

The Italian Observatory for Security against Acts of Discrimination (OSCAD) is an inter-agency body **established**, by decree of the Chief of Police, in **September 2010** to respond operationally to the demand for security of people belonging to "vulnerable categories ", by giving further impetus to the activities carried out by the Italian National Police and the Carabinieri in the field of **prevention and fight against hate crimes** (that is crimes motivated by the offender's prejudice against one or more *protected characteristics* of the victim: race, ethnicity, religious belief, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability and so on).

The OSCAD, set up within the Public Security Department – Criminal Police Central Directorate - is presided over by the Deputy Director General of Public Security - Central Director of Criminal Police and is made up of representatives of the National Police, the Carabinieri and the departmental units competent in this field.

The OSCAD's **main objectives**, which are closely **interconnected**, are the following:

- **to facilitate the filing of complaints** on hate crimes in order to effectively combat the phenomenon of **under-reporting** (i.e. the fact that very few complaints are filed), thus increasing its visibility;
- **to carry out a fruitful monitoring**, also through an in-depth analysis of open sources;
- **to raise awareness, train and constantly update** law enforcement officers' skills to combat the phenomenon of **under-recording** (lack of recognition of the discriminatory nature of the crime).

In order to counter the phenomenon of under-reporting, an e-mail address was activated ([oscad@dcpc.interno.it](mailto:oscad@dcpc.interno.it)) for the receipt of reports from institutions, associations or private citizens (even anonymously).

Dedicated pages have been published on the **websites** of Polizia di Stato<sup>1</sup>, Arma dei Carabinieri<sup>2</sup> and Ministry of the Interior<sup>3</sup>, where it is possible to find information on the organization, and OSCAD activities.

Bearing in mind the idea that training activities are **key** to increase awareness of law enforcement, about the crucial importance to prevent and fight hate crimes and hate speech, OSCAD has always paid great attention to training.

Only through the careful planning of training activities can the awareness and competence of law enforcement personnel be increased extensively and effectively, which is indispensable to improve their capacity to respond to the hate crime phenomenon, starting from the identification of the discriminatory element in a criminal offence (addressing under-recording), and – more importantly – to convey a clear message that the culture of respect for human rights and an increasingly effective action to prevent and counter crimes motivated by discrimination are strategic priorities for law enforcement authorities.

To ensure an updated, multidisciplinary training offer, relations have been established and increasingly intensified with a range of institutional and civil society stakeholders, with whom a number of joint training initiatives have been carried out: in particular the National Anti-Racial Discrimination Office (Ufficio Nazionale Antidiscriminazioni Razziali or UNAR) of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers (Italy's equality body with which OSCAD concluded an MoU in 2011); "Amnesty International – Italia" and several specialized CSOs.

So far more than 38.000 officers have been trained.

OSCAD is also actively involved in European and international working groups and fora, in particular in the European Commission's High Level Group on combating racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance established in June 2016, as well as in the various thematic subgroups (on antisemitism, anti-Muslim hatred/islamophobia, data collection, online hate speech, victim support and assistance to victims, training).

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.poliziadistato.it/articolo/osservatorio-per-la-sicurezza-contro-gli-atti-discriminatori-oscad>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.carabinieri.it/cittadino/servizi/osservatorio-per-la-sicurezza-contro-gli-atti-discriminatori-oscad>.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.interno.gov.it/it/ministero/osservatori/osservatorio-sicurezza-contro-atti-discriminatori-oscad> .

OSCAD has also realized several awareness-raising campaigns.

On 21 January 2020 a conference on “Hate victims” was held in Rome, which was attended, among other participants, by Italy’s Interior Minister, Minister for Equal Opportunities and Chief of Police-Director General for Public Security. This conference was an occasion for reflection on promoting the culture of inclusion and combating all forms of racism and consisted in a number of panels focusing on a specific ground of discrimination: race-ethnicity, religious faith, sexual orientation, disability.

In view of the success of the initiative and the general appreciation for OSCAD's commitment to raising awareness about this phenomenon, it was decided to replicate the format of the event in other Italian cities.

Oscad Secretariat has also published several reader-friendly information tools:

**“When hate becomes crime – Hate crime: what it is and the legal framework against it”** to gain a better understanding of hate crimes and hate speech, their characteristics, bias indicators, vulnerable victims and the relevant legislation both at national and international level;

**“Hatred of disabled people”** an opportunity for reflection and enrichment on a particularly sensitive topic with a view to providing law enforcement officers with practical tools to detect and combat crimes against the disabled most effectively;

**“Short guide to Judaism”** to assist law enforcement officers in fulfilling their responsibilities by providing them with a knowledge tool of a few key specificities of Italian Judaism, information that is crucial to interact with Jewish people in the most appropriate and effective manner.

**All the brochures are available in Italian and English on the Ministry of interior website already mentioned above.**