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D5.6 – FIRST PUBLIC EVENT IN BULGARIA (PROVISION)

WP5 – PUBLIC AWARENESS AND DISSEMINATION

COMBATHATE
COMBATING HATE SPEECH AND HATE CRIMES
AGAINST INDIVIDUALS WITH MENTAL DISABILITIES.

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ABOUT THE PROJECT

PROJECT NAME
COMBATHATE (Combating Hate Speech and Hate Crimes Against Individuals with Mental Disabilities)

PROJECT NUMBER
101205522

EU PROGRAMME
Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV)

WHY THIS PROJECT?
Individuals with mental disabilities frequently face hate speech and hate crimes that undermine their dignity, safety, and well-being. COMBATHATE seeks to address this challenge by developing tailored support systems, raising public awareness, and strengthening cooperation between civil society and public authorities (including law enforcement).

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PROJECT CONSORTIUM

1. Purpose and scope of the deliverable

This deliverable documents the implementation of D5.6 - First public event in Bulgaria, organised by PROVISION INTERNATIONAL within Work Package 5 of the COMBATHATE project. The event was implemented on 16 May 2026 in Bansko, Bulgaria, and gathered 50 participants representing local stakeholders, educators, NGOs, public authorities and community members.

The event was designed as a public awareness and stakeholder dialogue activity. Its purpose was to present the COMBATHATE project, discuss the WP2 deliverables and practical support systems developed during the first project phase, and raise awareness of hate speech and hate crimes affecting people with mental disabilities. It also supported dialogue on how local stakeholders can cooperate better to strengthen reporting pathways, prevention measures and access to support.

The deliverable is submitted as a public electronic report in English. In line with the public dissemination level, personal data contained in the original signed presence lists, including names and signatures, are not reproduced in this public version. The original signed presence lists are retained by PROVISION INTERNATIONAL in the project archive and remain available for verification, audit and internal project control purposes.

2. Executive summary

The Bulgarian public event successfully reached the target of 50 participants and created a structured public forum for awareness raising, dissemination of WP2 results and local stakeholder cooperation. The event combined presentations, interactive discussions, empathy-building activities, stakeholder dialogue and small-group work. The implemented methodology was consistent with the WP5 communication strategy and with the COMBATHATE objective of promoting dignity, equality, inclusion and coordinated support for people with mental disabilities.

The event showed strong participant satisfaction and high perceived relevance. All 50 participants completed the feedback questionnaire. Across the seven scored feedback indicators, the overall average score was 4.61 out of 5. All scored items received 100% positive ratings (4 or 5). Overall satisfaction was particularly high, with an average score of 4.90 out of 5, while the usefulness of information provided about support systems reached 4.74 and the increase in awareness reached 4.78.

The event also generated a strong cooperation signal: all 50 respondents indicated interest in future collaboration or follow-up activities. This confirms that the event not only disseminated project results but also contributed to creating a local stakeholder base for future awareness actions, implementation activities and cooperation around support systems.

3. Event overview and compliance with the Description of Action

Item	Description
Title of the activity	WP5 - Public Event on COMBATHATE Support Systems and Awareness Raising
Host organisation	PROVISION INTERNATIONAL
Location	Bansko, Bulgaria
Date	16 May 2026
Duration	1 day
Planned number of participants	50 participants
Actual number of participants	50 participants
Target group	Local stakeholders and community representatives, including educators, NGOs, public authorities and other local actors
Main thematic focus	Presentation and discussion of WP2 support systems, awareness raising on hate speech and hate crimes, and local cooperation
Evidence available	Agenda, original signed presence lists, implementation report and feedback questionnaire results

The activity complies with the deliverable description because it was implemented as a one-day public event in Bulgaria, involved 50 participants, presented WP2 deliverables and project resources, and collected participant feedback through a structured questionnaire. The event documentation also includes a signed attendance list, which is archived by the partner due to the public nature of the deliverable.

