Hate Crimes and Victim Assistance in the Czech Republic

# Forgotten Victims

A Summary

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**Foreword**

Following up on its experience with reparations to former forced labourers for Nazi injustice, the Foundation "Remembrance, Responsibility and Future" (Foundation EVZ) is developing a new programming priority, the objective of which is to express solidarity with victims of hate violence (hate crimes) and to find and support projects and initiatives that act on behalf of these victims in Poland, the Czech Republic, Ukraine and Russia. The Foundation also wants to connect these projects to each other on both a national and international level. After the study "Monitoring of hate crimes and victims assistance in Poland and Germany" was published in 2009, also with the support of the Foundation EVZ, this year will see the publication of this very study, along with studies on the situation of victims of hate violence in the Ukraine and Russia.

With its work, the Foundation contributes to increasing society's interest in the situation of this group of victims, improving their legal standing and establishing the appropriate counselling structures. At the same time, experiences acquired in supporting victims in Germany are put into use internationally. The long-term goal of the programme is to contribute to reducing the number of cases of hate violence and protecting the human rights of at-risk minorities.

As a long-time trustee of Foundation EVZ, I am pleased that we have now, as part of this programme, also gained some insight into the current situation of victims of racially and ideologically motivated violence in the Czech Republic. The goal of this study, supported by the Foundation, was to find organisations in the Czech Republic that are close to these victims and show the possibilities for long-term and effective support for individual groups of victims. The emphasis on human rights and strengthening democratic culture as the most effective activities serving to help victims also corresponds to the Foundation's mission and goals.

This study focuses on the role of civil society in the Czech Republic in supporting victims of hate violence and on identifying individual groups of victims. The research also examined opportunities for hate violence victims and their lobbies to influence the political and societal reality. Last but not least, it gives attention to the legislative and structural conditions for supporting these victims and also to (international) contacts and sources of funding that are available to non-profit organisations in the Czech Republic.

The results of this study were presented at an international conference that took place in April 2010 in Prague. All the organisations involved in the project had the opportunity to discuss the results and racist and other hate violence in the Czech Republic. These results are now published in Czech, with abridged versions available as PDFs in English and German.

The team of authors has attempted to find parties providing support to victims of hate violence in the Czech Republic and to determine to what extent they need support and resources for professionalising their work, both at the national and international level. Another goal was to describe the legislative and structural conditions for this work. It emerged that we have relatively few reliable statistics on the number of hate acts in the Czech Republic. On the other hand, the study was successful in better identifying which groups are victimised in the Czech Republic (with it emerging that, aside from Roma, the homeless are also often targets of violence). Discussion will continue, in the Czech Republic and elsewhere, on how to define this hatred toward certain groups

and the violence resulting from it (in contexts where it has not yet been established in law or shown to be functional in case history) in order to arrive at a description of this phenomenon that would not evoke qualms from a legal perspective and be usable for all parties involved.

Our thanks go out to all those partners involved (the associations Romea, Tolerance a občanská společnost, In IUSTITIA and Kulturbüro Sachsen), all the authors, all the organisations questioned and also to Forum 2000 for organising the conference.

Ambassador Jiří Šitler, Prague
Member of the Board of Trustees,
Foundation "Remembrance, Responsibility and Future" (Foundation EVZ)

**Introduction**

The publication before you can be read as a kind of final report from the project "Hate Crime – Forgotten Victims". For this reason, the first part presents the goals, terminology and research focus of the project in more detail. Many different organisations took part in the project, bringing new aspects and their own objectives to the table. For everyone, however, the activation role of the project was important; the study was not meant only to describe the situation of victims of hate violence and the assistance provided to them, but also to "activate" various actors in the Czech Republic, motivating them to take their own initiative (from non-profits through state and local administration to private donors and foundations). The initiators and implementers of the project are aware that their potential for intervention is limited, but sparking a serious society-wide debate on the issue would be a first step in the right direction.

The study itself took place in several phases (e-mail survey, activation interviews, internal seminar and international conference), which are described in more detail in the chapter on the research goals of the project. The following chapter, "Results of the project", presents a detailed summary of the most important conclusions arrived at from the quantitative and qualitative study carried out with Czech non-profit organisations and experts working either directly with victims of hate violence or indirectly with the minorities who, in the opinion of the project working group, are or could become victims of hate violence in the Czech Republic.

We would like to take this opportunity to emphasise that although we are aware of the importance of the subjective perspective of the victims themselves, this perspective did not play a deciding role in our project. Despite the fact that a large part of the respondents came from the groups that are the target of hate violence in the Czech Republic and often have this experience themselves, the research interviews focused on their professional, and thus generalised experience.

In performing the study it emerged that these interviews cannot capture all aspects of the issue of hate violence. We therefore decided to expand our final project report so that it could also be read as an academic study. For this reason, the summary of results from our project is followed up by other special studies that develop specific thematic complexes related to hate violence and its victims in greater depth. These articles are, however, only included in the Czech version of the publication, where we give space to experts from the Czech Republic who deal with hate violence and its impact on various target groups and present other points of view on the given issue. The great majority of the authors were not directly involved in the hate violence study and the texts were written independently of the study evaluation.

On the basis of an assessment of all phases of the study, we decided to formulate several recommendations that, in our opinion, could positively influence the situation for victims of hate violence in the Czech Republic. These recommendations are directed toward all the involved parties named in the introduction. Though the "Hate Crime – Forgotten Victims" project ends with this publication, this does not mean that these recommendations should fall into obscurity, as is often the case. The Foundation EVZ launched a grant programme in June 2010 to support pilot projects in the Czech Republic in this field. Our project will have fulfilled its goal if these recommendations inspire non-profit organisations to get involved in this grant programme or motivate the state or private donors and foundations to similar commitments for the benefit of victims of hate violence in the Czech Republic.

Miroslav Bohdálek
Kulturbüro Sachsen e. V.

# 1. Research project "Hate Crime – Forgotten Victims"

In June 2009 the project "Hate Crime – Forgotten Victims" was launched in the Czech Republic. In this project research was conducted with the aim of describing the situation of hate crime victims in the Czech Republic and the support that they receive.[1] The research was conducted by the working group consisting of the German coordinator Kulturbüro Sachsen e.V. and the Czech partner civic associations In IUSTITIA, Romea and Tolerance a občanská společnost. This project was initiated and financed by the German F**oundation "Remembrance, Responsibility and Future"** (Foundation EVZ).

The research contained several parts. In the first phase the situation was mapped out through a quantitative e-mail survey of 400 organisations in the Czech Republic, followed by a qualitative study in the form of an "activation interview" with 24 experts. This aspect of activation played an important role in the project. The aim was not only to describe the situation of the victims of hate violence, but also to identify the potential of the non-profit sector and already active organisations. On 4-5 November 2009 an internal seminar for the organisations involved in the project took place in Prague and on 22–23 April 2010 an international conference "Forgotten Victims" was organised in Prague. Both events were meant to enable all the participating organisations and individuals to get to know the results of the research and to build a platform for exchanging experience.

## 1.1. The issue of hate violence in the Czech Republic since the 1990s[2]

Soon after the changes to the political system in 1989, an increase in racially motivated verbal and above all physical violence took place. It is estimated that a majority of the perpetrators numbered among supporters of the racist skinhead movement. Armed with machetes, baseball bats, chains and knives, they terrorised minorities, chased them down in the streets and waited for them outside boarding houses. The escalation of racially motivated violence took place primarily in the 1990s. The inactivity of police and indifference of the general public played a large role in this increase. Racial violence committed by right-wing extremists was a daily affair. Police generally let attacks take place without recourse and interfered only to a minimal extent. The media gradually started reporting on those clashes where the police and rescue services intervened. The public remained indifferent as the racism and xenophobia that had remained hidden for years became visible. Many exchanged their newly found freedom for apathy and worrying about their own interests.

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[1] This project was initiated by the German Foundation "Remembrance, Responsibility and Future" (Foundation EVZ) and ties in to a similar project realised in 2008 in Poland by the organisations Opferperspektive Brandenburg from Germany and Nigdy Więcej from Poland.  The results of this project were published in 2009 under the title "Hate Crime Monitoring and Victim Assistance in Poland and Germany". This publication can be downloaded on the Foundation EVZ website: http://www.stiftung-evz.de/w/files/publikationen/hate_crime_monitoring_poland_germany.pdf.

[2] Put together according to: Kalibová, Klára (2009): Rasové násilí a násilí páchané pravicovými extremisty – Situace v ČR po roce 1989 [Racial violence and violence committed by right-wing extremists – The situation in the Czech Republic after 1989]. In: Editing collective – Miroslav Bohdálek, Friedemann Bringt, Grit Hanneforth (2009): Nebezpečné známosti. Pravicový extremismus v malém příhraničním styku (SRN-ČR) [Dangerous liaisons. Right-wing extremism in a small borderland contact (FRG-CR)]. Kulturbüro Sachsen e.V., Heinrich Böll Stiftung, Weiterdenken – Heinrich Böll Stiftung Sachsen, Dresden.

After a series of racially or ideologically motivated murders, to which the public reacted by founding non-governmental organisations addressing racism and right-wing extremism, a reversal gradually took place in the approach of police and other bodies involved in criminal proceedings. Since roughly 2004, the numbers of racially motivated crimes have been continually falling. Information from communities that are the target of violence from right-wing extremists also confirms that the frequency of attacks by racist skinheads has dropped markedly compared to the 1990s.

The ethnicity or other classification of the victims of crimes committed by right-wing extremists is not monitored in Czech police and court statistics due to the fact that such monitoring would go against the fundamental principle of non-discrimination rooted in the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Basic Freedoms. From the findings of non-governmental organisations that deal with the issue of right-wing extremist movements, and on the basis of an analysis of statements by right-wing extremists and radicals on the Internet and at public gatherings, it is evident that the most vulnerable groups in terms of physical violence by extremists are Roma, foreigners or Czech citizens of a different skin colour, real or presumed political opponents of right-wing extremists, and recently also homeless people. Verbal attacks and attacks on property have also been recorded against the Jewish community.

State authorities list similar groups of victims, also including drug addicts, homosexuals and paedophiles, as latent victims of right-wing extremist violence. The ideological motivation is difficult for the police to prove in such cases, however, and therefore it only rarely appears in the statistics as such.

This all confirms the necessity of an independent authority that would not only monitor neo-Nazi and right-wing activities, but also focus its attention on the victims of hate violence. This necessity is one of the things that led to the creation of the In IUSTITIA counselling centre, which aims to monitor this type of violence and provide counselling for victims. ROMEA is also aware of the importance of independent and systematic monitoring for victims of hate violence and since 2008 has been carrying out its own monitoring, in part through a telephone help line.

