



Quaker  
Council for  
European  
Affairs

# Anti-migrant hate speech



**HUMAN RIGHTS  
PROGRAMME REPORT**

*The Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) brings a vision based on the Quaker commitment to peace, justice and equality to Europe and its institutions.*

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*First published June 2018*

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AISBL - MONITEUR BELGE NO. 11 732/80  
NO. D'ENTREPRISE 0420.346.728  
TRANSPARENCY REGISTER 3960234639-24

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# Foreword

Invading, flooding, swamping... this is how the media in many parts of Europe has been portraying humans – people just like us seeking safety in Europe. It is a hurtful generalisation, an exaggeration of the greatest proportions and incredibly inflammatory language. When the press demonises our neighbours, it gives a green light to hate speech and enables it to catch hold of our daily discourse. I can't stress enough how important it is to address anti-migrant and all other forms of hate speech. Hopefully, one day eradicate it.

As an MEP for the North East of England, I have heard of horrific verbal abuse towards my own constituents, fuelled by a toxic political narrative, but have also been at the receiving end of it. Europe must have zero tolerance to hate speech. We know from our collective past that it has been a precursor to violence – we must learn from our history and avoid it happening again at all costs.

**Jude Kirton-Darling MEP**



# Introduction

This report is a call to action against the tide of anti-migrant hate speech in Europe today.

Differences of opinion are the keystone of a healthy democracy, but dehumanising language corrodes public discourse and inflames the hate which can lead to violence.

As the far right advances in parts of Europe, anti-migrant rhetoric is becoming normalised, particularly on the internet where anonymity trumps accountability.

Successfully tackling hate speech will require the common effort of governments, political parties, the media and internet companies.

However, this objective will only be achieved if we can work together to build truly inclusive and resilient societies, overcoming the politics of division in the process. Any responsible government or media organisation will relish this challenge.

# What is hate speech?

Despite the term being widely used in legal, policy-making and academic circles, there is no single definition of hate speech. There are varying standards for defining and limiting hate speech in international and regional human rights instruments. Those variations are therefore reflected in national legislation. This explains much of the confusion around the term. Beyond the question of finding a basic definition, what exactly constitutes hate speech and when it can be prohibited are subject to debate.

## Balancing rights: freedom of expression, equality and non-discrimination

Working in human rights very often involves balancing different rights (except freedom from torture and right to life which are absolute rights). The way human rights law understands hate speech also involves balancing rights: On the one hand, there is freedom of expression, which includes information and ideas that are favourably accepted as well as those that may offend, shock or disturb. On the other hand, there is the right to equality and to freedom from discrimination, for which international law requires states to prohibit, by law, “any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence”.<sup>1</sup>

For some, anti-hate speech legislation is not only difficult to interpret, and therefore to enforce, it is also not effective and poses a risk to freedom of expression by abusing restrictions or even silencing critics. For others, limiting speech is necessary to avoid discrimination and violence. The real challenge is then to identify the tipping point at which legitimate expression transforms into hate speech.

## Hate speech: a definition

Europe’s pre-eminent human rights body is the Council of Europe, encompassing almost all European countries. It defines hate speech as “covering all forms of expression which spread, incite, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, antisemitism or other forms of hatred based on intolerance, including: intolerance expressed by aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism, discrimination and hostility against minorities, migrants and people of immigrant origin”. (*Council of Europe, Committee of Ministers, Recommendation No. (97) 20*).

Using the above definition, this report will focus on hate speech that expresses hostility toward or about migrants and refugees. This type of hate speech is often framed within broader nationalist or racist expression.

***It is crucial to address hate speech because it infringes on people’s dignity, has a negative impact on societies and is a potential precursor to violence. Europe is experiencing a worrying upward spiral of hatred, likely stirred by some political trends and facilitated by the rapid development and strength of media, especially social media networks. In the context of increased migration into Europe, migrants – and people perceived to be migrants – have been targeted.***

# Why tackle hate speech?

## The harm inflicted by hate speech

Hate speech signals to the intended target that they could expect hostility, discrimination or exclusion. As reported in the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) Second Minorities and Discrimination Survey (December 2017), immigrants, descendants of immigrants and minority ethnic groups who have experienced discrimination show significantly lower levels of trust and feel less attached to the country in which they live. Therefore, hate speech potentially impedes integration and social inclusion policies, thus undermining social cohesion.

Moreover, a climate in which hate speech is tolerated creates an environment conducive to violence. While the extent of the relationship between hate speech and physical violence is not commonly understood, it is worth restating that there are examples, notably in European history, that point to a relationship between them.

The Holocaust was of such horrific proportions that it should be our first point of reference in any consideration of hate speech and violence. It alone justifies the existence of all international human rights institutions and mechanisms. However, it has not been enough of a wake-up call to end mass human rights violations, as seen in the genocides in Rwanda and Bosnia in the 1990s.

## Quaker approaches to hate speech

Quakers have a long record of working to promote human rights and protect minorities. For example, in 1933 Quakers established the Kindertransport, which alongside other groups, was responsible for helping Jewish children escape Nazi persecution in Germany, Czechoslovakia, Austria and Poland, and supporting them in their new country.

Since the movement’s birth in the 17th Century, Quakers have valued truth as one of their main principles. Early Quakers used the word truth as a way of describing their belief in the way that God can work deeply within people, and they were sometimes known as Friends of Truth and Publishers of Truth. Quakers believed in speaking truth at all times, even avoiding flattery and indirect language.

## Nazi Germany, 1933-45

One of the most prominent examples of hate speech being a precursor to violence was the Nazi Party and the spreading of antisemitic propaganda. The leaders of the Nazi Party spread their ideologies of hatred in order to gain power. The Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda ensured that the Nazi message was communicated through art, music, books, radio, and educational material. For example, propaganda books were published with the titles *The Poisonous Mushroom* and *Trust No Fox*. Books like these portrayed Jews as an ‘alien race’ that poisoned the German culture, and needed to be exterminated. It was impossible to escape the propaganda and it quickly influenced the actions of those living in Germany at the time.

## Rwanda, 1994

Another example of the relationship between hate speech and violence is the Rwandan Genocide. In 1994, Hutu nationalists in Rwanda spread violence and hate speech throughout the country, which then led to a genocide against Tutsis and others who opposed the violence. The genocide took the lives of more than 800,000 people. Through the use of government and non-government sponsored radio broadcasts, hate speech spread throughout the country to hundreds of thousands of people and promoted violence towards people with Tutsi identity. One of the major radio stations, Radio Television Libre des Milles Collines (Radio RTLM) called for “a final war” to “exterminate the cockroaches”.<sup>2</sup>

*continued →*

Hate speech (alongside fake news, stereotypes and lies in general) is an offence to this Quaker concept of truth, as well to most other people’s concept of honesty and truth. However, freedom of expression is also important to Quakers. In 1917 the wartime government in Britain imposed censorship on publications. Quakers did not comply, saying, “Christianity requires the toleration of opinions not our own, lest we should unwittingly hinder the workings of the Spirit of God.” (*Recorded in Britain Yearly Meeting’s Quaker Faith and Practice*, 23.90).