4. Participant profile and stakeholder reach

The event succeeded in reaching a multidisciplinary participant group. The attendance list confirms 50 participants. The gender distribution recorded in the attendance documentation was 47 female participants and 3 male participants. The composition was highly relevant for a public awareness activity focused on local implementation, because the participants included educators, NGO representatives, local authorities and community members.

4.1 Gender composition

Gender	Number of participants	Percentage
Female	47	94.0%
Male	3	6.0%

The final attendance profile was not gender-balanced, but it reflected the actual composition of the local stakeholder group reached by the event. The gender split is transparently reported here for monitoring purposes.

4.2 Stakeholder categories in the signed attendance list

Stakeholder category	Number of participants	Percentage
Educators	26	52.0%
NGO / civil society	19	38.0%
Public authorities	4	8.0%
Local community	1	2.0%

Educators and NGO/civil society representatives formed the largest participant groups. This is consistent with the event objective of raising awareness among local actors who are positioned to identify hate incidents, communicate with vulnerable groups, support reporting pathways and strengthen community inclusion.

5. Implemented agenda

The implemented agenda followed a one-day structure combining registration, opening, thematic inputs, interactive discussion, stakeholder dialogue, group work, presentation of COMBATHATE resources and final evaluation. The timing and session structure were designed to make the event accessible and participatory while maintaining sufficient time for discussion.

Time	Session	Implemented content
09:30 - 10:00	**Registration and welcome coffee**	Registration of participants, distribution of information materials and agenda, informal networking, background visual presentation of the COMBATHATE project and goals.
10:00 - 10:20	**Official opening and introduction**	Welcome speeches by PROVISION and local stakeholder/municipality representative; brief introduction to COMBATHATE.
10:20 - 11:00	**Session 1: Understanding hate speech and hate crimes against people with mental disabilities**	Presentation and interactive discussion on hate speech, discrimination, stigma, online/offline hate speech, stereotypes and impact on mental health and social inclusion.
11:15 - 12:15	**Session 2: Real stories, real impact - empathy and human perspective**	Case studies, personal stories/testimonials and small-group reflection exercises.
12:15 - 13:00	**Session 3: Stakeholder roles and responsibilities**	Panel discussion/moderated dialogue on local challenges, gaps in support systems, prevention measures, institutional responsibilities and improved cooperation.
14:00 - 15:00	**Session 4: Workshop - building inclusive and safe communities**	Mixed stakeholder group work on local challenges, institutional improvements, community responses to hate speech, preventive

Time	Session	Implemented content
		actions and support for people with mental disabilities.
15:20 - 15:40	**Session 5: COMBATHATE resources and support opportunities**	Presentation of project resources, psychological and legal support concepts, available local services, organisations and future cooperation opportunities.
15:40 - 16:00	**Final reflection, evaluation and closing**	Summary of the day, final reflections and completion of participant feedback questionnaire.

6. WP2 deliverables, support systems and training materials presented

A central requirement of D5.6 was the presentation and discussion of the deliverables from WP2, including the developed support systems and training materials. The event therefore included a dedicated presentation of the COMBATHATE resources and support opportunities developed during the first project phase. The presentation focused on practical application rather than only theoretical description.

The following WP2 outputs and tools were presented or discussed in accessible form during the event:

- Needs assessment findings: the main barriers faced by people with mental disabilities exposed to hate speech and hate crimes, including stigma, under-reporting, low service awareness and difficulties accessing support.
- Psychological First Aid approach: an initial supportive response that helps create safety, calm, connection and referral after a distressing event.
- Support system components: PFA Card, icon-based incident reporting form, proxy reporting option, Evidence Bundle Kit, Legal Flowcharts, Template Letters, Help Maps and Digital Wizard prototype.
- Training materials and staff capacity-building outputs: practical modules covering Psychological First Aid, legal rights, evidence handling, support protocols, accessible communication and warm referral.
- Support protocols and referral logic: how local stakeholders can recognise a problem, support the person, record the incident safely and connect the person with relevant services.
- Communication and awareness materials: project visuals, public messages, information materials and channels for future dissemination.

