

ATOMY

User manual





The moment we hate a man, we hate something in his image that is inside of us.

Hermann Hesse, Demian

Hate speech includes all forms of expression that spread, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and other forms of hatred based on intolerance, including: intolerance expressed as aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism, discrimination and hostility towards minorities, immigrants and people with immigrant background.

The Council of Europe



Hate speech

Hate speech is a typical manifestation, but also a typical consequence of structural and symbolic violence functioning in the public space.

Numerous studies carried out in the Polish and international context clearly indicate the negative effects of this phenomenon, which are manifested both at the social and individual level. At the same time, the elimination of hate speech is difficult due to at least several factors, in particular the ambiguity of the definition, the subjectivity of feelings embedded in it and the lack of precise criteria distinguishing it from drastic formulations and / or expressing views considered to be radical. In this context, counteracting hate speech itself is sometimes perceived as restricting the freedom of speech and may contribute to perpetuating social antagonisms.

Over the past two decades, hate speech has established itself in virtual space and social media, gaining more momentum in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

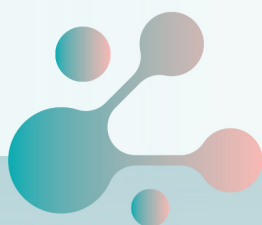
However, the indicated difficulties do not exclude the possibility of counteracting hate speech at its sources, for example at the level of education aimed at expanding competences shaping a democratic culture and intercultural dialogue in relation to the guidelines formulated in this regard by the Council of Europe. They also do not exclude the possibility of deconstructing or contesting hateful content with the use of counter-discourse based on positive and inclusive messages. Finally, they do not rule out more determined reactions in cases where the social and individual risks, including those related to incitement to physical or physical violence, become evident.



About the project

This user manual was created as part of the *Together against hate speech project* implemented by Krakow, Lublin and Wrocław, Polish members of the Intercultural Cities family in cooperation with the Good Company collective and the Centre for Research on the Future of Collegium Civitas.

The assumption of the project was to develop a common communication platform, as well as a methodology supporting the process of co-creating initiatives that build mutual openness, understanding and unity, and thus counteract hate speech. The process included diagnostic, analytical and conceptual work, which was based on a thorough diagnosis of the situation, individual interviews with activists, as well as a series of meetings with experts as well as residents and residents of Krakow, Lublin and Wrocław.



The purpose of the User Manual is to equip its Readers with the following toolkit:

- (1) a short version of the diagnosis of the current state of counteracting hate speech, including the basic mechanisms of its formation, typical motives for its functioning and a handful of practical recommendations;
- (2) a package of simple self-diagnostic questions correlated with the diagnosis, which help to direct and organize thinking about counteracting hate speech in the reader's place of residence;
- (3) basic guidelines for the use of the A T O M Y concept developed under the project Together against hate speech and associated communication and graphic components.

Intercultural Cities

Membership in the Council of Europe's Intercultural Cities Programme (ICC) is a great privilege and honour, but also a great responsibility. Creating good living conditions for new residents of our cities - from functioning on an equal basis to developing one's potential and engaging in the development of local communities as fully as possible - is quite a challenge.

Lublin's experience from participation in the Programme is not only about strengthening competences and creating solutions to support foreigners. These are also initiatives aimed at building attitudes of openness and acceptance in local communities, which we have shared with each other for years. We all know how important they are.

The joining Council of Europe's Intercultural Cities Program of two extremely strong partners, with enormous competences, experiences and result in the field of interculturalism - Krakow and Wrocław - became an opportunity to join forces and implement a joint venture that was to respond to the common need of all three cities. Many hours of talks led us to the diagnosis of the problem that we decided to tackle: counteracting hate speech.

A universal problem, joint development of solution to deal with it by three municipalities, the idea sharing it with all interested cities in Poland - this is a unique and unprecedented undertaking.