Despite this tendency to free expression, Quakers recognise the particular danger of hate speech.



→

A study by David Yanagizawa-Drott of Harvard University uses datasets on genocidal violence in one thousand Rwandan villages to understand the impact that radio broadcasts had on participation in violence. In his study, he found that the communities which had full radio coverage and access to the broadcasts containing hate speech experienced more violence than those which did not. The study estimates that approximately 9% of genocidal deaths (45,000 Tutsis) could be attributed to hate speech that was broadcasted on radio stations.<sup>3</sup>

### Bosnia, 1990s

During the Bosnian war of 1992-1995, nationalist controlled media such as Radio Television of Serbia portrayed non-Serbs as a subhuman 'other'. Vojislav Šešelj, a Serb political leader in the 1990s, was known for his hateful speeches against non-Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. In April 2018, the Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals, which replaced the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), judged Šešelj guilty of three counts of crimes against humanity, involving acts of hate speech. The judgement leads to the conclusion that there is little doubt that Šešelj's speeches encouraged and led other Serbs to commit crimes against non-Serbs.<sup>4</sup>

A study conducted by Richard Ashby Wilson and Christine Lillie from the Institute for Advanced Study analysed 242 of Šešelj's speeches. The research established positive correlations between the themes of speeches, notably revenge propaganda, and the likelihood of the commitment of atrocities.<sup>5</sup>

**While causal links between hate speech and violence are difficult to establish, there are clear indications of a correlation between them, which should raise concerns over a banalisation of hate speech.**

## Hate crime today

### A CORRELATION BETWEEN FAR-RIGHT SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS AND HATE CRIME FOUND IN GERMANY

In December 2017 Karsten Müller and Carlo Schwarz of the University of Warwick published the results of a research project examining the relationship between social media and hate crime. Their paper, 'Fanning the Flames of Hate: Social Media and Hate Crime' provides extensive evidence that the level of anti-migrant sentiment on Facebook has a relationship with the number of violent crimes against migrants and refugees.

The research examined 3334 recorded hate crimes across the 4466 municipalities in Germany from January 2015 to February 2017. The research focused on the Facebook page of the German political party Alternative für Deutschland (AfD). The relationship was so close that levels of hate crime were lower when a municipality suffered a power cut.



→  
From words to deeds: some of the 20th century's most brutal atrocities were made possible by the normalisation of divisive hate speech which preceded them. From top: a Nazi boycott of Jewish shops, the remains of victims of the Rwandan genocide, and the reburial of Bosniak men and boys who were killed in the massacre at Srebrenica.

PHOTOS: BUNDESARCHIV / CONFIGMANAGER / ROSA MENKMAN

## International human rights law requires States to address hate speech

The most widely cited international human rights instruments related to hate speech are the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (see *right column*).

Pursuant to those two articles, states have an obligation to prohibit cases of "advocacy of national, racial, or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence" by law. This obligation to address hate speech extends to the mass media and the internet.

In 2011, the United Nations tried to create spaces for promoting a shared and better understanding of what hate speech is, where to distinguish it from freedom of expression, and how it should be addressed according to national, regional and local sensitivities. The Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence<sup>6</sup> is a result of such a process.

Regardless of debates and complexities around the term 'hate speech', the phenomenon has negative impacts on people's rights and on societies. As expressed in international human rights law, states have an obligation to prohibit it by law whether it manifests itself offline or online.

### BETWEEN FREE SPEECH AND HATE SPEECH: THE RABAT PLAN OF ACTION

Adopted in Rabat, Morocco, in October 2012, the *Rabat Plan of Action* contains a six-part threshold test for forms of speech that are prohibited under criminal law. The test takes into consideration: the context of incitement to hatred, the speaker, intent, content, extent of the speech, and likelihood of causing harm.

It further recommends the adoption of comprehensive national anti-discrimination legislation with preventive and punitive action to effectively combat incitement to hatred, as well as the empowerment of minorities and vulnerable groups.

*Any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law.*

### Article 20.2 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

*States Parties condemn all propaganda and all organisations which are based on ideas or theories of superiority of one race or group of persons of one colour or ethnic origin, or which attempt to justify or promote racial hatred and discrimination in any form, and undertake to adopt immediate and positive measures designed to eradicate all incitement to, or acts of, such discrimination and, to this end, with due regard to the principles embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the rights expressly set forth in article 5 of this Convention, inter alia:*

*(a) Shall declare an offence punishable by law all dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or hatred, incitement to racial discrimination, as well as all acts of violence or incitement to such acts against any race or group of persons of another colour or ethnic origin, and also the provision of any assistance to racist activities, including the financing thereof;*

*(b) Shall declare illegal and prohibit organisations, and also organised and all other propaganda activities, which promote and incite racial discrimination, and shall recognise participation in such organisations or activities as an offence punishable by law;*

*(c) Shall not permit public authorities or public institutions, national or local, to promote or incite racial discrimination.*

### Article 4 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination



# How significant is hate speech in Europe?

## Growing patterns of hatred

According to the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights' director, Michael O'Flaherty, "FRA studies, research and surveys offer compelling evidence of unacceptable and growing patterns of extreme hatred and vilification targeted against groups including migrants – especially Muslim migrants".<sup>7</sup>

In 2016, the project *An overview of hate crime and hate speech in 9 EU countries* examined people's experiences of crime and other offences motivated by hate and prejudice. The results show that the general perception registered among the surveys' respondents, with few exceptions, is that the situation with regard to discrimination and hate incidents is getting worse across Europe.<sup>8</sup>

## Anti-migrant political discourse

The past few years of economic and social policies driven by an austerity agenda have left many European citizens with a feeling of fear and anxiety concerning their own future, as well as the future of their communities and countries.

Nationalistic and xenophobic movements across Europe have captured citizen's fears and uncertainty. By generating and fuelling xenophobic discourse—where foreigners are portrayed as a threat to national identity, culture and economic prosperity—an atmosphere has been created in which hate speech, and often violence, are able to thrive.

Moreover, in an effort to avoid further erosion of their electoral base, traditional political parties often take up certain elements of this rhetoric and associated ideas, thus enabling these elements to enter the political mainstream.<sup>9</sup> This has further contributed to a "normalisation" of hate speech.