The presentation was adapted to the public-event context. Instead of a technical training format, the facilitator explained the tools in practical terms and connected them to local stakeholder roles. This enabled participants to understand why the tools were created, how they can reduce reporting barriers, and how local actors can contribute to safer, more inclusive communities.

7. Description of activities implemented

7.1 Opening and project presentation

The event opened with registration, welcome coffee and informal networking. Participants received basic information materials and were introduced to the COMBATHATE project, its objectives and its relevance to the local context. The opening session placed the project within the broader European framework of combating hate speech, promoting inclusion and protecting the rights of vulnerable groups.

7.2 Awareness session on hate speech and hate crimes

The first thematic session created a common understanding of the concepts of hate speech, hate crime, discrimination and stigma. Participants discussed how hate speech can occur both online and offline, and how stereotypes against people with mental disabilities may lead to exclusion, social isolation and reduced access to participation. The session also highlighted that hate speech has real psychological, emotional and social consequences even when incidents are not formally reported.

7.3 Empathy and human perspective

The second session used case studies, personal stories and guided reflection to connect the topic to human experience. This methodology helped participants move beyond abstract definitions and consider the emotional impact of harassment, verbal abuse, hostile behaviour and institutional exclusion. Small-group reflection supported active participation and made the topic more tangible for stakeholders from different sectors.

7.4 Stakeholder dialogue

The stakeholder dialogue focused on local responsibilities and cooperation. Participants discussed current local challenges, gaps in support systems, prevention measures and the role of municipalities, schools, NGOs, support services and community actors. This session was important because it linked awareness raising to practical cooperation and encouraged participants to identify where their institutions or organisations can contribute.

7.5 Workshop on inclusive and safe communities

Participants were divided into mixed stakeholder groups to discuss the biggest local challenges and possible solutions. The group work focused on how institutions can improve, how communities can respond to hate speech, what preventive actions can be implemented locally, and how people with mental disabilities can be supported better. The exercise produced practical reflections around early recognition, accessible communication, referral pathways and cooperation between institutions and civil society.

7.6 Presentation of COMBATHATE resources

The final thematic presentation introduced the COMBATHATE resources and support opportunities developed within the project. The session emphasised the psychological and legal support concepts, practical support tools, local services and possibilities for future cooperation. Participants were encouraged to use the resources as reference points in their own professional and community settings.

8. Evaluation framework and participant feedback

Participant feedback was collected through an electronic questionnaire completed by all 50 participants. The questionnaire included profile information, seven 1-5 rating questions and a question on interest in future collaboration or follow-up activities. The results were analysed in aggregated form only, in line with the public dissemination level and data minimisation principles.

8.1 Feedback respondent profile

The self-identified role/profile in the feedback forms was as follows:

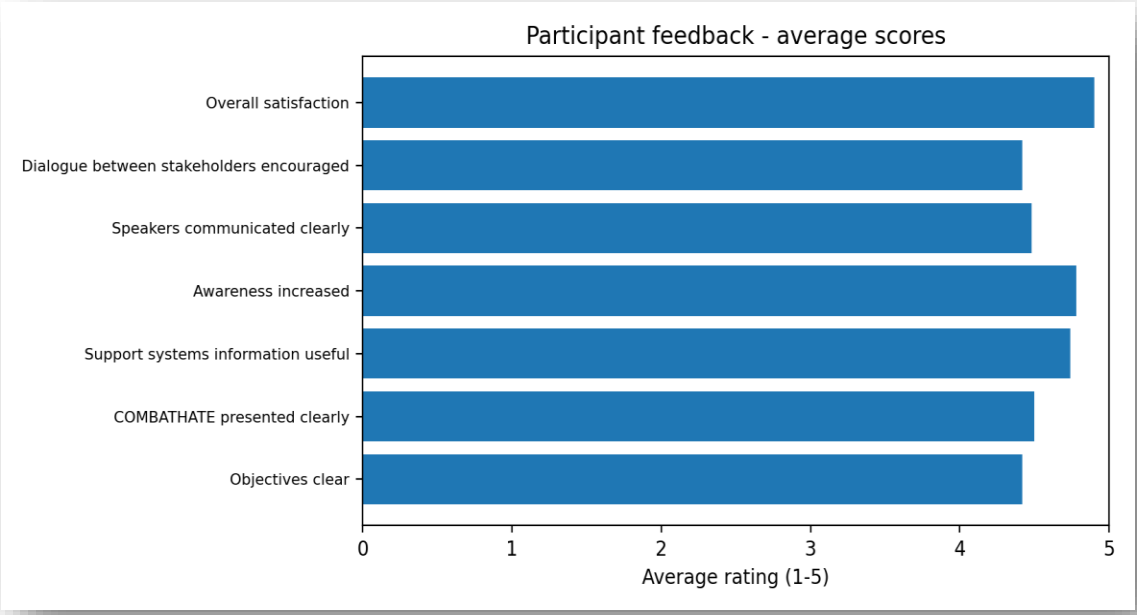
Role / profile in feedback form	Number of respondents	Percentage
Educator / trainer	36	72.0%
NGO / civil society	9	18.0%
Local authority	4	8.0%
Citizen / community member	1	2.0%