We have spent five months of working together (which, due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, took place entirely in remote mode) which took so much commitment and time on all ends, thanks to which in the end we all feel very satisfied. We acted together, we learned from each other, we got to know each other. It is precisely the idea of the Council of Europe Intercultural Cities Program translated into practice.

It would not be possible without cooperation with partners - the Good Company collective and the Institute for Research on the Future at Collegium Civitas. They patiently guided us through this process, supported us at every stage, served with knowledge and experience. They were able to collect, analyse and share the ideas, concepts and needs of all cities. Listen and learn from experts as well as residents, and then transform it into the effect we want to share today.

Intercultural Cities

Counteracting hate speech is a common need of our cities. However, we all asked ourselves how to do it so that the unintended consequence of actions would not be strengthening of the existing divisions? It is our intention that the steps and ideas presented in this document serve as help and inspiration.

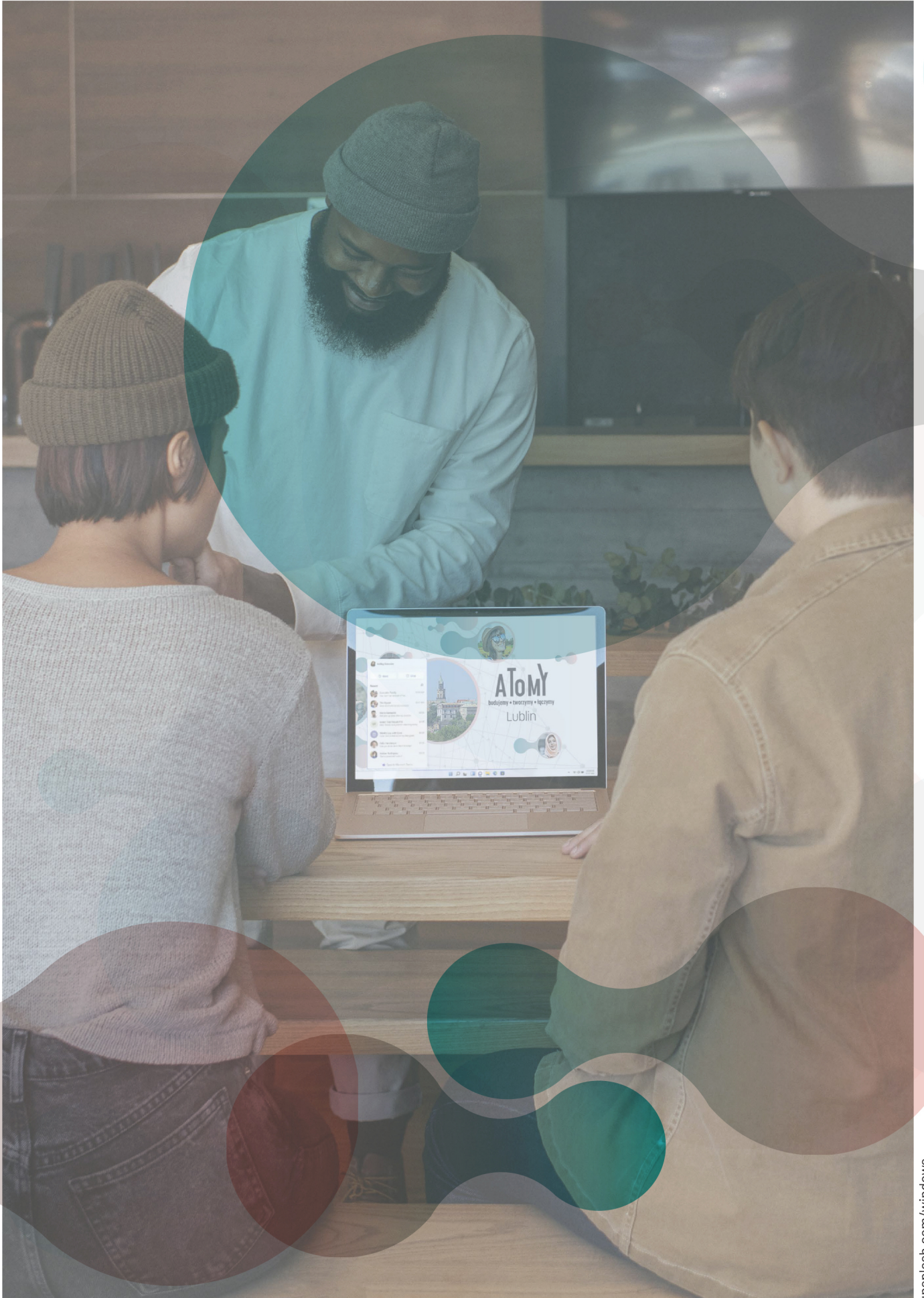
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The Council of Europe's Intercultural Cities Program:
<https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities>