## 1.2. Project working group

The research project was run by the working group consisting of 5 representatives of the participating organisations, one additional interviewer and an academic supervisor.

**Project working group:**
Miroslav Bohdálek – coordinator of cross-border projects in Kulturbüro Sachsen e.V. in Dresden and coordinator of the project "Hate Crime – Forgotten Victims"

Ondřej Cakl – with his organisation Tolerance a občanská společnost he monitors activities of right-wing extremists and neo-Nazis in the Czech Republic

Klára Kalibová – lawyer, director of the counselling organisation In IUSTITIA

Markéta Kovaříková – social pedagogue, works for Czech Helsinki Committee

Dana Moree – teaches multicultural education at the Faculty of Humanistic Studies of the Charles University in Prague

Zdeněk Ryšavý – executive director of the ROMEA Association

František Valeš – lawyer, at the beginning of the project he worked as a counsellor in the organisation In IUSTITIA

**Participating organisations:**

**Kulturbüro Sachsen e.V. (KBS)** is a non-profit organisation that has been operating in Saxony since 2001. The association is based in Dresden, but has functioning offices in five other Saxon cities. KBS primarily offers counselling and assistance to support the democratic development of society. Counselling and support are provided to educational institutions, NGOs, churches, local governments, companies and public offices. KBS works on the premise that right-wing extremist and racist acts endanger our society and they therefore help to develop democratic structures in everyday life in society.

**In IUSTITIA** provides legal aid to people who have been attacked due to their perceived or actual race, ethnicity or nationality, sexual orientation or identity, sex, age, health, religion, faith, creed, or the fact that they are without religion, political convictions, sub-culture or membership in any other social group. Its clients are primarily persons exposed to hate violence, but the organisation also provides counselling to their families, workers assisting them and the state administration. In IUSTITIA respects the dignity, individuality, security and other interests of its clientèle. Under certain conditions it also deals with clients anonymously.

**ROMEA** is a volunteer, non-governmental, non-profit association of citizens and legal persons bound together by their support for the fight against racism, spreading adherence to human rights, and helping cultivate democracy and tolerance in society. The organisation's primary mission is to bring together primarily young citizens of Romany and Czech nationality who want to help the Romany and Czech nations to improve their mutual coexistence.

**Tolerance a občanská společnost (TOS)** is a civic association that has been monitoring the activities of right-wing extremist and neo-Nazi groups and individuals in the Czech Republic for more than 15 years. Thanks to TOS's monitoring a number of persons have been taken to court and convicted in recent years. Aside from this, TOS also offers talks and seminars for schools and other interested parties.

**1.3. Project goals**

In the beginning the project drew considerably on its Polish predecessor, which also influenced its goals. However, the make-up of the working group and the individual focuses of the organisations taking part also brought new aspects to the project. At the beginning of the project the working group defined its goals, which can be summarised in four categories, and are further elaborated by certain questions:

**1) Role of civil society in supporting victims of hate violence**
- Which societal actors offer general support for victims and/or specialised counselling?
- What methods are used and what kind of counselling is offered?
- How large is the need for this counselling?

- What kind of capacity and resources do these organisations have?
- Are they interested in expanding their activities?
- What general conditions must be met for this support to work?

## 2) Persons and groups at risk of hate violence in Czech Republic
- Which groups are at risk of hate violence in the Czech Republic?
- Are there any differences between these groups?
- Which groups turn to others with a request for help and which do not?
- Are there regional differences?

## 3) View of society and the political sphere toward hate violence in Czech Republic
- Is there any public debate about racist violence and regarding what acts?
- Are there differences in the perception of hate violence?
- Is there any lobby that would make it possible for victims to influence the public discourse or political decisions?
- What legislative and structural framework applies to the victims of hate violence in the Czech Republic?
- Is there monitoring of acts of hate violence?

## 4) International networking and financial support
- What international networks do counselling organisations in the Czech Republic belong to and is there a need to intensify these contacts?
- What financial resources do they take advantage of at the national and international level?

These goals reflect the interests of the organisations involved at the beginning of the project and are manifested again concretely in the formulating of the research questions in further phases.

## 1.4. Terminology

Violent acts, which were the subject of our investigation, are often labelled as racist, or connections are drawn to the problem of right-wing extremism. Both terms are, however, imprecise from our point of view, as the term racism is too narrow and can hardly be used to include attacks against the homeless or drug addicts. The term "right-wing extremist violence", which is often used in Germany for example (*rechtsextreme Gewalt*), on the other hand suggests that the perpetrators of this type of violence are only a handful of extremists at the periphery of society. In the view of the working group however, the issue is not only one of physical violence perpetrated by a handful of individuals, but also of verbal attacks, the perpetrators of which we can also find among the general public.

At its first meeting the working group decided on a Czech translation for the English term "hate crime", which was *násilí z nenávisti* (hate violence).[3] Hate crime is a term that is in common use not only in English-speaking countries, but which has established itself in the lexicon of various international organisations dealing with the issue. One generally accepted definition of this term is offered by the ODIHR (Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights), which is an

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[3]In the beginning the translation "violence motivated by hate" was also used. This is not a direct translation of the English "hate crime", which in Czech would be *zločin z nenávisti*.

organisation that falls under the OSCE and deals with monitoring and support of human rights in the countries of the OSCE. The wording of this definition is:

*Any criminal offence, including offences against persons or property, where the victim, premises or target of the offence are selected because of their real or perceived connection, attachment, affiliation, support or membership with a group. A group may be based upon their real or perceived race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation or other similar factor.*

On the basis of this definition a further discussion took place within our working group, the result of which was a slight modification, with emphasis on the fact that the resulting hate crime definition for the purposes of this project was not a consensus, but rather a compromise among all participating organisations. The wording of this working definition was:

*Violence motivated by hate (hate crime) is understood to mean violence toward persons due to their real or perceived race, connection to an ethnic group, nationality, political conviction, confession, sexual orientation, sex, age, health or affiliation with another group.*

This definition differs from the definition used by the ODIHR on three points. Above all it was the goal of the working group to simplify the definition, particularly with a view to its usability in practice. The working group also tended away from the use of the phrase "criminal offence", for several reasons. The primary reason was that this phrase presumes that the criminality of this act has a basis in the law, which, in the case of sexual orientation for example, is not true in the Czech Republic. Such an offence is punishable, but the political motivation is not taken into account by the law. Another reason is that verbal offences in particular may not meet the definition of a criminal act, but can nevertheless cause the victim considerable harm. It is also necessary to mention that there are many cases of anticipated violence, where no offence has yet taken place, but the given person avoids certain places out of fear that they could be attacked (for example homeless people and drug addicts who avoid stadiums and train stations during football matches). These arguments do not only turn up in the Czech Republic, but also in discussions in other countries or on the international level, which has led to increasing use of the English term "hate violence", which is the exact translation of the term that we use, *násilí z nenávisti*.

The last important difference between the definitions is a change to the last point. The ODIHR definition states "or other similar factor". The working group agreed on a more specific expression, "or affiliation with another group", which more clearly points out that it can also be a case of violence against certain social groups, for example poor people or the homeless.

It came to light over the course of the project that the term "hate violence" is rather controversial in the academic public. The most important shortcoming of this term is the fact that its general formulation allows a very wide understanding of the term "hate".[4] One argument is that every violent act is motivated by hate, while another is that this definition would also include violence against right-wing extremists, who are however seen as the main perpetrators of these acts. This spectrum of criticisms also reflects the discussions within the working group. The importance of this discussion was shown again in the preparation of the final report for the project, where in some cases the authors who had been asked to contribute (particularly Jiří Kopal and Bob Kuřík with Ondřej Slačálek) expressed various criticisms of the term hate violence. As such an academic

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[4]An interesting contribution to the discussion is the approach of Professor Heitmayer of Bielefeld University, who in his study works with the term "group-focused hatred of people" (*Gruppenbezogene Menschenfeindlichkeit*). It is clear from the title itself that it is not a matter of individually motivated violence (his work refers more to positions than to actual acts of violence), but about violence motivated by hatred toward a certain group of people.

debate can be seen as one of the first positive outcomes of the project, drawing attention to the existing problem and helping sort out the opinions of the parties involved, the working group decided to leave the criticisms in the aforementioned articles.

## 1.5. Project design

From the beginning the project had a practical focus and made no attempt at a scientific or methodologically pure description of the situation in the Czech Republic. What was important was the interventional component. Those implementing the project were not employees of an academic institution that come, map out the system and then leave again. All organisations taking part in the working group are actively involved in supporting the victims of hate violence in the Czech Republic, and they brought their own experiences and interests to the table. Over the course of the project's realisation a reciprocal process was to take place. Those who had been contacted as part of the project were to provide certain information, but communication was also to take place in the other direction; it was in the interest of the working group to present the existence of counselling methods for hate crime victims known from, for example, neighbouring countries and which were starting to be applied in the Czech Republic as well.

### 1.5.1. E-mail survey
At the beginning of the project the working group decided in favour of a combination of various methods. Thus in the first phase of the project the situation was mapped out through a quantitative e-mail survey. The decision in favour of this type of investigation was made at the first meeting of the working group in June 2009, when the organisations that could be approached as part of a qualitative investigation through an activation interview were discussed. Concerns arose that even though four important organisations with a long history of dealing with hate crimes were represented in the working group, they might not be able to identify all the players in the Czech Republic. This was also related to the fact that the issue of hate violence does not play a significant role within the professional public. Therefore the main goal of this e-mail survey was to map out the field and acquire basic information about the organisations that are active in the area under investigation before moving on to a qualitative study. The results of this survey were not intended to be particularly ground-breaking in comparison with a qualitative study, but they were commensurate to the lesser degree of effort put in. Another expected outcome was that in this way around 400 organisations would find out about our project and about the significance of the issue of hate violence in the Czech Republic, which corresponds to the interventional or activational objective of the project.

### 1.5.2. Activation interviews
In the second phase, the working group decided on a qualitative study in the form of an "activation interview". This method has a long tradition in community work. In contrast with standard questionnaire methods, the questions in an activation interview are open and meant to motivate the respondent to elaborate. The questions thus serve only as a starter and the respondent has more opportunity to say what they themselves consider important rather than what the interviewer wants to hear. The core of an activation interview lies in investigating the personal standpoints, opinions, interests and capabilities of the respondent. The goal is thus not only to point out existing problems, but also to generate possible solutions and above all to cultivate the respondent's willingness to take part in those solutions. Under certain general conditions the

activation interview can then significantly contribute to the development of democratic methods for "bottom-up" solutions.

