



Budapest Centre
FOR MASS ATROCITIES PREVENTION

Following Up....

The GAAMAC IV conference in mid-November was very useful and constructive, in my view! The high number of participants shows not only the growing interest in such meetings but also points to the advantages of online events!

Let me express my gratitude to all who participated in the preparations and the successful implementation!

The meeting gave a rather comprehensive overview of the state of play in the field of hate speech which plays a key role in driving populations towards violence and mass atrocity crimes. The halt and prevention of such processes, therefore, is vital. Similarly, it is important to exchange views and share best practices as that took place in the framework of the conference. Anyway, I suggest for consideration that in the future we also focus on hate per se from the perspective of preventing the progress of divide, polarization and discrimination in its early stage when hate and its language are in infancies.

I highly appreciated the efforts of the GAAMAC management to provide opportunities for exchanging views on the enhancement of regional efforts. In that context, I found particularly important the brainstorming of some European practitioners who inspired further thoughts and ambitions on the setup of a European Working Group within the structure of GAAMAC, akin to other regional or continental structures.

In my view, the establishment of such a framework would send out a clear signal that we, in Europe do not underestimate the threats and risks of mass atrocities. Instead, we clearly see our home tasks, the necessity of tangible actions, and we are ready to intensify our endeavors to counter the belief of many in Europe that mass atrocities are rather far from our countries as if hinting that Europe is practically immune to mass atrocities. Sadly, that approach is clearly reflected in the fact that in the vast majority of European states the national RtoP focal points sit in the ministries of foreign affairs and focus on the activities abroad, outside of the borders of Europe.

The exchange of views of European practitioners also provided some insight in the diversity of the challenges, approaches and political environments. I understood that the latter constitutes sometimes headwind, sometimes tailwind for the RtoP-related activities in Europe and most likely in other parts of the world too.

I was pleased to also hear and I fully agree with the efforts focusing on youth and education as long-term investments. I was less pleased to hear the lack of the whole of society approach. All that gave me the impression that the enthusiastic and ambitious activities of NGOs and other activists remain isolated and fragmented in many cases. Consequently and regrettably, the societal effects remain limited.

Without deepening too much in my considerations, let me cut it short: my conclusion has been that the setup of a European Working Group is a must. It will be able to do a lot: facilitate joint advocacy, joint actions, agreed procedures, consistency and synergies among a wide range of actors should we want indeed to address more effectively our RtoP-related “domestic” and other emerging challenges and protect our populations.

The sooner we shall start these activities the earlier we shall be able to give an important and necessary push to making changes in the mindsets that is key for preventing the identity-based crimes such as mass atrocities.

As flagged during the GAAMAC IV conference, I suggest to proceeding by small but swift steps. The early convention of an online meeting of those European practitioners who participated in the regional discussion during the GAAMAC IV might prove useful and demanded relatively humble preparations. I am convinced the vast majority of the participants would be able to find a slot in their diaries at short notice for a two hour-brainstorming in the next (two-three) weeks.

The continuation of the joint reflection launched during the GAAMAC could result in a consensus on when and how a multi-actor conference of European experts could take place, perhaps, in the first half of 2022 and offer a platform to decide on the establishment and mandate of the European Working Group.

Please feel free to contact the Budapest Centre for Mass Atrocities Prevention if you find we could be of any help.

Budapest, 01.12.2021.

Dr. Gyorgy Tatar

Chair

Budapest Centre