In such context, migrants and refugees have become more and more the targets of racist violence and hate speech across European countries.<sup>10 11</sup>

## The role of the media

The media plays a central role in informing the public about what happens in the world. An increasing number of studies provide evidence that media affects political attitudes.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, messages communicated by the media in all its forms can have a discernible impact on judgement formation, particularly in those areas in which audiences do not possess direct knowledge or experience.

On migration-related issues, studies have found that there has been a negative effect of media coverage on attitudes towards migrants and refugees. By portraying them as threats to the economy, culture, or security, news articles have been creating a situation conducive to the formation of negative attitudes.<sup>13</sup> It has also been observed that press coverage promoting hate speech and hostility was systematic and persistent in part of the press.<sup>14</sup>

 **feroo338**

Put them against the wall and **shoot them** – no exceptions.

♥ 66 💬 4 Comment from the website of the Slovak newspaper *Nový Cas*

## Online hate

With the advent of digital information and communication technologies, the possibilities of human interactions have dramatically increased. The internet has opened up new ways to say more things to more people. Moreover, social media companies hold considerable power over the flow of information and ideas online. As a consequence, hate speech can be disseminated more easily on comment sections of news portals or using social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter or YouTube. Even if hate speech online is not intrinsically different from similar expressions found offline, the proliferation of this phenomenon with an online dimension poses a new set of challenges in Europe and beyond, particularly in an internet world which is increasingly user-generated, interconnected, and consisting of multiple forms of content.



**Victor Young**

Send them back where they come from. Bunch of **cockroaches** trying to invade.

♥ 45 💬 9

Comment from the website of the British newspaper *The Sun*

## The challenges posed by online hate speech

- The internet gives people **the possibility to remain anonymous and use pseudonyms**. This could potentially facilitate destructive behaviour as people feel much more comfortable saying things knowing that they will not have to deal with the consequences of what they say. **This anonymity creates challenges for victims of hate speech.**
- Like any content, **hate speech can stay online for a long time in different formats on different platforms and can be shared repeatedly**. The longer it stays online, the more exposure it gets and the higher the likelihood of inflicting damage.
- The **transnational reach and decentralised architecture of the internet raises issues which potentially render existing legislation inappropriate and/or ineffective**. Hatemongers therefore enjoy a significant level of mobility as content could be spread across countries with different laws regarding combating hate speech. Moreover, within the same country, private actors, such as Internet Service Providers, might have different policies (terms of use, community guidelines) regarding hate speech. As many actors might be involved in the dissemination of hate speech (creation, publication, hosting etc.) the question is raised as to who is responsible, and to what extent.

## QCEA research

Encouraging readers to post online comments allows news media to connect with audiences. However, such comments are often filled with vitriol. QCEA undertook a piece of research assessing the prevalence of hate in the online comment sections of several leading European newspapers.

The comments shown on these pages represent only a fraction of the reality (see *Annex, page 22*). In some countries, there have been efforts undertaken to moderate comment sections. Be that as it may, these examples illustrate the unfortunate assessment that hateful and dehumanising language against migrants is all too common and not systematically removed online.

## Conclusions

- Migrants and refugees have increasingly been the targets of hate speech.<sup>15</sup> This trend is likely to be correlated with media coverage of increased migration, recent violent extremism and anxieties stemming from economic and social difficulties in some European countries.<sup>16</sup>
- Politicians, notably from nationalist and xenophobic movements, have contributed to an atmosphere where hostility, hate speech, and even violence towards migrants and refugees are able to thrive.
- Online hate speech has grown with the advent of social media and it poses a new set of challenges, notably assessing the extent of this phenomenon.



**Myuller**

Didn't you try shooting them? Or running a few **gas chambers** with Zyklon B, together with several ovens?

♥ 29 💬 11 Comment from the website of the Russian newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda*

# What is being done?

At the European level, laws and policies have been adopted in order to counter hate speech. In this section, we will give an overview of the main existing legal frameworks and policies aimed at addressing hate speech offline and online. This section also looks at the policies of internet companies such as Twitter, Facebook and Microsoft, given their significant role in online communications.

## The Council of Europe

The Council of Europe's different bodies have regularly worked to improve legal standards for the member states to support them in dealing with hate speech. Essentially, they have used the following instruments:

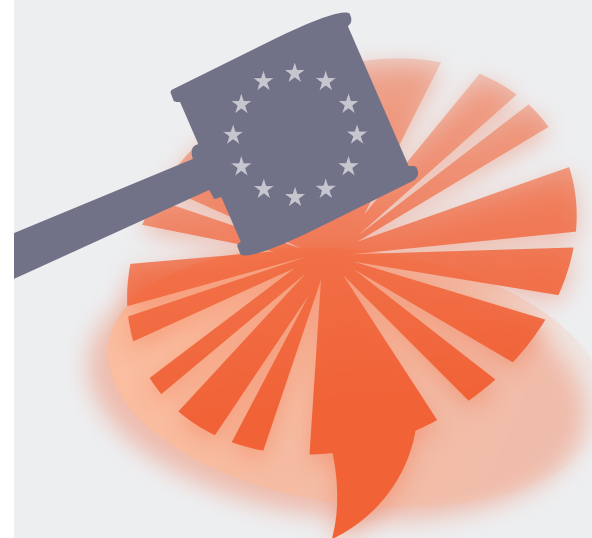
- Legal instruments (the European Convention on Human Rights, the judgements of the Court, the Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime criminalising acts of a racist and xenophobic nature, and the European Convention on Transfrontier Television.
- Policy instruments (Recommendations providing guidelines for the member states).
- Monitoring instrument (the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance).

### Legal instruments

While there are no specific articles prohibiting hate speech in the European Convention on Human Rights, the **European Court of Human Rights**, which enforces the Convention, has used two approaches when dealing with cases concerning incitement to hatred and freedom of expression:

- **Article 10**, which sets out the right to freedom of expression and the possible restrictions to it, the Court assesses whether the expressions used spread, incite, promote or justify hatred based on intolerance.
- **Article 17**, by which the Court assesses whether the comments in question amount to hate speech and negate the fundamental values of the Convention.

Put simply, all forms of expression which spread, incite, promote or justify hatred based on intolerance can be sanctioned by the Court, as indicated by some of its judgements.<sup>17</sup>



1. Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers. This Article shall not prevent States from requiring the licensing of broadcasting, television or cinema enterprises.

2. The exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or rights of others, for preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary.

**ECHR Article 10, Freedom of expression**

Nothing in this Convention may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein or at their limitation to a greater extent than is provided for in the Convention.

**ECHR Article 17, Prohibition of abuse of rights**

### ECHR RULINGS ON FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND HATE SPEECH

Freedom of expression is applicable not only to 'information' or 'ideas' that are favourably received or regarded as inoffensive or as a matter of indifference, but also to those that offend, shock or disturb the State or any sector of the population.

