

Justice for victims: off and online



Hate speech online is a growing problem, as FRA surveys repeatedly show. It is often where victims frequently come across racist, sexist and homophobic content. It is often where perpetrators feel free to vent and share their hate with impunity.

But hate speech is not the only problem online. Children face bullying, and women have to deal with harassment and stalkers. For example, [earlier FRA research](#) already revealed how 1 in 5 women were victims of cyberharassment.

As people spend more and more time online, such sentiments online can create a hostile environment where the recipients of hate feel increasingly victimised. This can affect how victims perceive the real world.

Online victimisation also applies to the issue of cybercrime and consumer fraud, an area of growing concern for European consumers, as our [recent Fundamental Rights Survey](#) shows. Over 1 in 2 Europeans worry about fraudsters or criminals misusing their online data and nearly 1 in 4 worry about misuse of their online bank account or payment card details.

To help victims have access to justice, Member States need to deliver on the rights of victims, as guaranteed under the Victims' Rights Directive.

This includes providing online tools for victims to simply and quickly report incidents of cybercrime and hate speech to the police.

Support organisations could also play a key role. They could provide easy online help to victims so that they can report incidents to the police.

At the same time, Member States should create new or expanded specialist police units to tackle online hate and crime. They would be instrumental in carrying out effective investigations and cooperating across borders to seek out and punish offenders. They should also be readily reachable by victims to report incidents.

Additionally, Member States should run rights awareness campaigns to inform consumers of their rights and what to do if they have become victim of abuse or fraud online.

As people increasingly live their lives online, access to justice needs to keep pace to offer victims the same protection as they expect offline.