

# Foreword

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Across the European Union, LGBTI people face discrimination and violence based on their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or sex characteristics. Most incidents are not reported which impedes the possibility to investigate hate crimes and prosecute offenders. The lack of reports renders the problem of anti-LGBTI hate crimes invisible to the public and may prevent authorities from acknowledging and addressing the problem. As a result, victims often suffer in silence and their rights may not be fully respected.

By reviewing the legal and policy frameworks and analyzing the institutional deficiencies in reporting and recording anti-LGBTI hate crime and access to victim support in ten EU countries, the report sheds much needed light on the obstacles to the accessing justice faced by victims of anti-LGBTI hate crimes in the EU. Specifically, the report responds to the following key questions: (1) Why is the number of reported anti-LGBTI crimes in Europe so low? (2) What are the barriers to reporting? (3) How are victims' rights protected? (4) What do states do to encourage victims and witnesses to come forward? (5) How are police, NGOs and support services prepared to deal with anti-LGBTI hate crimes? (6) What regional differences in the response to anti-LGBTI hate crime can be observed?

The research underpinning this report represents a core activity of the two-year project *Come Forward: Empowering and Supporting Victims of Anti-LGBT Hate Crimes*, co-financed by the European Commission's Rights, Equality and Citizenship (2014-2020) program. The project aims at addressing a common need within the European Union to increase reporting of homophobic and transphobic hate crimes through building the capacity of civil society and official partners and empowering victim communities. It has six objectives:



1. Identify institutional obstacles in the access to justice for victims of anti-LGBTI hate crime;
2. Assess the training needs of reporting centers and victim support service providers working with victims of anti-LGBTI hate crime;
3. Increase the number of dedicated front-line reporting centers by building capacity of civil society organizations and public institutions;
4. Improve access to specialized support by building the capacity of victim support service providers;
5. Share good practices, strengthen cross-border and multi-agency partnerships;
6. Raise awareness and empower victims.

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The project is co-led by the Department of Law of the University of Brescia (coordinator) and the NGO Lambda Warsaw (scientific leader). It is divided into four workstreams: research and analysis, training, outreach and dissemination. As part of the first workstream, we have analyzed the legal and policy frameworks on anti-LGBTI hate crime in 10 countries and assessed the preparedness of police and victim support services. The present report and the collection of good practices are the product of desk-based research and interviews with 195 professionals representing law enforcement agencies, prosecution services, equality bodies, victim support services, and LGBTI and generalist human rights organizations (for details of methodology, see Annex). As part of the second workstream, training curricula for institutions and organizations where victims may report hate crimes and seek support were prepared, based on the needs identified through the interviews and additional web-based surveys. In April 2018, 26 international trainers were trained to deliver training on anti-LGBTI hate crime in their home countries. By the end of 2018, over 1000 professionals across 10 EU member states will receive training adequate to their roles and needs. Participants will receive the newly-developed handbook for professionals *Working with Victims of Anti-LGBT Hate Crimes*, which provides information on how to accommodate the specific needs of LGBTI victims. As part of the outreach activities, booklets allowing victims to understand anti-LGBTI hate crimes and the criminal justice procedure will be developed, customized for each country and distributed by partner organizations. The project will conclude with a final conference, the proceedings of which will be

published. Through this set of activities, the project helps to build a stronger, more adequate response to anti-LGBTI hate crimes in partner countries and the EU by identifying key factors which either enhance or hinder access to justice for victims, highlighting examples of good practices, building capacity of professionals and raising awareness among victims.