Backgrounds, Experiences and Responses to Online Hate Speech:

A Comparative Cross-Country Analysis

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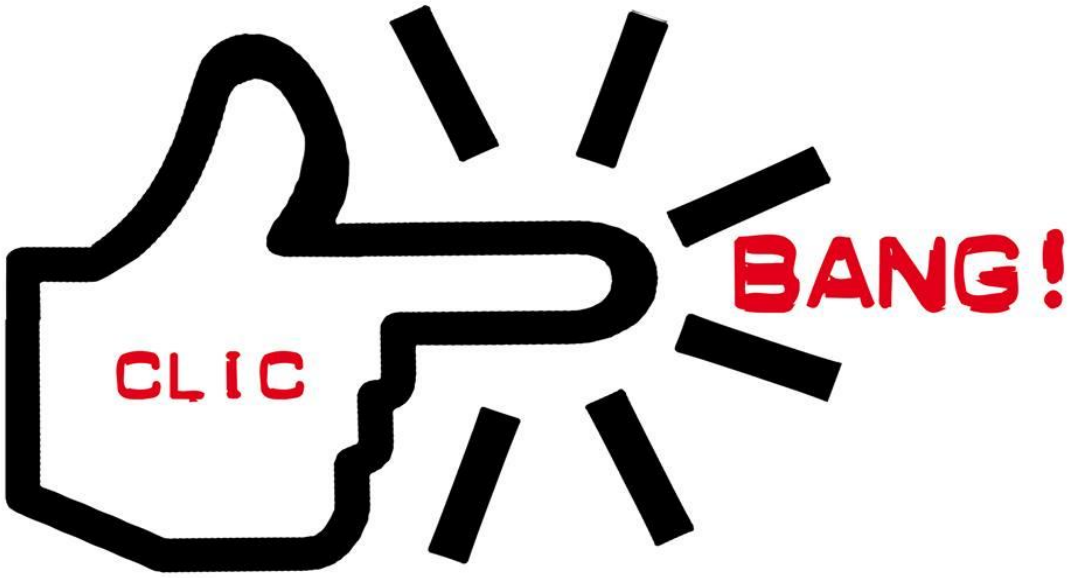

WORDS ARE WEAPONS.

PREVENTING REDRESSING & INHIBITING HATE SPEECH IN NEW MEDIA

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PART I – Setting the Scene

1. Introduction

International- and EU-institutions are paying increasing attention to the phenomenon of online hate speech and acknowledge this as a growing problematic across and beyond Europe. In this regard, the 2015 ECRI report highlights online hate speech as one of the main trends of the previous year, emphasising that "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". Also UNESCO has recently focused on this growing issue, mapping and analysing the existing initiatives to combat online hate speech in their comprehensive 2015 report "Countering online hate speech".

In addition to this, governments are recently beginning to take the issue of online hate speech more seriously, reflected for example in the plan of the French president Francois Hollande to introduce a law that would make companies like Google and Facebook accomplices in crimes of hate speech if users post content deemed extremist by the government.[1] This, however, can be perceived rather as a reflection of their heightened surveillance of possible terrorist groups, than an effort to protect the rights of vulnerable groups targeted by hate speech. More interesting in this regard is the recent call from the Germany's Minister of Justice in relation to the current (September 2015) refugee crisis, to increase the efforts to combat hateful xenophobic speech. This has lead to an agreement by Facebook to work with Germany's Ministry of Justice, internet service providers, and other social networks to form a task force for flagging and removing hateful content more quickly.[2]

However, there is a clear gap between this growing awareness among authorities and institutions, and the actual efforts devoted to gathering empirical data on online hate speech. This is where the PRISM[3] research aims to contribute, with the objective of providing research and common solutions to prevent and contrast online hate speech across Europe.

The present report provides a comparative analysis of the research carried out in five European countries, France, Italy, Romania, Spain and the UK, within the framework of the PRISM project. The PRISM research is primarily qualitative, based on 149 face-to-face interviews with professionals and social media users, as well as on a mapping of the social media use by selected xenophobic and far right groups. The focus of the project is on xenophobic and racist hate speech on the Internet, with an emphasis on social media, whilst also taking into account other arenas of online interaction, such as comments sections of digital newspapers and general discussion forums. Furthermore, the qualitative part of the study has a special focus on the experiences of young social media users, as those having

[1] Bloomberg, January 27, 2015, http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-01-27/france-seeks-to-sanction-web-companies-for-posts-pushing-terror

[2] Wall Street Journal September 14, 2015 "Facebook Outlines Measures to Combat Racist and Xenophobic Content", http://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-outlines-new-measures-to-combat-racist-and-xenophobic-content-1442242351

[3] "Preventing Redressing & Inhibiting Hate Speech in New Media", 2014-2016, with financial support from the Fundamental Rights and Citizenship Programme of the European Union. http://prismproject.eu.

fully integrated social media into their day-to-day living, and with potential to make a change.

The legal matters, regarding both the national contexts and the EU- and international frameworks, are analysed in the separate PRISM report "Hate Crime and Hate Speech in Europe: Analysis of International Law Principles, EU-wide Study and National Assessments", and are therefore only briefly touched upon here.

1.1. Definitions of hate speech

There is no common international definition of the hate speech concept, but rather several definitions exist in parallel. In legal terms, hate speech tends to refer to "expressions that advocate incitement to harm […] based upon the targets being identified with a certain social or demographic group" (UNESCO 2015). In the public debate, however, or related to issues of awareness, broader definitions tend to be applied. This is the case, for example, in the commonly used definition by the Council of Europe where "hate speech" is understood as "covering all forms of expression which spread, incite, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism 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, 1997).

For the purpose of the PRISM project, the following working definition has been adopted, related to the CoE definition: "'Hate speech' includes every stance purporting to jeopardize the rights of an ethnic, religious or national group, in clear violation of the principles of equal dignity of and respect for the cultural differences among human groups".[4]

Another concept with relevance to the present study is that of "cyber hate", which essentially refers to "hate speech online". "Cyber hate" is defined by the Anti-Defamation League as "any use of electronic communications technology to spread anti-Semitic, racist, bigoted, extremist or terrorist messages or information. These electronic communications technologies include the Internet (i.e., web-sites, social networking sites, 'Web 2.0' user-generated content, dating sites, blogs, on-line games, instant messages, and E-mail) as well as other computer- and cell phone-based information technologies (such as text messages and mobile phones)"[5].

Cyber hate towards an individual, not related to his or her identification with a particular group, tends to be referred to as "cyber-bullying" (Council of Europe, 2012), a phenomenon which has been mentioned by some of the young social media users interviewed, showing a greater familiarity with this concept than with the concept of hate speech. However, within the PRISM project the concept has not been analysed, as the focus of the research has been on online hate speech on racist and xenophobic grounds.

[4] For further reflections on definitions of hate speech, please see the section "Repression of hate speech: its foundations in international and European law" of the PRISM report "Comprehensive Report on Hate Crime and Hate Speech in Europe: International Principles, EU-wide Study and National Assessments"

[5] ADL "Responding to Cyberhate, Toolkit for Action: http://www.adl.org/internet/Bindel_final.pdf

1.2. Previous research and concepts in relation to online hate speech

As pointed out above, there is still a lack of research on online hate speech, especially from a qualitative perspective. In this section a non-comprehensive overview is made of some reports, studies and academic contributions with relevance to the PRISM project, some of which contribute with key concepts for reaching a deeper understanding of the topic.

To better understand the contextualisation of discriminative behaviours, including hate speech, and their possible consequences if normalised, the Anti-Defamation League has developed the **Pyramid of Hate** tool (figure 1) [6]:

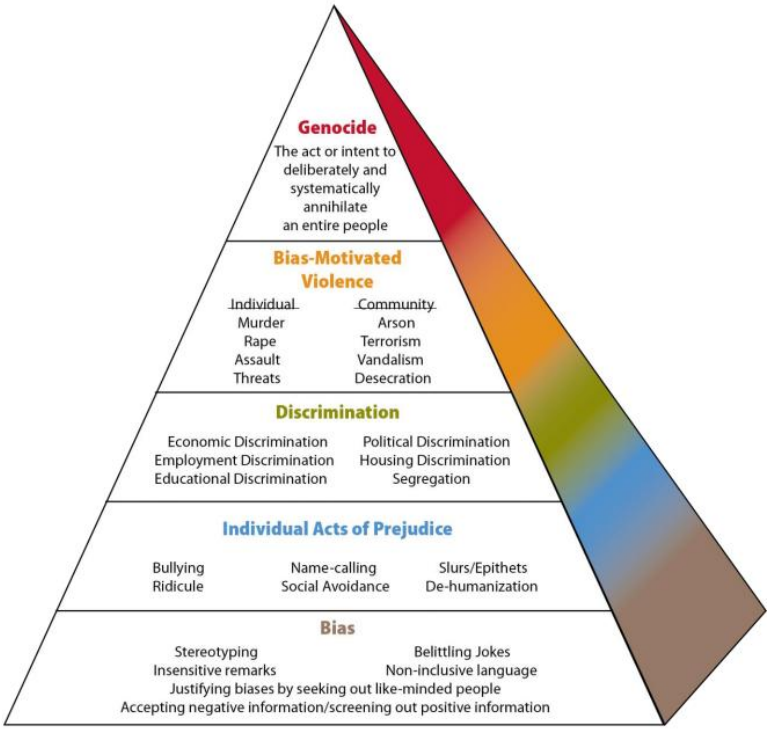

Figure 1 *Pyramid of Hate*

The Pyramid shows biased behaviours, growing in complexity from the bottom to the top.[7] Although the behaviours at each level negatively impact individuals, groups and society, moving up the pyramid the behaviours have more life-threatening consequences, so that the upper levels are supported by the lower levels. If people or institutions treat behaviours on the lower levels as being acceptable or "normal," it results in the behaviours at the next level becoming more accepted.

Hence, hate speech contributes to **stigmatising, marginalising, and intimidating members of distinct and vulnerable groups**. In this regard, Waldron (2012) emphasises **the harm that hate speech causes to the persons targeted**, which he means is often forgotten in the debates on freedom of speech: "Members of the vulnerable groups targeted are expected to live their lives, conduct their business, raise their children, and allay their nightmares in a

[6] ADL Education Division: Pyramid of Hate, available at http://www.adl.org/assets/pdf/education-outreach/Pyramid-of-Hate.pdf

[7] It is important to note that the categories are for illustrative purposed and should not be seen as comprehensive or fixed.

social atmosphere poisoned by this sort of speech. Not only that, but the aim of this sort of speech is to defame the members of the vulnerable groups in question".

Drawing on Waldron (2012), two types of messages conveyed by hate speech can be defined: the first message is aimed at the targeted group, trying to dehumanise and diminish them. The second, however, is sent to others with similar views, aiming to reinforce a sense of a group under threat from "the others" and unite this group of like-minded persons. In this sense, **hate speech both divides and unites** at the same time (UNESCO, 2015), making a distinction between who is inside and outside of the desired society.

Zooming in on the online version of hate speech; whereas this as such is not essentially different from hate speech in its offline shape, it does entail some **specific characteristics and challenges** (UNESCO, 2015) to be kept in mind:

1. Permanence: Hate speech can remain online for long periods of time and in different formats across different platforms, and can be repeatedly linked. In this sense, the architecture of the platforms influences how long topics "stay alive", e.g. Twitter is built around the idea of "trending topics" which may facilitate a quick and wide dissemination of hateful messages, however, if topics are ignored, discussion rapidly fades; Facebook on the other hand, provides the opportunity for longer lasting discussion threads.

2. Itinerancy: Even when content is removed, it may be revived somewhere else, either on the same platform with another name or in other online spaces.

3. Anonymity or pseudonymity (false names): With the possibility to be anonymous, people tend to feel more comfortable expressing hate, as they won't be discovered or will have to deal with any consequences. Anonymity, especially on social media, may also be an obstacle to prosecution.

4. Transnationality: The transnational reach of the Internet enhances the effects of hate speech and also poses complications regarding legal mechanisms for combating online hate speech.

Although hate speech expressed online has these specific characteristics, it is a fallacy to adapt the **digital dualist assumption** that anything happening online is separate from the offline, as argued by Jurgensen (2011): "Social media has everything to do with the physical world and our offline lives are increasingly influenced by social media". An example of this digital dualist assumption is institutions worrying about white supremacists using the web to *recruit people*, but not about *the site in itself also being an outlet for racism* (Daniels, 2009). Moving away from a digital dualist perspective also means putting an emphasis on contextualising online hate speech: hate speech on the Internet is an expression of a larger phenomenon, of a pervasive and increasing racism in society.

When conducting research on online hate speech it is also of key importance to look beyond words and phrases, taking into account the context, but also other types of expressions, such as images. Regarding **hate expressed through images**, the EC-funded LIGHT ON project[8] has investigated modern verbal and visual manifestations of racism and xenophobia, showing that racist images are often accepted as normal social expressions. However, as

[8] http://www.lighton-project.eu/

they convey meaning in a communicative and immediately recognizable form, they influence personal and collective behaviours, especially when shared on the Internet, where visual expressions can easily engage broad audiences. "These 'newer' forms of racism are so embedded in social processes and structures that they are even more difficult to explore and challenge" (Bajt, 2014).