On the basis of this theoretical framework the working group put together a set of questions that were based on the goals laid down at the start. The questions covered a whole range of topics, and the order had a certain internal logic but was not mandatory for the interviewers. The set of questions merely provided a certain framework and the order and formulation of the questions could be freely altered as seen fit. The respondents came from various organisations and had very different experiences, which led to some topics being left out and others being dealt with in much more detail based on the respondent's focus. It was also the case that topics that played an important role in the first interviews and which led to certain valuable conclusions were added to the set of questions which were asked of later respondents.

The selection of respondents and the interviews with them took place in three stages. In the first, or "pre-test", interviews were conducted with four subjects from the working group. Following an evaluation of the experiences from these interviews, a further 15 or so organisations were approached with interview requests. In the last phase a further 15 organisations were contacted, some of which were suggested in the preceding interviews. Not all the organisations or individuals approached agreed to an interview. Their reasons for this varied, including the feeling that they did not deal with hate crimes and therefore could not be helpful or did not have enough time, whereas some organisations did not respond to the e-mails or telephone calls and others cut off communication without providing a reason.

In the end, interviews were conducted with 23 respondents. As some of them did not agree with having their names made public and in some cases they did not want their organisation's name made public, the working group decided to make the interviews completely anonymous. All interviews were recorded and transcribed for the purposes of evaluation. For the sake of clarity we divided the respondents into several groups based on the specialisation of the organisation they represented.

7 – General counselling centres, focused both specifically on hate crime victims and generally on all victims of crime
3 – Counselling centres for foreigners
3 – Roma organisations
3 – Organisations for helping the homeless
3 – Individuals (both those helping victims in practice and representatives of the academic sector)
2 – Non-profit organisations carrying out their own projects (in contrast to the first group these are not exclusively for counselling)
1 – Gay and lesbian organisations

### 1.5.3. Internal seminar

The internal seminar took place after the activation interviews were completed and was primarily intended as an opportunity to further involve these respondents in the project. Representatives of about ten organisations involved in the project through both the e-mail questionnaires and the activation interviews took part in the seminar. The seminar was held on 4–5 November 2009 in Prague at the UN Information Centre. The programme included information about the first results of the project and a discussion thereof. The members of the working group presented the issue of hate violence and two guests from Germany presented their experiences with counselling for victims of hate crimes, monitoring of such offences and so-called "mobile counselling", counselling

focused on the development of a democratic culture and against right-wing extremism. One segment was also devoted to a discussion of possible monitoring methods in the Czech Republic.

### 1.5.4. International conference

All interested parties had another opportunity to get involved in the project, familiarise themselves with the results and discuss possible further steps toward supporting persons at risk of hate violence in the Czech Republic and other countries in Central and Eastern Europe on 22–23 April 2010, when an international conference took place at the Goethe-Institut in Prague. The conference was the conclusion of the "Hate Crime – Forgotten Victims" project, and was intended for all activation interview participants and other organisations from the Czech Republic working to support victims of hate violence (including both non-profits and public offices, the police, government ministries, etc.), as well as other partners in this field, particularly those from Poland, Slovakia, Ukraine and Russia. The conference was organised by the Foundation Forum 2000, the German Foundation "Remembrance, Responsibility and Future" and the associations In IUSTITIA and Kulturbüro Sachsen e.V., and was funded by the Foundation "Remembrance, Responsibility and Future".

### 1.6. Publication of the project results

The Czech language publication came out in November 2010 and contains both the results of the quantitative and qualitative research, and the texts of the external authors. The external authors were asked to provide the theoretical background and a deeper understanding of the phenomena of hate violence against particular groups of victims in the Czech Republic. At the same time, they focused on the most relevant problems that were identified through the research. The following list of articles gives a better idea of the contents.

Hate-crime protection – a commentary to the applicable legislation
Author: Klára Kalibová

Hate crime in the strategic materials of the state authorities
Author: Klára Kalibová

The situation of hate-violence victims
Author: František Valeš

Counselling for victims in the Czech Republic faces many obstacles
Author: Pavel Eichler

Police and the victims of hate violence
Author: Jiří Kopal

Ups and downs of the political lobby of Roma in the Czech Republic
Author: Pavel Pečínka

Social exclusion of Roma – myths or reality?
Author: David Beňák

Hate violence against homeless people

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Author: Martina Křížková

Hate violence against LGBT  community
Author: Olga Pechová

Alternative youth and subcultures
Authors: Bob Kuřík and Ondřej Slačálek

## 2. Results of the research

### 2.1. Results of the e-mail survey

**Dates**
22–24 June 2009 – questionnaires sent out
22–14 July 2009 – answers received

**Respondents**
A total of 446 organisations from around the Czech Republic were contacted with a short questionnaire. These organisations either worked with potential hate crime victims themselves or were the community organisations of various minorities. The contacts came from either our own sources or from the websites of the organisations. Forty-nine of the e-mails came back as undelivered and 49 were responded to, which totals 12.3 % of those successfully contacted.

**Questionnaire evaluation**
This study cannot be seen as representative nor can these results be generalised, as the sample of respondents was skewed by various influences. It nevertheless provided us with interesting insights that we made use of in our subsequent qualitative study. The questionnaire was introduced with our working definition of the term "violence motivated by hate" and contained eight brief questions.[5]
71 % (35 respondents) come into contact with victims of hate crimes in their work. The attacks were targeted against the following groups:
9 – Roma
8 – A particular social group (e.g. the homeless, the socially weak, alternative youth)
5 – Race or nationality
5 – Health (including the elderly, people with HIV)
4 – Foreigners
4 – People with a different sexual orientation
4 – Domestic violence (3 – against women; 1 – against the elderly)[6]

All the potential groups that we presented in our definition of hate crime were mentioned. The only exception was Muslims, which were not explicitly mentioned, but it can be assumed that they are subsumed within the category of foreigners. Due to the strong distortion of the research sample the frequency of individual groups is not particularly relevant. What is important is that the answers also included the elderly, AIDS sufferers, alternative youth, gays and lesbians and others. Of the 35 organisations that come into contact with victims of hate crimes, 13 declared that this contact occurs once a month or more often. Only one organisation claimed that this contact is daily.
Twenty-seven organisations offer targeted counselling; for the majority this includes a wide spectrum, – from help lines through psychiatric or legal counselling. However, this counselling is not always however only on the topic of hate crimes; ordinary clients turn to the given organisation with their a problem and over the course of this contact they also mention their

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[5]See Annex 1.

[6]In our definition domestic violence cannot be seen as hate violence, because it is individual violence.

experience with a hate crime. The counselling offered is thus not specifically intended for only this topic only.

Four organisations or individuals stated that they actively seek out such clients. They usually present their activities through a network of associated organisations.

These four and two other organisations intend to provide these services in the future or intensify them (*"if the number of this type of client were to increase we would react by offering further services"*).

If the organisations are unable to offer victims assistance, they recommend the following types of partners:

24 – Smaller local organisations or associations

17 – Bílý kruh bezpečí (counselling for victims of crime)

11 – The police

7 –  Intervention centres (counselling centre specialising in domestic violence)

5 –  Various help lines

5 –  A charity or church facility

5 –  Civic counselling centres

3 –  Doctors or psychologists

3 –  Probation and mediation services

**Summary**

The return rate of this study corresponds to the method used (e-mail survey). From our perspective, however, few of the organisations whom we considered important or whose answers we particularly wanted or whom we considered important actually responded. A disproportionate number of responses came from civic counselling centres (9 responses) and shelters (6 responses). On the other hand we received only 4 responses from Roma organisations and 4 responses from organisations working with foreigners. About 5-6 organisations were contacted on the basis of the evaluated questionnaire with a request for an activation interview. These were organisations that we had not originally counted on but which had shown that they could be of use for our qualitative study, thereby fulfilling one of the main goals of this survey, namely mapping out relevant organisations and individuals in more detail.

This survey also confirmed the working group's expectation that there are very few organisations in the Czech Republic that give at least give an indication of offering counselling for victims of hate crimes.

**2.2. Results of the activation interviews**

**Time frame:**
August to October 2009

**Interviewers:**
Miroslav Bohdálek, Markéta Kovaříková

**Evaluation:**
The following pages provide bring the a summary of the most important conclusions from the activation interviews. We identified several important topics, which we sorted into chapters. These chapters begin with a quotation from the interviews, which is meant to introduce but not necessarily to  however does not sum up all the aspects of the chapter.

### 2.2.1. Hate violence from the point of view of respondents

*"Under that term I recall the case that took place in Moravia, where they threw a burning bottle into a flat. I haven't experienced that here."* (ROZ4, 28-29)

Aside from the organisations directly involved in realising the project, only a few others deal closely with the issue of violent hate violence or crime on a theoretical level. They may encounter specific cases over the course of their work that can be classified under this term, but with a few exceptions the topic of hate violence is not a central theme in the given organisation. *"That's what it's like for me too. I recall some specific clients that we met, but of course the problem could be much more widespread. Maybe we can't even imagine what all this term encompasses."* (ROZ13, 27-29) Mostly it is active individuals without any connection to a specific organisation that attribute major significance to hate violence. Several times the lack of interest was justified by a lack of demand on the part of clients. "*PERSON1: Do you think that Roma don't even encounter verbal violence? PERSON3: They definitely do, and there are such situations here, but I've never experienced that it was dealt with or analysed."* (ROZ15, 19-21)

In an attempt to define this term, the reasons most frequently mentioned for that people are attacked were nationality or race, but respondents also often pointed out other endangered groups: – gays and lesbians, the homeless, drug addicts, Muslims and members of other religions. In general it can be said that the respondents are aware that their clients can and do become victims of this sort of violence.