Atomization and hate

Why atomization? Atomization results from the recognition of otherness as a threat. Atomization leads to the recognition of otherness as a threat. Atomization encourages further atomization in the name of risk prevention. Atomization encourages the prevention of atomization by further atomization in the name of risk prevention. The inevitable result: more hate speech.

Lack of openness to the voice of the Other. Even if we agree that kindness and openness to the voice of another has limits, the exclusion of this voice closes the possibility of understanding. Such removal carries the risk of hiding the problem that, in fact, has not been solved, from sight. Escaping painful reality carries threats much greater than confronting it. That is why it is so important to tackle the issue of hate speech not short-sightedly by getting rid of the problem, but in the long term, bearing in mind its actually addressing the issue.

Being different in today's Poland. For many of us, being different seems to be a threat and questioning the existing symbolic order, disturbing the comfort zone, which leads to negative reactions. The expectation of political correctness often only deepens the frustration that arises. At the same time, the conformistically limited space of contemporary political debate does not offer a chance to honestly address the actual sources of the socio-economic problems we are experiencing. Therefore, populist radicalism finds fertile ground today.

Sustainable solutions. Let's take a broader look. Spending time together, feasting at one table, and having daily conversations and disputes has always had the power to turn disturbing otherness into a friendly dialogue. So, next to the question of how to counteract hate speech, we ask the question: why, knowing well how to counteract it, we still don't do it? Maybe it's worth starting here and now. Who's going to do it first?

The main mechanisms of the formation of hate speech

1.

In the era of growing problems with identity, a culture of fear and risk societies, failure to get used to otherness leads to a feeling of danger, which, in connection with communication and emotional deficits, finds an outlet in hatred.

2.

The contrast between the unclear criteria to qualify something as hate speech, on one hand, and the radicalism of labelling as political incorrectness on the other, leads to a deepening of misunderstanding and a growing feeling of groundless exclusion.

3.

Political and populist harnessing of ideological motives by leaders of opinion and public life, by authorities, politicians or influencers, leads to radicalization of attitudes and communication among people who are not fully socialized, and therefore easier to seduce by the charms of black and white.

4.

The passivity of those who: (a) are against hate speech, but for various reasons are afraid to speak out in public debate; (b) those who quietly support hate speech but who, for various reasons, are shy to speak out in public debate; (c) they believe that they are not concerned by the topic; it leads to the emergence of favourable circumstances for the flourishing of hate speech.

5.

Vigorous stigmatization and combating hate speech from a position of unopposed superiority leads to pushing problems underground and, consequently, creating greenhouse conditions for development of hateful attitudes, all the more susceptible to radical populist discourse.

Themes related to the functioning of hate speech

1.

We deal with hate speech mainly in three spheres: (a) in public space; (b) during direct interactions, especially during marches or manifestations; (c) in cyberspace.

2.

Due to the evolution of meaning, metamorphosis of attitudes and the lack of good research methodologies, a great practical problem is to determine the dynamics of hate speech - statistics show a very narrow spectrum of the issue, while opinions on this topic are perfectly divergent.

3.

The use of hate speech can no longer be assigned to specific groups, such as radical political organizations - with increasing social consent, this phenomenon is absorbed and spreads out, permanently becoming part of a wide range of public discourses.