Monitoring hate speech is key to understanding the phenomenon of online hate speech, and most countries have at least one organisation dealing with this. However, this monitoring tends to be conducted exclusively through collecting user complaints, which does not give a complete picture of the scale of the problem. In this regard, some studies have made attempts at obtaining a bigger picture of the problem, for example the study by the French organisation MRAP which in 2008-2009 analysed over 2000 URLs, not only including hate sites, but also links to and from these sites leading to forums, blogs, social networking sites and videos. A panorama of a series of highly interconnected 'hate networks' emerged, illustrating the sophistication of many hate groups in spreading their ideology. The viewing of one video, for example, was likely to lead users to further videos, hate-music, communities which shared the same views, and other resources (CoE, 2012).

Focusing on the extreme right, Rogers (2013) has conducted an **online mapping of the populist right and right-wing extremism** in 13 European countries[9], described as "a picture of the right according to the web". The mapping found an overall decay of the right-wing web across Europe, concluding that the right has largely moved from web sites to blogs and social media. The author points out that it is not only the youth and youth organizations who have left the web behind and now use social media, but also *the new right*, so that the newer the right-wing formation, the more updated the media they use. In this regard he encourages new research to focus on social media networks and the appeal of the content and activities to the right's followers, studying their engagement in terms of likes, shares, comments, and liked comments. An approximation to this has been conducted by the mapping activity of the PRISM research.[10]

Another study, conducted in the UK, has focused on the perpetrators of **Islamophobia** on Twitter, following the Woolwich attack in May 2013 (Awan, 2013). The study examined 500 tweets from 100 Twitter users, looking at the hashtags #Woolwich, #Muslim and #Islam, to analyse how Muslims are viewed by perpetrators of online abuse, aiming to provide a typology of offender characteristics. The majority (72%) of the tweets analysed were posted by men living in the UK, and over 75% of the tweets showed a strong islamophobic sentiment. The study is yet another piece of evidence of the growing issue of online Islamophobia, as well as of the role of so called **trigger events** in unleashing waves of hate crimes, including online hate speech against certain collectives.

What concerns research on **responses to online hate speech**, in 2012 the Council of Europe in preparation of its campaign against online hate speech, conducted a mapping of existing initiatives addressing cyber hate. The authors of the study stress that the mapping did not attempt to provide a comprehensive account of the initiatives, but instead focused on projects or organisations addressing the specific issue of online hate speech, concluding that

[9] Of the PRISM countries, Italy, France, and Spain are included.

[10] See section 5.1. of the present report "Mapping of online hate speech: Uses of social media by xenophobic groups"

relatively few organisations work specifically on this issue (CoE, 2012). In this regard, the recent study by UNESCO provides a further overview of responses to online hate speech. Among the responses described in the study, campaigns alerting companies advertising on social media of hate content are especially interesting as a tool making social media platforms react and withdraw hate content through reactions from advertisers. For example, in 2013 the group *Women, Action and the Media* and the *Everyday Sexism Project* in the UK launched a campaign showing page advertisements of prominent companies on Facebook pages that disseminated graphic sexist content. In response to the campaign, Nissan and the insurance company Nationwide withdrew their ads from Facebook. Having achieved this initial success, the organizers together with online supporters began sending written complaints and photos of different adverts on hateful pages to other major companies on their social media platforms, urging them to follow suit. As a result of this campaign, 15 major companies decided to remove their adverts from Facebook. Shortly after, Facebook removed the content, and issued a statement expressing the need to clarify their content regulation policies and promote collaboration with organisations preventing online hate speech (UNESCO, 2015).

A further possible response to online hate speech, suggested by some scholars (e.g. Keats & Norton, 2011), is to give a **stronger responsibility to intermediaries** such as Google or Facebook, in fostering a digital citizenship, by transmitting norms of respectful engagement, as the silence of intermediaries "can send a powerful message that targeted group members are second-class citizens" (Keats & Norton, 2011). Keats and Norton specifically suggest for intermediaries to advance the fight against hate speech through increased transparency, requiring them to engage in conversations with stakeholders to identify the potential harms of hate speech and understand how a particular policy may regulate hate speech.

In terms of individuals' responses to hate speech, some researchers suggest that the **spiral of silence** theory (Noelle-Neuman, 1974) can be applied on discussions on social media, i.e. the tendency of people, so called bystanders, not to speak up about policy issues in public—or among their family, friends, and work colleagues—when they believe that their own point of view is not widely shared. This is the case, for example, in the study conducted in the US by Hampton et al (2014) looking into people's willingness to share opinions on sensitive social issues on social media. The finding showed that, in the Edward Snowden case, whilst 86% of Americans were willing to have an in-person conversation about the case, only 42% of Facebook and Twitter users were willing to post about it on those platforms. Furthermore, in both settings people were more likely to share their views if they thought people agreed with them. Whereas this quantitative study did not look into the reasons why people remain silent, the traditional view of the spiral of silence is that people choose not to speak out for fear of isolation. Previous studies (e.g. Rainie and Smith, 2012) have found that social media users are often not familiar with their friends' beliefs and are surprised to discover their friends' actual views via social media, and hence do not want to disclose their minority views for fear of disappointing their friends, getting into arguments, or losing their friendship. Some people may prefer not to share their views on social media because their posts persist and can be found later, in stages of life when they may compromise them. Whilst this does not concern hate speech or counter-speech as such, it does tell us something about the interaction and expression of opinions on social media, and how people with other views may choose to remain silent as hate speech becomes more normalised, which may be even more applicable to the peer-pressure and fear of isolation among young people.

2. Methodology, scope and sample

The present study has been conducted by a national team in each of the five countries, with common tools and guidelines provided by the research coordinator. The study has a decisively qualitative focus, allowing for a deeper understanding of experiences of, attitudes towards, behaviours around, and reactions and responses to online hate speech, mainly from the perspective of young users of social media, but also from professionals working in fields with relevance to combating online hate speech.

Previous to the qualitative data collection, a secondary data review of both qualitative and quantitative data was conducted, as well as a mapping of xenophobic groups on social media, in order to provide a knowledge base with some ground information in each national context, whilst also feeding the elaboration of research instruments for the fieldwork phase. The methodology of the different steps is further described below.

2.1. State-of-the-Art

The first step of the research entailed looking into any **reports related to the issue of online hate speech**, on the one hand by national NGOs and monitoring agencies, and on the other, by EU and international organs such as ENAR, ECRI and OSCE - what we frame as a secondary data review in each country.

As the specific issue of online hate speech has not been extensively studied in any of the countries, nor internationally, reports generally concerning discrimination, racism, hate crimes and hate speech were therefore scanned for content on online hate speech. Furthermore, academic articles on the subject at the national level were also consulted when available.

2.2. Mapping of far right groups' uses of social media

In order to zoom in on social media and possible perpetrators spreading xenophobic and racist hate speech, a mapping of the social media activities of far right parties, organisations and movements was conducted in each country. This activity contributed to a wider picture of the social media use by these types of organisations. The aim was to provide us with information on xenophobic or extremist groupings at the national level, as groups potentially spreading hate speech, and their presence in and uses of social media. Furthermore, as the subsequent fieldwork mainly focused on victims, target groups and bystanders of online hate speech, the mapping activity contributed with an additional focus on groups of (potential) perpetrators.

In each national context, **five xenophobic, far right or extremist parties, organizations or movements were selected** based on the secondary data review and the following criteria:

- ✓ Parties, organisations or movements that have incurred complaints or sentences in relation to spreading xenophobic or racist hate speech in the last few years.
- ✓ Parties, organisations or movements described in the secondary data as engaging young people and/or as especially active on social media.

All research teams provided a rationale for the selection of parties in their national context. Then, following the initial selection, all social media platforms used by the parties were listed, e.g. through visits to the official webs, through searches on Google of "the name of the party + name of social media channel" (e.g. "Plataforma per Catalunya +YouTube"), as well as through searches on the social media platforms themselves, in order to find any accounts not linked by the official webs.

Once a listing of the social media channels of each party had been elaborated, the tool **FanPage Karma**[11] was used to collect the following information for each party on each of their channels: Date when joined; number of followers/likes; gender distribution of followers (Facebook); number of posts in the last year[12]; average number of posts per day (during the last year) and for YouTube total number of videos and date of last upload; most frequently used words and user engagement in the last year (Facebook) and top words in the last year (Twitter); links between the different social media and the official web; as well as any further information relevant to the study.

Finally, in order to obtain further indicators of these parties' use of social media, the familiarity with the parties and any encounters with these on social media were also inquired into in the interviews with the professionals and the young social media users.

It should be emphasised that the data collected and the analysis undertaken should be mainly seen as a descriptive mapping of the social media activity, following a limited selection of far right or xenophobic groups potentially spreading hate speech on the Internet.

2.3. Interviews with professionals and young social media users

The main focus of the PRISM research has been placed on ethnographic work, through **face-to-face interviews with professionals working in fields related to online hate speech, as well as with young users of social media**. In this regard, the interviews with professionals have contributed with perspectives complementary to those found in reports, considering that the existing data on online hate speech was scarce in all countries involved. Meanwhile, the interviews with the young users of social media have allowed us to look deeper into how young people experience, reason around and react to online hate speech from different perspectives, both as direct victims, as individuals belonging to the groups mainly targeted by hate speech, and as "bystanders". In this sense, face-to-face semi-structured interviews are especially useful where depth of meaning, attitudes and behaviours is important and where the research is focused on gaining insight and understanding.

A total of 149 interviews have been conducted across the five countries, including 32 interviews with professionals and 116 with youngsters. The sample of *professionals* is diverse across the countries, depending on the expertise available in each national context, including lawyers, prosecutors, law enforcement agents, NGO representatives, journalists, academics and social media providers. The specific characteristics of the sample in each country can be consulted in the national reports, in Annex II of this report. The interviews were based on a semi-structured guide, adapted to each interview due to the diversity of the

[11] Fanpage Karma is an online tool for social media analytics and monitoring. Http://www.fanpagekarma.com/
[12] From March 2014 to February 2015

professionals interviewed. The sample of *young people* has the following general cross-country characteristics[13]:

- ✓ Age range: 14-30
- ✓ 50% women (58), 50% men (58)
- ✓ Active users of social media (self-reported)
- ✓ About one third of the young people interviewed are individuals who could either be defined as target groups of racist or xenophobic hate speech, or who have been direct victims of hate speech, either because of their origin, their parents' origin, their belonging to a minority, or their skin colour. The rest are so called "bystanders", i.e. neither victims nor identifying themselves with any target group, but youngsters who come across hate speech online and react - or don't react - to it. In the case of Spain some of the youth in Catalonia had experienced hate speech against them as Catalans. Moreover, some of the interviewees had suffered hate speech on grounds of gender or sexual identity.

All interviews with young people were conducted face-to-face, and most were conducted individually, however, in the French and the Spanish study some group interviews of 2-3 persons were also included. This modality of interaction proved quite effective in eliciting more reflections and discussions, especially among the younger age range.

Table 1 *Number of interviews across Europe*

Country	**Professionals**	**Young people**
UK	8	21
Spain	5	17
France	4	26
Romania	8	32
Italy	7	20
ALL COUNTRIES	32	116
TOTAL	**149**	

[13] The specific characteristics of the sample of young people in each country can be consulted in the national reports

PART II – Analysing the data: Transnational comparison

In the present section, which makes up the main body of the report, the studies conducted in France, Italy, Romania, Spain and the UK are summarised in a comparative cross-country manner. Hence, when a specific country is mentioned, it refers to the national study conducted in that country. The five national reports can be found in Annex II of the present comparative report and should be referred to for a more comprehensive analysis of the situation in each country.

In this chapter, first, we look briefly at the public debate on freedom of speech in relation to online hate speech in some of the countries, followed by an introduction to the current social context of hate speech and the most targeted groups. After that, we enter into the subject of online hate speech through an overview of the characteristics and contexts of online hate speech in the studied countries, followed by a mapping of the uses of social media by far right groupings, and an analysis of the experiences of online hate speech by young social media users. After this, we look into the reactions and responses to online hate speech, first focusing on the responses by young social media users and then presenting an overview of responses by different institutions and organisations. Finally, the recommendations for preventing, inhibiting and redressing online hate speech are exposed, collected from the interviews with professionals and young social media users, followed by some concluding remarks.

3. Freedom of speech versus hate speech

Within the public debate hate speech is commonly raised as two fundamental rights in conflict: *freedom of speech*, to protect opinions stated in public and the *prohibition of discrimination*, protecting persons and collectives from behaviours which lack respect, humiliate or depreciate them in relation to certain features, such as ethnicity (Rey Martínez 2014).

The debates in the countries studied are quite similar, but with their peculiarities. In Italy the public debate on the line between freedom of speech and hate speech in the new media has developed in recent years, mostly in the wake of offensive and sexist comments directed against men and women in public positions[14]. In response not only to hate speech on the Internet, but more in general to questionable behaviour online, various politicians and authorities have called for regulating Internet and for stricter laws against hate crimes. A number of bills have also been proposed, which however have not been passed due to widespread opposition by MPs, journalists and opinion leaders, worrying that excessive regulation of the use of the Internet might infringe on the freedom of speech.

