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OSCAD was established in September 2010 by the Italian Chief of Police-Director General of Public Security, Prefect Antonio Manganelli, for the purpose of guaranteeing the right to security, which is an indispensable prerequisite for enjoying all other rights, of persons belonging to social groups at risk of discrimination.

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Set up within the Department of Public Security - Central Directorate of Criminal Police, OSCAD is chaired by the Deputy Director General of Public Security - Director General of Criminal Police and is made up of the directors of the investigative services of the National Police and the Carabinieri Corps dealing with hate crimes.

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With regard to:

A. Surfacing of the phenomenon

To address under-reporting, OSCAD receives reports, also made anonymously, by e-mail or fax, from institutions, associations and private citizens, of hate crimes on grounds of race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, language, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender, age, disability...

B. Initiation of timely and effective investigations

Through its members from the central investigative services, OSCAD initiates immediate, targeted operational interventions based on received reports.

C. Monitoring and analysis

OSCAD also closely monitors the progress of all reports received and the investigations carried out by field units to identify the offenders and protect the victims.

As a result of the analysis carried out, OSCAD suggests to police forces the adoption of appropriate prevention and enforcement measures.

The reports received highlight:

- a prevalence of cases of racial/ethnic discrimination, followed by cases of discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation/gender identity and then by those based on religious belief
- very often discrimination is perpetrated on the web (Internet websites and “Facebook” profiles with discriminatory contents).

For this reason OSCAD also includes representatives of the Postal and Communications Police, a specialist National Police service dedicated to combating crimes on the web.

D. Enhanced knowledge of the phenomenon

In order to enhance the relationship between civil society and police forces and to get direct knowledge of communities at risk and their security needs, OSCAD maintains contacts with associations engaged in the protection of people at risk of discrimination (NGOs) and cooperates with other institutions dedicated to the fight against discriminatory acts.

In particular, close cooperation has been established with the UNAR – National Office Against Racial Discrimination - of the Department for Equal Opportunities of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, a body that deals with the prevention and fight against all forms of discrimination not constituting an offence.

In April 2011 OSCAD signed with UNAR a Memorandum of Understanding whereby OSCAD sends to UNAR the reports of discriminatory acts not constituting an offence that have been received, while UNAR sends to OSCAD the crime reports received by its contact centre.

In addition, the two offices collaborate in the training of police forces.

E. Training of police officers

In this context, OSCAD has always attached the utmost importance to the training of police officers to raise their awareness of the issues involved and enable them to handle discrimination cases with professionalism as well as to take the proper approach to victims.

In 2012 and 2013, during both pre-service and in-service training courses, a number of ad hoc seminars were held for police officers of various ranks.

Overall, training on non discrimination and tolerance issues was delivered to about 3,200 staff.

In addition, OSCAD has signed an MoU with ODIHR concerning Italy's participation in the TAHCLE Programme (Training Against Hate Crimes for Law Enforcement), a programme designed to improve the capacity of police forces to detect, understand and investigate hate crimes.

The programme, which is being customised to adjust to the Italian context, envisages specific training courses on hate crime to be delivered by the end of this year/early months of 2014 to the police officers who will be later tasked with the training of other staff.

This methodology will make it possible to disseminate across the national territory a better understanding of hate crime and the serious harm it causes to victims, their communities and society as a whole, the knowledge and expertise required to identify and tackle hate crime, as well as the importance of establishing a relationship based on trust and cooperation with victims and witnesses.

F. Communication

A series of initiatives to make OSCAD known to the general public have been launched. In this regard:

- In June 2012, a communication campaign against racism was launched through mass media advertisements
- In March 2013, an awareness-raising initiative intended for football fans was carried out at stadiums to eradicate racism in sports
- OSCAD web pages have been developed on the Internet sites of the Interior Ministry, the National Police and the Carabinieri.

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Prevention

We believe that preventing and combating hate crimes, by effectively protecting people from discrimination is one of the most important signs of a country's level of civilisation and represents in itself a goal to be pursued with the strongest determination.