4.

Political declarations on counteracting hate speech are often recognized as façade slogans, but at the same time practical, local projects implemented by people genuinely involved in them are positively received and trusted.

5.

Educational projects aimed at counteracting hate speech at its source work very well almost everywhere where they are implemented, but, unfortunately, and despite this, their implementation is still not systematic or systemic.

Main recommendations regarding counteracting hate speech

1.

Counteracting hate speech should not be a matter of prohibiting and gagging the hate speech, because in this way we do not solve the problem, but lose sight of it.

2.

In counteracting hate speech, the best initiatives are those based on cooperation resulting from dialogue and sharing responsibility for common matters.

3.

It is easy to stigmatize juvenile bullies for hate speech, and more difficult to stigmatize prominent politicians or charismatic leaders - so it is a matter of having the courage to call a spade a spade when we are dealing with open and unequivocal acts of hatred by influential people, including cutting off the ideological basis of hatred.

4.

Instead of looking for new ways to counteract hate speech, it is good to reach for solutions that are well-developed and proven in practice, especially educational initiatives, which have been implemented all over the world for years, and then multiply and integrate them up to the system level.

5.

At the same time - which does not contradict the creation of systemic solutions - the daily counteracting of hate speech should be decentralized and de-institutionalized, treating those who try to escape from shared responsibility for the common space as adult people.



Mapping

Hatred towards whom? The most common victims of hate speech in Poland are refugees, Muslims, Roma, Ukrainians, Jews, black people and people identifying with the LGBT + community. Almost certainly, the representatives of these groups are also exposed to hate speech in your town. Let's take a look at it. Let us consider whether any of these groups is exposed to hatred in a special way due to the local specificity. Let's think if there are any unusual groups in your town that could also be victims of hatred? Let us remember that hate speech more and more often goes beyond stereotypical contexts.

Mechanisms and motives. Let's take a look at basic mechanisms, motives and contexts that accompany the emergence of hate speech in your locality, both positive and negative. Can we indicate something special, specific to your place of residence?

People know it. Diagnosing hate speech situation in your town is easy when we listen to the voices of those who are targeted, those who try to counteract it, but also those who use it. All of this is at your fingertips.

Mapping

Map of initiatives and projects. Let's search social media and websites. Let's get in touch with people who have contact with or represent selected groups that are most exposed to hate speech. Let's establish specific initiatives, projects and organizations focused on counteracting hate speech. Likewise, let's figure out if there are initiatives, projects and organizations that spread hate speech in an organized manner. Let's try to create a map of mutual connections and cooperation, both positive and negative. Let's not forget about cyberspace.

Barriers, deficits and potentials. Let's meet people and talk to them. Based on our experience of the Together Against Hate Speech project, we can say that meetings with activists, experts and other people involved in counteracting hate speech are very helpful. We recommend meetings with female and male residents of your town as well as representatives of groups exposed to hate speech. It would be great if the discussion could also include people who ... use hate speech - this is the first step to dialogue. Let's invite them to look at the situation from a bird's eye view. Let's listen to the nuances. Let's diagnose barriers, deficits and potentials. On this occasion, let's also try to estimate the mass of indifference in your town, including covert support and consent to hate speech.

To work! Let us use the potentials to propose systemic and systematic solutions that would address the diagnosed barriers and deficits. Let's not create new initiatives if it is not necessary. And lastly - let's not do all of this for people - let's do it with people.



ATOMY

Hatometer: threats

STEP 1:

let's identify and indicate groups that may be exposed to hate speech in your town – let's mark all these groups on the hatometer radar, signing individual bars with their names

STEP 2:

let's talk to the representatives of selected groups to determine the scale and intensity of hate speech directed against them

For each of the groups, let's find out if in your town ...