The role distribution confirms that the event mainly reached professionals and community actors who can serve as multipliers for awareness, prevention and support. The largest feedback group was educators/trainers, followed by NGO/civil society representatives.

8.2 Quantitative feedback results

Feedback indicator	Mean	Median	% ratings 4-5	Distribution
Objectives clear	4.42	4.0	100%	21 ratings 5; 29 ratings 4
COMBATHATE presented clearly	4.50	4.5	100%	25 ratings 5; 25 ratings 4
Support systems information useful	4.74	5.0	100%	37 ratings 5; 13 ratings 4
Awareness increased	4.78	5.0	100%	39 ratings 5; 11 ratings 4
Speakers communicated clearly	4.48	4.0	100%	24 ratings 5; 26 ratings 4
Dialogue between stakeholders encouraged	4.42	4.0	100%	21 ratings 5; 29 ratings 4
Overall satisfaction	4.90	5.0	100%	45 ratings 5; 5 ratings 4

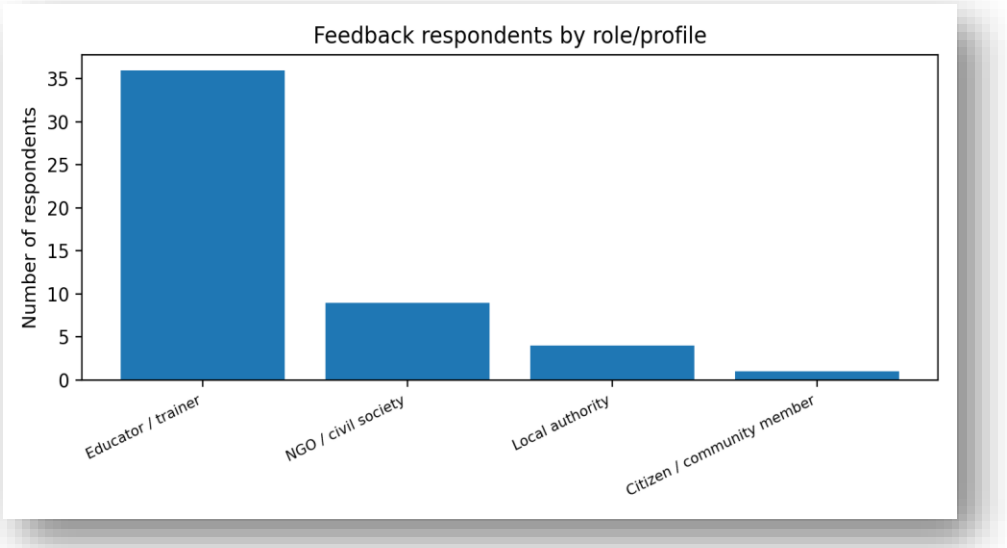
The results are consistently positive. No participant gave a rating below 4 in any scored category. The highest-rated item was overall satisfaction, followed by increased awareness and usefulness of the information provided about support systems. This demonstrates that the event was both well received and aligned with its intended public awareness and dissemination purpose.