[14] Among those that have had the greatest echoes are the vulgar and aggressive attacks to the President of the Chamber of Deputies, Laura Boldrini, posted on the Facebook page of Beppe Grillo, leader of the Movimento 5 stelle (an influential political movement), who had provocatively asked members, "What would happen if you find Boldrini in your car?" (see “Grillo scatena insulti on-line: «Che fareste in auto con Boldrini?». Poi lo staff M5s li cancella. Attacchi ad Augias”, La Repubblica, 1 February 2014, available at: http://www.repubblica.it/politica/2014/02/01/news/grillo_attacca_boldrini_sui_social-77461212/).

In France, the debate on hate speech against freedom of speech has focused on comment moderation on forums, chats, and social networks. This debate has lead to another, since complete removal of content without any legal or educational processes does not inhibit online hate speech; on the contrary, it may create a feeling of censorship. Considering recent events and feelings of double standards, a public debate has appeared on the limits between incitement to hatred and non-criminal hate speech, sometimes hidden by humour speech.

In the case of Spain the debate on the balance between freedom of expression and hate speech tends to lean towards a high level of freedom - a stance influenced by the previous dictatorship - and it is still a challenging issue, especially for the work on the ground, as expressed by some of the experts interviewed:

> "Freedom of expression does not cover everything and we are relativising opinions especially in relation to cyber hate - opinions and groups which later can be dangerous, because the convening power through the social media is important" [NGO Legal expert, ES-P2][15]

> "We have to find limits, and the limit that hasn't been established is the aspect of dignity of persons, of respect of persons and collectives and we need to find that adequate balance in the debate […] We're doing a laboratory analysis without considering that this is very important in the work on the ground" [Prosecutor, ES-P4]

For further reflections on the balance between hate speech and freedom of expression, from a legal perspective, please see the section "Repression of hate speech: its foundations in international and European law" of the PRISM report "Hate Crime and Hate Speech in Europe: Analysis of International Law Principles, EU-wide Study and National Assessments".

[15] Please section 3.1 for further analysis of the interviews with professionals working with issues related to hate speech, and Annex 2 for the full interview sample.

4. Contexts and target groups of hate speech

Hate speech online does not appear out of nowhere, but reflects the surrounding social and cultural climate. Each national study has therefore aimed at describing the current social climate that may support the increase in online hate speech, the contexts where hate speech tends to arise, and the most targeted groups. All the countries involved in the study have suffered to a greater or lesser extent from the economic crisis, which is present as a general dark backdrop across Europe. The crisis as a particular factor in the increase in online hate speech against migrants is especially emphasised for Italy, Romania and Spain:

> "Hate speech is motivated by socio-economic aspects. Ethnicity is not the fundamental problem, but the social aspect is because there is the misconception that the stranger puts in peril the social security" [RO–P1]

In the UK as well as in Spain and Romania, the context of the study is also influenced by the 2015 general elections. In this regard, politicians are undoubtedly contributing to a xenophobic discourse in all the countries, with Front National in France, the governing Partido Popular in Spain, Lega Nord in Italy and an array of smaller far right parties across all countries expressing more or less explicit hate speech towards immigrants and minorities.

Furthermore, mainstream media is underlined as a contributing factor in creating and flaming online hate speech across all countries, often also serving the interests of political parties. The pressure of media companies to create "buzz" in order to achieve clicks contributes to sensationalist headlines, portraying migrants as scapegoats and sparking online debates many times marked by racist and xenophobic comments. In this regard, in Romania there seems to have been an attitudinal transfer between journalists and their audience over the last 20 years: whilst in the early 90s journalists were the most active hate speech perpetrators and the vast majority of news items on Roma were negative and offensive, in the late 2000s mainstream media became quite neutral towards Roma, whereas the audience became extremely reactive against Roma.

In the UK, on the other hand, a recurrent theme in the media depicts immigrants as invading the country, framing them as a threat to society, as "floods" or "tidal waves":

> ''A TIDAL wave of Romanian and Bulgarian immigrants is threatening to swamp Britain — and flood our overstretched jobs market'' (The Sun, 2012).

Regarding the persons suffering the most from this increasingly hostile climate, the main current target group of hate speech and distrust across most of Europe is the Muslim community, with islamophobia continuously on the rise over the last few years. In this regard, the Charlie Hebdo attacks in January 2015 have been reported as triggering a massive amount of islamophobia, especially in France and Spain, and especially online. Of the countries included in the study, Romania is the exception, as a country with very minor immigration. There, minorities tend to be targets of hate speech; particularly the Roma community, but also Hungarians, Jews and LGBT people. Roma are reported as one of the main target groups of hate speech also in Spain, France and Italy, and anti-Semitic hate speech is also reported by most countries. Other targeted groups are undocumented or newly arrived migrants, especially those from African countries, and in the UK Eastern Europeans.

5. Hate speech on social media and other online channels

The research conducted in Italy highlights some characteristics of the channel, which can be applied on all countries and therefore should be pointed out, namely that the web, and social media in particular, help spread and amplify hate speech because they facilitate an extremely rapid bottom-up and transversal communication, in which messages can potentially be replicated an infinite number of times. Furthermore, social media make immediately "public" individual acts and behaviours that were once limited to personal environments and networks. Social media also creates a sensation of anonymity and impunity: individuals are more likely to verbalise ideas they would not express in other situations for fear of being criticized or punished. They often state them without being aware of the amplification effect of the web and therefore of the seriousness of their actions. The web produces an "illusory" depersonalization in regards to reality; however, precisely because of this, most hate perpetrators limit themselves to "keyboard activism" and do not engage in real actions.

Online hate speech is reported by all country reports as existing and continuously on the increase. However, the actual extent of the problematic is unknown, as nation-wide statistics on the phenomenon of online hate speech, are lacking in the countries studied. Any numbers reported in the national studies are fragmentary, and based on user reports and complaint collected by law enforcement- and monitoring agencies. Furthermore, experts stress that any statistics collected on online hate speech can only give a very partial picture of the phenomenon because of *the enormous underreporting tendency*.

In terms of human rights legislations, of the countries included in the PRISM project, the UK is recognised worldwide as a forerunner. However, even in the UK, there are no clear laws on hate speech, and cases are covered by various legal provisions. Notwithstanding, protection against racism in the UK extends to the online domain so that the medium through which hatred is promoted is irrelevant. This means that incitement to racial or religious hatred or violence is illegal regardless of the medium through which it is expressed (Feldman and Littler, 2014). However, there is still scarce research on online hate speech in the UK, with researchers warning that online hate crimes can be “the precursor to more physically or threatening offline incidents” (Copsey et al, 2013).

Previous studies show that the climate of online hatred – characterised by targeted discrimination, prejudice and violent attacks – tends to cluster in time and drastically increase after so called “trigger events” (Kind and Sutton 2013). In the last few years there has been a surge in online hate speech against Muslims, with peaks after specific events, such as Charlie Hebdo. In the aftermath of the Paris attacks online hate speech against Muslims grew massively in France and Spain, e.g. the third most used hashtag in Spain after the Paris attacks was #matadatodoslosmusulmanes[16] (“kill all Muslims”). In the UK, the murder of Lee Rigby in May 2013 is especially pointed out as a trigger event for hate crimes and online hate speech against Muslims (Awan, 2013). Before this incident, between April 2012 and April 2013, there was an average of 28 anti-Muslim hate crimes per month, whereas in May 2013, when Lee Rigby was murdered, that number soared to 109 crimes.[17]

[16] Twitter search for hashtags during the week after the event

[17] Tell Mama: http://tellmamauk.org/anti-muslim-hate-crimes-2012-2014-in-london-an-analysis-of-the-situation/

In the UK in general the NGO TellMama recorded 548 anti-Muslim incidents in 2014 of which two thirds took place online. Seeing these numbers we still need to keep in mind the large amount of unreported incidents, especially in the online domain. For example, as we will observe in section 5.1 below, the analysis of the social media use of some British xenophobic parties reveals a massive amount of anti-Muslim comments by the parties' followers on their social media profiles, which are left unmoderated, and visible to the public.[18] Nevertheless, there have been cases of criminal offence in the UK under the Public Order Act 1986 following dissemination of hate speech on social media, such as the recent case under investigation of columnist Kate Hopkins' racist comments following news on migrants drowning in the Mediterranean.

In Italy data on hate crimes is very limited, but there are still some statistics on online incidents: In 2013 the number of online discrimination cases reported to the equality body UNAR was for the first time higher than the number of cases offline. In 2014, UNAR recorded instances of 347 racist manifestations on *social media,* of which more than 50% were on Facebook and the rest on Twitter and YouTube. In the past there have been criminal cases associated with groups such as the Italian section of Stormfront, but according to representatives from the Italian Postal Police and OSCAD these groups are at the moment closely monitored and not very active. These professionals also stress that hate speech in Italy is highly generalised and tends to be expressed by individuals rather than organised groups. A large part of the problem seems to be that currently racist discourses are being normalised in the political and public arena:

> "The real problem is not that the internet is the Wild West, the problem is that our entire country has become the Wild West" [IT-P5]

In Spain up until now there has been no official statistical file of hate crime incidents, however, a change is currently underway, with a new national protocol for law enforcement agencies for filing suspected hate crimes, also including protocols for "hate crimes committed through the internet and social media"[19] Consequently no statistics have been found on online hate speech. There are, however, some prosecuted cases of online hate speech, with most related to neo-Nazi groups spreading their ideology and music over the Internet. One ongoing case, though, is directly linked to social media, against the administrator of a Facebook page for xenophobic and anti-Semitic comments. Also, many of the cases reported to the police or the prosecutor in Catalonia are related to hate speech against Catalans, for example regarding anti-Catalan tweets in the aftermath of the Germanwings plane crash in March 2015. In this regard it is interesting to note that while the vast majority of online hate speech, such as that against Muslims, is neither reported nor investigated, that targeting the autochthonous people seems to be so to a greater extent.

[18] For examples, please refer to the UK report in the annexes, pages 14-26.

[19] "Protocolo de actuación fuerzas de seguridad del estado ante los delitos de odio y conductas que vulneran las normas legales sobre discriminación". Source: http://www.interior.gob.es/web/interior/prensa/noticias/-/asset_publisher/GHU8Ap6ztgsg/content/id/2990387. In this regard, the EU project FIRIR should also be mentioned, which has developed a training manual for law enforcement agencies "Handbook for training security forces in identifying and recording racist or xenophobic incidents" and which has trained around 800 agents in Spain.

In France, ethnic and religious statistics are constitutionally forbidden and the lack of statistics on racism, xenophobia and hate speech is therefore even more noticeable than in the other countries. However, an NGO interviewed for the study reveals that their reporting platform in 2014 received reports of 1728 incidences of hate content, of which Facebook accounted for 31% of alerts, 18% came from Twitter, 17% social media in general, 12% blogs, 8% forums and 12% videos, mainly YouTube and Daily Motion, and finally 1% from games.

Whilst in Romania statistics on hate crime and hate speech are scarce, the research conducted quotes two previous studies on online hate speech: the first analyses the attitude of online readers towards Roma people concluding that about 10% of user comments consisted in direct and explicit hate speech messages subject to legal sanctions.[20] The second study[21], analysing more than 6000 user comments in 7 online media outlets, identified hate speech markers in almost 38% of the comments (Petnehazi, 2012). Romanian professionals interviewed furthermore expose that the internet and social media are the main tools used in Romania by politicians to promote their agenda, and that it is difficult to control the content:

> "Today I think social media is very important, and that's why the politicians talk about Facebook's Party. For example, our Prime Minister is constantly communicating on Facebook and on Twitter very important activities. I think our President speaks more on Facebook than on television or in public debates. Politicians have begun to understand the importance of online communities, especially since there is capacity to mobilize, to create new social movements. People gather and greatly mobilize online" [RO–P1]

> "Facebook helps the exhibition of hatred. Social media has decisively democratized the hate speech." [RO–P5]

In addition to social media, the comments sections of digital newspaper are highlighted by experts across all countries as especially troublesome areas, as well as other pages and forums not seemingly focused on anti-immigration or connected to far right groups, such as general or specialised discussion forums[22]. These discussion arenas may in fact be more effective in spreading hate speech than more marginal webs or social media pages by far right groups, because of the high number of people they attract, and not only those with already established opinions.

[20] Hate Speech in Romania – National integrated report 2014

[21] User-generated hate speech: Analysis, lessons Learnt and Policy Implications, 2012

[22] E.g. in the case of Spain ForoCoches, a forum for discussing cars, is highlighted as problematic in terms of hate speech.