- negative stereotypes about this group are common? YES NO
- hate speech aimed at this group appears in the public space? (e.g. scribbles on walls) YES NO
- there are offensive attacks at this group in the public space? (e.g. slogans during a manifestation) YES NO
- there are attacks on this group on local websites, forums or social media? YES NO
- harassment because of stereotypes about this group occurs in schools or other meeting places for minors? YES NO
- influential local people publicly use hate speech directed against this group? YES NO
- there are acts of physical aggression towards representatives of this group? YES NO
- representatives of this group are denied their rights in public contexts? YES NO
- representatives of this group encounter difficulties in receiving adequate legal support and psychological help when they fall victim to hate speech? YES NO

For each answer YES, mark one line on the range bar on the hatometer radar.

Hatemeter: integration of activities

STEP 3:

for each of the groups indicated on the previous page, **let's define** how many and which initiatives / projects / organizations in your town already operate and counter-act hate speech towards these groups or implement activities engaging and including these groups in the life of the entire local community.

STEP 4:

let's talk to the representatives of these initiatives / projects / organizations to find out how the activities undertaken by these entities compare with the following scale of integration of activities:

- no activities, ineffective or counter-effective activities | lack of awareness of the importance of the problem - **0 POINTS**
- point actions - single effective projects implemented from time to time, when it is possible and the funds are available - **1 POINT**
- mass, effective activities, implemented by one or more entities, but not integrated into a coherent system that it would ensure stability, including financial stability - **2 POINTS**
- a comprehensive system of counteracting hate speech, taking into account at least: (a) systematic educational activities; (b) an integration platform and forum for exchange of ideas for stakeholders working on the issue; (c) a stable and well-established support environment - **3 POINTS**

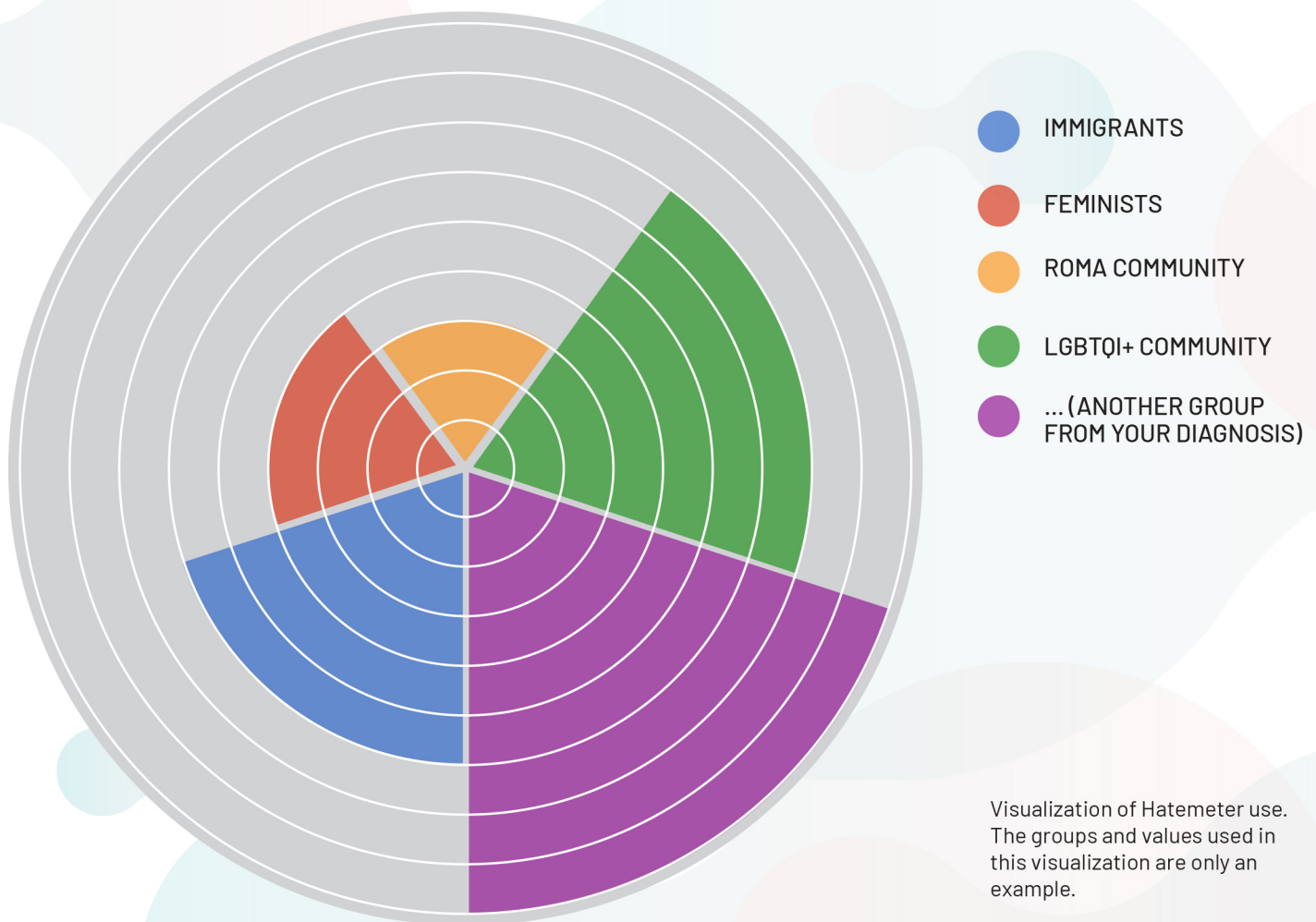
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 \text{from the threats scale} & & \text{the scale of integration} & & \text{hatemeter radar} \\
 & & \text{of activities} & &
 \end{array}$$