The Roma have a unique place among the victims of hate violence, which we will deal with in a separate chapter. This unique position also shows itself in the understanding of hate violence. Although the respondents associate attacks against all sorts of groups with this term, Roma are often mentioned in first place, or a prominent role is attributed to them. *"Definitely Roma, alternative youth, the ones that are different somehow. The homeless, foreigners – particularly those with a different skin-colour because they are confused for Roma."* (ROZ14, 149-151)

This was not only the case in the responses, but in the project group discussions, where one conflict associated with the understanding of the term hate violence came up. *"There's a question of whether to evaluate it as a hate crime when the attack comes from the extreme left wing. Last year some neo-Nazis went to some kind of sports tournament and they were waiting for them and attacked them by a supermarket. There, I think, the element of a classic hate crime is debatable."* (ROZ8, 27-30)

In this case the respondent is basing their statement on the fact that hate violence is associated with right-wing extremism. This has been demonstrated in the reports on the issue of extremism already mentioned, where certain acts that fall under our definition are summarised as acts with extremist overtones. If, however, we were to take the literal definition of hate violence, attacks by anti-fascists against neo-Nazis would also fit into this category. This question, justified on a theoretical level, has concrete repercussions in practice when we consider the target groups of centres for victims of hate violence. If such centres were also to provide support to followers of neo-Nazism (and if they were to be interested in such services), contact could take place between victims and attackers on the centre's premises, which would not do much to lend the institution an air feeling of trustworthiness. *"In terms of racially motivated or police violence, we are here for everyone. We even had a case of a member of the right-wing scene that the police assaulted excessively, and we dutifully helped him write up a complaint. For us it's important to know that it's a matter of principle. That the law must apply to all, otherwise there is no rule of law."* (ROZ6, 144-147)

### 2.2.2. Victims of hate violence

*"I see it in the context of the growth of right-wing extremism. Of course you can also include protests against gay and lesbian parades under that as well. ... It can also be class-based, on the basis of social group, hate, and we encounter that as well. … That's why I direct it mostly at the Roma. They could also be Sudanese or Vietnamese, but the parties score points when they make reference to the Roma."* (ROZ6, 45-52)

In this chapter we look at which groups contained in the definition of hate violence are actually made victims of it in the Czech Republic and what factors play a role in this. Both the quantitative investigation done through e-mail and the  qualitative interviews found that all groups listed in our definition of hate violence do become victims in the Czech Republic. There are however certain differences between those groups, particularly in the extent to which this violence applies to them, but also in certain other aspects.

### a. Hate violence victims in the Czech Republic
The unequivocally most affected group are is the Roma, toward whom hatred or at least intolerance seems to be a societal consensus. Some form of violence or discrimination is thus a daily routine for them. Respondents from non-Roma organisations also cite the Roma as the most vulnerable group.
*"In general I think that the typical victims are Roma. That's not the field of our organisation though, so from that perspective they're black people, meaning people with a different skin colour, and then Ukrainian workers."* (ROZ16, 19-20)
A similarly negative perception applies to foreigners as well, particularly those with darker skin colour, and to the homeless. In the latter case brutal physical violence was also often mentioned. As shown in the following quote (*"Definitely Roma, alternative youth, the ones that are different somehow. The homeless, foreigners – particularly those with a different skin-colour because they are confused for Roma."*, (ROZ14, 149-150)), those in danger are primarily those that are visibly different in some way. This is most marked for people with darker skin, but it is also true for people who are different in the way they dress, behave or in their lifestyle.

*"I don't know if there is a typical victim. The fact is, in terms of homeless people, they are frequent targets of any kind of violence. In general I'd say from document theft, identity theft, through physical violence, to murder."* (ROZ10, 3-5)
In the case of people with a different sexual orientation, physical violence was mentioned much less frequently, but this group has its own specific characteristics, particularly being forced to come out, whereby the victim is forced to reveal their homosexuality or transsexuality in order to report their assault.
Other risk groups intertwine with each other, particularly when taken primarily from the point of view of attackers. This is true of the group  that, for this project, we labelled "alternative youth", i.e. people who differ in their style of dress, hairstyle, lifestyle or political opinions. From the point of view of the attackers this also includes drug addicts. They, along with the homeless, are also often the victims of police violence, which we will get to later.

In conclusion let us also stop at religious groups. Violence due to religious intolerance turned up on only a theoretical level among our respondents. Specific acts of violence turned up more as a form of property violence (*"cases of damaged Jewish gravestones"*, (ROZ8, 8)), or ideologically motivated acts (*"Well, there's definitely a growth in the fact that the demonstrations are focused on the*

*area. Areas where they're against Roma, somewhere where there's a greater number of foreigners, plus once or twice they pick something against the Jews."* (ROZ23, 274-276)). Even a cursory look at the websites of various neo-Nazi or radical nationalist groups makes it clear that anti-Semitic and anti-Islamic ideas play an important role for in these organisations. There are however only a minimum number of known cases of specific physical violence against these religious communities.

### b. Specifics of the Roma minority

If we are emphasising the specific position of Roma, it is primarily for the reason that the antipathy toward them is shared by a large part of the Czech public. If a specific Roma person has not yet become a victim of physical hate violence, they must still take it into account as a very real possibility. Essentially every Roma person has experienced some form of discrimination or verbal violence. It is this "potential" for hate violence that is the typical indicator differentiating it from other forms of criminality. These people's quality of life is markedly reduced even if they have not yet been the victim of a violent act. Other endangered groups have a similar problem, but for Roma this problem is different by its magnitude. For one organisation this omnipresent discrimination and unequal standing of Roma led them to offer their counselling services exclusively to this minority.

*"For us it's important because we work from the conviction that Roma have limited access to justice and it is therefore necessary for us to balance out that access through our activities."* (ROZ9, 23-25)

Of course the specific status of Roma also relates to historical developments and has its political, cultural and social causes. One of the aspects of this issue at the structural level relates to the social position of Roma in particular and the reasons for their social exclusion. Respondents called attention to, for example, practices at the level of local governments that (although it is not always intentionally) result in Roma being pushed to the fringes of society.

*"In terms of apartments, every municipality is giving up municipal flats now. The majority of flats have already been sold and the chance that we could get a flat for our clients from the city is constantly shrinking. Getting a flat from a private owner is completely hopeless as they want to make money off it. They demand high rents paid several months in advance and write up the leases in such a clever way that our client ends up leaving the flat after three months with no money at all. That happened to us. In terms of work, there are some possibilities, but it's under-the-table work. The employer doesn't pay any deductions. He comes and picks them up in the morning and gives them, say, five hundred crowns cash-in-hand for the day. In the end though the person finds out that they've reached retirement age and don't have any right to a pension."* (ROZ2, 138-144)

This is a very broad issue that cannot be summarised in detail only on the basis of our interviews. Thus, David Beňák deals with several problems more specifically in his text.

### c. Specifics of hate violence on the basis of sexual orientation

Although we did not obtain any particularly high numbers for victims of hate violence on the basis of sexual orientation in our interviews, we will go into a little more detail about this group. In our e-mail investigation one respondent answered that they came across such cases less than once a month, and they are *of the type 'physical in the workplace' and 'psychological in the workplace and immediate surroundings.'."* (ED-HRCH) Another of the respondents gave a similar frequency of physical violence in their interview:. *"I don't know, there are various periods when several cases come at the same time, or not at all. I don't know, maybe in the realm of five a year. Probably less."* (ROZ18, 46-47)

One specific characteristic consists primarily of secondary victimisation, more specifically in being forced to come out and also in a kind of self-censorship of these people's private lives.

If, for example, a homosexual man becomes the victim of a motivated violent act, he must not only report the act, but also make public his sexual orientation public. This takes place not just at the police station, but most often also in his day-to-day environment. For this reason victims often think better of it and do not report the crime.

Concerns often stem not only from making one's sexual orientation public, but from meeting with antagonism at the police station, or at least with mocking comments. For this reason it would be appropriate to cooperate with an LGBT centre, which could be a first contact location point for victims and, after a relationship of trust is built up, the client could be referred to a victim counselling centre or the police.

By self-censorship of one's private life we mean the situation where a person is aware of belonging to a certain endangered group and fears a negative reaction. In the case of persons with a differing sexual orientation this means a fear of doing things in public that are completely normal for members of the majority, such as holding hands or kissing in public.

One important aspect was hardly mentioned at all in the interviews, but we should make reference to it nonetheless, and that is the process of coming out, which normally takes place during puberty, i.e. during a period when young people are in school and have to hope for the understanding of their schoolmates, teachers, and of course, parents.

*"One thing occurs to me. What we're working on on the committee for sexual minorities, that education in schools needs to be intensified. ... it is necessary and it is happening, dealing with the question of discrimination, bullying at specific schools, where gays and lesbians run up against hatred and lack of understanding at the time of their coming out. We don't have these cases on record because these people don't devote a lot of attention to a solution, because they're still in the phase where they're worrying about coming out and personal things and they can't deal with it. There's a lack of perspective and a possibility to deal with these things in some way."* (ROZ18, 235-241)

### 2.2.3. Reactions of the victims of hate violence

There are also other factors that unite victims of violence. Many of them become victims of criminality that is not directly motivated by hatred but which uses their marginalisation for an easy profit. For various reasons marginalised people have limited access to justice and therefore they do not report some acts they do not report at all, or are themselves charged as perpetrators. Another reason that they do not go to the police and do not react to insults and attacks is that they are resigned and do not believe that anyone can help them.

This is the hypothesis of one respondent that was contacted in the e-mail investigation. She works in an organisation that helps victims of human trafficking. In her opinion the victims of this phenomenon are persons who are marginalised in some way and thus have fewer options or interest in defending themselves. In the activating interviews there were then other respondents who confirmed this hypothesis.

Specifically these were cases where the victim was addicted to drugs and was forced to take out a loan on behalf of the perpetrator, or where homeless people sold their identity cards for a laughable sum or were exploited on the labour market. In the majority of cases these victims do not do anything to fight back, being having either resigned to their fate or feeling that the police or other authorities would not help them. Often these people are themselves wrongdoers in the eyes of the police and have no chance to prove otherwise.

For victims of hate violence, resignation is often a way to defend oneself and to come to terms with these attacks. This is also caused by the fact Also for the reason that the police, their surroundings, and society as a whole are of the opinion that through their behaviour they provoked this attack

themselves and should not be surprised that it took place. For the public this explanation of hate violence acts as a justification for its own racism.

The victims thus see that any reaction to such an attacks brings minimal or no improvement, and for this reason they therefore protect themselves by trying not to not let it get to them. We often heard this in relation to Roma who do not take notice of daily insults, or rather do not react to them. Another reaction is to avoiding places where such attacks could take place.

*"On the other hand only a small part of those in socially excluded locales that become victims of a hate crime are able to identify the situation as such. And they don't know at all what they should do in such a situation. Which means, I expect, that every second 'gypsy from the ghetto' has been a victim of such a crime, but it's such a common aspect of their life that they don't bother with it. If there were some kind of education campaign where the service was made more visible, then I can imagine that a long line of people would form here (I can't guess how long); in like half a year there would be countless numbers of clients."* (ROZ3, 86-92)

Particularly, though not exclusively, does the principle apply whereby the guilt is reversed. The victims of such acts are often told, whether directly or indirectly, that they themselves are responsible and to a certain extent provoked the attack.

This strategy, which leads to relativisation of the attacker's guilt, often occurs in connection with hate violence against Roma. Thus the specific act and guilt of the specific person involved in the attack are not addressed, but rather a strong generalisation is made and blame is often placed on the Roma, who are said to be perpetrators of crimes themselves.