**Handyside v. the United Kingdom judgment of 7 December 1976, § 49**

However, tolerance and respect for the equal dignity of all human beings constitute the foundations of a democratic, pluralistic society. That being so, as a matter of principle it may be considered necessary in certain democratic societies to sanction or even prevent all forms of expression which spread, incite, promote or justify hatred based on intolerance.

**Erbakan v. Turkey judgment of 6 July 2006, § 56**

"Racist and xenophobic material" means any written material, any image or any other representation of ideas or theories, which advocates, promotes or incites hatred, discrimination or violence, against any individual or group of individuals, based on race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin, as well as religion if used as a pretext for any of these factors.

**Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime, Article 2.1**

1 All items of programme services, as concerns their presentation and content, shall respect the dignity of the human being and the fundamental rights of others. In particular, they shall not:

- a. be indecent and in particular contain pornography;
- b. give undue prominence to violence or be likely to incite to racial hatred.

**The European Convention on Transfrontier Television, Article 7 – Responsibilities of the broadcaster**

Moreover, regarding the diffusion of hate speech online through platforms or portals, the Court considered that:

"Internet news portals which, for commercial and professional purposes, provide a platform for user-generated comments assume the 'duties and responsibilities' associated with freedom of expression in accordance with Article 10 § 2 of the Convention where users disseminate hate speech or comments amounting to direct incitement to violence."<sup>18</sup>

Aside from the European Convention on Human Rights, other relevant legal frameworks<sup>19</sup> include:

- The Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime criminalising acts of a racist and xenophobic nature,<sup>20</sup> and
- The European Convention on Transfrontier Television.<sup>21</sup>

The former requires states to adopt (and enforce) legislation and/or other effective measures to make various types of racist conduct committed via computer systems criminal offences under domestic law. The latter calls for broadcasts to respect human dignity and the fundamental rights of others, and to avoid incitement to racial hatred.

### Policy instruments

Beyond legal frameworks, the Council of Europe's political bodies have all adopted resolutions and recommendations providing guidelines for the member states with regards to hate speech.

### Recommendation No. R (97) 20 on hate speech,<sup>22</sup> and Recommendation No. R (97) 21 on the media and the promotion of a culture of tolerance<sup>23</sup>

In 1997, the Committee of Ministers adopted a recommendation on hate speech and condemns all forms of expression inciting racism, xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance. It also lays down guidelines for the Member States' governments on how to address these forms of expression. On the same day, the Council of Europe also adopted another recommendation on the role of the media and the promotion of a culture of peace. It noted that the media can make a positive contribution to the fight against intolerance, especially where they foster a culture of understanding between different ethnic, cultural and religious groups in society.

### The Committee of Ministers' Declaration on freedom of political debate in the media from 2004<sup>24</sup>

The Declaration emphasises that freedom of political debate does not include freedom to express racist opinions or opinions which incite hatred, xenophobia, antisemitism and all forms of intolerance.

### The Parliamentary Assembly's resolution on a strategy to prevent racism and intolerance in Europe

In 2014, the Parliamentary Assembly adopted a resolution on a strategy to prevent racism and intolerance in Europe in which it calls on the Council of Europe member states to better respect and implement the relevant legal frameworks related to hate speech and hate crime.<sup>25</sup>

continued →



Monitoring instrument

The **European Commission against Racism and Intolerance** (ECRI) is a Council of Europe human rights body. It is composed of independent experts who issue monitoring reports. These include guidelines that policy-makers are invited to use when drawing up national strategies and policies in a variety of fields.

On hate speech, ECRI published a recommendation in 2015 in which it emphasises that:

*“Hate speech poses grave dangers for the cohesion of a democratic society, the protection of human rights and the rule of law. Action against the use of hate speech should serve to protect individuals and groups of persons rather than particular beliefs, ideologies or religions. Restrictions on hate speech should not be misused to silence minorities and to suppress criticism of official policies, political opposition or religious beliefs.” (ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 15.)*

In the recommendation, ECRI also found that immigrants, Jews, Muslims and Roma have been particularly affected by the use of hate speech – even if it has not been restricted to them.

The recommendation further adds that any effective action would also apply to the online environment as governments are to use “regulatory powers with respect to the media (including internet providers, online intermediaries and social media), to promote action to combat the use of hate speech and to challenge its acceptability.”

What is the Council of Europe?

In the aftermath of the Second World War, and in particular the vast and unprecedented crimes against humanity which took place during the conflict, European leaders resolved to create common institutions which would ensure that a repeat of the horrors of 1939-45 would not just be undesirable but impossible in practical terms.

The Council of Europe (CoE) was founded in 1949 as the pan-European organisation for democracy, human rights and the rule of law. From its headquarters in Strasbourg, its role is to oversee and report on the status of fundamental freedoms across Europe. In addition to an executive branch, the CoE includes a Parliamentary Assembly (*shown above*) which brings together elected representatives from national parliaments.

Shortly after the CoE’s establishment – at which time it consisted of twelve member states – its Parliamentary Assembly gathered to draft what would become known as the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). Every European country except Belarus is now a member of the Council of Europe, and therefore bound by the ECHR as a condition of their membership.

The Convention contains 18 articles which outline the rights of every European citizen, from the prohibition of torture to the freedom of assembly. Its implementation is overseen by the European Court of Human Rights, which is the supreme judicial arbiter as regards human rights law in Europe.

*The Internet has become an important vehicle for promoting racism and intolerance. Hate speech through social media is rapidly increasing and has the potential to reach a much larger audience than extremist print media were able to reach previously.*

2014 ECRI Annual Report



*1. Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers.*

*2. The freedom and pluralism of the media shall be respected.*

Article 11, Charter of Fundamental Rights

*Nothing in this Charter shall be interpreted as restricting or adversely affecting human rights and fundamental freedoms as recognised, in their respective fields of application, by Union law and international law and by international agreements to which the Union, the Community or all the Member States are party, including the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and by the Member States’ constitutions.*

Article 53, Charter of Fundamental Rights

The European Union

At the level of the European Union, there is the **Charter of Fundamental Rights**.<sup>26</sup> Article 11 establishes Freedom of Expression and allows restrictions to it. While there are also no specific provisions on hate speech, the meaning and scope of this right is similar to those guaranteed by the ECHR. This means that freedom of expression can be restricted if it is used to spread, incite, promote or justify hatred based on intolerance.

Beyond the Charter, there are other sources of EU law which provide for a set of rules aimed at tackling different forms and manifestations of racism and intolerance (such as the **Race Equality Directive**<sup>27</sup> prohibiting discrimination on grounds of racial or ethnic origin in several walks of life; and the **Employment Equality Directive**<sup>28</sup> prohibiting discrimination on several grounds in the field of employment).