8.3 Interest in future collaboration

All 50 feedback respondents answered "Yes" to the question on interest in future collaboration or follow-up activities. This result is important because it indicates that the event generated not only awareness but also willingness to remain engaged in future project-related or local inclusion activities.

Future collaboration response	Number of respondents	Percentage
Yes	50	100.0%
No / Not sure	0	0.0%



8.4 Interpretation of the feedback

The feedback indicates that the event met its immediate awareness-raising and dissemination objectives. Participants considered the support systems useful, reported increased awareness, and confirmed that the event encouraged stakeholder dialogue. The score for support-system usefulness is particularly important because it confirms that the WP2 results were presented in a way that local stakeholders understood and could connect to practical implementation.

The feedback also suggests that future public events should continue combining project-resource presentations with case-based discussion and local stakeholder dialogue. This format appears to be effective for translating technical project outputs into messages that are meaningful for educators, NGOs, authorities and community actors.

9. Key findings, lessons learned and recommendations

9.1 Key findings

- The event fully reached the planned target of 50 participants.
- The participant group was diverse and relevant to the event purpose, with educators, NGO representatives, public authorities and community members represented.
- The event successfully disseminated WP2 outputs in a public and practical format.
- Participant feedback was very positive, with all scored items receiving only ratings of 4 or 5.
- The support systems and training materials were perceived as useful and applicable.
- All feedback respondents expressed interest in future collaboration or follow-up activities.

9.2 Lessons learned

- Public events are most effective when technical project outputs are translated into practical examples and local stakeholder roles.
- Case studies and human-perspective activities help participants understand the emotional and social impact of hate speech and discrimination.
- Stakeholder dialogue is essential because support systems require cooperation between schools, NGOs, social services, municipalities and community actors.
- Future events should continue using participatory methods, because small-group work allowed participants to reflect actively and propose local solutions.
- A strong public-event evaluation system provides useful evidence for WP5 reporting and future campaign adjustments.

9.3 Recommendations for future WP5 activities

- Maintain the combination of awareness raising, practical tool presentation and stakeholder dialogue in future public events.
- Continue presenting WP2 support systems in simple and accessible language, supported by examples and visual tools.
- Develop follow-up contacts with participants who expressed interest in further cooperation.

- Strengthen outreach to male participants and other underrepresented groups in future public events to improve gender balance.
- Use the event results to inform local dissemination planning, public communication messages and future cooperation with municipal stakeholders.
- Preserve all attendance and feedback documentation in the partner archive for audit and reporting purposes.

10. Communication, visibility and public dissemination

The public event was implemented in line with EU visibility requirements. The agenda and event documentation displayed the COMBATHATE visual identity and the European Union funding acknowledgement. The public nature of the deliverable also supports transparency and dissemination of the project mission, while personal data from attendance lists are protected and stored separately.

The event contributed to the WP5 communication strategy by increasing local awareness of the project and by disseminating the support systems and training resources developed in WP2. It also reinforced the project messages around dignity, non-discrimination, inclusion, safe reporting and cooperation between civil society and public authorities.

Project information and dissemination channels remain available through the consortium web and social media presence, including the project social media pages on Facebook and Instagram and the partner webpages used for public communication and visibility.

11. Conclusions

D5.6 - First public event in Bulgaria was implemented successfully by PROVISION INTERNATIONAL on 16 May 2026 in Bansko, Bulgaria. The event achieved the target number of participants, presented the COMBATHATE project and WP2 outputs, promoted awareness of hate speech and hate crimes affecting people with mental disabilities, and created space for local stakeholder dialogue.

The event generated strong positive feedback and demonstrated high relevance for the local community. The support systems and training materials developed in WP2 were not only presented but also discussed in connection with real local roles and responsibilities. This strengthens the project objective of moving from technical outputs to practical awareness, cooperation and implementation.

Overall, the event represents a solid contribution to WP5 public awareness and dissemination and provides a strong basis for continued local engagement, future public events and wider dissemination of the COMBATHATE results.