*"Last year there was criminal activity here, where muggings were taking place on the street. According to the descriptions and according to what was gradually uncovered, they were being committed by young Roma. This brought problems that caused problems the other way around. People in some parts of Hradec knew what was going on (it was a question of two or three months before the activity was eliminated) and it caused a kind of blanket hatred for Roma. That was something that had to be dealt with. It pertained to one street, where there was a higher concentration. Patrols were increased there and they installed cameras in order to satisfy the complaints."* (ROZ15, 181-187)

This does not only pertain to Roma, however, but also to other minorities, be they homosexuals, drug addicts or others.

### 2.2.4. Monitoring of hate violence

*"Particularly now, when brutal racially-motivated violence has a tendency to find its way to us in Central Europe. It used to be done – it motivated the state State to do a good job of its statistics, because then they'd be compared to the NGO stats. It would definitely be worth it. It helps provide a picture of which areas are the worst or how the state is dealing with it. There are regions here where there's a tendency to sweep it under the carpet. Then you can have a situation where a substantially greater number of such acts suddenly pops up in one region. People always talked about Vysočina, for example, where there weren't many problems and then we suddenly discovered that there are powerful neo-Nazi cells in Světlá nad Sázavou, who were even terrorising the surrounding area. They were even searching out different types of victims than neo-Nazis in, say, Prague."* (ROZ9, 132-140)

The respondents criticise the current situation, where neither the official nor unofficial statistics make it possible to form a real picture of the number of cases of hate-motivated violence. The ministry's official statistics are incomplete, as many victims do not report these cases to the police at all. When they do, such cases are only rarely dealt with as cases with extremist overtones. Independent statistics on a central level do not exist at all, as organisations that would be

interested in such statistics do not have the capacity to collect the data, systematise it and publish the data. This is an activity that requires substantial human and financial resources. The non-existence of sources of financing in the Czech environment context is related to the inadequate importance attributed to this issue on the part of state authorities, as well as to a certain extent by civic society in general.

### a. Official monitoring

Currently the only monitoring related to hate violence in the Czech Republic is the official monitoring of the Interior Ministry, which is published annually in a regular report entitled "Information about the issue of extremism on the territory of the Czech Republic".[7] This report lists all criminal acts with a political undercurrent, broken down by article of the law. The number of violent criminal acts with extremist overtones, such as for example bodily harm, are is around 30 per year.[8] As several respondents stated, however, these data are incomplete and misrepresentative. *"First of all I think that the Interior Ministry should publish it. I still don't get why they stopped doing it. The statistics were always made public. How many there were and where. Then it was possible to search it out. It was always one case, one paragraph. Who did what to whom, where, and how it's being dealt with. That's what it was like before. But the authorities should search it out. Today it looks like there is a minimum of cases because there are few well-known cases."* (ROZ23, 108-113)

These missing statistics also weaken the position of non-profit organisations in their negotiations with state bodies, as they cannot base their arguments on official numbers: *"Another matter is the lack of analytical and statistical data that would allow public discussion or discussion with the bodies that should be dealing with it. That weakens us. If we don't have a good analysis then the Interior claims that the statistical numbers are falling. They are falling, but that doesn't mean anything."* (ROZ22, 241-244)

If we look at the chapter about the role of the police and state bodies in general, it is clear that the official monitoring cannot be sufficient;, because hate violence has a high level of dormancy, and for various reasons the greater part of criminal acts are not reported to the police at all all for various reasons, and therefore cannot be included in the official statistics. Another reason is the lack of willingness on the part of police and other bodies involved in criminal cases to investigate the crimes as crimes with a racially motivated or other political overtones.

### b. Independent monitoring

The second main reason for the lack of data is the non-existence of independent monitoring. Independent monitoring existed to a certain extent in the 1990s and even today some individual organisations attempt to keep statistics of the cases with which they come into contact, but no central exchange or collection of data takes place. *"Previously, Tolerance did this for Roma victims. In the nineties HOST did quite a detailed job. Recently I don't have any information about anyone systematically collecting information about cases not recorded by the police. I know that Markus Pape is trying to do something similar in the Silesian region in connection with that case from Vítkov. There are European centres against racism here, which are actually branches of European organisations. That's ENAR and RAXEN. But I don't think it's anything above and beyond what you can read in the government*

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[7]http://aplikace.mvcr.cz/archiv2008/dokument/index.html#extrem

[8]E.g., the report cited above (pg. 7) states that in that year 23 criminal acts were committed according to § 196 of the Criminal Code (violence against a group of inhabitants and individuals), 12 acts according to § 221, and 222 of the Criminal Code (intentional bodily harm) and one criminal act of murder according to § 219g.

*statistics. A network of people who collect the data systematically, there's nothing like that." (ROZ8, 140-146)*

As also shown by the discussion at the workshop we put on for organisations involved in research, the collection of data requires a certain capacity that has to be specially set aside for this activity. Organisations are thus aware of the importance of monitoring, but they are not willing to hand over their data to any kind of central organisation if the data and the energy put into them are not financially compensated in an appropriate manner. This is related to the overall financial situation of organisations active in this field. Aside from a few larger organisations, the majority of them are struggling to survive and are not capable or willing to repeatedly exploit the voluntary work and drive of their employees.

### 2.2.5. Counselling for victims of hate violence

*"Occasionally it happens that someone comes to us directly needing help in a specific case. More often though we just happen to find out that something happened to someone, but frequently it just isn't the subject of any kind of investigation, that there's just lots ..., or from what I register, responses or comments or whatnot, lots of them don't really want to deal with it or don't know how to deal with it. So for people to come to us directly, people who want something specific, to deal with a specific case, I don't see that very often."* (ROZ18, 39-44)

In the Czech Republic there are very few organisations or individuals specialising in counselling for victims of hate violence. Only one organisation and a few individuals concentrate on that topic exclusively, while a few others are capable of providing specific counselling, only however only as part of the given organisation's general activities. In general it can be said that the respondents are aware of the existence of hate violence and are even capable of providing support to their clients to a certain extent, with the exception of a few organisations that do not classify this type of counselling separately from their general activities and do not attach special significance to it. As could be seen in our quantitative study, these organisations do not plan on doing so in the future either.

One cause of this could be the fact that in both the general and the professional public there is no discussion of this topic and the majority of organisations have not taken the conscious step from acknowledging the existence of hate violence to actively supporting its victims. People active in this field have only a vague idea of what form such support could take, and consider their current activities in this field entirely sufficient. The first step could thus be for them to become aware of the existence of the specifics of counselling for victims of hate violence and to re-evaluate their own activities from the point of view of such counselling.

### a. Types of organisations

We can divide the organisations and individuals contacted into three major groups based on whether and what services they provide to their clients. In the first group are four organisations and two individuals who actively provide counselling, primarily legal counselling, but to a certain extent psychosocial counselling as well. What makes them notable is that they also perceive their counselling as specific counselling for victims of hate violence and even advertise it as such. Of course there are also marked differences among them. Alongside the organisation mentioned above that specifies counselling for victims of hate violence as its exclusive objective, other organisations or individuals also carry out different projects. They are, however, distinguished

from the second group by the fact that they consciously label their service as counselling for victims of hate violence.

The second and, largest group is made up of organisations that come into contact with cases of hate violence over the course of their work, but for various reasons do not provide these victims with any specific support, or do not identify their clients as victims of hate violence at all, and for this reason do not label any potential support for them as such. The reasons for this can include the fact that there are few such cases, that the clients do not turn to the given organisation for help, or that the organisation is not capable of assisting and refers them to others. *"I guess I'd give them a business card, tell them to go to somebody who does that specifically. At most I'd help them find the theoretical perpetrator, if they remembered what he looked like. I'd tell them to go to the police, but any kind of legal activity, raising money, not at all. I raise money for what we do. They have to go to a different organisation that can help them."* (ROZ23, 99-103)

Here we arrive at the third group, namely the organisations and individuals who do not deal with counselling for victims. In some cases, the reason for this is that they do not acknowledge the specifics of hate violence, whereas for others it is the fact that their activities are focused elsewhere and counselling for victims is not part of that, though they are aware of its importance.

**b. The importance of counselling for victims of hate violence**

Counselling for victims of hate violence is not a standardised process that is consistent in all countries and in all cases. Our project is financed by a German foundation and coordinated by a German civic association; it is therefore logical that the German approach played a role in formulating the framework of our project. It is necessary to emphasise, however, that the Czech organisations active in this field had their own ideas about how this type of assistance should work. In order to explain what is covered under the term "counselling for victims of hate violence", we can use a quote from one respondent who described this opinion on what such counselling should entail. Other respondents also mentioned the individual aspects of this process, so this is a description of an idealised case as perceived by multiple participants in this field. We will get into more detail on individual points and potentially conflicting points of view later.

*"It has several elements. The first level is the manner of communication with the client. Certain ethical standards for communicating with this person must be set. Sensitivity, non-aggression, listening. First contact should be based on the person talking as much as possible, so that the worker gets as much information as possible from them. I see the first point as simply basic intervention – that the person has the opportunity to tell someone what happened. That's what the person is lacking and what they are not being given. That's what they are utterly not afforded in, say, a criminal court case, and it's up to the organisation to provide it. The next step depends on the client's impetus. The clients should be responsible for their own situation and the organisation should not take it over. They shouldn't be made into a passive element. It should be clear and intelligibly explained to them what the organisation can do for them. What the organisation can do is primarily to deal with the legal aspect of the matter. Help with pressing charges; help with representation in the criminal proceedings. Explain what kind of satisfaction they can demand from the perpetrator. Explain the methods, in what way to be in contact with the perpetrator. Including the possibilities for mediation, this can be somewhat controversial in such cases, but not entirely ruled out. The possibility of a civil lawsuit if the person's good name is damaged, etc. Representing the person in court should also be a component, whether by the organisation itself or through a lawyer. In an ideal case the organisation would have a fund from which it could pay for legal services if the person lacks the means. In addition to all that the organisation should be able to provide psychological assistance for the person. So at first contact, the person should get information about all the services that the organisation can offer or*

*arrange for. What follows should be based on what the person wants and what they solicit. The organisation should always only do things the person has agreed with. If the organisation is able to, it should also offer the person the possibility of publicising their case in the media."* (ROZ1, 154-175)

As noted in quote, counselling can be divided into legal, psychological and social components. The interviews showed that a large number of the respondents only associate victim counselling with legal counselling, or at least that legal counselling (from drawing up charges through representation at court) is considered the most important thing needed by a potential client. Thus the organisations contacted often claimed that they do not provide victims of hate violence with any or with only insufficient counselling, even though the spectrum of services they provided was actually quite wide.