5.1. Mapping of online hate speech: Uses of social media by xenophobic groups

In order to study the uses of social media by groups potentially spreading hate speech online, a mapping was conducted of five far right groupings in each country of the study.[23] The method used is further described in the Methodology section above. This activity has revealed how different online platforms - mainly Facebook, Twitter and YouTube - are used by far right groupings to gain followers, connect with their members, and unite through messages excluding and expressing hate towards certain groups. Whilst the researches in the UK and Spain have focused exclusively on political parties with a xenophobic agenda, the study in France has also included the online media channel Riposte Laïque and the association Terre et Peuple. This is also the case for Italy where the study, in addition to political parties, has included a racist so called "counter information" website and a network of Catholic extremists. In Romania, on the other hand, political parties tend to be built around a strong leader, and three individuals have therefore been included in the mapping, with their personal social media profiles.

Most of the groups studied across the five countries are active only on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. The major exception is the French Front National which has implemented a wide social media strategy seemingly to renew their image and make the party more socially acceptable, using also channels such as Google+, Flickr and Instagram. In Table 2 below, however, the focus is placed on the three main platforms, detailing the likes/followers and average number of posts per day (for Facebook and Twitter), and subscribers and total number of videos (for YouTube), for each party, and below the findings of the national studies are briefly compared in relation to each of these three main platforms.

Table 2 *Social media activity by far right groups*

Country	**Group**	**Facebook**		**Twitter**		**YouTube**	
		Page likes	Average posts/day	Followers	Average posts/day	Subscri-bers	Total videos
FR	Front National	219,931	6.8	72,294	45	12,599	177
FR	Riposte laïque	6,942	7.5	2,223	6.8	4,567	19
FR	Bloc Identitaire	39,425	1.1	72,016	1.1	1,789	17
FR	Terre et Peuple	1,879	0.6	939	2.9	-	-
FR	Jeune Nation	4,162	8.6	1,210	6.9	208	19
IT	Lega Nord	177,850	46	14,150	49	5,112	932
IT	CasaPound Italia	115,000	1.2	11,000	2.2	3,925	-
IT	Forza Nuova	135,527	2.9	6,787	2	1,240	17
IT	Resistenza Nazionale	24,000	2.2	721	8.7	194	-
IT	Losai.eu/Radio Spada	152,000	3	1,981	2	19,881	145
RO	Corneliu Vadim Tudor	85,850	2.96	265	-	-	-
RO	Gheorghe Funar	901	2.23	-	-	-	-
RO	New Right Movement	1,126	3.4	9.068	-	476	108

[23] Local or youth groups have not been taken into account in the study, but it has been noted in the national studies that pages of local or youth groups of the parties tend to re-post or re-tweet posts of the official accounts and vice versa.

RO	Bogdan Diaconu	110,007	2.75	539	4.8	15	7
RO	Greater Romania Party	902	-	-	-	45	27
ES	Plataforma per Catalunya	5,846	6	1,749	8.7	34	14
ES	Democracia Nacional	1,401	1.6	6,100	2.7	372	64
ES	España 2000	17,186	0.5	6,068	1.1	668	140
ES	Alianza Nacional	-	-	6,738	1.1	278	19
ES	Movimiento Social Republicano	2,200	0.6	4,553	3.4	398	26
UK	Britain First	2,300	14	12,500	23	1,900	44
UK	British National Party	178,000	6	4,700	15	6,700	541
UK	English Defence League	173,000	9.9	2,300	14	880	78
UK	National Front	2,200	2	481	-	-	-
UK	UKIP	344,000	4.9	1,900	32	8,500	216

5.1.1. Facebook

As is exposed by the figures of Table 2, Facebook is by far the most followed channel - not surprisingly as it is also the biggest social media platform in general, in terms of user numbers. Page likes for the groups range from 344,000 for the British UKIP; almost 220,000 for the French Front National; 170+k for the British National Party and English Defence League, as well as the Italian Lega Nord; a surprising 110,000 for the Romanian upcoming party leader Bogdan Diaconu; to the lower range of 900 for the smaller Romanian parties. . In France, Romania, Italy and the UK, at least one of the groupings studied has a Facebook page with more than 100,000 likes, whereas the biggest Spanish page, of España 2000, only reaches 17,000 likes. Although individual pages of party leaders have not been studied across all countries, it is interesting to see that some of these individual pages, most notably in the case of the Lega Nord leader Matteo Salvini (986,457 likes on Facebook), enjoy a considerably higher following than the official pages of the parties. This indicates a *personalisation* of some of the parties.

The groups with a high level of following also tend to be among the most active ones, although this is not always true, such as in the case of Britain First, which has the second highest activity rate of all parties on Facebook, with an average of 14 posts per day, but only reaches 2,300 followers. In this regard, the Italian Lega Nord is extremely active with an average of 46 posts per day, i.e. almost two posts per hour.

In addition to the actual numbers of followers of the parties, the user interaction is also key to analysing the dissemination of the parties' messages. In this regard, the British study exemplifies with a news article posted by Britain First with a post reading "Asylum bill hits £726,000 a day: Immigration policy is a 'shambles' say critics". On Facebook the post has a total of 912 likes, 1.042 shares and 311 comments, multiplying enormously the reach of the post. However, on Twitter it was only re-tweeted twice. The Italian study also reports more user interaction on Facebook than on Twitter, especially in the cases of CasaPound Italia and Resistenza Nazionale. In contrast, the French study suggests that the groups use Facebook mostly as a showcase and auto-promotion platform, highlighting the organisations and their topics, and not to any great extent as interactive platforms, given that on most of the pages fans cannot post and the comments are controlled and moderated.

Regarding the gender division of the most active followers, this could only be measured on Facebook and for only one of the groups, the Spanish (Catalan) Plataforma per Catalunya, which showed that 78% were men and 22% women, as could also be expected based on expert reports (see e.g. Büttner, 2011).

5.1.2. Twitter

In general, the groups have fewer followers on Twitter than on Facebook; however, in spite of this they tend to be much more active on this platform. For example, Lega Nord tweets an average of 49 times per day to their 14,000 followers, notwithstanding, also on Twitter the Lega Nord leader has a considerably higher following than the official profile of the party. The French Front National disseminates an average of 45 tweets per day, but admittedly also here has a rather high amount of followers (72,294). In Romania, on the other hand, only one of the cases studied, Bogdan Diaconu, currently shows any activity at all on Twitter, where he tends to publish the same content as on his Facebook page. The British UKIP tweets an average of 32 times per day despite their fairly low following (1,900), and also the other UK parties tend to be very active, but without reaching that many followers.

It should also be kept in mind that the tweets are publically visible and so can be read by any internet user without being registered on Twitter or following the profile, meaning that the audience of the tweets may be larger than only the amount of followers. Also re-tweeting contributes to continued dissemination of the messages; however, as we have seen above in the Britain First example, the same posts were shared to a much higher extent on Facebook than on Twitter. However, as no comprehensive analysis of the interactivity of the different platforms has been included in the country studies, we can only contribute with anecdotic examples, and cannot draw any conclusions in this regard.

5.1.3. YouTube

The general tendency across all countries is for the groups not to be very active on YouTube. Whilst many of the parties opened their accounts several years ago, the activity in recent years is low, and consequently their followings are not very wide. However, there are some exceptions, most notably Losai.eu/Radio Spada in Italy with almost 20,000 subscribers and 145 videos, Front National in France with 12,600 subscribers and almost 180 videos, and the UK's UKIP and BNP with 8,500 and 6,700 subscribers and 216 and 341 videos respectively.

A main use of the platforms seems to be to post videos on other social media, suggesting that in many cases YouTube is used less as a social media channel and more as a storage platform. This is exemplified by the case of the Italian Lega Nord, with over 900 videos but only around 5,000 subscribers which compared to their other social media profiles is a rather low number.

5.1.4. Content in relation to hate speech

Regarding content, each grouping has its specific issues around which they construct their discourse. Most national studies have only based their content analysis on the data gathered with FanPage Karma and can therefore only point towards interests of the groups and the followers' interaction with certain key words. In this regard, the Italian study observes that the rhetoric of the groups analysed relies more on traditional populist key words than on

blatantly hateful words, and that the reason may be to avoid sanctions and remain within the limits of the commonly accepted populist rhetoric typical of the public debate.

The exception is the UK study, which has looked closer on the content, exemplifying some of the more extremist stances and comments, and revealing a massive amount of hate speech against Muslims, by the social media followers of Britain First, English Defence League, British National Party and National Front. In this regard, a large number of the posts and pictures published by the parties are not illegal as such, but triggers extremely hateful and hostile messages among the followers' comments.[24]

5.1.5. Observations from the interviews

In addition to the online social media mapping, the groupings and their social media activity were also discussed during the interviews with professionals and young social media users. In this regard, all the professionals across all countries were familiar with the groups studied; however, not all were able to comment on their online activities, especially in Romania and Spain, where the interviewees deemed the studied groups as quite marginal in terms of influence on society. In Spain, although one of the main parties studied, Plataforma per Catalunya does not enjoy a very large social media following in comparison with parties from the other countries, experts report that this party did achieve some electoral success due to the implementation of their social media campaign previous to the 2011 local elections. In contrast, whereas the Romanian professionals recognise the importance of social media in today's political world, and acknowledge the rapidly increasing online community of Bogdan Diaconu, they believe that this individual would not be able to reflect his following online in any electoral success.

In the UK, on the other hand, professionals are more concerned, but also have contrasting opinions: some believe that the parties have a great impact on the public's attitudes towards certain ethnic or religious groups, whereas others believe that they don't have a great influence. In France, experts recognise that the major part of new recruitments to Front National and other far right parties is achieved through the internet, but that the presence of these parties is still much bigger online than offline. In Italy, interestingly, especially CasaPound, Forza Nuova and the network of Resistenza Nazionale are reported as the authors of much of the online hate content reported to the civil rights association Lunaria and hence, are well known to them.

The youngsters interviewed across all the countries were, as expected, less familiar with the parties. In Spain none of the young people had come across any of the parties on social media, however many remembered an islamophobic TV spot by Plataforma de Catalunya from a few years ago. In Italy youngsters were more familiar with Lega Nord, CasaPund and Forza Nuova, whereas Losai.eu and Radio Spada seem to be more of a fringe phenomenon, with an undefined following. In the UK only a small number of the young social media users interviewed had seen content by these groups on social media, in part because the youngsters prefer other platforms such as Instagram, where most of these parties are not active. Another important point made by the UK study is that many young people (especially the younger age range of the study, 14-18) pay little attention to what is posted online, but rather use social media exclusively to interact with their friends. The consequence of this is

[24] For examples of this content, please see the UK report, pp. 14-26.

both that they tend not to intervene with or react against hateful content, but also that the messages of hateful groups on social media do not reach them.

5.1.6. Concluding observations on the social media mapping

The findings by the PRISM mapping of xenophobic groups' use of social media are largely in agreement with Rogers' conclusions from his 2013 online mapping of right-wing parties, expressing that with regard to social media Facebook is a leading platform for expression throughout the right, whilst Twitter is popular only in specific countries and instances (Rogers, 2013). Social media in general is frequently used by political movements to promote their initiatives, their positions and their role in the public debate, as well as to communicate appointments and demonstrations. Many of the groups studied also take advantage of the political climate and major events and use social media for scapegoating and scaremongering. A key Italian informant argues, in agreement with Rogers (2013), that social media has largely replaced the use of websites and blogs by racist perpetrators, on account of their greater capacity to transmit contents. The UK study suggests that both Facebook and Twitter are used as open-ended platforms where unchallenged hateful, hostile, and disturbing messages against certain religious or ethnic groups are spread at a speed of a click, with four of the five UK parties monitored encouraging violence against the identified ''suspect population''; currently Muslims, and other recent newcomers to the UK.

The instant sharing of these types of messages coupled with the laissez-faire attitude of the social media providers makes the issue of online hate speech a challenging problem, and difficult to regulate. Hence, social media offers a "safe" space for far right parties and their followers to share enmity against particular groups; in this sense, as pointed out in the introduction, hate speech both unites and divides. This use of the internet could also radicalise the debate, exposing even casual users to the ideas of extremist groups (Caldiron, 2013), although it remains uncertain, calling for further studies, whether this is limited to the symbolic level or whether there is a risk of turning the so-called "keyboard activism" into real action. The Italian case of Stormfront suggests the risk of such a transition, from a group active only on the internet gradually turning into an organisation also aiming at acts of violence outside of the internet, pointing to a line between virtual and real (Andrisani, 2014), and reminding us yet again that what happens online matters.

5.2. Young social media users and online hate speech

This section presents an analysis of the interviews with young social media users. For characteristics of the sample, refer to section 2.3 as well as the national reports for specifics of the sample in each country. The interview guide, with the topics that were brought up during the interviews across all countries, can be found in Annex I of this report.

5.2.1. Uses of and approaches to social media by young people

In order to learn more about how young people perceive and use social media, the interviewees were asked about which social media platforms they use, how often they use them, from what sort of device, for which purposes, and with whom they interact. It turned out that the use that young people make of these platforms is very similar across the five countries studied: they mainly use social media to communicate with friends, for entertainment purposes and to be updated on what is going on, in terms of news, events, and activist encounters. Consequently, most of the young people interviewed connect only with people they already know, and follow pages close to their own interests and values. This also means that the hate speech content seen by these young people is limited, and mainly coming from friends of friends, or comments by strangers on "liked" pages. In contrast, in Italy many of the youngsters interviewed reported having never met most of the people they interact with on social media.