On hate speech, an important regulation is the **Framework Decision on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law**.<sup>29</sup> In the Framework Decision, hate speech is defined as the public incitement to violence and hatred based on race, colour, religion, descent or national or ethnic origin as well as hate crimes that have a racist or xenophobic motivation. Under the Decision, hate speech is a criminal offence and EU member states must penalise it. The framework is applicable both to the online as well as to the offline world.

Aside from this legal framework, other relevant EU laws include:

- The **Audiovisual Media Services Directive**,<sup>30</sup> which obliges Member States to ensure the audiovisual media services provided under their jurisdiction do not contain incitement to hatred based on race, sex, religion or nationality.
- The **e-Commerce Directive**,<sup>31</sup> which foresees that, when illegal content is identified, internet service providers should take effective action to remove it.

At a policy level, the European Union has taken the following actions with regards to hate speech over the past few years:

In 2016, a new **High Level Group on combating racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance** was set up by the European Commission. The High Level Group is intended as a platform to support EU and national efforts in ensuring effective implementation of relevant rules and in setting up effective policies to prevent and combat hate crime and hate speech. This is done through thematic discussions on gaps, challenges and responses, promoting best practice exchange, developing guidance and strengthening cooperation and synergies between key stakeholders.

One of the key priorities is countering hate speech online, including through the implementation of a **Code of Conduct on countering illegal hate speech online**, agreed by Facebook, Twitter, Microsoft and YouTube with the European Commission in May 2016 (see *page 15*).

*continued →*



In September 2017, the EU Commission released a communication on **Tackling Illegal Content Online: Towards an enhanced responsibility of online platforms**, in which it reiterates that online platforms which mediate access to content for most internet users carry a significant societal responsibility in terms of protecting users and society at large and preventing criminals and other persons involved in infringing activities online from exploiting their services.<sup>32</sup>

More recently, on March 1 2018, the EU Commission published a recommendation on measures to effectively tackle illegal content online.<sup>33</sup> The recommendation outlines types of processes online platforms should put in place, in order to speed up the detection and removal of illegal content, and thus curb the spread of such material, while also offering a set of robust safeguards.

## Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)

As a regional organisation for cooperation and security in Europe, the OSCE has also played a role in preventing hate speech. This has mainly been done through commitments, declarations, resolutions on the need to combat hate speech which is addressed through:

- Awareness-raising projects, education and regular meetings with media outlets, editors and journalists;
- The **Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media**, whose role includes combating hate speech while preserving freedom of expression, and
- The OSCE **Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)**, issues an annual report on the status of hate crimes in member states. Sometimes the report includes information on hate speech in member states where hate speech is penalised in national legislation.

## Internet companies: how do they address hate speech?

Internet intermediaries, such as social networking platforms or search engines, have terms of service in which they stipulate how they may intervene in allowing, restricting, or channelling the creation of, and access to, specific content. Given the global reach of many internet companies, an increased awareness of their policy on hate speech is relevant for understanding what is being, and could be, done in Europe. Here are a few examples of hate speech-related policies from some of the most used internet companies.

### Twitter's *Hateful Conduct Policy*<sup>34</sup>

In its policy, Twitter urges users not to promote violence against or directly attack or threaten other people on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, religious affiliation, age, disability, or serious disease. Twitter also does not allow accounts whose primary purpose is inciting harm towards others on the basis of these categories.

The consequences for violating its rules vary depending on the severity of the violation, the context and the person's previous record of violations. For example, Twitter may ask someone to remove the offending Tweet before they can Tweet again. In other cases, they may suspend an account.

### Facebook's *Community Standards*<sup>35</sup>

In its community standards, Facebook says that it does not allow hate speech because it creates an environment of intimidation and exclusion and in some cases may promote real-world violence.

Facebook defines hate speech as a direct attack on people based on 'protected characteristics' (a term used in the 2010 UK Equality Act) – race, ethnicity, national origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, sex, gender, gender identity and serious disability or disease.

Similar to Twitter, the consequences for violating the rules vary depending on the severity of the violation, the context and the person's previous record of violations. Facebook may therefore remove posts and comments containing hate speech.

### Microsoft's *Services Agreement*

In its Services Agreement, Microsoft has a Code of Conduct containing a rule which requires users not to engage in activity that is harmful to themselves, the Services, or others (e.g. transmitting viruses, stalking, posting terrorist content, communicating hate speech, or advocating violence against others).<sup>36</sup> In addition to this, Microsoft has developed a new dedicated web form for reporting hate speech on its hosted consumer services.<sup>37</sup>

To conclude this section, we observe that there are legal frameworks and policies at European level which provide for rules restricting the use of freedom of expression for spreading, inciting, promoting or justifying hatred based on intolerance, and they are applicable both online and offline. Internet companies also have rules by which one must agree to abide in order to use their services.

However, in spite of laws, policies and rules, hate speech still very much exists. The debates over the delicate balance with freedom of expression, on what exactly constitutes hate speech and on the challenges posed by online hate speech, make addressing the issue difficult.

While legal and policy responses to hate speech are important, they are not enough. Social and non-regulatory responses to counter hate speech merit similar attention.



## The European Commission's Code of Conduct on countering illegal hate speech online

The European Commission and four major IT companies (Facebook, Microsoft, Twitter and YouTube) presented a Code of conduct to address online hate speech in May 2016.

As per the regulations of the Code of Conduct, a request to remove specific content must be dealt with as quickly as possible, ideally less than twenty-four hours. The social media companies are said to have removed 70% of hate speech of which they were notified.

The Code of Conduct is evaluated through a monitoring exercise set up with the help of civil society organisations in various EU countries. Civil society organisations monitoring the Code of Conduct use a mutually-agreed-upon methodology to test how the social media companies applied the Code of Conduct in practice, by regularly sending requests to remove contents from the social media companies' websites. The civil society organisations taking part in the monitoring exercise will then record how the requests are handled – how long it takes to assess and respond to the requests as well as look at the feedback they receive from the social media platforms.

While the Code of Conduct is noble in and of itself, it is not without its criticisms. The European Commission has anticipated this in its press release from 19 January 2018: "The Code of Conduct will not lead to censorship of hate speech. The Code of Conduct only aims to get rid of hate speech that is already illegal, both online and offline."

Another issue that the European Commission has taken into account is the role that national courts play in policing hate speech. Only national courts can decide what is illegal, and social media platforms must follow national laws, especially the ones relating to the Framework Decision on combatting racism and xenophobia, as well as the e-commerce Directive of 2000. When the social media companies receive a valid alert about content that may have hate speech, the social media companies must assess it according to national (and EU) law, in addition to their own rules and community guidelines.