*"And then it's a problem looking for a new job. The person feels alone, they don't know what to do about it. They need to go talk about it with someone. We know this situation. People come and talk about a problem even though we can't really help resolve it. We tell them to find another job."* (ROZ11, 224-227)

There were many such quotes, where the respondents were not aware that in this way they could provide – or to a certain extent already are providing – considerable help. Before the client makes up their mind about whether they want legal or social help and turns to someone for professional advice, they need someone to give their case the proper name and to take it seriously. This is not always psychological counselling, and even counselling centres in Germany do not always have a qualified psychologist in their team.

### 2.2.6. Counselling methodology

This chapter is focused on various proposals for the optimal organisation of counselling for victims of hate violence. Respondents both presented their own experiences and formulated hypothetical recommendations. One part of the recommendations dealt with coordination between the various components of counselling, particularly by emphasising the specifics of purely legal counselling on the one hand, which should be rational and unemotional, and psychological and social counselling on the other, which in contrast must reflect the specifics of hate violence and the trauma it can cause in victims. Compared to experiences from Germany, it is evident that respondents in the Czech Republic markedly prefer legal counselling and either do not address other types of counselling at all or do not consider them as important.

### a. Contact between the client and the counselling organisation

In this chapter we arrive at some specific aspects of counselling processes and problems that arise in practice. The first approach follows up on the preceding chapter. A large part of the interviews dealt with the question of how to make and maintain contact between the client and the counselling organisation. One group of respondents emphasised the importance of this first contact and held that as few barriers as possible should be imposed at first contact. The best approach would thus be for ordinary contact centres, such as those for foreigners, or for gays and lesbians, homeless shelters and Roma organisations, to actively or passively seek out clients during their regular activities and, after establishing a relationship of trust and defining the needs of the given client, to refer them to professional counsellors, whether general legal counsellors or specialised counselling centres for victims of hate violence.

*"I can imagine it being one of the services we offer. I suppose we wouldn't want to limit ourselves completely. If it relates to foreigners, then I guess so. On the other hand we don't have any experience with criminal matters. It would definitely have to be dealt with through training of some sort and staffing. I can*

*imagine it more as working with another organisation that specialises in it. We help more with residence issues for foreigners and the like."* (ROZ16, 94-98)

Another variant is that these two functions (making initial contact and subsequent professional counselling) be connected within one organisation, as described in the following quote. The argument presented was that the complexity of the problems could be dealt with within a single organisation. That way the client would not need to make contact with multiple organisations, which could potentially deter them from seeking out help. Spatial proximity also plays a role with the client finding everything in one place.

*"1: Whether you think it would need a specialised counselling centre...*

*2: I don't think so. Because most of the time, when a person comes in, other things come up as well. I'm more of the opinion that it should be done the way we do it. Have a contact station where a person comes in, and then to have specialists for various areas."* (ROZ12, 65-69)

It can be said, however, that this approach is based on a narrow understanding of counselling for victims, as was described in more detail in relation to the relationship between legal and psychological counselling.

### b. The specialisation of the counselling organisations

We should also briefly mention the question of whether there should be counselling centres for victims of hate crimes that are specialised only in a single group of victims – e.g. only for the homeless, for Roma, or for gays. Here the answers were universally negative, primarily for the reason that the market would be too splintered. One of the arguments was also that overspecialisation excludes certain marginal groups that would then have the feeling that they have nowhere to turn.

The question of specialising in certain target groups also brought up a conflict related to the "ethnicisation" of the problem of hate violence. While one of the respondents put great emphasis on "de-ethnicising" the issue and expected that this would result in greater public support, another based their counselling on the fact that it is provided only to a certain ethnic group because of that group's limited access to justice. Another approach that also rejects ethnic labelling claims that although the overall majority of clients are Roma, the reason for their marginalisation is not their ethnicity, but their social standing.

### c. The regional aspect

Another important issue is the level of regionalisation of counselling centres. While this could not exactly be called a controversy among the respondents, emphasis was certainly placed on differing aspects. While one respondent emphasised the existence of a single central organisation that devotes itself professionally to all victims of hate violence, another respondent pointed out the limits of such a central organisation, which would be unable to maintain close contact with the client over the long term while also support them on the spot. This position thus accentuates the necessity of creating a wide network of local organisations working together, and  would make and maintain contact with clients and make use of specific expertise from a central professional counselling centre. A network of local initiatives and associations working together is imperative for functional counselling. The point is not just for clients to be contacted and new cases to be sought out, but also for the centre to be able to "refer" the clients to local associations that provide the sufferers with the feeling that they are not alone against the world.

*"You can see that for more long-term work there should be a person there to motivate people. Only a person who has been working with them at a local level for a long period knows how to do that. ... The approach of these local organisations is that they can't see a long ways ahead. They only see the everyday problems. But I*

*understand that, they have a different mission. So this needs to be joined up a little bit and it won't be easy. Like when someone beats someone up somewhere and there isn't anyone there, who's there all the time, living with them and not just commuting. Just someone who knows them and lives there with them. So this can only be done through these local organisations."* (ROZ6, 71-78)

**d. Similarities to the development of counselling for the victims of domestic violence**
Several respondents mentioned the parallel between hate violence and domestic violence, which deserves to be given more space. This parallel shows up on several levels. The first is the similarity between the effects of these acts have on the victim. In both cases the victim is often in an unequal position compared to the perpetrator and is almost constantly exposed to potential attacks.

In the case of domestic violence there is already a relatively extensive network of resource centres, which serve as a model for some organisations wanting to provide counselling for victims of hate violence. Above all, however, these organisations are inspirational due to the process that took place in recent years in the Czech Republic, whereby domestic violence is now perceived as a serious problem across society and there are special tools, whether counselling for victims or training for police officers, that are meant to deal with this problem. At the same time, however, the respondents are also aware of the complications and the differences involved. The main difference is the perception of the victims of these two types of violence by the general public – on the one hand are women, while on the other hand are Roma, drug addicts, the homeless, etc. The interest of the public or the authorities involved in criminal proceedings in improving the situation of victims of hate violence is thus much lower.

*"Take domestic violence, say, where there was public support, cops react to that a little better, but it's a long-term change to change the victims' way of thinking. We had a seven-year programme for domestic violence in various structures and I give that as a good comparison of how long it takes, even when there's demand in society, for something to change. So to change things so that the police treat Roma better, that will take a lot longer. And because the police operate in that environment of criminality, drugs and the like, it will be difficult for them to switch over to a different way of thinking. That's more the domain of intellectuals, to make those distinctions. So these societal problems are complicated."* (ROZ6, 130-136)

Aside from the proposals for various organisational and thematic configurations for counselling centres for victims of hate violence, there were also of course views that rejected the mere creation of such centres on principle. The reasoning for this was the feeling that there are not enough clients, or that the police are competently capable of competently dealing with the existing cases.

**2.2.7. The public and state authorities**

*"I think that it's present primarily in that it's going on. It's not present in society as a kind of comprehensive issue, because society doesn't, in my opinion, consider it overly important. It is present from the point of view of public opinion in the case that they run into the activities of neo-Nazis. I think that society in general doesn't see that hate crimes aren't just committed by neo-Nazis, but by society in general too, that they themselves are doing it. They don't notice the relatively minor forms of hate crime, like xenophobic jokes, insults against Roma. They don't perceive that it could affect those people in some way."* (ROZ1, 24-30)

**a. The climate in society**
It is not just in the work of non-profit organisations, but also in the general public and media as well that hate violence is just as marginalised as its victims. As we already mentioned, the public is

not often unable to put itself in the situation of the victim and to take into account the fact that hate violence is not just an issue of neo-Nazis or right-wing extremists, but of all citizens. Minor insults, thoughtlessness, xenophobic jokes – these all create a climate in society that pushes certain groups of citizens to the fringes. In the preceding chapter we dealt more closely with the police, but a similar approach can be identified among other groups as well, for example among local politicians. Marginalised groups are an easy targets and verbal attacks against them in particular often score easy political points.

*"So the worst thing I see in it, in this issue, is the passivity of the public administration, going as far as populist gestures from the majority of municipal politicians against homeless people. The attempts to push them somewhere completely out of civilisation, so that they can't be seen, so that they don't get in the way, so that they don't spoil the credibility of the city, as the Mayor said. I see this as a problem, because local politicians need their votes every four years and the homeless aren't voters. So they say these things that they think the public wants to hear, thereby of course influencing the public in a negative sense. So I see that as the biggest problem related to this violence."* (ROZ10, 5-12)

This climate in society naturally does not make things any easier for organisations that work to help victims of hate violence or who bring together marginalised groups. A certain level of xenophobia and everyday racism is the norm in society and does not offend anyone even when it turns up in the media, in speeches by local politicians, or even more and more frequently among national politicians and well-known personalities. Attempts to change this situation and above all to support people from these negatively perceived groups are naturally quite complicated when we realise that they are to be implemented by public workers that in many cases share these prejudices.

### b. Media

The media play a paradoxical role in connection with hate violence. On the one hand it can be said that for some time now the media have been clearly on the side of the victims and cast a highly negative light on neo-Nazis and right-wing extremists. In serious cases of brutal attacks the media can set off a major wave of solidarity with the victims, such as in the case of two-year-old Natálka, who suffered serious burns after a flaming bottle was thrown at the house of a Roma family. However, regional and internet media in particular often use, and as a result support, public animosity against Roma in their news reports, and especially in criminal cases they emphasise the ethnicity of the perpetrators.

*"Generally speaking all media in the Czech Republic always condemned these attacks. But that's the main media. There is a difference here between the main media and local papers. Local papers in the nineties tended more to take the side of the attackers. When we look at what Respect wrote about the pogroms in Klatovy and Rokycany in 1990, the tone of the piece is similar to what is written critically now. The change came about nine years ago when the media started to be careful in indicating that, say, a theft was committed by Roma. But on the other hand I have the feeling that it's been changing again in the last two years. On the one hand they write almost hysterically against right-wing extremists, but on the other hand we can read that it was Roma that stole something, or Roma that attacked someone, etc."* (ROZ8, 58-64)

### b. Police

Just as with prevention, the role of the police was also not included in the set of questions for the activating interview, even though we discussed this topic in the project group and expected that it would appear in the interviews, which to a large extent was confirmed. With only three exceptions, all the respondents commented on the police, and in the great majority of cases their comments were negative. In the opinion of the respondents there is a general lack of trust in the work of the

police among their clients and marginalised groups in the Czech Republic. This has its roots in both the personal experiences of these persons, as well as in the experiences of their friends and acquaintances. This mistrust primarily manifests itself in the fact that victims of hate crimes refuse to take their cases to the police. What causes this?

