

## Dissemination event – Turin, 20 October 2023 TRUST and STAND-UP - Online and offline hate: cooperative and preventive models

Agenfor International Foundation presented, with the support of the Municipality of Turin, the joint work of the European projects TRUST and STAND-UP at CTE NEXT, House of Emerging Technologies, a dissemination event on hate phenomena and the public-private cooperation model. Among the speakers, the Councillor Giovanna Pentenero, Municipality Councillor Abdullahi Ahmed, and RAN expert Diletta Berardinelli.

The conference was well attended, in presence as well as online, by Muslim communities in particular, women, who are still the most affected group in Italy, but also by representatives of civil society associations and organisations.



The event opened with the presentation of Viviana Gullo (Junior Project Manager at Agenfor International) on the European projects TRUST and STAND-UP, which focus is on the implementation of a model to counter and prevent hate phenomena, based on public-private cooperation, starting from the analysis of phenomena in the online reality.

The speaker and moderator briefly presented the essentials for understanding hate crime and hate speech, starting with the definitions of under-reporting and under-recording. It is important to start with these definitions because discrimination, intolerance and hatred towards individuals or communities on the grounds of gender, ethnicity, religion, or other aspects of a person's identity are still widespread in our society. The limited or lack of reporting and recording of hate phenomena foments their recurrence, “normalising hatred”. According to interviews conducted during the first months of TRUST, Ms. Gullo continues, it is precisely the tolerance of Muslim women who have experienced discrimination, crimes and hate speech that is emphasised, i.e. the reality of considering the reporting or denouncing of such violations useless, which prevents the phenomena from being combated.



**Under-reporting:** limit in the number of reports from targets and witnesses of the hate phenomena

**Under-recording:** limited registration of the number of complaints and institutional data

**Escalation:** derives from the social acceptance of discrimination against some minority groups (phenomenon of the “normalization of hate”) that favours the increase of hate crimes

**Multi-offensiveness:** hate phenomena affect primarily the target, but also their community and the society as a whole



To understand the work of the TRUST and STAND-UP Consortia, it is also necessary to specifically define hate phenomena, starting with the OSCE-ODIHR and Council of Europe definitions, so that precise action can be taken. In this regard, therefore, the Agenfor International representative outlined two other essential elements for defining hate crimes and hate speech: multi-offensiveness and the risk of escalation.



**Hate crime:**

Hate Crime

Reporting, OSCE-ODIHR]

“crimes motivated by prejudice or prejudice against particular groups of people”.

- a crime, including threats, damage to property, assault, murder or any other crime committed with a motivation based on a particular characteristic of the target (bias motivation);
- bias motivation, including intolerance, stereotyping or hatred based on the victim's ethnicity, language, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, disability, gender or other characteristic.



**Hate speech:**

[Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)16, Council of Europe]

“all types of expression that incite, promote, spread or justify violence, hatred or discrimination against a person or group of persons, or that denigrates them, by reason of their real or attributed personal characteristics or status such as race, colour, language, religion, nationality, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity and sexual orientation”.

These elements are fundamental for defining intervention strategies, in particular, because the model developed through STAND-UP starts precisely from the analysis of the online world, more precisely through specific methodologies, such as OSINT systems.

Hence, a need to involve key players from both the public and private sectors, i.e. law enforcement agencies, but also municipalities, NGOs and associations dealing with victim protection, but also and primarily the communities directly affected.





After the introduction, Councillor Pentenero took the floor to outline the work carried out in recent years by the Municipality of Turin, from which the TRUST Consortium took its cue for the implementation of the Action Plan - which is still ongoing in Palermo, Milan and Trento.

Indeed, in 2016, the Municipality initiated a series of activities dedicated to interculturalism as a vector of exchange with Muslim communities. A significant moment is highlighted by the Memorandum of Understanding with the 26 Islamic communities and the City of Turin, a guarantee of mutual knowledge and a shared commitment to strengthen the process of integration and cooperation. Within the framework of the pact, the basic step was the organisation of promotion and awareness-raising events: meeting activities, “Open Mosques” days, and neighbourhood meetings. This was a mutual accompaniment to citizenship and the coexistence of differences.

**FORUM**  
Politiche di integrazione e nuovi cittadini

**Cosa si intende per Integrazione?**  
Un processo dinamico bilaterale dove lo Stato ospitante deve garantire stessi diritti e doveri a residenti di origine straniera non aventi la cittadinanza e tutelare e promuovere gli usi e costumi delle minoranze per un'inclusione attiva. Allo stesso tempo il residente di origine straniera ha il dovere di conoscere la lingua, la legislazione, la Costituzione e la storia del paese in cui si trova.