Regarding channels, Facebook is still by far the most popular social media platform, followed by Instagram and Twitter. Therefore, most of the experiences by young people in relation to hate speech content stem from Facebook. Spanish youth report being bystanders on Twitter, and not participating actively in discussions. WhatsApp, a mobile application used both for one-to-one messaging and group discussions, is used by most youngsters interviewed in Spain and Romania. Whereas this application was not considered as social media at the outset of the study, many young people treat it as such, although it is limited to closed groups. Romanian youngsters also mention using Snapchat, an application which allows users to take photos, record videos, add text and drawings, and send them to a closed list of recipients, and ask.fm, a social networking site where users create profiles and can send each other questions, with the option of doing so anonymously. Additionally, Skype was perceived as social media by a couple of people, and there was also mention of the online gaming platform League of Legends, as an arena where hate speech is pervasive.

Regarding the extent of use, the youngsters tend to visit social media daily or several times per day through their smart phones. In the UK, some of the teenagers with stricter parents reported only using their social media accounts during the weekends.

There were different perceptions on the limits between the online and the offline. Some of the youngsters interviewed mentioned that social media is just an extension of the things they normally do – that there is a continuum between the online and offline - and they claim to behave just like they do in their everyday lives:

> " I think that my way of behaving in social media is exactly the same as I would do in person, I try to avoid saying things that I would not say in person" [ES-YP5]

This is also supported by the fact that most of the youngsters only interact with people they also interact with or know offline. By contrast, others believe that people create characters online and therefore behave completely differently in the virtual realm. Moreover when asked if they believe that people feel freer to say offensive things online, the majority of informants agreed that anonymity and no fear of repercussions contributes to this.

5.2.2. The concept of hate speech in the eyes of young people

In order to better understand what information had reached young people in relation to online hate speech, the interviews included a discussion on the concept of hate speech, and whether the young people had received any information regarding this problematic.

The reflections by the young people on this showed that the majority of the young social media users across the five countries of the study were not at all familiar with the concept of hate speech. They had not received information from school or other institutions, nor were they familiar with any recent campaigns against hate speech. Nevertheless, many youngsters expressed quite an intuitive understanding of the concept, as opposing it to love, or affiliating it with rejection, "say that you don't like people and what you don't like about them, but in a horrible way" [UK-YP14]. In this intuitive understanding, however, the grounds for hatred, such as ethnicity, or religion, is missing, and the understanding is therefore closer to the concept of cyber-bullying, of which there seem to be more awareness among youth, perhaps due to schools focusing on the issue of bullying.

Following the interpretation of young people's responses, there is a clear need for awareness-raising and education regarding what hate speech is; how it is manifested online; its impacts on the target groups and society; and how it can be counteracted and reported.

5.2.3. Experiences of and reflections on online hate speech

It should be emphasised that not all of the hate speech content referred to during the interviews with the young social media users can necessarily be defined as hate speech according to a legal definition. Instead we can use the concept "perceived hate speech". In some of the interviews, where the young persons were not familiar with the concept of hate speech - especially in the younger age range of 14 to 18 - hate speech content and experiences were discussed in terms of "racist comments" or "offensive comments" or through a longer explanation by the interviewer on what sort of content the discussion may refer to. This means that the term "hate speech" in the narrative of the young social media users in most cases is broader than that in the narrative of the professionals interviewed, which is more focused on the legal limits.

Having said that, across all the countries, the majority of the interviewed youngsters have seen what could be defined as hate speech on social media, below exemplified by some of the young social media users interviewed in the UK, France, Romania and Spain. Some of these examples are directed towards a general target group:

> ''I have seen things like pictures targeting the Jewish community. You see posts with headlines from the news and people comment on them. A lot of comments about black people and Muslims'' [UK-YP7]

> “I heard about the ‘Romanians are coming’ documentary and there were tons of hard messages. There was so much hate in those comments against Gypsy or Roma” [RO–YP27]

Some youngsters also exemplify with hateful phrases directed towards them personally:

> “Recently I saw the profile of a girl who wrote that she wanted to meet new people, but said she doesn’t want Arabs, nor Blacks, nor people from outside only people from her country [...] When I read that my heart hurt so I told her ‘you should also leave because nobody wants you either’, she responded ‘you go back to your country you shitty negro’” [ES-YP1]

> “When she put ‘this is all because of the bougnouls’ [derogatory word for Arab] etc., I commented that she shouldn’t get everything mixed up, that Muslim doesn’t mean terrorist and that not all Muslims are Arabs, she said ‘shut up bougnoul, you should be burning by now’” [FR-YP6]

Many young people expressed that they have come across hate speech especially in relation to specific crystallising contexts or events, mainly trigger events such as Charlie Hebdo, but also sports events such as the football World Cup, or cultural events such as beauty pageants. However, it could also be that some of these instances were easier to remember than single comments or posts.

In general, young people’s experiences reinforce the view that religious groups and especially Muslims tend to be the most targeted by hate speech. In the case of Spain, especially following the Charlie Hebdo attacks the overwhelming majority of informants report seeing countless posts on social media sparking a polarized debate where it seemed as though everyone had to choose sides:

> “...the Charlie Hebdo incident, Facebook the following day was a fight to the death between the *je suis Charlie* and the *je nes suis pas Charlie,* and it was like *boom*! [ES-YP13]

Also in the French study, Charlie Hebdo was recognised among the youth as leading to a wave of social media reactions and increased online hatred against Muslims:

> “The same old things, “it’s always the Arabs”, “it’s always the Muslims, we shouldn’t let them in”, that sort of hackneyed, but absolutely horrible phrase... We’ve always heard them, but this time you heard it ten times more.” [FR-YP2]

Some informants also recognised the role of politicians, especially in the context of elections, in spreading and normalising hate speech, such as this young person from Italy:

> "You know what the problem is? If I see that a politician incites hatred, speaks in violent ways, in racist ways, I will do the same, as a member of society, right? They think that it is freedom of speech…" [IT-YP8]

However, many also see the role of “ordinary people” using social media and in particular Facebook and Twitter to vent their dissatisfaction. In most cases, the hate speech content stems from people they are not familiar with, or friends of friends, such as in the testimony in the following quote:

> "Often it is precisely the ordinary people, I mean... not my personal friends but, you know, friends of friends or people who share the same Facebook page with me, you know" [IT-YP15]

In addition to racist and xenophobic content, which has been the main focus of the research conducted, also gender issues were mentioned by some of the women interviewed, especially in the studies in the UK and Spain. Some have been targeted because of their stances as feminists; however, even more common are derogatory posts and comments, often targeting the physical appearance of girls:

> "Like you are whore, slut, very derogatory words like these'' [UK-YP1]

It is worth pointing out that there is often a racial component to these comments, assigning certain negative characteristics to specific nationalities or ethnic groups, making the intersection between gender and ethnicity the ground for hate and prejudice. For example, in the Spanish study, one informant with roots in Latin America received countless offensive comments after participating in a beauty contest:

> "For example if someone is Latina, obviously you will be attributed the worst or things that are not even true […] they think we are inferior, that we have a lower cultural level […] that why would people even vote for me knowing that we don't even have enough to eat, that we didn't even have social media, that we were the worst." [ES-YP6]

She eventually reported the harassment to an NGO, because the organisers did not take any measures to stop the abuse. The NGO managed to get the organiser of the event to delete the comments from the web.

Another feature of hate speech that is brought up by young social media users across the countries is the use of images, often in the shape of "memes"[25]. These images tend to be treated as jokes:

> "It didn't happen to me personally but in general there are certain groups that distribute all sort of jokes and memes that might be offensive, might be misinterpreted and one thing to another appears all kind of disputes." [RO-YP26]

However, many of these images feed on prejudices and tend to trigger racist comments and debates on social media. As evidenced by the LIGHT ON project, racist symbols and images can influence personal and collective behaviours, especially when shared on the Internet, where they easily engage broad audiences. In the case of Spain, many of the youngsters interviewed mentioned that racist images[26] circulate especially on WhatsApp. Although messages shared through this application are not public, images shared can still have a significantly wide reach as they circulate via private messaging or through groups whose members in turn keep sharing them. The same may be true for closed groups on Facebook, which are mentioned by some youngsters as spaces for "safe" (i.e. non-public) conversations.

[25] An image, video, piece of text, etc. typically humorous in nature, which is copied and spread rapidly by Internet users, often with slight variations. In this case, we refer to memes building on racist or xenophobic prejudice, but there are also many harmless memes.

[26] For examples, refer to the report "Online hate speech in Spain" in Annex II.

Most youth link the way of behaving online to anonymity, and the lack of immediate consequences for the persons spreading hateful comments:

> “They cannot be directly affected. They just sit in front of the desktop and write. Not being put in the position of looking the other in the eye gives them automatically more courage” [RO–YP23]

> "It’s as if there was a wall between them and me and therefore they feel free to say whatever they want" [IT-YP20]

In this regard, most young people agree that people express themselves in more violent ways on the Internet and that there is a wider acceptance for hateful remarks said online than offline.

6. Responses and reactions to online hate speech

In the present chapter, the responses and reactions to online hate speech are analysed, first in the case of the young social media users interviewed, whose experiences of online hate speech were summarised in chapter 5, above, and then regarding responses of institutions and organisations, drawn from the interviews with professionals.

6.1. Responses and reactions by young people

There seems to be an increased normalisation of the hostile messages spread online. The narratives of many of the youngsters interviewed reflect a widespread laissez-faire attitude, of being indifferent, seeing hateful comments as jokes, minimising the impact, or linking hateful content to freedom of speech and everyone's right to express their opinions:

> "I get amused by many of them. It makes me laugh; I see them as jokes" [UK-YP7]

> "I don't particularly like them, especially if they are racist, I just scroll past them 'cause a lot of people are horrible..." [UK-YP11]

> "There is nothing you can do and after all it's their opinion" [RO-YP5]

> ''To be honest they are entitled to say whatever they want... It's freedom of speech; what they say to me I do not find it as offensive as others do… If I like something I follow regardless what comments or whatever comes with it'' [UK-YP12]

Even those belonging to the target groups of the hate messages - especially in the case of islamophobia - tend to have normalised this discourse, considering it inevitable online, or even no longer identifying themselves as part of the target group:

> "Today I don't want to be, I don't want to consider myself Muslim, I don't want to consider myself Moroccan, I take up and leave and make my own life, nobody is persecuting me… So frankly, when I hear those things, I cannot really relate them to the social category they are directed against" [IT-YP8]

However, there are also reactions such as disbelief, anger and sadness, although most of the youth reacting to hate speech in a more "active" way still don't believe that the people making offensive comments are aware of their implications, and link it to immaturity because of young age, a low cultural level, or simply to these people reproducing the discourses around them:

> "They don't see the consequences and one is blinded and doesn't see it is a hateful comment, a discriminatory one, they don't realise its reach and what all that can generate" [ES-YP3]

These different reactions and attitudes among the young social media users are reflected in their *responses* to hateful content, which in general can be divided into four categories:

- **Ignore – don't do anything**

As a consequence of the laissez-faire attitude towards hate speech, a common "response" – or non-response - to hateful content is to ignore it or not do anything. As seen above, some users believe that it's everyone's right to express their opinions and therefore don't intervene, some scroll past hateful posts, others although they are against the opinions of the content choose more consciously not to intervene, viewing it as useless – some because they have tried discussing with posters in the past without any result, or have reported in the past without result. Some are also afraid of others' reactions and of getting caught up in a conflict:

> "Sometimes I feel revolt because it's not fair and I feel like I need to intervene but I am afraid of other reactions and that I would be perceived as a meddler" [RO–YP28]

- **Delete or block users and leave groups**

A small number of young people choose to clear their accounts from people sharing offensive comments by blocking or deleting them:

> ''Most of the time when someone is saying something bad I just block the person'' [UK-YP1]

Some have also chosen to leave groups or "unlike" pages where hateful comments have been made. Many of the informants believe that deleting, unfollowing or blocking users is more efficient than reporting content to the social media platform:

> "There's all that, I don't know what you call it, comment regulation where you can denounce someone, flag up discrimination or [...] hate speech and all that. But it's no good re-publishing them or showing them because when you publish a message you give it exposure, so I think it's best to delete them." [FR-YP25]

However, this reaction, whilst removing the content from their specific personal feed, still leaves the content visible to other people, to be read and further disseminated.