*"Fear. Dependence. Style of life. In the case of conflicts with skinheads it is likely the disbelief that the police would do anything about it."* (ROZ13, 165-166)

The causes are highly varied in different cases. Often respondents mention a general distrust or resignation that they notice in their clients. *"If a physical attack takes place, they likely don't know where to go. When they do decide that they can go to the police, they then start to doubt whether the police will help them, whether they won't try to discourage them from dealing with it. And they don't actually know where else they can go where they won't try to talk them out of it."* (ROZ14, 110-113)

Another cause is the unwillingness or the inability of the police to spend time on these clients' cases. This is not only true of hate violence cases – there is a certain degree of mistrust of the police in the general public as well.

It is not just the excess of work, however, that can lead individual police officers to try to brush aside certain cases that to them seem insignificant. A large part of the criticism is caused by the police's lack of interest, and by their inability to put themselves in the victim's place. Yet no special qualifications are needed for this – , for example from psychology –, just an ordinary human approach and decent behaviour. In some cases this oafishness on the part of individual police officers can be very counterproductive and lead to the situation spinning out of control.

Respondents even recounted other situations where individual police officers demonstrated behaviour that could at least be labelled bullying, in some cases even bodily harm. The astonishing thing about this is the extent to which these acts were deliberate and calculated, which can be explained by the racist tendencies of individual police officers. We thus come back to the typical motive for hate violence, which is the conviction that certain people are inferior, and which justifies the violence perpetrated against them. After such experiences, a lack of trust in the police is understandable. Police officers abused their position, which takes away any possibility for the victims to defend themselves, even if they would have tried.

*"What I can't understand is why they check them in the night every two hours in some thrown together shelter so that they can't get a good night's sleep, so that they leave. People don't do it because they're aware that they're violating the law against camping. So they're hardly about to report that the police officer was vulgar, that he poured water on them, that he sliced open their tent and so forth. So really inhumane things take place. Where there's no plaintiff, there's no judge. The value of these people's testimony is also very low; often they've drank something as well, so they don't even really know where it happened."* (ROZ10, 131-136)

If we leave aside the cases mentioned above, which should be investigated as criminal acts by the police officers against the specific persons involved, a certain logic can in fact be found in the police officers' behaviour, one inherent in the structural set-up of the whole system.

*"For the police, an important role is played by whether they say they will solve it as a racist act, or whether the motive will be unclear. They tend toward the unclear motive because right now there's pressure from above that racially motivated acts have to be cleared up. And they're motivated to solve those acts and that's a mistake of the 'checkmark' system. So a good police officer isn't the one who is filled in that there's a concert being organised and reports it, the good one is the one that has a mark for finding the culprits. For him the best thing to do is to pick up some drunk at a football game, because that's a mark. As soon as the case is unclear and they don't know whether they'll solve it, they'll try to investigate it as a non-racial criminal act, in order not to have it in the unsolved column. When it's clear, they'll happily put down that it was a racially motivated criminal act, because they'll be praised for that."* (ROZ8, 95-103)

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Aside from the abundance of negative cases, however, we must also mention several examples of positive behaviour from police officers, or rather more of a differentiated perspective.

*"1: The person I was talking to told me that if someone goes to the police three times as a perpetrator and the fourth time as a victim, then they'll treat him the same as a perpetrator. Can that be expected here too? 2: I used to think so too, but now I don't. I'm more convinced that it depends on the specific person. At the local police station there are lots of boys from the surrounding villages that we know working there."* (ROZ2, 182-185)

Three respondents also pointed out that the behaviour of police officers is more professional if one looks at units that have a higher position in the police structures.

*"I had an experience now with one client and the police where I think the investigation was poorly conducted right from the start. Then it was transferred to the criminal investigation police and there it seemed to me that they take it relatively seriously."* (ROZ16, 12-14)

### d. The state

Mistrust on the part of victims does not apply only to the police, but in general to all state authorities, or "the system". Victims meet with rejection, a lack of understanding and animosity everywhere. When the situation then comes to a head in the form of a physical assault, they do not have the feeling that anyone is interested in helping them. In cases where these persons become victims of criminality due to their marginalisation, and not hate violence, this long-cultivated distrust of "the system" is a barrier to them claiming their fundamental rights. *"These are serious things. Like rape. We're not capable of getting the girls to go report it."* (ROZ13, 171-172)

This mistrust of everything official often has its roots in these people's own experiences, which are formed over dozens of years, and it is not easy to change this in a short period, if at all.

*"They have a general distrust of psychologists and therapists, because the majority of clients have gone through the facilities at Bílá Voda, which is a mental institution, or they've been in another institution or served time and have a general distrust of doctors and these people. The therapist that works with us tries to break this down. So far it's been working, but there aren't that many clients that work with her. It's a group of maybe ten people."* (ROZ2, 74-79)

### 2.2.8. Resolving structural problems: prevention and education

*"Right, it's not fully clear with these campaigns what the impact is and who the target group is. I say that the biggest problem is the racist mother-types. They work in the public sector, they shut Roma children away into institutions, as teachers they siphon them off into separate schools ... And they're not even the mothers of those skinheads, there are plenty of them too. So these, if someone was to focus on them, they'd murder off half the population...."* (ROZ6, 240-243)

### a. Prevention

The topic of prevention was not part of the series of questions for the activating interview. Nonetheless, respondents spoke about it because they themselves considered it important, which to a certain extent increases its significance. From the point of view of these organisations, prevention primarily includes activities aimed outwards, at the general public, and particularly to the professional public. The objective of preventative activities is to improve the image of minorities that make up the organisations' clients. This can be achieved through media activities, for example through ads making fun of neo-Nazis. More important however are seminars and other educational activities for the professional public – teachers, social workers, police officers

and civil servants – so-called "multipliers", who are in contact with many people in their profession and who, through their work, can prevent hate violence or help victims of violence, to help them better deal with their situation or at least not to worsen it.

In the Czech Republic there is a tradition of public campaigns on various topics, including campaigns against right-wing extremism. The main aspect of these campaigns is ridiculing members and sympathisers of these groups and (neo-) Nazi ideology in general. One example is the well-known campaign, "Be Kind to Your Local Nazi". The problem however is that these campaigns do not deal with the depicted ideology and do not offer any alternative. Their aim is merely to reduce the attractiveness of these groups for potential supporters among young people. Perhaps this is one of the reasons that respondents called for public campaigns that could act as a form of prevention against hate crimes. *"In our country, education campaigns, that would probably be the best use of money."* (ROZ4, 158) One positive thing we can observe is that respondents have evidently thought about what such a campaign could look like and what other activities could accompany it.

*"I would say that it should be divided up into multiple parts. To show the good cases, what worked where, or like the television campaign, 'If you don't think, you'll pay'. It should also be done in the form of seminars or training for civil servants, for teachers, so that it gets out to the professional public as well, because even among teachers and public workers not everyone is at a level that they don't exude racism. Or definitely among politicians too; I wouldn't aim the campaign in just one direction, just articles aren't enough, it should be a long-term campaign, but you need money for that."* (ROZ4, 53-58)

Aside from nation-wide campaigns, another thing that is important for the respondents is everyday activities focused outward that and contributing to doing away with prejudices toward the clients of these organisations. A positive aspect here again is the emphasis on systematic and not one-off activities.

*"Of course it would help if teachers would accept accountability for dealing with cases. If they close their eyes to it or sweep it under the carpet that someone physically or verbally assaults the children, then next time the aggressor will do it again."* (ROZ11, 199-202)

The importance of prevention at schools also turned up in connection with other problems (see Specifics of LGBT – ROZ18, 235-241). It is not only an issue of multicultural education for the students however, but it is about training the teachers, school psychologists and social workers so that they know how to deal with this issue themselves. The regret, that social workers, the police, civil servants, etc. lack sufficient empathy and a prejudice-free approach to these clients was a recurring theme in all the interviews. This is why the respondents put such great emphasis on the necessity for further educating these workers. We already noted more detailed criticism, primarily of police officers. Their poor behaviour is, according to one respondent, just a result of the overall mood in society.

*"I'm more of the opinion that public opinion has to be changed. That's the main problem. Because if public opinion is so warped, then that's how courts, the police and authorities act as well."* (ROZ10, 60-61)

**b. Education**

A problem mentioned several times already is the lack of public or even professional discussion of the topic of hate violence. Thus there is a lack of public awareness on this topic, including among experts. Several respondents mentioned their own attempts to implement certain structural changes. This primarily related to adding instruction about the topic of hate violence and the treatment of victims to university curricula. This would not be a new field of study, but a step that would span across departments. Future lawyers would thus encounter cases of representing such victims, psychology students would get acquainted with the specifics of such traumas, and

likewise so it would be for students of social work, journalism, etc. However, none of the respondents however had yet been successful with such a proposal. These proposals did not only related to instruction, but also to involving students in specific support through practical work in non-profit organisations.

**c. Co-operation between state authorities and NGOs**

The criticism of police mentioned in the preceding chapter also had a constructive element that can also be expanded to apply to other professions. Non-profit organisations often represent an enormous source of experience and practical and theoretical knowledge that can be very helpful for police officers and civil servants, for example. The public activity of several neo-Nazi groups has been growing recently, which has led to various manuals being drawn up, particularly for public employees in charge of public assembly. There is a great potential for changing the existing situation through cooperation between governmental and non-governmental organisations. There are, however, certain concerns on both sides that often prevent such cooperation from taking place.

*"I also work at Bílý kruh bezpečí. When the new law against domestic violence was being created, a manual for police officers, healthcare workers and social workers was also put together. And they trained police officers. That was addressed through legislation. Bílý kruh bezpečí has a big name because it works with this target group. Maybe they won't approach us [ROZ13] because they don't like us because of what group we work with."* (ROZ13, 318-322)

The lack of willingness on the part of non-profits to cooperate is often motivated by the fact that hate violence, along with other aspects related to it (e.g. migration), fall under the jurisdiction of the Interior Ministry. Some organisations go so far as to work voluntarily rather than apply for a grant from that the Ministry for their projects. At the level of the police this leads to the fact that a certain police officer is responsible for both the suppression of extremist acts and for prevention, thereby standing on both sides, which of course in the eyes of victims lowers their trustworthiness. The role of other ministries in this field is thus unclear.

