Hate crimes are criminal offences committed with a discriminatory or ‘bias’ motive.

Offenders who commit a hate crime, do so because they are intentionally discriminating against the victim. This discrimination is made on account of a ‘protected characteristic’ of the victim, such as race, national or ethnic origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, language or age. Examples of hate crimes are violence against migrants merely because they are migrants, and writing anti-Semitic graffiti.

Hate crimes are contrasted with ‘hate incidents’, which are also actions committed with a discriminatory motive, but are not crimes. Hate incidents include, for example, many kinds of verbal abuse.

Hate crimes and incidents have been on the rise since the beginning of the 21st century. They are a common feature of the lives of some people and often occur in ordinary, everyday circumstances. The people most affected by hate crime and incidents include the Roma, LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex) people, Jews and immigrants and refugees coming to Europe.

Hate crimes and incidents can have a severe psychological impact on the victims. They undermine their dignity, their individuality, their sense of worth, and their respect for their place in society. The psychological impact of hate crimes can be far greater than other types of crime because they send a message that the victim and/or their group are not an accepted part of the society in which they live.

The Hate Crime module aims to raise awareness and the sense of urgency on the issue of hate crime, and to help users to better understand it and identify issues in police attitudes and responses to it. It targets all police officers and other law enforcement authorities in middle, senior and special management functions.

The module consists of an introduction, nine topic chapters and a glossary of hate crime-related terms and abbreviations. In the My Progress section, users can assess their levels of understanding of each of the topics by considering a selection of true/false statements.
The earlier chapters cover the more theoretical topics, but they become progressively more practical in the later parts of the module. In more detail, the chapters are:

1. **Introduction**

2. **Concepts:** This chapter describes the basic concepts used to address hate crimes. The aim is to explain how hate crimes differ from other offences and why they require particular attention and a specific response.

3. **Legal Aspects:** This chapter outlines the most important legal provisions guiding the authorities of EU Member States in dealing with hate crime.

4. **Characteristics:** This chapter covers the specific characteristics of hate crimes. It includes the different types of expression of hate, the most common forms of hate crime, and the different types of offenders.

5. **Hate Speech:** Hate speech is a verbal or written expression that forms a public incitement to violence or hatred against a group of persons. This chapter explains what hate speech is, its impact and how it can best be tackled.

6. **Online Hate:** This chapter is concerned with hate that is spread over the internet and by text messaging, and how it differs from other hate speech and hate crime.

7. **Impact:** This chapter discusses the impact that hate crimes can and do have on the victims and their families and communities. It includes the issue of non-reporting of hate crimes to the police.

8. **Indicators:** This chapter examines the different types of indicator (sign) that in practice show that a crime is committed with a discriminatory motive, and is therefore a hate crime.

9. **Response:** This chapter describes the police response to reported hate crime. It features the ‘victim-centred approach’, which means putting the needs of the victim at the centre of the investigation.

10. **Organisation and Cooperation:** This chapter aims to describe how organisational measures can improve the response of the police to hate crime and support victims of hate crime.