It is important to note that the Code of Conduct is a voluntary agreement that Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Microsoft have made with the European Commission. The Code of Conduct is not a legal document, therefore governments do not have a right to take down content as they wish. The Code of Conduct cannot be used to force the social media companies to take down content that does not count as illegal hate speech, or any type of speech protected by the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

# Initiatives countering hate speech

*More awareness-raising initiatives, better monitoring and more effective reporting mechanisms, and a strong emphasis on education and training, will contribute to limit the spread of hate speech. In this section, we have grouped different initiatives and projects addressing hate speech in different categories according to their objectives.*



## Campaigning

### The No Hate Speech Movement<sup>38</sup>

This Council of Europe youth campaign for human rights online is composed of national initiatives in over 40 countries. Together with online activists and partners at the European level, it works to reduce the levels of acceptance of hate speech and to develop online youth participation and citizenship, including in internet governance processes. The campaign mainly operates on the online platform [nohatespeechmovement.org](https://nohatespeechmovement.org).

The No Hate speech movement also developed “Hate Speech Watch”, an online tool for reporting, monitoring and education on hate speech. It also provides information on national reporting mechanisms.

### #MediaAgainstHate<sup>39</sup>

#MediaAgainstHate is a Europe-wide campaign led by the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) and a coalition of civil society organisations. The campaign aims to “counter hate speech and discrimination in the media (online and offline) by promoting ethical standards while maintaining respect for freedom of expression”. As a campaign created by journalists, it recognises the crucial role they play in informing public opinion and policy regarding migration and refugees.

The objectives of the campaign are to:

- Improve media coverage related to migration, refugees, religion, and marginalised groups in general;
- Improve capacity of journalists, media, civil society organisations, and community media to counter hate speech, intolerance, racism, and discrimination;
- Improve implementation of legal frameworks regulating hate speech and freedom of speech;
- Raise awareness about various types of discrimination through better reporting on the above issues;
- Provide support to journalists exposing hate speech who have become targets and victims of hatred and harassment for speaking out.

### The European Radio Broadcast Campaign by the RESPECT WORDS Project<sup>40</sup>

The RESPECT WORDS project has brought together more than 150 European media and about 1300 journalists from eight countries (Germany, Austria, Slovenia, Spain, Greece, Hungary, Ireland and Italy).

One axis of the project is the development of a radio broadcasting campaign which is underway in more than 150 broadcasting radio stations and seven countries. The objective is to counter hate speech in the media and raise awareness among European citizens on issues related to migration processes, human rights and the situation of ethnic and religious minorities in our society.

## Monitoring and reporting

### The eMORE Project

The eMORE project aims to contribute to developing, testing and transferring a knowledge model on online hate speech and offline hate crime. It does so using a joint monitoring-reporting system in order to better understand the phenomenon and its trends over the Internet and offline. This allows comparative analysis at national/EU level.<sup>41</sup>

In March 2018, the eMORE mobile application was released.<sup>42</sup> It allows users to flag hate speech wherever they might come across it and by reporting it, they also get to contribute to a pan-European research project on online hate speech.

### The MANDOLA project

The project aims to empower ordinary citizens to monitor and report hate speech, and to develop a wider understanding of the challenges posed by online hate speech. The objectives of the project are:

- To monitor the spread and penetration of online hate speech across the EU using so-called ‘big data’ approaches, with the aim of being able to quickly identify illegal hate speech.
- To provide policymakers with actionable information that can be used to promote policies that mitigate the spread of online hate speech.
- To provide ordinary citizens with useful tools that can help them deal with online hate speech as bystanders or even as victims.
- To transfer best practices among member states.
- To set up a reporting infrastructure that will connect concerned citizens with police forces and which will enable the reporting of illegal hate speech.

### Get the Trolls Out<sup>43</sup>

Led by the Media Diversity Institute (MDI) with the support of six partners spread throughout Europe, the *Get the Trolls Out* project aims to reduce discrimination and intolerance based on religious grounds in Europe.

The project monitors traditional and new media to uncover antisemitic acts and speech by journalists and public figures. When content is detected, it is exposed and complaint mechanisms are activated. Content online is also created to contribute to a wider awareness and understanding of hate speech and its impact.

### Stand up to Hate: Reporting UK Internet Hate Crime and Abuse

The organisation’s goal is to inform people of hate speech perpetrators across social networking internet sites. It also aims to be a focal point for people to access information and resources to report such perpetrators to appropriate website staff, government departments and law enforcement agencies around the world.

### #jagärhär (“I’m here”)

The Swedish grassroots initiative #jagärhär was created in May 2016 in order to mobilise social media users to respond to hate speech. Rather than moderate in the traditional sense, #jagärhär coordinates its supporters so that they can ‘drown out’ hate speech *en masse* with positive comments – from simple messages of love to detailed counter-arguments in cases where so-called fake news is cited in support of violent or discriminatory statements.

The movement, which is itself run from a private Facebook group, describes itself as apolitical and has strict standards about which comments can be targeted. From humble beginnings, #jagärhär now has almost 75,000 volunteers as of March 2018; they won the 2017 Anna Lindh Prize for their contribution to a “human and just” public life.<sup>44</sup>

*continued →*



## Education and training

### We CAN! Taking action against hate speech through counter and alternative narratives

In order to support its campaign, the Council of Europe has developed a manual: *“We CAN! Taking action against hate speech through counter and alternative narratives”* so as to offer guidance to develop counter and alternative narratives to combat hate speech and promote human rights, especially in online environments.<sup>45</sup>

### Facing Facts

*Facing Facts* is a programme which has offered training to identify, monitor and counter hate crime and hate speech. With its new project, the organisation looks to reach a broader audience, specifically targeting law enforcement and government bodies to achieve institutional change in hate crime perception.

### Debunking Myths About Jews<sup>46</sup>

Developed by the European Network Against Racism (ENAR), the leaflet quotes the most common myths about Jews in Europe, and provides historical facts and insights from a variety of sources discrediting and deconstructing these persistent yet incorrect beliefs about Jews.

### An ethical code on journalistic treatment of migratory processes and minorities in Europe<sup>47</sup>

Also developed by The RESPECT WORDS project, *Reporting on Migration and Minorities: Approaches and Guidelines* is an ethical code on the journalistic treatment of the aspects related to migratory processes as well as ethnic and religious minorities.

### The PRISM Project

Implemented in five countries (Italy, France, Spain, Romania and UK), the project is based on an interdisciplinary strategy. It combines research, best practice and training activities addressed to law enforcement officers, lawyers, journalists, bloggers, social network administrators, young people, teachers and youth workers.

The objectives of the project are:

- To raise awareness on hate speech with national and European studies.
- To identify, investigate and fight hate speech and hate crimes through mapping the incidence of hate speech in websites and social media.
- To monitor online hate speech through a constant data collection on the phenomenon.
- To develop effective tools, national legislation and redressing mechanisms for contrasting online discrimination, hostility and violence.