- **Report to the social media platform**

Most youngsters are aware of the possibility to report pages, posts or comments, especially on Facebook, whereas in general there is less familiarity with this function on Twitter. By and large the youngsters interviewed tend not to report. The most commonly mentioned reason for this is that they believe it is useless, as no action will be taken by Facebook. Among the Italian and Romanian youth, only two and three respectively had reported content on Facebook. In the case of Spain, most had reported on some occasion, but were discouraged because of the lack of action by Facebook, and about half did no longer use the reporting function. In France about half of the interviewees had used the reporting mechanism, however only one had managed to get a page deleted. Similarly, most of those who had reported on Facebook across the other countries revealed that Facebook did not take any action to delete the reported content, but rather just sent a message stating that the content did not break the site's community norms. One of the Italian informants explains that:

"The reporting method is clear, however, I tell you, it looks like a joke, because if you tell me 'you can report it' but in the end there are no consequences, I stop reporting stuff" [IT-YP8]

In this regard, the passivity of Facebook seems to reinforce the laissez-faire attitude of youth, as even many of those with more activist stances, who would like to take more action, perceive reporting to Facebook as meaningless. Many also limit themselves to reporting only when they feel intimidated themselves or feel that their friends are somehow targeted:

''I have reported photos 'cause all my friends are African and Indian… I found it offensive because the photos were targeting such people and making them feel that they do not belong here when they have the right to be here'' [UK-YP16]

Finally, on a positive note, one informant mentions participation in the PRISM study as encouraging her to start reporting:

"I didn't do [report] it because I say 'there's no point', I mean, the person continues to have those bad ideas; actually, now, also thanks to this survey you're doing, I'm realizing one should do it, because continuing to allow comments like those ones, which tend to remain on a webpage and therefore can be also shared by other people, could incite even more people to hate" [IT-YP15]

- **Participate in the discussion, counteract comments, or "like" comments**

Another response to online hate speech is to take part in the discussion, counteracting hateful arguments and introducing other viewpoints. Most of the young social media users interviewed do not intervene in this way. Some, who have tried to engage in dialogue with people making hateful comments on Facebook report backlash either from the original poster or from other users. A number of interviewees also think that online discussions are easily inflammable and prefer discussing *in real life*, to influence others' positions. However, yet others explained that if you are open-minded, listen carefully to others' arguments and answer gently, you can find a way to agree. Some also choose only to "like" others' comments in order to provide support, while not actively entering the discussion themselves, mostly not to waste time.

Conclusively, in terms of young people's involvement in the struggle against online hate speech, in general youngsters believe they should get more involved, but at the same time they seem not to know up to what point it would make a difference. By and large, hate speech and offensive comments are seen as an inevitable part of the internet:

"It is social media, people do not know each other so you know people take it that much further because they feel secure, because it's the Internet and you know you could be anyone you wanna be on this'' [UK-YP4]

This passive attitude towards online hate speech and cases of stereotyping, scapegoating, dehumanization and defamation may turn into a spiral of silence towards hatred where young people, who should be the primary defenders of human dignity choose instead to ''flick the page'' and ''get amused'' rather than take any actions.

6.2. Responses and reactions to online hate speech by institutions and organizations

In terms of responses by institutions and organizations, each country report details the different monitoring agencies dealing with hate speech and hate crimes in the national context. In this section an overview of the different responses is provided, also highlighting some specific complexities, obstacles and initiatives, based on the interviews with professionals working with these issues.

6.2.1. Law enforcement agencies

All the national studies indicate an immense underreporting of hate speech and hate crimes, in part because vulnerable collectives often do not trust the police. The police both in Spain and Italy recount having made more progress on issues related to homophobia and LGBT discrimination in terms of awareness raising and increased reporting, mainly through collaboration with associations and NGOs, than in relation to racist and xenophobic hate speech, hate crimes and discrimination. For example, the protocol of the Catalan police on hate crimes was first developed for crimes against the LGBT community, and later on expanded to include also hate crimes based on race, religion or ethnicity.

The experience of building relationships with civil society organizations in LGBT issues indicates the importance in elaborating networks with a wide variety of associations and organisations in order to educate possible hate crime victims on their rights and the tools available, to increase reporting, and also to increase the awareness and sensibility in relation to these issues within the police. In this regard, in Italy there seem to be differences in sensitivity and responses to acts of anti-Semitism and anti-Roma within the police: on the one hand, the historical and generalized condemnation of anti-Semitism has led to a relationship of trust between the Jewish community and law enforcement; on the other hand, the traditionally discriminatory attitude of Italian institutions and society towards Roma communities is reflected in a lack of sensitivity also in the law enforcement agencies:

> "If I were to say which is the issue where there is a total distrust, to say the least, I would have to say Anti-Gypsyism: this is the issue in which, frankly speaking, even among the police (because the whole society feel like this) there is the greatest mistrust" [IT-P4]

Underreporting in the case of Italy is also linked to the limited tools allowed by the Italian legislation; whereas for example in the UK, hate incidents can be reported to the police either by the victim or by someone acting on their behalf, in Italy third part reporting is not allowed. Also in Spain, investigations into online hate speech are “reactive” and based on specific complaints by concrete victims. Hate speech against general collectives tends not to be investigated. Although specific police units deal with reports on online hate speech, these units also deal with all other crimes committed online and therefore do not have resources to “patrol” the internet for hate speech. In this regard, in order to provide information and increase the reporting of online crimes, the Italian Postal Police has established an “online police station”. However, this station is little known among the citizens and in 2014 it only received two reports.

6.2.2. Prosecution

In general, in terms of prosecution, these is a clear difference between prosecuting cases of hate speech on normal web pages and on social media in that the servers hosting the web pages are obliged by legislation to facilitate information. International collaboration is also possible regarding web pages, although some experts consider the system rather inefficient.

Social media companies like Twitter and Facebook, on the other hand, tend not to collaborate, something which is perceived as problematic and an obstacle by the experts interviewed. This is also related to the limitless freedom of speech in the US, where most of these companies are registered. Therefore, those who aim to spread hate speech are likely to use servers located in the US or Canada. This is summoned in the following words of a Spanish prosecutor:

> "The problem with justice is that it has borders, but today's criminality does not." [ES-P4]

Hence, the problem of tracking people online is almost never technical but rather bureaucratic – most anonymous profiles could be easily uncovered if it weren't for bureaucratic limitations. Furthermore, Italian experts point out that many posters of hate speech are in fact no longer anonymous as they do not consider the content they post illicit or are not ashamed of it, a clear reflection of the current societal climate.

A positive recent change in Spain is the establishment of special prosecutors on hate crimes and discrimination in all 50 provinces, which hopefully could lead to more cases of online hate speech being prosecuted. Also, recently in Catalonia, as we have seen some cases of online hate speech against Catalans have been investigated; and it seems that the reactions and responses against hate speech targeting the autochthonous people are much stronger and extended, than against the pervasive hate speech against Muslims and Roma.

6.2.3. Civil society organizations

In the UK, there is a large spectrum of organizations dealing with the issue of hate speech and hate crimes, some of which are focused on discrimination against specific groups, such as TellMama, which is dedicated to reporting any form of anti-Muslim abuse. In terms of responses against hate speech, the UK professionals acknowledge that there are tools available to counter online hate speech, but that there is a widespread lack of awareness of the existence of these tools. Likewise, a lack of awareness both among the general population, among vulnerable collectives and among victims of hate speech, is reported by NGO representatives across all the countries.

In France, positively, an NGO with a reporting platform, has established partnerships with Facebook and Twitter, and have regular meetings with representatives of these platforms, to improve reporting mechanisms. This may be a way of improving the reporting mechanisms of the social media providers, and points towards a growing awareness of the seriousness of online hate speech by some of these platforms, as well as an understanding of the importance of building networks with stakeholders, in lines with what has been suggested by Keats and Norton (2011).

In Spain, victims of vulnerable collectives tend not to report directly to the police, but rather to NGOs which advice them and accompany them to the police if needed. However, even though victims do reach out to NGOs to verbalise what has happened to them, they are often hesitant to file an official complaint with the police, often because of distrust and fear, especially in the case of undocumented migrants. In fact, one major obstacle to improving the reporting seems to be that the most common target groups of hate speech do not tend to report. This should be seen in the light of the normalisation of hate speech and racism as part of life for many immigrants:

> "Immigrants themselves have assumed the role of 'well, that is what corresponds to me being an immigrant, so I won't give it much importance and continue with my life', and here we need to educate everyone not to put up with this kind of situation" [ES-P3].

6.2.4. Media and social media

Another crucial perspective on responding to online hate speech is that of media and social media providers. In this regard, an important obstacle to inhibiting hate speech, reported by non-media professionals interviewed, is that digital newspapers and social media providers tend to perceive themselves as mere intermediaries for discussion, and consequently take little or no responsibility for the content of the discussions.

Media professionals have been interviewed in the French and Romanian studies. A Romanian journalist responsible for coordinating a blogging platform expresses frustration in trying to find the balance between freedom of speech and hate speech:

> "It's very frustrating for me […] to be put in the position to explain to an author that is using our blogging platform the differences between free speech and hate speech. Also, my editing work is misinterpreted as censorship, despite my honest efforts to create a credible debating space" [RO–P2]

A French journalist acknowledges media's role in creating buzz around certain topics, and their responsibility also in moderating debates, partly through self-regulation and alert buttons:

> "I mean, you can't control everything and at the same time want freedom. So it's part of the game and yes, we do need regulatory bodies but it seems to me that the responsibility of structured media, and what I think is a priority, is to provoke constructive debate and to refrain from the temptation to create buzz, to attract attention to themselves, to generate clicks based on hatred [...]. Autoregulation is the answer. There should be moderators on threads. There should be an "alert" button. And people should be regulating too. There should be someone who umpires a conversation to stop the hate speech and keep the most harmful trolls under control." [FR-P2]

There are also examples of initiatives aimed at providing readers of online newspapers with tools to contrast hate speech comments, such as the Spanish project PROXI[27], which

[27] http://www.observatorioproxi.org/

monitors hate speech in the comments sections of digital newspapers and provide readers with tools for counteracting hate speech.

Regarding social media providers, experts report a general lack of transparency in their reporting mechanisms, i.e. how is the moderation done? How many reports do they receive and how many lead to any action? As we have seen in the narratives of the young social media users, the slowness in reaction from Facebook contributes to a laissez-faire attitude among youth, in which they stop reporting hate content as it does not lead to any consequences. Furthermore, a French NGO reports differences in how the social media platforms react to the reports coming from NGOs:

> "Facebook reacts much more quickly than Twitter. At Twitter they have trouble taking action, trouble with their concept, in their view of Internet [...] At Facebook, they understand that it's in their interest to delete content [...] That said, you have to remember that Facebook and Twitter don't have, are not proactive, but that's also true of YouTube. I mean, they respond when we report content to them, but they don't keep a lookout themselves. So, even if we tell Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, content will still spread and filter through." [FR-P4]

However, as we have seen a change may be underway in terms of Facebook's management of hate content: Following calls from the Germany's justice minister to do more to combat hateful speech about refugees in relation to the current (September 2015) refugee crisis, Facebook has agreed to work with Germany's ministry of justice, internet service providers, and other social networks to form a task force aimed at flagging and removing hateful content more quickly. Facebook have also pledged to help finance organizations that track online hate speech, however, it is not clear whether the company will also change its policy on what types of content are considered offensive.[28] Furthermore, as seen in section 6.2.3 above, there are already positive examples of Facebook and Twitter establishing partnerships with NGOs.

[28] Wall Street Journal September 14, 2015 "Facebook Outlines Measures to Combat Racist and Xenophobic Content", http://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-outlines-new-measures-to-combat-racist-and-xenophobic-content-1442242351

PART III - Concluding remarks and recommendations

7. Recommendations for preventing, redressing and inhibiting online hate speech

This section presents an overview of the general recommendations drawn from the interviews with young people and professionals across the five countries studied.

For a more detailed look at the recommendations formulated in each national context, we refer to section 7.5 below, where all the recommendations are expounded according to target group and country, as well as to the national reports, for further clarifications and contextualisation.

7.1. Education and awareness raising

From the research conducted, it is evident that more education is needed regarding online hate speech. This is also by far the most common recommendation, both by young social media users and by professionals: education and awareness-raising is essential as a starting point. Those especially targeted by hate speech must be made aware of the fact that this can and should be reported, and be motivated to do so. Most professionals interviewed refer to public awareness campaigns and training as crucial for improving the reporting of online hate speech.

Awareness-raising is also crucial for
inhibiting and preventing hate speech. Internet users need to learn that not only do their hateful online statements have pervasive effects on the target groups and the societal climate, but that some of these statements are indeed criminal. The responses by many young people interviewed, and their lack of familiarity with the issue of hate speech, further testify of a need of awareness-raising on these issues across all countries.

In order to achieve this, a greater allocation of public resources to awareness raising and information campaigns for citizens is necessary. These campaigns should be carried out using modern communication channels, i.e. those available on the Internet, in order to reach both hate victims and perpetrators more directly.

Another recommendation amongst the professionals and young people is to focus on internet awareness and encouragement of counter speech. In this regard exposure to positive articles, and to examples of positive online interactions, is crucial:

> ''I think people have to put the positive stuff out there, people need to know the facts, there are myths and there are facts. We need to put that together and differentiate'' [UK-P2]

And so are tools and information for counteracting hate speech:

> ''We also need to develop counter speech […] We do not necessarily need to go to the police and ask for actions, you can go online and counter it'' [UK-P1]

7.2. Responsibility of opinion makers and media professionals

In most of the countries, there have been cases of politicians and public representatives contributing to the stigmatization of certain groups through expressions of hate speech, both online and offline. Experts underline that given their function as public officials and their influence, it is essential that these representatives abstain in their public statements from using hate speech or promoting stigmatizing stereotypes and prejudices.