**Che cos'è il Forum?**  
È uno spazio civico di confronto per la cittadinanza e per le associazioni che lavorano in ambito delle politiche di integrazione per il nostro territorio. Il Forum è stato istituito con delibera del 14 luglio 2011. Il Forum applica il **7° punto dei Principi fondamentali comuni per una politica UE di integrazione degli immigrati** dove si afferma: "L'interazione frequente fra immigrati e cittadini degli Stati membri è un meccanismo fondamentale per l'integrazione. Forum comuni, dialogo interculturale, educazione sulle comunità di immigrati e sulle loro culture, condizioni di vita stimolanti in ambienti urbani sono tutti fattori che potenziano l'interazione tra immigrati e cittadini degli Stati membri".  
Il Forum "Politiche di Integrazione e Nuovi Cittadini" della Circonscrizione 7 è stato segnalato come pratica locale sull'European Web Site on Integration - Italy: [http://ec.europa.eu/ewsi/en/practice/details.cfm?ID\\_ITEM=43301](http://ec.europa.eu/ewsi/en/practice/details.cfm?ID_ITEM=43301)

The example from Turin, adds Agenfor International Director, Sergio Bianchi, presents the starting point of a more ambitious project, which sees a kind of dialogue between different models, where private and public bodies work together for complementary purposes - in this case, the fight against hatred and discrimination. Although an important limitation of regional or municipal funding must be highlighted, making certain models as part of the priorities of institutional actors is pivotal.



With the intervention of the City Councillor, further food for thought and subsequent debate is added. The above-mentioned MoU, and the work done especially in the last two years, lays the groundwork for making minorities protagonists, giving them a voice, and allowing them to be subjects. It was crucial to involve the Muslim communities directly, so that effective strategies could be implemented, starting from their needs and perspectives.

One point Mr. Ahmed felt it was relevant to emphasise concerned how, in the past years, the issue of Islamophobia [*this is the term used within the Italian context, although the author acknowledges the difference and implication of using Islamophobia rather than anti-Muslimism hatred*] was little heard or, rather, little mentioned in the public debate.



The City of Turin was the first to organise initiatives for the Day against Islamophobia, on 15th March, emphasising the need for awareness-raising days, especially in places where 'living as a citizen' is not so obvious.

A striking example was the San Salvario district, considered the symbol of multiculturalism in Turin, where there is a mosque, a synagogue, a Waldensian church and a Catholic church.

It is precisely neighbourhoods like this, which can represent a challenge for institutions, that instead become a stage for good practices, demonstrating that peaceful coexistence is possible, by a shared commitment to the sharing, meeting and cooperation of different cults and communities.

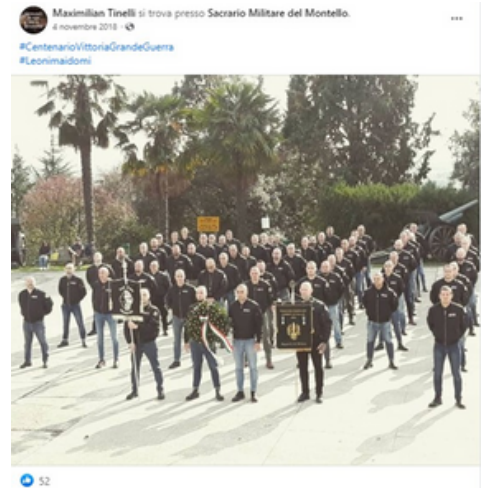
Good practices and examples are also brought to the European level, as the expert RAN mentions, because all the differences create what European citizenship is. The Forum - Integration Policies and New Citizens, not by chance, was voted as best practice, precisely for the creation of a civic space for citizenship and for associations working in the field of integration policies in the area.





Working in the area of radicalisation, adds the rapporteur, Ms. Berardinelli, it is evident that there are mechanisms for building prejudice, hatred and stigma; it is therefore crucial to bring the experiences of under-represented Muslim communities to municipal tables, to make the communities protagonists.

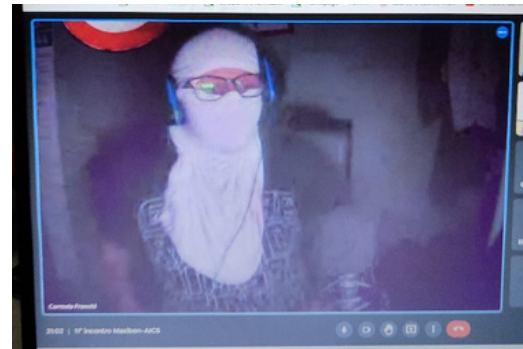
The last intervention by the OSINT analyst from the Agenfor International team, Fabio Frettoli, presents a practical application of the public-private cooperation model, through two cases of online hate analysis. The first case concerns the Veneto Front Skinheads, an extremist group that spreads neo-Nazi messages and narratives of hatred and discrimination, whose actions in offline reality, often in the form of rallies, lead to aggression and violent clashes.



It is interesting, Mr. Frettoli explains, how an analysis of the online channels of the extremist group and its affiliates, following violent assaults and clashes, led to the identification of the aggressors of certain incidents, and thus to subsequent action by law enforcement agencies.



The second case concerned online harassment suffered by an NGO by a group of online trolls, whose identification was made possible, again, thanks to OSINT analysis work, which made it possible to trace the original accounts of one of the online attackers, starting from a simple screenshot and images shared during the trolling videos.



The conference concluded with a Virtual Reality experience, during which participants were able to experience through VR scenarios explaining hate phenomena, in particular an Islamophobic episode, a xenophobic attack and an example of hatred based on nationality.

