has sought to focus on their specific strengths and weaknesses.

Network

Benefits:

- can work with a small amount of resources;
- a low-threshold structure operators can easily join;
- can involve a wide range of operators.

Challenges:

- the commitment of operators is often lax;
- networks are often based on personal ties and interest, the engagement of organisations varies;
- does not achieve all the impact objectives, as networks focus on information exchange;
- purposes other than the exchange of information require resources from all operators in the network if the network's activities have not been separately resourced;
- communicating a shared situational picture and proactive communication is challenging when network consensus is required;
- stability of the network in changing circumstances.

The Government's Anti-Hate Coordinator

Benefits:

- a government-level mandate provides strength for the management of operations and definition of objectives;
- gives the theme visibility in the Government's work;
- responds well to the challenges of coordination and competence development;
- focusing on a limited phenomenon is effective.

Challenges:

- hate speech is a narrow remit and its relation to wider promotion work is unclear;
- tied to one perspective even though many of the identified challenges are linked to a broader perspective than hate speech (e.g. underreporting, competence development);

- tackling root causes is challenging,
- organising activities requires sufficient additional resources (cf. Anti-Trafficking Coordinator);
- mandate and effectiveness of the operations may need a policy programme to support them;
- risk of personification (to be taken into account especially with a theme that meets resistance).

Centre of excellence

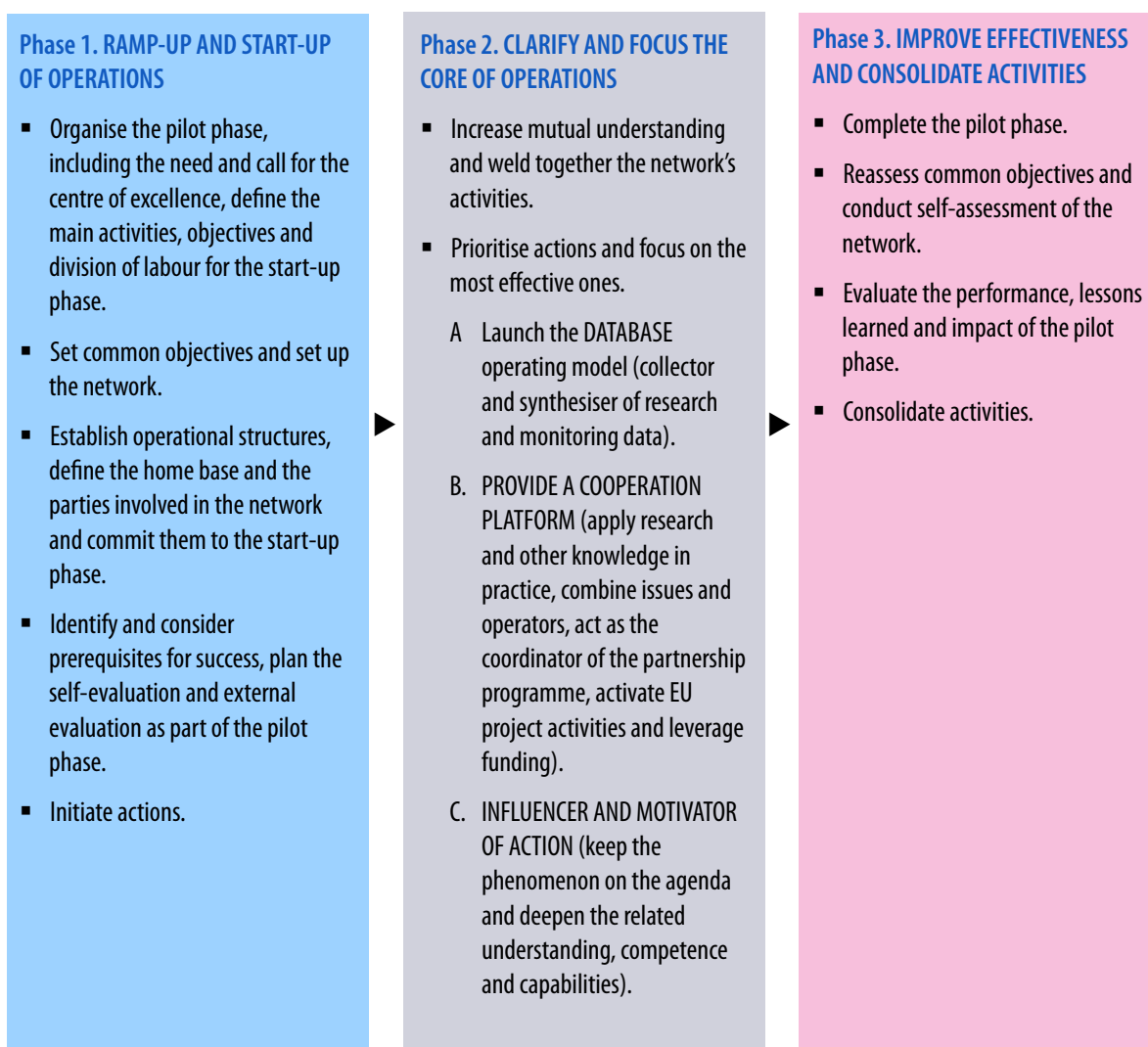
Benefits:

- holistic approach: covers different tasks from coordination to competence development and improving the efficiency of communication;
- responds well to the challenges of coordination and competence development;
- can be established by complementing existing structures;
- also able to address root causes and direct its activities based on observed changes;
- definition of common objectives and commitment to them.