### Positive Messengers<sup>48</sup>

The *Coalition of Positive Messengers to Counter Online Hate Speech* engages local communities in creating and sharing powerful counter-narratives against xenophobia. It is implemented by a consortium of eight organisations from seven countries (Bulgaria, United Kingdom, Croatia, Czech Republic, Romania, Italy, Greece).

### Look Beyond Borders experiment and video: “4 Minutes of Eye Contact”<sup>49</sup>

Filmed in Berlin in April 2016, this social experiment and video was made by Amnesty International Poland and the Polish ad agency DDB&Tribal. It is based on a theory developed by psychologist Arthur Aron in 1997, who observed that four minutes of uninterrupted eye contact increases intimacy. They applied it to the refugee crisis, seating refugees from Syria and Somalia opposite people from Belgium, Italy, Germany, Poland and the UK, with positive results.

### Counter-Narrative Toolkit

The Counter-Narrative Toolkit is a simple and freely-available toolkit which was created to offer individuals and organisations the skills to produce credible counter-narrative messages.

### YouTube Creators for Change<sup>50</sup>

*YouTube Creators for Change* is a new initiative dedicated to amplifying the voices of role models who are tackling difficult social issues with their channels. From combating hate speech, to countering xenophobia and extremism, to simply making the case for greater tolerance and empathy toward others, these creators are helping generate positive social change with their global fan bases.

### La Stampa – visual netiquette

*La Stampa*, an Italian newspaper that allows comments only on Facebook created a visual netiquette – a term commonly used in reference to popular forms of online communication, including email, forums and chat. When they identify a discriminatory comment, they do not delete it nor hide it but they post what they call in Italian a “*galateo*” (etiquette) under the comment, an image reminding users of the rules of online participation.

# Recommendations



## Governments

- Adopt and effectively implement relevant legislation that includes preventive and punitive action to combat incitement to hatred, while making sure that restrictions to freedom of expression are legal, proportional and necessary.
- Adopt policies and better enhance engagement in broad efforts to combat negative stereotypes of, and discrimination against, individuals and communities on the basis of their nationality, ethnicity, religion or belief. This includes:
  - Promoting intercultural understanding.
  - Training police and other criminal/ community justice agency staff.
  - Creating and/or properly funding equality bodies.
  - Investing in better data collection as regards monitoring/logging hate crime.
  - Providing clear mechanisms that encourage victims and witnesses to report hate speech, including through third-party reporting systems.
  - Providing support to, and investing more in, civil society organisations’ initiatives, like those highlighted in the previous section of this report.



## Political parties

- Adopt and enforce ethical guidelines in relation to the conduct of their representatives, particularly with respect to public speech.
- Seek to engage migrants and refugees in political life.



## Internet companies

- Include international standards on freedom of expression and due process in terms and conditions and community guidelines.
- Provide transparency and clarity on the decision-making processes on content removals on platforms.



## The media

- Design and promote guidelines and ethical standards in the media for journalists and media managers. On all issues, notably migration, the media need to report in a contextual, factual and sensitive manner, while ensuring that acts of discrimination are brought to the attention of the public. This includes:
  - Raising awareness of the harm caused by discrimination and negative stereotyping.
  - Giving members of different groups or communities the opportunity to speak and to be heard in a way that promotes a better understanding of them, while at the same time reflecting their perspectives.
- Apply the five-point test of speech for journalism, developed by Ethical Journalism Network, which is based upon international standards. It highlights some questions to be asked in the gathering, preparation and dissemination of news and information that will help journalists and editors place what is said and who is saying it in an ethical context.<sup>51</sup>
- In moderating an online community, content publishers could use the following strategies:
  - Provide clear and transparent terms and conditions and community guidelines, together with user-friendly reporting mechanisms.
  - Pre-moderate or actively moderate comments, in order to remove hate speech as and when it is identified.
  - Limit user-led discussion to a dedicated ‘debate’ section which can be the focus of moderation activity.
  - Use a content management system that allows the detection of hate speech-related words (“forbidden words”) and flags such comments for moderation.
  - Showcase good practice by users.
  - Close problematic comments sections.

# Conclusion

Throughout history, the ‘fear of the other’ has been exploited by those who can benefit from doing so. Old prejudices and current tensions are manipulated in order to inflame suspicions and reinforce a sense of division between people. With time, such feelings can spill over into discriminatory language in conversation, in the media or on the internet. When these words become particularly violent or dehumanising, we often refer to them as hate speech.

Hate speech against ethnic, religious or social minorities is a phenomenon as old as humanity itself, and today Europe finds itself gripped by a fear of the other once again. An unprecedented flow of refugees, the ongoing threat of violent extremism and continued economic disarray have created the anxiety and political disillusionment in which prejudice flourishes.

Violent speech, left unchecked, can lead to violent acts. In the past, Europe learned this lesson the hard way, and created rules and institutions designed to protect against a repeat of past mistakes. Nowadays, however, the anonymity and immediacy of the internet have created new and incredibly efficient ways for hate speech to spread. This is particularly true in the case of hate speech against migrants and refugees. Europe’s policymakers and institutions are only just beginning to grapple with the scale of this challenge, but legal and political responses have – so far – proved insufficient.

Regulation of the internet is famously difficult, and arguably undesirable; there is also a risk that a purely political solution to this problem will be seen as censorship. Instead, we propose that civil society can respond to violent and dehumanising speech online with more efficacy than the authorities acting alone. As such, this report has not only given an overview of the relevant laws and policies adopted at the European level, but has also outlined existing initiatives which seek to tackle anti-migrant narratives in the hope that they will receive greater attention and support.

Tackling online hate speech will involve a combination of policy, legislation, media regulation, civil society initiatives and the work of international organisations such as the Council of Europe (CoE) and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). However, our capacity to overcome the fear of the other ultimately depends on our collective will to build truly inclusive and resilient societies, in which the politics of division can no longer find a home.

## Quakers and human rights: a history

One of the founding principles of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) was the recognition that every person is unique and their life must be valued. This quickly led Quakers to take radical positions based on their spiritual experience, such as opposition to war and the death penalty.

These ideas led to a wide range of practical projects undertaken by members of the Society, such as the first attempt at mental health care, in the house of John Goodson in 1673, and later the first mental health hospital, *the Retreat*, which was established in 1796 and continues its work today.

Another well known example is Elizabeth Fry who led campaigns for improved detention conditions in Britain in the 19th Century. She later also advised on prison regimes in France, Germany, Italy and Russia. In recognition of the impact of her work, her image could be found on British £5 notes for many years. Today, Quakers continue to be active as prison chaplains, prison visitors and campaigners for reform of immigration detention.

