OSCE ODIHR
HATE CRIME REPORTING

Information contained in this report was compiled as part of ODIHR's 2020 Hate Crime Report.
For more information, including on previous years' reporting, please visit: hatecrime.osce.org/belgium

For more information about ODIHR's Hate Crime Report, visit: hatecrime.osce.org/our-methodology

1 2020

Summary

Belgium regularly reports hate crime data to ODIHR. Recent initiatives to improve hate crime identification, recording, and data collection have been implemented through ODIHR's Information Against Hate Crimes Toolkit (INFAHCT) programme. In particular, Belgium has implemented the programme's recommendations on the operational practice of police, prosecutors, and equality bodies.

Crime victimization surveys and research are frequently conducted in Belgium. "Safe.brussels", the Brussels public service responsible for crime prevention and security within the Brussels-Capital Region, conducts surveys on the perception of security and crime victimization among the general public every two years.

Hate crime data collection in Belgium
Support for hate crime victims in Belgium
Hate crime capacity building in Belgium
Belgium's hate crime legislation

ODIHR's Key Observation

ODIHR recognizes Belgium's efforts to improve its hate crime recording mechanism. Continuing in the same vein is encouraged since, based on the available information, ODIHR observes that Belgium's hate crime recording and statistics do not sufficiently distinguish hate crimes from other crimes. In addition, ODIHR observes that Belgium would benefit from reviewing the existing legal framework in order to ensure that bias motivation can be effectively acknowledged and appropriate penalties can be imposed on the perpetrators.

Official Data

In addition to hate crimes, the numbers reported here also include other types of "discrimination" incidents, which can fall outside of the OSCE's definition of a hate crime. Some cases may have been registered several times by the police, such as when there was more than one victim, whereas the prosecution would registered such cases only once.

Year	Hate crimes recorded by police	Prosecuted	Sentenced
2020	1,750	1,334	80

Police data by bias motivation

The numbers below represent all incidents recorded by the police and sent to the criminal prosecutor's office.



Racist and xenophobic



Anti-LGBTI



Hate crime against other groups

This category refers to all other discriminatory cases not listed elsewhere.



Gender-based



Other hate crime based on religion or belief



Disability

Police data by type of crime

The numbers below represent all incidents recorded by the police and sent to the criminal prosecutor's office.



Unspecified crime type

National Developments

Following the recommendations made by ODIHR and the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) at a workshop on the registration of hate crimes and offences in January 2020, a working group composed of representatives of the **Equal Opportunities Team (SPF Justice), the police, the judiciary and Unia** was set up to optimize the registration of hate crimes. The work focuses on the following areas: the lack of obligation to systematically register all hate crimes at the police level; the technical challenges in registering cases of multiple bias motivations; lack of systematic transmission of the registrations made by the police to the IT systems of the judiciary and the Central Criminal Records Office. The working group should further propose short-term solutions to the challenges identified.

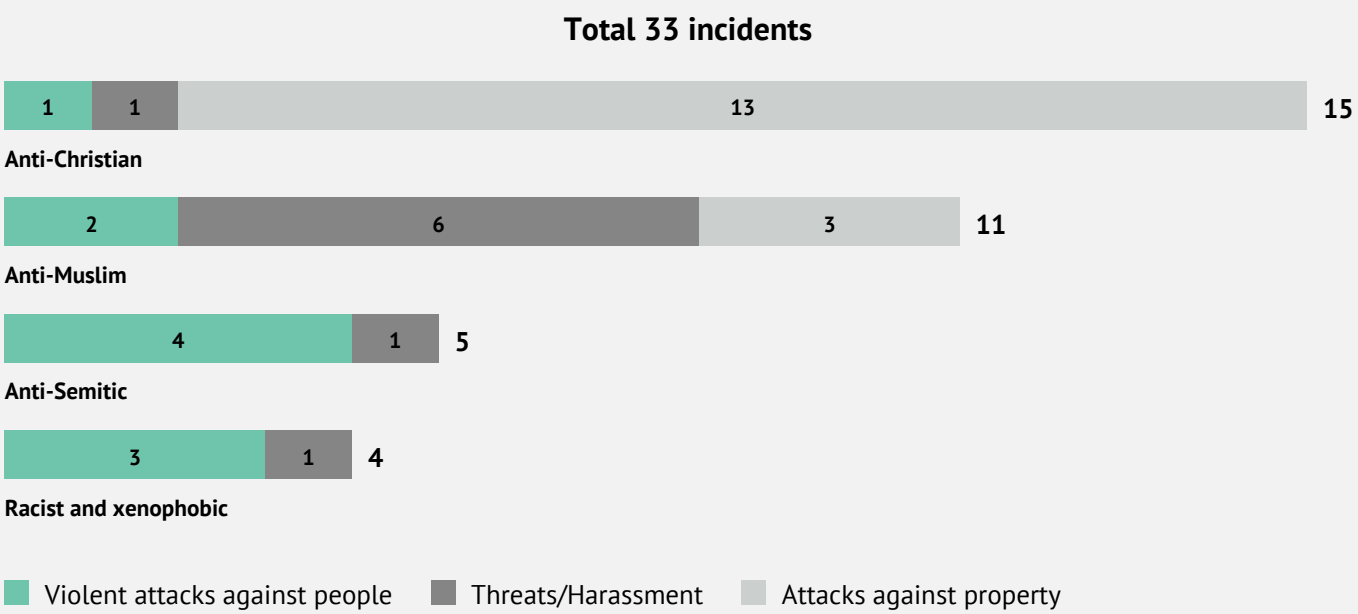
The **Police of La Louvière** launched a dedicated website for the integrated police services on discrimination and hate crimes. On this website, the police officers can find all essential and useful information regarding, for example, legal framework, resources, useful contacts, video material or articles. All police forces in the country now have easy access to such information in French and Dutch, and partially in German.