In this regard, also media professionals should be more aware of their role in contributing to stigmatizing debates through creating headlines aimed for "buzz" and clicks, and trained to take responsibility in this regard.

7.3. Legal measures and law enforcement

Several professionals underline the need of states to take online hate speech more seriously as a crime and not view it as harmless. This means allocating more resources to the law enforcement agencies for dealing with this kind of crimes, e.g. through the creation of special police units to patrol the web for criminal cases of hate speech.

As we have seen, many experts also indicate the need for greater collaboration among the police and civil society organizations, on the one hand, in order to help the police discover cases of hate crimes and hate speech; on the other hand, in order to make organizations aware of all the legal instruments available for reporting cases of hate speech, so that they can promote them and help contrasting the phenomenon of under-reporting

In legal terms, the complexity of the issue requires an intervention strategy not limited to national borders, but also at a European and international level. In this sense it is crucial to harmonize legislations among European countries and encourage a greater legislative and judicial collaboration at an international or at least European level, as indicated by the Additional Protocol to the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime. In this sense several professionals also call for better collaborations with social media managers and providers.

7.4. Online communities and social media platforms: responsibility and transparency

Both professionals and young people believe that social media providers do not take the issue of hate speech seriously enough, and are not proactive in making sure that their community norms are followed by users. In this regard, social media providers need to take more responsibility.

Professionals also report a lack of transparency in how social media deal with reports, and therefore challenge them to produce statistics:

> ''Part of the problem is lack of transparency with the number of complaints these organizations are getting and how they are dealing with them. [...] I think one concrete recommendation to take away is the need for platforms like Facebook and Twitter to be more transparent about not only the way they deal with complaints, but also to produce statistics as to the cases that they are getting more complaints about, so that these questions get an answer. I think it is valuable information'' [UK-P8]

Furthermore, as we have seen above, legal and law enforcement professionals call for better collaboration by social media providers in order to obtain information for investigation and prosecution.

Partnerships between social media and NGOs/reporting platforms, could be a way of raising awareness among social media providers, increasing their sense of responsibility, and hopefully improving the reporting mechanisms of the social media providers as evidenced by a French NGO, in section 6.2.3 of the present report.

7.5. Recommendations by country

Based on the collection of recommendations by each research team, the data has been organised in a table, by country, those who have put them forward and the target group to which they are directed. The recommendations reflect the arguments expressed throughout the report, through quotes and cases, however, for a greater contextualisation of any country-specific recommendation, the national reports in Annex II should be consulted.

Table 3 *Recommendations by country and target group*

Country	Recommendations	By whom	Target group
FRANCE	Workshops on hate speech and social media to raise awareness among young people	Young people	NGOs
	A charter to commit to against online hate speech	Young people	Social media users
	Favouring travels to get to know the other person	Young people	Young people
	Bringing back the far-right into society	Young people	Journalists, other institutions
	Media education to use information and technological tools properly	Young people	Educational institutions
	Ignoring hate speech not to highlight it, or delete comments in order not to give hate speech exposure	Young people	Social media users
	Filter comments on social media	Young people	Social media providers
	Not to censor free speech	NGO	All institutions working with hate speech issues
	Make media aware of their responsibilities on regulation and refrain temptation to create buzz	Journalist	Journalists
	Auto regulation of online communities	Journalist	Social media providers and users
	Fight on political grounds rather than on religious grounds	Lecturer	EU institutions, other institutions
	Provide credibility for media	Lecturer	Journalists
	Coding access to comments to inhibit hate	Lecturer	Social media

	speech		providers
	Answering to reports of online hate speech to encourage citizenly action	NGO	Police, other institutions
	Create partnerships between authorities, NGOs and social media providers	NGO	Police, NGOs, social media providers
	Fight against inequalities to fight against hate speech	NGO	EU institutions, other institutions
	Improving recompilation of statistics on hate speech	Public institution	Police, NGOs, EU institutions, other institutions
	Avoiding racist speech banalisation	Young people, public institutions	All institutions working with issues related to hate speech
	International coordination against online hate speech	NGO, public institution	EU institutions, other institutions
	Create a national online hate speech committee to counter hate speech	NGO	All institutions working with issues related to hate speech
	Publish algorithms and codes to allow community to influence them	Lecturer	Social media providers
ITALY	Reform current legislation and allow third party reporting	Police, NGO	Legislators
	Induce political and institutional representatives to assume their responsibilities, to avoid hate speech and firmly condemn it.	All professionals and young people	Politicians, institutions
	Induce media professionals to avoid hate speech and to firmly condemn it, respecting their professional ethics.	All professionals and young people	Media professionals, Order of Journalists
	Reinforce the powers of the national equality bodies	ECRI	Institutions
	Allocate human and financial resources to the police and the national equality body, to effectively monitor and combat hate speech	Police, NGOs	Institutions
	Encourage collaborative and multi-stakeholder actions on a national and local level, developing a joint strategy for preventing and fighting hate speech	Police, NGOs, lawyers/legal experts	Police, prosecutors, NGOs, social media providers, journalists, institutions, universities and

			research institutes
	Encourage networking among various civil society actors in advocacy and lobbying activities	NGOs, lawyers/legal experts	NGOs, lawyers/legal experts' associations
	Promote a greater collaboration among the police and civil society associations	Police, NGOs	Police, NGOs
	Allocate more public resources to awareness raising and information campaigns for citizens on hate speech and the legal instruments available, starting from schools	Police, NGOs, Young people	Institutions
	Promote a more widespread knowledge of the regulatory, legal and victim support tools	NGOs, lawyers/legal experts	NGOs, lawyers/legal experts' associations, Equality body
	Continue to promote wide-spread long-term actions aimed at increasing the awareness, expertise and training of police forces, also through greater financial resources,	Police, NGOs	Institutions, Police, NGOs, lawyers/legal experts' associations, Equality body
	Promoting more awareness raising, information and training activities on hate crimes and hate speech among lawyers/legal experts and judiciary	Police, NGOs	Judiciary, lawyers/legal experts' associations
	Arrange workshops and meetings between various stakeholders (police, judiciary, civil society organizations) to exchange experiences and establish collaborations	Police	Police forces, judiciary, lawyers/legal experts' associations, NGOs
	Harmonize legislations among European countries and encouraging a greater legislative and judicial collaboration at an international or at least European level	Police, NGOs, lawyers/legal experts	EU institutions and countries
	Promote more fruitful collaborations with social media providers	All professionals	National and European institutions, social media providers

ROMANIA	National debates on promoting and protecting free speech with respect for human rights.	Professionals	Media Politicians
	De facto sanctioning when hate speech occurs	Professionals	Judicial authorities Equity bodies
	Educational framework centred on human rights and diversity	Professionals	Educators Government
	Media outlets should insist on quality content and quality interactions with their audiences (even when moderating their activity)	Professionals	Media
	Sponsors should not advertise and associate their brands with media outlets that trigger hate speech	Professionals	Private companies
	Schools should include more formal and informal activities that promote human rights and anti-discrimination (tools to fight against hate speech)	Young people	Educators
	Social media platforms should improve their facilities in order to efficiently report and eliminate hate speech messages. To some extent, total ban of users that promote hate speech	Young people	Social media platforms
SPAIN	Public campaigns to raise awareness among the population that online hate speech can and should be reported	Police, Prosecutor, NGOs, Young people	All institutions working with hate speech
	States need to take hate speech more seriously and conceptualise it as a crime	Prosecutor	State's justice system
	Harder sentences for spreading hate speech	Prosecutor	State's justice system
	Better international collaboration for online crimes	Prosecutor	International justice system
	More tools to report online	NGO	NGOs, social media providers,
	Possibility to place formal complaints with the police or prosecutor also by persons who are not direct victims	NGO	Police and prosecutor
	Increased user engagement to report to the social media platforms	NGO	General public
	Societies need to acknowledge that structural racism exists and fight this on all levels	NGO	Community as a whole
	Educational and sensitization workshops about hate speech and discrimination for youths especially at an early age.	Young People	Education system
	Better education at home and at school: to respect others and our differences, and raising awareness about hate speech.	Young People	Educational system; parents
	Leading by example (not making hateful or discriminatory comments) both on social media and outside of it.	Young People	Governmental institutions and representatives;

			Community as a whole
UK	Education should be the leading protective factor in the fight against online hate speech	Young people	School representatives
	Internet awareness and counter speech	Professionals Young people	All the organizations working on preventing hate speech. Involve young people –as the defender of human dignity
	Clear definition and boundaries	Young people Professionals	Policy and law makers
	Responsibilization and transparency	Young people Professionals	Social media providers Social media users
	Laws: cross transnational consistency and proactive preventive actions	Professionals	Policy makers at an international level All stakeholders dealing with hate speech/crime
	Monitoring: introduction of watchdog	NGO	Social media providers Policy makers Law enforcers

8. Concluding remarks

Inequalities are on the rise across Europe, powerfully affecting young people across all states, particularly those from minority groups. The current difficult economic, social and political climate provides an ideal platform for exacerbating and constructing tensions between constructed groups, many of which are reinforced and transmitted through hate speech. This is coupled with a growth in racism across Europe that is evidenced in many ways and supported by the increasing awareness far right groups have of the convening power of social media. In this context xenophobic and racist views reach a much wider audience and greater significance as online hate speech spreads throughout social media. In the recent years we have seen a rise of hate blogs and social media sites on internet that not only promote prejudice and racism, but actually enhance it. What is more, many internet users are increasingly open about their xenophobic and racist views as many instances of online hate speech are no longer anonymous. This not only reflects a pattern in individual options, but also evidences the existence of a background where these views are somehow normalised.

The evidence and analysis presented in this report shows how words can be powerful weapons that used within a biased framework can further marginalize and demean groups which have already been rendered vulnerable. Furthermore, it exposes how the study of hate speech becomes fundamental to know our society and our youngsters. It is in order to understand and address online hate speech, that we must recognize actions in the virtual realm not as separate from or less harmful than those "in the real world", but rather as a continuum. As exposed throughout this paper, the web must be perceived as part of real life, with a circular process of mutual interaction and fostering. In a cultural and social context in which the feeling of intolerance is common, this will be reflected on the web and vice versa. Racist and xenophobic hate speech on the Internet is an expression of a larger phenomenon, in political and public debate: a structural racism that is widespread in everyday public life, through various forms and channels, including through the web and social media.

Yet whilst it is very important to have a thorough overview of the main representation and current debates around hate speech, including the importance of protecting community interests or safeguarding the rights of the individual without limiting the civil liberties of the speaker, this report also shows how essential it is to account for the backgrounds, experiences and responses of those involved in the action of hate speech. This allows us to reach a deeper understanding of experiences of, attitudes towards, behaviours around, and reactions and responses to online hate speech, mainly from the perspective of young users of social media, but also from professionals working in fields related to combating online hate speech.

Through this ethnographic approach, the evidence gathered allows us to unravel the experiences of young people that come into regular contact with discriminatory, racist and xenophobic stances on social media and other online forums. In doing so, we can demonstrate how, worryingly, many young social media users have normalised the existence of hate speech on the Internet and show a markedly laissez-faire attitude towards this phenomenon. This attitude, in turn, seems to be supported by the inertia and lack of credibility of the social media platforms' reporting mechanisms.

The diffusion of hate speech is a dynamic phenomenon which flourishes online and which requires a variety of multi-agency joint actions to develop and implement effective responses. Although professionals working in areas related to racism and xenophobia are increasingly aware of the growing issue of online hate speech, and tend to take the problem seriously, most organisations unfortunately suffer from a lack of resources allocated to combating online discrimination, or even to disseminating information on the tools available to report.

On the other hand, it is evident that education and awareness-raising is crucial in making the public aware of the fact that not all messages disseminated online are acceptable and justified by freedom of expression. Social media users need to be exposed to a greater recognition of the consequences of online hate speech, in order to express themselves in a more responsible way. Increased engagement of users to report through online reporting tools is a way of continuously monitoring content. However, social media users cannot be motivated to keep reporting instances of hate speech unless social media providers take stronger action in responding to the reports, and add more transparency to their reporting mechanisms.

Finally, as this report has evidenced, when analysing hate speech we must keep a focus on the victims of online hate speech; their experiences and views. Yet, in doing so, it becomes evident a need for further qualitative research also on the perpetrators, not only considering the organised extreme stances, but also the ordinary internet users who may not come clean with their opinions in face-to-face encounters, but hide behind their screens to spread hateful messages. Acknowledging the possible methodological difficulties of this type of research, considering the anonymity of many of the users spreading hate speech, we still believe it would be crucial to learn more about the motivations of these persons. In addition to this, the results call for further research to explore the narratives of young women from an intersectional approach that addresses online harassment against women from the multiple prism of the social experience.

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Annex I: Methodological tools

Guide for the interviews with professionals

[This questionnaire needs to be adapted to the national context as well as to the context of the person interviewed, bearing in mind that the range of professionals is very wide, and therefore themes and questions may vary for each interview. Before starting the interview, the interviewer should briefly explain the project, and clarify that the person interviewed will be anonymous and the material confidential. S/he should also hand out the letter of informed consent: one copy for the interviewer and one for the interviewee.]