Challenges:

- requires additional resources (in particular anti-hate speech work and communication) and the reorganisation of existing structures;
- the relationship with other official ministry duties must be carefully built.

4.4 Steps to start operations



A three-phase model is proposed for launching the centre of excellence:

1. launch the centre of excellence;
2. focus operations on the most essential objectives and actions; and
3. improve effectiveness and consolidate activities.

The first phase would include

- definition of activities, objectives and division of labour,
- establishment of common objectives, and
- creation of operational structures (including defining the home base and the parties involved in the network),
- bringing together the network and
- committing the operators.

It is important for success to consult the operators involved in the network during the start-up phase and to identify and consider the prerequisites for success, as well as to plan self-evaluation and external evaluation.

In the second phase, it is essential to increase mutual understanding and to weld together the network's activities, to prioritise actions and to focus on the most effective actions.

The third phase, the consolidation phase, involves assessment of the timeliness and importance of the common objectives and self-assessment of the network.

5 Conclusions and next steps

Work against hate incidents is already under way, but the fragmentation of the activities is a problem. There is no operator tasked with directing and implementing comprehensive, cross-cutting and intersectoral work. The conceptualisation process of the centre of excellence reinforced the view that there is a need for a body whose task is to lead change towards a society where hate incidents are not acceptable and where their adverse impacts, costs and consequences are identified.

As a result of the change, social balance, comprehensive security and social cohesion will be perceived as a common concern of all authorities, social operators and, ultimately, citizens as well. Preventing hate incidents and discrimination requires better awareness of the situation, a more capable network prepared to utilise expertise, and more effective decisions, communications and interaction. By committing all operators to a common agenda, it is possible to bring about social change.

5.1 Options for setting up a centre of excellence

As stated earlier in this report, the needs identified in the process, such as improvement of coordination and development of competence, can in practice be met in several ways. Although the report and the conceptualisation work done during the project uses the term 'centre of excellence', the planning was carried out based on societal need and with a focus on tasks and impacts.

Work to combat hate incidents has been carried out in recent years with project funding, but to improve continuity and the strategic approach of the work, it is important to consolidate coordination and decouple it from project funding, in particular. This would also allow organisations other than those acting as project partners to fully participate in the planning of activities, which would commit them to the activities and objectives.

In recent years, a lot of pilots and development work have been conducted with external project funding, but project funding cannot be used to consolidate and disseminate the results of such development work after the end of the project. However, project funding can continue to support the work against hate incidents and provide significant

additional resources for development work. Project funding is also important in building international connections, and projects are a natural place for implementing joint activities both nationally and internationally.

On 1 January 2023, the Ministry of Justice launched an EU-funded follow-up project to combat hate incidents called Peer Action against Hate. The resources of the project will be used, for example, to start developing the generation of information in order to achieve the objectives set out in the impact model. The project will build a virtual database for the work against hate incidents and to support victims and peer learning.

There are more existing structures and cooperation for information generation than for the other tasks proposed for the centre of excellence during the conceptualisation. Reinforcement of structures is more urgently needed for acting as a cooperation platform and as an influencer. In practice, acting as a cooperation platform could mean, for example, building and consolidating national coordination and supporting cooperation opportunities in project work. Acting as a cooperation platform would also support the sharing and implementation of good practices across sectors.

Influencing societal decision-making, in particular, requires a mandate to lead action against hate incidents. Although there are currently many operators and some cooperation between different operators, the work lacks clear leadership. The work of the different operators reflects their knowledge of their particular sector, but a multidimensional phenomenon requires cross-sectoral leadership.

When evaluating the suitability of the competence development and coordination aspects of the different models for the fight against hate incidents, the centre of excellence model seems to respond well to the identified development needs and the desired impacts.

The mandate of the centre of excellence must be sufficiently broad to enable it to address effectively the root causes of the phenomenon. The conceptualisation approached the phenomenon through at least the following concepts: equality, good relations between population groups, prevention of discrimination, hate incidents, hate crime and hate speech. In particular, additional resources would be needed to improve the work against hate speech and hate incidents and to launch the cooperation platform. Existing resources could also be reallocated and, for example, resources for monitoring discrimination could be targeted at creating and communicating the situational picture.

During the conceptualisation process, it was proposed that a centre of excellence be set up within the Government. Since influencing through policy and influencing aimed at operating policy and at its governance are such an essential part of the necessary coordination and network management, equally effective activities cannot be achieved

outside the government organisation even if the content expertise were sufficient. A natural location for the centre of excellence would be the Ministry of Justice, where its work would be linked to the ministry's existing policy work (e.g. promotion of equality, prevention and monitoring of discrimination and crime prevention).

The resourcing of the centre of excellence would influence how wide its field of activity could be. Without additional resources, it is not possible to permanently implement new tasks, such as maintaining the outlook, acting as a cooperation platform and facilitating coordination between different operators and levels. To function effectively, the centre of excellence would need approximately three to five person-years of staff. This is in line with other centres of excellence operating in the Government. As the role of the centre of excellence should be cross-sectoral and cross-administrative, its staff should have a wide range of experience in different sectors and activities (including education, communication and policymaking).

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