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## ODIHR Webinar

# Ensuring Justice for Hate Crime Victims through Strategic Litigation

**Date and hour: 12 December 2024, 11:00-12:30 CET (Warsaw time)**

### *Concept note*

Hate crimes have a profound impact on victims, their communities and societies, as they send a message of rejection both to the community that shares the victim's identity and to the broader public. Despite the significant impact of these crimes, judicial protection for hate crime victims is often inadequate. This is largely due to legislative gaps that fail to comprehensively protect and ensure equal rights for marginalized communities. As a result, hate crime victims may find themselves without the legal recourse needed to seek justice, leaving them without sufficient protection and, in some cases, resulting in their secondary victimization.

In addition to that, without effective judicial outcomes, hate crime victims may experience perpetuated discrimination, eroded trust in the legal system, and increased vulnerability and social isolation. This ultimately hinders the progress towards fundamental rights and values, such as equality and non-discrimination. The actions and decisions of courts and policymakers, including the decision to apply strategic litigation, can have a crucial impact on these victims. For this, it is important that all those who work with hate crime victims, including legal professionals, have the skills and resources necessary to respond to their needs or know where to refer victims for such support.

Strategic litigation serves as a powerful tool in addressing the injustices faced by hate crime victims and closing the legislative gaps to ensure better support to these victims. It seeks not only to provide redress for individuals but also to bring about broader systemic change. By selecting cases that can set important legal precedents, strategic litigation can strengthen the legal protection of victims of hate crimes, increase accountability, and foster societal and systemic change, all while ensuring that the victims feel included and supported throughout the legal process, and reinforcing their trust in justice institutions.

With the aim of promoting effective and community-centred outcomes through strategic litigation for hate crime victims, ODIHR will organize a dedicated webinar featuring insights offered by leading experts and practitioners in the field. The speakers will focus on the crucial role of strategic litigation in raising awareness about the impact of hate crimes on victims, establishing new individual rights for them, and broadening their access to justice. Speakers will also examine the challenges and opportunities in using strategic litigation to shape environments and conditions that improve the support available to hate crime victims.

The webinar is aimed at experts and professionals working to protect and support hate crime victims. This includes legal professionals working in civil society organisations, human rights institutes, Ombudsperson institutions, litigation lawyers and other human rights defenders, prosecutors and judges, alongside

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This webinar is part of the co-operation initiative between OSCE/ODIHR and the European Commission "Support to the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights) for knowledge sharing and standard setting on hate crime including hate crime victim support" (CERV-2023-IM-CRAC/RIGH/2). It is funded by the European Union and the governments of Bulgaria and Italy and implemented by OSCE/ODIHR.



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researchers in the field of hate crime and hate crime victim support and specialist support providers working on hate crime victim protection.

### Guest Speakers

- **Ines Bojić**, Attorney-at-law in the case of [Dorđević v. Croatia](#) before the European Court of Human Rights.
- **Iustina Ionescu**, Attorney-at-law in the cases of [M.C. and A.C. v. Romania](#) and [Association Accept and Others v. Romania](#) before the European Court of Human Rights, team member and lawyer at [ACCEPT](#) civil society organization, author of the report on “[Hate Crimes and other Hate Motivated Incidents against LGBTI People in Romania](#)”.
- **Susheela Math**, Senior Managing Litigation Officer at [Open Society Justice Initiative](#), co-author of [Challenging Ethnic Profiling in Europe: A Guide for Campaigners and Organizers](#), lead of third party interventions in the case of [Wa Baile v. Switzerland](#) before the European Court of Human Rights.

### Host and Moderation

- **Ruth Burns**, Assistant Hate Crime Officer at ODIHR
- **Tomasz Filipiak**, Associate Project Officer ([STARS](#)) at ODIHR

*Please note: The webinar will be recorded and made publicly accessible via the ODIHR website. The recordings will also be used for future reference, including for awareness-raising and capacity-building purposes.*

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