Now let's summarize our diagnosis. For each of the groups indicated on the previous page, from the number of points obtained on the threats scale, subtract twice the number of points obtained on the scale of integration of activities (each result lower than 0 is interpreted as 0).

Hatemeter: Summary

STEP 5:

let's read the result indicated on the radar to get an initial idea of which areas of action should be addressed or strengthened as a matter of priority.



Important! The Hatemeter is not a research tool and its indications are approximate and intuitive. Moreover, they can turn out to be confusing if the diagnostic process is not performed reliably. The values indicated in the hatemeter do not have unambiguous scientific interpretation and are also indicative only. In particular comparing the results obtained by different municipalities / cities is unjustified.

The hatemeter is an internal self-diagnostic tool and its function is to provide clues and suggestions for further thorough analysis. It is to help organize the reflection process on counteracting hate speech in a given local context. In this sense, establishing a detailed strategy for counteracting hate speech and a hierarchy of tasks requires individual, in-depth reflection and taking into account local specificities.

Atoms? A TO MY [THIS IS US]!

The main result of the *Together Against Hate Speech project* is the umbrella concept and sign A TO MY. The aim of its creation was neither to bring to life another project, nor to compete with the existing visual concepts, which would involve further atomization of activities. On the contrary, A TO MY are supposed to deatomize = integrate under a common banner the activities that are already happening.

A TO MY is a common framework for initiatives undertaken in the area of hate speech prevention, enhancing their visibility. A TO MY is also a model, participatory process of co-creating circumstances in which, through action and shared experience, people who are seemingly strangers build mutual, positive relationships.

Dear Reader, let us use this tool at will! Let's use contacts, examples and good practices shared on the A TO MY platform. Let's co-create it. Atoms? No! A TO MY! THIS IS US!



The shortest recipe in the world for counteracting hate speech:

1. **Let's not combat hate speech directly. It may antagonize even more.**
2. **Let us remove the root causes - one by one, building a community.**
3. **Let's sign activities and successes with the logo: A TO MY.**

A TO MY

Pass it on

If you found this instruction manual helpful, you can contribute to the next dimension of deatomization!

We observe not only insufficient cooperation and integration of activities carried out in a given town, but also between towns all over Poland, and even more so in the international context.

We can do more together! Pass it on!

ATOMY



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The Council of Europe's Intercultural Cities Program:
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A TO MY
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