*"The question is whether it falls only under the jurisdiction of the Interior Ministry. Assistance for victims could be done by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, which I don't know what they're doing in this field. We did a project for them once, and put an enormous amount of energy into it, and they simply said that they don't do that. Maybe there's something similar under the Ministry of Justice, but we don't know that either. The Education Ministry is launching a big programme against extremism right now. I spoke with them at a conference. They're interested in absolutely everything, but essentially they don't know what they should do concretely. So that could be one of the motives for them. They do have some programmes for children and some handbooks, but they don't have a clear system."* (ROZ8, 107-114)

**2.2.9. Summary of the results**

During the interviews that took place as part of the study, an enormous number of topics came up that would be worth mentioning. The preceding analysis is an attempt to cover the most important aspects of hate violence in the Czech Republic as well as the societal and political framework in which this violence takes place.

One of our main goals was to identify the groups that are actually made victims of hate violence in the Czech Republic. Through an e-mail survey and activation interviews we managed to address a wide range of organisations and individuals representing all the groups mentioned in traditional definitions of hate violence. It is clear from their responses that all these groups really do become victims hate violence, though to differing degrees. The form of the study naturally does not allow us to generalise, but we can nevertheless make a few important conclusions. The most important

and also most anticipated one conclusion is that the most frequently affected group in the Czech Republic are the Roma, particularly in terms of verbal violence, commonly even transmitted by the media. The level of physical violence against homeless people is also disconcerting.

In light of the completely insufficient comprehensive monitoring of hate violence, no one in the Czech Republic is able to provide reliable statistics on the number of cases and the specific victims of hate violence. Most people taking part in the interviews expected that our study would be able to provide such data, but this was neither possible nor our aim. None of the respondents had data that would allow a reliable estimate of the degree to which individual groups are at risk. This does not mean that there are not organisations monitoring hate violence in the Czech Republic. In the great majority of cases though, this involves unsystematic, random collection of certain data, whether from the media or conversely from the respondent's close surroundings.

In the interviews, the respondents provided a detailed description of their practical experiences from working with victims of hate violence. At the same time, they thought about how professional counselling for victims could be set up, as only a small number of them are currently involved in such practices. The necessity of making contacts with other partners at the regional level played a major role, particularly in terms of finding out about specific cases, contacting potential clients and working together with local organisations to support them. Another key topic of the interviews was the need to find funding for professional legal counselling, which the currently active parties in the Czech Republic lack. Also of note was that some respondents demonstrated a certain underestimation of psychological counselling.

A further aim of the study was to examine the social and political framework in the Czech Republic. For this reason the respondents also included persons from the academic sphere or those acquainted with the situation in the media or state sector. It emerged quite clearly that hate violence is not an individual problem, i.e. a conflict between the victim and the perpetrator, but rather a society-wide problem. Counselling for victims of this type of violence is thus an essential factor in dealing with this problem and can be a very important form of support for victims, but it cannot affect its causes. Hate violence is still perceived primarily in connection with right-wing extremism in the Czech Republic. There is thus a lack of public discussion on the topic of everyday racism and discrimination at the political level as well as in the media, schools, workplace, etc. The vast media coverage of cases of brutal physical violence at the expense of common, unspectacular, but nevertheless alarming expressions of widespread animosity toward certain segments of the population supports this "extremised" perception of hate violence even further.

# 3. Recommendations

Based on our evaluations of both studies as well as discussions at the internal seminar and within the working group, we have formulated a set of recommendations that in our opinion could improve the situation of hate violence victims in the Czech Republic. The vast majority are general steps that can and should be made more concrete and put into practice in further phases. However, this phase is not part of our project.

**1. Add the perspective of hate violence victims to the public discourse**
Hate violence is usually seen by the organisations as an important problem that they are also aware of in connection with their clients as well. It is nevertheless a highly abstract term that remains on a theoretical level and does not lead the respondents to take any concrete steps on behalf of affected clients. There is a lack of public discussion in both the Czech and professional public that would sufficiently reflect on this problem from the point of view of those affected while also presenting their interests. When hate violence does appear in the media, it is only presented as individual acts without mention of the specific characteristics of such cases. Public discussion initiated by non-profit organisations could put this issue into context and bring in the perspective of victims.

**2. Move away from the right-wing extremism angle**
When hate violence, meaning concrete offences, does get into the media, the discussion tends to revolve around the role of the perpetrators, presented as right-wing extremists. This narrowing of the problem only to only right-wing extremism can for one thing be seen as a sub-conscious rejection of shared responsibility for "everyday" racism in general society, but it also leads to a narrowing of the perception of hate violence, which from this perspective includes only racist acts (leaving out violence due to sexual orientation, or violence against the homeless, against drug addicts or against political opponents). The attempt to promote the term hate violence is thus an effort to move away from this narrow understanding of the problem and to enrich the discourse as outlined in the first point.

**3. Implement independent monitoring**
The lack of hate violence monitoring is seen as a major shortcoming. This criticism is directed at both state bodies (for inadequate official monitoring), as well as at our own ranks. The primary reason for the non-existence of independent monitoring is the lack of capacity, in terms of both financing and staffing. Various organisations collect data in their field, but these data are not pooled centrally because there is no one willing to put in the time and energy. On the other hand, these individual organisations rightfully expect that their data and the energy put into collection should be financially compensated. However, no one has the resources for this however. Experience from Germany, for example, shows that high-quality independent monitoring has motivated state institutions to professionalise their own data collection methods. This should also be a priority in the Czech Republic. More precise data would also help spark public debate about the issue of hate violence.

**4. Present the particulars of counselling for hate violence victims**

Aside from a few exceptions, counselling for hate violence victims is not seen as a separate and clearly defined activity with its own clear characteristics. On the one side are the victims, who do not know that they could demand this service, and on the other side are the already existing counselling centres that are not aware they could offer it. If organisations do know this specific counselling, they imagine that it primarily means legal counselling or even representation at court. As a result they underestimate the often wide spectrum of existing activities that they already offer but call something else. This of course leads to these activities being only ad hoc and non-systematic; they do however represent the rudiments of counselling for victims. Certain aspects of hate violence, though, require a specific approach to clients, which is often lacking at these counselling centres.

**5. Create a network of cooperating organisations**

It is neither realistic nor desirable for all the aforementioned counselling centres to professionalise their activities in the field of counselling for victims of hate violence. Although they are or should be able to provide first intervention, it is of primary importance to create a network of organisations that can be a first contact points for clients. One or a few professional counselling centres cannot cover the whole country without the help of these regional and local organisations that on the one hand serve as a trustworthy partners for the victims and mediate between clients and counsellors, and on the other hand are also available as a contact points after the counselling process has ended.

**6. Use existing contacts and the potential for training and internships for counselling staff**

For existing counselling centres and non-profit organisations there is a potential for further education of their employees on the topic of counselling for hate violence victims. These training sessions and internships require inspiration from abroad, where counselling and monitoring has a greater tradition. Some organisations already have good contacts in Great Britain, Germany and Russia that could be intensified through joint seminars or twinning projects. The content of training must be diversified in relation to the needs and experiences of the participating organisations.

**7. Intensify programs for further education of professionals (police, social workers, and the media)**

One fundamental shortcoming is the lack of experience with the given issue on the part of professionals that come into direct contact with hate violence victims or who influence the perception of this problem. First and foremost the police, social workers and the media need training on the topic of hate violence and how to deal with its victims. Here, too, there is a great potential for partnership between state institutions and non-profit organisations.

**8. Launch an exchange of experiences between the academic and non-profit sectors**

Hate violence is missing from the tertiary education of these professionals – both on the theoretical and practical level. This relates to both fields such as psychology and social work, as well as to law or police training. Collaboration with non-profit organisations could be initiated through practical internships, which are a boon for both the student in question and for the non-profit, which acquires a theoretical impulse for its work. Universities can follow specific projects and draw on the data gathered.

**9. Break up the ingrained departmental division on the part of government institutions – consider support for victims of hate violence as a cross-sector problem**

On the part of government institutions there is also a lack of a well thought-out strategy for the prevention of hate violence and support for its victims. This issue falls primarily under the jurisdiction of the Interior Ministry. The line is thus blurred between prevention and repression and emphasis is placed on wiping out right-wing extremism and not on supporting the victims of violence. Other ministries (Justice, Education, Labour and Social Affairs) should become more involved in dealing with this problem. One result of the current situation is the lack of financing for organisations that for ethical reasons refuse to cooperate with the Interior Ministry. Concrete legislative changes in general are also needed to improve the status of victims of hate crimes and crime in general. There is a lack of any long-term concept, which is also felt in the short-term financing of projects.

**10. Move from one-off activities to new prevention concepts for the general public**

There is a tradition of public campaigns in the Czech Republic and some of them have been targeted against neo-Nazism and right-wing extremism. Many organisations accentuate the significance of these campaigns in relation to hate violence as well. For the reasons given above, however, campaigns against neo-Nazism overly narrow down the problem and do not bring any concrete improvement to the situation of hate violence victims. Also lacking is a consensus on basic shared values such as human rights and human dignity, which neo-Nazis and right-wing extremists react against, but which are not sufficiently grounded in society at large either. Campaigns cannot remain isolated but must attain a strategic position by creating positive role models in fields relevant to society (for example through the active recruiting of minorities for sports clubs).

**11. Utilise and appreciate the professional potential of non-profit organisations**

The non-profit sector today has great professional potential and expertise in fields such as monitoring and representing victims of police violence, working with minorities or mapping out the activities of neo-Nazi and right-wing extremist groups. Non-profits do not however have the finances to hold on to these professionals – they are only capable of funding them on a project-by-project basis, and these projects are usually short-term and very demanding administratively. Foreign foundations only finance model projects and refuse to support projects already underway.

**Annex 1**

**Questionnaire of the e-mail survey**
The goal of this questionnaire is to map out the services for victims of hate-motivated violence.
*Violence motivated by hate is understood to mean violence toward persons due to their real or perceived race, connection to an ethnic group, nationality, political conviction, confession, sexual orientation, sex, age, health or affiliation with another group.*

Question 1
Do you encounter clients that have experiences with attacks for the aforementioned reasons? What sort?

Question 2
How often do you encounter such clients?

Question 3
Do you provide targeted services to such clients?

Question 4
If so, what sort?:
- Psychiatric counselling
- Legal counselling
- Social counselling
- Provision of information
- Ad hoc counselling
- Help line
- Other services – please specify

Question 5
Do you actively seek out victims of such attacks actively?

Question 6
If so, how?

Question 7
Are you considering providing services for this type of client in the future? What kind of services are you considering?

Question 8
When a victim of an attack turns to you and your organisation is unable to offer them any assistance, which other organisation would you recommend?

# FORGOTTEN VICTIMS
## Hate Crimes and Victim Assistance in the Czech Republic. A summary

The printed Czech version of the final report of the project "Hate Crimes – Forgotten Victims" was published in November 2010. You can download the brief summary of the final report in English and German here: www. kulturbuero-sachsen.de and www.stiftung-evz.de