Michael Bartlett, former Parliamentary Liaison Secretary for Quakers in Britain, has written, “An early conception of human rights is implicit in the seventeenth century political and religious experience of Friends. Such rights are inherent in the ‘neighbour principle’ as a source of social responsibility, common to world faiths.” Some Quakers have also been influenced by the writings of Thich Nhat Hahn who has argued that Buddhism’s focus on personal liberation through the cycle of life should today be understood as a requirement for work to bring about social liberation for all people.

Around the world, Quaker organisations are working to promote and protect human rights. This includes peacebuilding efforts by Kenyan Friends, and the Sanctuary Everywhere programme led by American Friends Service Committee in the US. The work of the Quaker United Nations Office in Geneva has also included a human rights programme for many decades, positively influencing global discussions on child soldiers, conscientious objectors to military service and the children of prisoners.



Methodology of QCEA’s hate speech research

For a better understanding of how prevalent online hate speech is, QCEA undertook a research project before writing this report.

The aim of the project was to collate a record of anti-migrant hate speech in the comment sections of various European newspaper websites, namely:

- The Sun (United Kingdom)
- Dnes (Czech Republic)
- Le Figaro (France)
- Novy Cas (Slovakia)
- Komsomolskaya Pravda (Russia)

These publications are some the biggest-selling daily newspapers in their respective countries, and all enjoy significant web traffic. Their websites are free to access and comment upon. They were not selected for their political stance.

Articles published between 1 June and 1 September 2017 were selected. They were found by searching the keywords ‘migrant’, ‘refugee’ and ‘asylum’ on the sites’ internal search engines.

What we were looking for

We were looking for comments which clearly fall into one, or both, of the following categories. Remarks which are simply unpleasant, offensive or anti-migration were not taken into consideration.

Incitement to violence

Comments which suggest, encourage or hint at a violent response to migrants. This can include references to genocide or the Holocaust, “blowing up boats” or “letting them drown,” or any other such violent remark. It does not include comments about scuttling boats so as to prevent migration.

Dehumanisation

Comments which compare migrants to animals or use animal-related terminology to describe migration. Examples include calling migrants “cockroaches,” “rats” or a “plague,” references to “swarms” etc. It also includes calls for migrants to be enslaved or suffer cruel and unusual punishment. It does not include the words “flux,” “flow” or “wave” - only words with purely negative connotations.

All relevant comments were collected with the date and time, and screenshots of each them were recorded as proof they were present.

In total, 78 comments meeting our criteria were identified, the majority of which are still online at the time of going to print. Some of these were featured earlier in the report, and additional samples from each newspaper are shown here. Comments have been translated into English where necessary.

The Sun

“Put them down like the rabid animals they are. It’ll be doing a favour for the whole world.”  
05/09/2017

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/4396053/asylum-seeker-20-and-three-teens-arrested-for-gang-raping-polish-tourist-on-italian-beach-as-her-badly-> [HYPERLINK “https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/4396053/asylum-seeker-20-and-three-teens-arrested-for-gang-raping-polish-tourist-on-italian-beach-as-her-badly-beaten-husband-was-forced-to-watch/”](https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/4396053/asylum-seeker-20-and-three-teens-arrested-for-gang-raping-polish-tourist-on-italian-beach-as-her-badly-beaten-husband-was-forced-to-watch/) beaten-husband-was-forced-to-watch/

“shoot them dead and they will soon learn”  
03/09/2017

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/4381353/gang-of-migrants-clash-with-french-riot-police-leaving-three-officers-injured-as-they-try-to-board-uk-bound-lorries-stuck-in-calais-traffic-jams-full-of-shocked-british-holidaymakers/#comments>

“Just shoot them”  
06/07/2017

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/3956957/brussels-officials-warn-eu-migrant-crisis-could-raise-for-decades-as-tensions-mount-at-the-italian-> [HYPERLINK “https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/3956957/brussels-officials-warn-eu-migrant-crisis-could-raise-for-decades-as-tensions-mount-at-the-italian-austrian-border/#comments”](https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/3956957/brussels-officials-warn-eu-migrant-crisis-could-raise-for-decades-as-tensions-mount-at-the-italian-austrian-border/#comments) austrian-border/#comments

“Napalm the place with all the illegal inhabitants”  
06/08/2017

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/4184575/new-calais-migrant-camp-jungle-refugees-welcome/#comments>

“Should employ helicopter gun ships to strafe these boats filled with illegals as they are not coming to Europe to benefit Europe but to rape and pillage for whatever they can get”  
12/08/2017

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/4227347/migrants-are-being-trafficked-into-europe-on-high-speed-jet-skis-for-3000/#comments>

Dnes

“a beast from a jungle does not belong to a peaceful society”  
20/06/2017

[http://zpravy.idnes.cz/diskuse.aspx?iddiskuse=A170620\\_125007\\_zahranicni\\_aha](http://zpravy.idnes.cz/diskuse.aspx?iddiskuse=A170620_125007_zahranicni_aha)

“Can’t we spray the Quran with some sterilisation substance while printing it? The problem would be solved instantly”  
11/06/2017

[http://zpravy.idnes.cz/diskuse.aspx?iddiskuse=A170611\\_171040\\_zahranicni\\_aha](http://zpravy.idnes.cz/diskuse.aspx?iddiskuse=A170611_171040_zahranicni_aha)

Le Figaro

“Just imagine for a second that the Charles de Gaulle (a war ship) would be positioned along the Libyan borders with a misison to sink NGOs and illegals’ boats. The problem will be dealt with in a week.”  
12/07/2017

<http://www.lefigaro.fr/flash-actu/2017/07/12/97001-20170712FILWWW00164-3500-migrants-secours-en-mediterranee.php#fig-comments>

Novy Cas

“shoot the dirty fu\*\*\*\*\*”  
31/08/2017

<https://www.cas.sk/diskusia/589679/podozrivi-utecenci-sa-vratili-do-nemecka-boli-clenmi-islamistickej-skupiny/2/>

“drown them and problem solved”  
29/06/2017

<https://www.cas.sk/diskusia/566841/taliansko-ziada-o-pomoc-dalsie-krajiny-uz-to-nezvlada/2/>

“We should be quick... put them to the wall and shoot. No exceptions.”  
02/09/2017

<https://www.cas.sk/diskusia/589679/podozrivi-utecenci-sa-vratili-do-nemecka-boli-clenmi-islamistickej-skupiny/2/>

Komsomolskaya Pravda

“I’ll be slaughtering both [migrants and those who support them]”  
04/06/2017

<https://www.kp.ru/online/news/2765909/>

“Didn’t you try shooting them? Or running a few gas chambers with Zyklon-B, together with several ovens?”  
18/07/2017

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