Since 2020, victims of homophobic and transphobic violence in Brussels have been able to report hate crimes (including anonymously) to the civil society organization "Rainbow House". Rainbow House collects information from victims and refers them to official bodies if necessary. This project is based on **collaboration between Rainbow House, Brussels Prevention & Security, and the Brussels Regional Public Service (equal.brussels)**. Furthermore, the Brussels Capital police zone created an LGBTI hotline on its website. Victims and witnesses can report homophobic and transphobic hate crimes to the Brussels police through this channel.

The **Police of Charleroi** developed a model letter for victims of discrimination and hate crimes, with the aim to refer victims to Unia. In this letter, the reference agent asks victims if they agree to report the facts to Unia and if they would allow a copy of their statement to be sent to Unia.

In October 2020, a report of a victimisation survey entitled "Comment (mieux) aider les victimes de délits de haine à se reconstruire?" was published by the King Baudouin Foundation (KBF), based on **collaboration with the College of Public Prosecutors, Unia, the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men, and the National Institute of Criminalistics and Criminology**. The survey project mapped hate crime victims' experiences, and needs, as well as barriers hindering victims from reporting hate crimes to state authorities. It collected and analyzed in-depth interviews with 21 victims of hate crime belonging to LGBTI, Roma, Muslim, Jewish , and migrant communities in Flanders, Brussels, and the Wallonia-Brussels regions, as well as 20 representatives of the criminal justice system such as police officers, judges, or mediators.

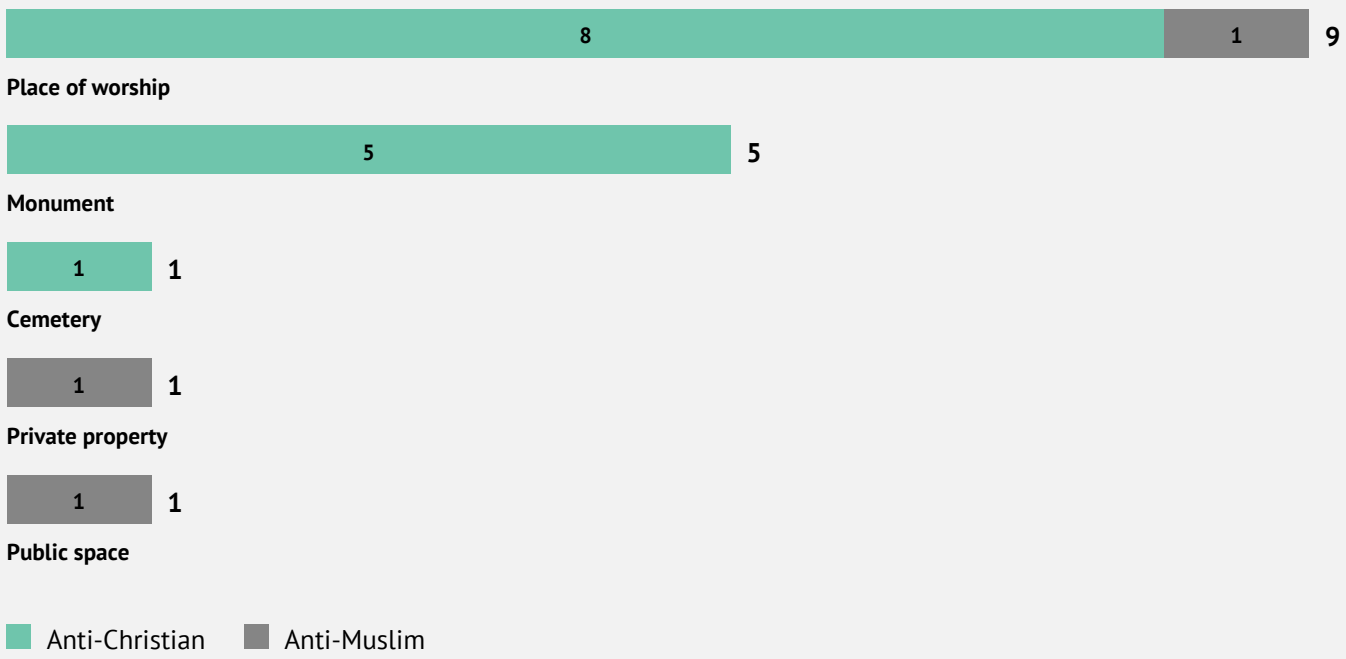
Incidents reported by civil society



Please note that the total number of incidents may be lower than the sum of incidents presented in the breakdown chart above, as some incidents involve multiple bias motivations.

In addition to incidents summarized below, this graph includes 4 hate incidents reported by Kantor Center as statistics.

Targeted properties



Type of property attack



View civil society incidents for Belgium, 2020