Annex A - Implemented agenda

The implemented agenda is reproduced below in text format to maintain the public accessibility of this deliverable.

09:30 - 10:00 | Registration and welcome coffee

Registration of participants, distribution of information materials and agenda, informal networking, background visual presentation of the COMBATHATE project and goals.

10:00 - 10:20 | Official opening and introduction

Welcome speeches by PROVISION and local stakeholder/municipality representative; brief introduction to COMBATHATE.

10:20 - 11:00 | Session 1: Understanding hate speech and hate crimes against people with mental disabilities

Presentation and interactive discussion on hate speech, discrimination, stigma, online/offline hate speech, stereotypes and impact on mental health and social inclusion.

11:15 - 12:15 | Session 2: Real stories, real impact - empathy and human perspective

Case studies, personal stories/testimonials and small-group reflection exercises.

12:15 - 13:00 | Session 3: Stakeholder roles and responsibilities

Panel discussion/moderated dialogue on local challenges, gaps in support systems, prevention measures, institutional responsibilities and improved cooperation.

14:00 - 15:00 | Session 4: Workshop - building inclusive and safe communities

Mixed stakeholder group work on local challenges, institutional improvements, community responses to hate speech, preventive actions and support for people with mental disabilities.

15:20 - 15:40 | Session 5: COMBATHATE resources and support opportunities

Presentation of project resources, psychological and legal support concepts, available local services, organisations and future cooperation opportunities.

15:40 - 16:00 | Final reflection, evaluation and closing

Summary of the day, final reflections and completion of participant feedback questionnaire.

Annex B - Materials and presentations used

The materials and presentations used during the event were designed to introduce the project, explain the relevance of combating hate speech and hate crimes against people with mental disabilities, and present the support systems developed under WP2. The materials were used as awareness and discussion tools rather than as formal training handbooks.

Material / presentation	Purpose and content
COMBATHATE project introduction	Overview of project objectives, partnership, EU funding, target groups and work package logic.
Understanding hate speech and hate crimes	Presentation on the distinction between discrimination, stigma, hate speech and hate crime; online and offline manifestations; impact on mental health and inclusion.
WP2 support systems presentation	Public introduction to the PFA Card, icon-based incident form, proxy reporting, evidence bundle, legal flowcharts, template letters, help maps and digital wizard prototype.
Training materials overview	Explanation of WP2 training topics: Psychological First Aid, legal rights, evidence handling, support protocols, accessible communication and warm referral.
Case studies and reflection prompts	Short examples and group questions used to stimulate empathy, local reflection and stakeholder discussion.
Evaluation questionnaire	Feedback form collecting role/profile information, 1-5 ratings and future collaboration interest.

Annex C - Feedback questionnaire

The participant feedback questionnaire included the following fields and questions. Responses were analysed only in aggregated form.

1. Your country
2. Your role / profile
3. The event objectives were clear. (1-5)
4. The COMBATHATE project was presented clearly. (1-5)
5. The information provided about support systems was useful. (1-5)
6. The event increased my awareness of hate speech and hate crimes against people with mental disabilities. (1-5)
7. The speakers communicated clearly and effectively. (1-5)
8. The event encouraged dialogue between stakeholders. (1-5)
9. Overall satisfaction with the event. (1-5)
10. Would you be interested in future collaboration or follow-up activities? (Yes/No)

Annex D - Attendance evidence and public-data note

The event collected a signed presence list confirming the participation of 50 persons. The attendance list includes participant names, gender, country, organisation/institution, stakeholder category and signature. Because D5.6 is a public deliverable, the signed list is not annexed to this public version in order to avoid publishing personal data and signatures.

The full signed presence list is archived by PROVISION INTERNATIONAL and can be made available to the Coordinator, the granting authority or auditors through the appropriate internal or official channels. The aggregated attendance data included in this report are sufficient for public dissemination and monitoring purposes.

Aggregated attendance summary: 50 participants; 47 female and 3 male participants; stakeholder categories recorded in the attendance list include 26 educators, 19 NGO/civil society representatives, 4 public authorities and 1 local community representative.