1. **Basic information**
   - **1.1.** What is the field of work of your organisation/institution?
     - From what approach? (e.g. legal, victim support, awareness raising)
   - **1.2.** What is your role in the organisation? How did you come to work here?
   - **1.3.** In terms of work in relation to online hate speech, what does your organisation do?

   → *This may already lead into or exclude some of the questions below:*

2. **Contexts of hate speech:**
   - **2.1.** In your experience, which would you say are the contexts where hate speech is more present? (e.g. sport, politics, music, anti-racist initiatives…)
   - **2.2.** What would you say triggers hate speech? Would you say specific events can trigger hate speech? (e.g. Charlie Hebdo)
     - If yes, how?
   - **2.3.** Would you say that normative discourses (e.g. in politics or media) can also be fomenting hate speech?
     - Do you think there are groups taking advantage of the current hard economic climate for communicating hate speech?
     - If so, what are some of the real world effects of communicating hate speech in this context?

3. **Main actors:**
   - **3.1.** In your opinion, where do hate speech discourses come from? (e.g. individuals, political parties or organizations, informal groups …?)
     - What do we know about them? (e.g. gender, age range, other demographic information)
     - Which are more active online?
     - Who are they trying to reach and what's the purpose of their hate speech?
     - Are they successful?
   - **3.2.** Which are the main target groups of hate speech?
     - Has this changed over the last few years?
     - Is there a difference between women and men of these groups in being the target?
     - Would you say that the following topics include most types of racist or xenophobic hate speech: Islamophobia; xenophobia against immigrants; anti-Semitism; anti-Roma? Would you add any in the national context? Which?
4. **Discourses and channels:**
   - **4.1.** Do you see any differences in how different social media or web channels are used for spreading hate speech?
     - In which social media or web channels do you see the most hate speech?
   - **4.2.** In your experience, what are the trends and changes in hate speech discourse over the last few years?

5. **Responses and tools:**
   - **5.1.** Which ways or tools are available to report online hate speech?
     - At what level?
     - In your experience, do people use them?
     - If yes, are they useful?
     - If not, why? What are the obstacles to reporting hate speech, if any?
   - **5.2.** Do you know of any cases that have lead to legal action? *[or you can ask about any specific case that you're aware of and want more information about]*
   - **5.3.** What is your opinion on the reporting tools within the different social media platforms? Are they effective and do social media administrators take these complaints seriously?
   - **5.4.** In your experience, how have social media and other online platforms attempted to balance the condemnation of hate speech with the preservation of freedom of expression?
   - **5.5.** In your opinion, what needs to/could be done to improve the responses and reporting?
   - **5.6.** Any recommendations or best practices for preventing, inhibiting and/or redressing online hate speech?

   - ***5.7.*** *[If the institution deals with reporting (claims, complaints), ask the questions of this section:]*
     - How many people reported (claimed, complained, informed) specifically on online hate speech? (e.g. in the last year)
     - Who were these people and what did they report?
     - How are these reports dealt with by the institution?

6. **Questions related to the mapping activity and the five far right parties, movements or organisations examined:**

   [The interviewer needs to explain that the next few questions will deal with five parties/movements/organisations and then list those selected in their country]
   - **6.1.** Do you know these organizations?
     - Does your organization have any relation with them? Which?
   - **6.2.** What is you experience or awareness of hate speech in relation to these groups?
     - Are you aware of any incidents in the new media in relation to them?
     - What influence do they have in the new media in general?
   - **6.3.** Do you think there are other more relevant groups in terms of spreading hate speech?

Guide for the interviews with young social media users

[Before starting the interview, the interviewer should briefly explain the project, and clarify that the person interviewed will be anonymous and the material confidential. S/he should also hand out the letter of informed consent: one copy for the interviewer and one for the interviewee.

In the questions, "hate speech" is phrased as "offensive comments" or "comments that promote hate against people", since some young persons may not be familiar with the concept of hate speech. When translating the questions, this can be adapted to the national context. It is also important to be aware that this is not a closed list of questions, but rather "triggers" to start discussing the topics. Finally, note that the headings in bold are not to be asked as questions but intended as internal guiding themes.]

1. **Introduction to the personal use of and approach to social media:**
   - **1.1.** What social media do you use?
     - Which do you use/like the most? Why?
   - **1.2.** How frequently do you use each social media platform?
     - Do you use it on your phone, tablet, computer?
   - **1.3.** What do you use it for? (e.g. to talk to friends, to get information, to be active in organisations or social movements, to get to know new people…)
   - **1.4.** In the profiles/pages you follow, or groups you have joined in the different social media, do you know who the other users are?
     - Do you think you have a lot in common with them? (e.g. attitudes, political views, religious beliefs...)
     - If you know them, do you spend time with them outside of social media?
     - If you don't know who these people are, does that worry you?

2. **Channels, contexts and language:**
   - **2.1.** In your everyday use of social media, do you come across offensive or hateful comments against particular persons or groups?
     - Like what? Do you remember any specific expressions used?
     - Where and in which context(s)? (e.g. on which social media, which pages/profiles. Discussing what? Among friends or strangers?)
   - **2.2.** Do you remember any specific events or situations that have triggered this kind of comments? (e.g. sports events, before political elections, in relation to migration in general...)
     [Here the interviewer could concretise with recent examples such as Charlie Hebdo]
   - **2.3.** Is there any profile/page you would like to follow, but don't because you are aware of the offensive comments made on that page or by that profile (e.g. a sports club, a band)?
     - If yes, which?

3. **Main actors:**
   - **3.1.** In relation to any offensive comments you have seen, who have made those comments? (e.g. peers, political parties, sports fans...)
   - **3.2.** Against who are the comments you have seen?
   - **3.3.** Have any of the comments been directed towards you?
   - **3.4.** Do you think people feel more free to make offensive comments on the internet than in real life? Why?

4. **Responses and reactions:**
   - **4.1.** How do you feel about this sort of comments (towards you and towards others)?
     - Do you feel offended?

- Do you think they offend others?

4.2. How do you feel about the reactions of other people? (e.g. people liking, replying with offensive comments, or on the contrary reacting against the comments)

4.3. Are you aware of the reporting systems provided by the social media platforms you use? Were you informed of the rights of users in reporting offensive comments/contents before registering with your preferred social media sites?

4.4. Have you ever done anything about offensive comments? (e.g. started a discussion or tried to talk to the person that has made the comment, reported online, reported to the police)?
- If you have reported comments (either through the platform reporting mechanism or elsewhere), was that easy or complicated? What happened afterwards? Did social media administrators address your report in a professional and respectful manner?
- If you haven't, why? Do you know how or where you could report? Do you think you should have done something?

4.5. In general, do you think enough is done to prevent and stop comments spreading hate? (e.g. by social media providers, equality bodies, police, etc)

5. Information on and familiarity with the concept of hate speech:

5.1. Are you familiar with the concept of hate speech[29]?
- What do you think it means?

5.2. Have you received any information about hate speech and language in social media, at school or elsewhere?

5.3. Have you heard about the "No Hate Speech Movement" or other projects or campaigns against online hate speech?
- If so, where/how have you heard about them and what do you think about them?

5.4. How do you think young people could be more involved in fighting hate speech?

6. Questions related to the mapping activity and the five far right parties examined in that activity:

[The interviewer needs to explain that the next few questions will deal with five political parties and then list the parties selected in their country][30]

6.1. Have you heard about these parties?
- How or where have you heard about them?
- Have you visited their social media profiles? If so, have you seen any offensive comments?
- Do you know people who follow them on social media? What do you think about that?

Socio-economic information to collect:

1. Age
2. Woman/man
3. Where do you live? (residence)
4. Where are you from? (origin) *[You can adapt this question to the national context or choose not to ask it if too sensitive]*
5. Educational level
6. What do you do (work/study/...)?

[29] Initial project definition by CNR on January 23rd 2015: Hate speech "includes every stance purporting to jeopardize the rights of an ethnic, religious or national group, in clear violation of the principles of equal dignity of and respect for the cultural differences among human groups". According to the CoE hate speech shall be understood as "covering all forms of expression which spread, incite, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-semitism or other forms of hatred based on intolerance, including: intolerance expressed by aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism, discrimination and hostility against minorities and people of immigrant origin".

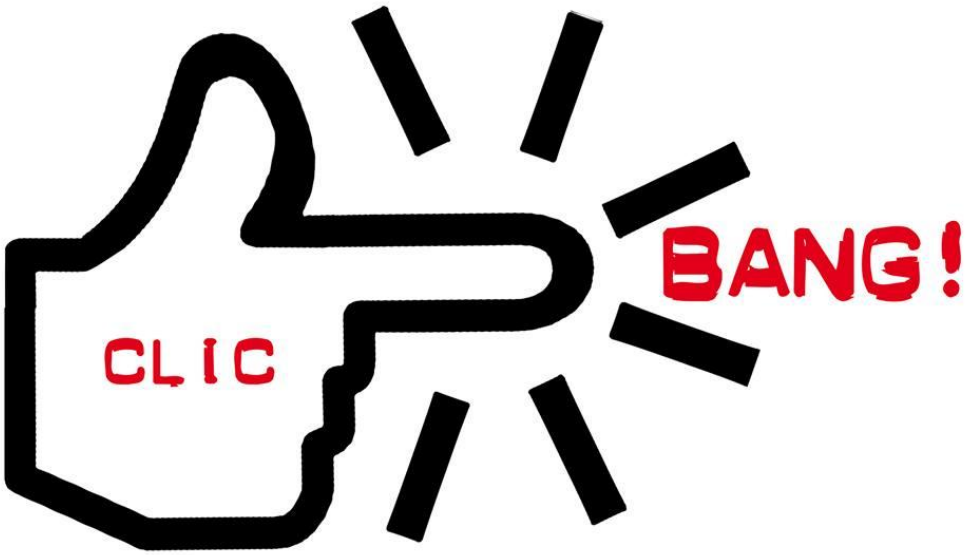
[30] This will be further explained in the Methodology for Mapping. The selection of the parties, movements or organizations will have to be done before the interviews. If you have not done the complete selection before starting with the interviews, mention any party that you know for sure will be included.

Annex II: National reports on online hate speech in France, Italy, Romania, Spain and the UK

Online hate speech in France

Fieldwork report

P R I S M



WORDS ARE WEAPONS.

PREVENTING REDRESSING & INHIBITING HATE SPEECH IN NEW MEDIA

M. Roturier, E-L. Gay, M. Schoger

La Ligue de l'enseignement, France

la ligue de l'enseignement

un avenir par l'éducation populaire

With financial support from the Fundamental Rights and Citizenship Programme of the European Union

1. Introduction to the national context

1.1. Economic, social, and political climate in relation to hate speech

French society has experienced social and economical inequalities for over 30 years. Since the 1980s, with regard to household incomes, the gap has increased. In 1990, in France, the Gini Index – a measure of statistical dispersion intended to represent the income distribution of a nation's residents – was about 0.277. In 2011, it was 0.302. Unemployment keeps increasing: according to the INSEE (National Institute of Statistics and Economic Research), in 2014, the number of unemployed reached 2.9 million in France, which depicted 10% of the French active population. According to Eurostat, in March 2014, this represented 23.4% of unemployed youth. This social and economic climate has an effective impact on media coverage of far right organisations, thus spreading hate speech to a larger audience. Mainstream media spread discourses accusing scapegoats: migrants.

Further, the political context has participated in triggering hate speech in relation to news reporting. For 30 years, the far-right political party, the Front National, has gained media influence, members and voters. It has developed a hostile discourse against immigration, especially against Muslims. In May 2014, during the European elections, 24.86% of expressed votes were in favour of the Front National, which represents 24 MPs of 74. The abstention rate was 57.57% in France. In 2010, the French president, Nicolas Sarkozy implemented a national debate on French identity, finger-pointing North-African immigrants and especially veiled women. The same presidents as well as his successor, François Hollande, have enforced deportation orders, stigmatising Roma people, Gypsies and Travellers.

More recently, in July 2014, the war in Gaza exacerbated the feeling of double speech and media standards between Muslims and Jews. The conflict was imported with demonstrations, street fights and media stigmatization.

> "In each category, Whites, Arabs, Blacks, Jews, there is a lot of resistance and reflection. We are all in the same boat but I think that there are people; there are forces that fight to keep things in check, even if things are difficult at the moment, with terrorist attacks and the war in the Middle-East, which make things really hard. Still, people want to be finished with these calls for war and hatred of others. It's not easy." [FR-P2]

On January 7th 2015, two French jihadists attacked the weekly newspapers *Charlie Hebdo*. During the next two days, another French jihadist shot a policewoman and attacked a kosher supermarket. It triggered online hate speech, increasing confusion between Islam and violent jihad. The hashtag *#jesuischarlie* (I am Charlie) represented 6.6 million tweets from 7th to 12th January. During the same period, *#jesuiskouachi* (I am Kouachi, the name of the two jihadist brothers) represented 36,000 tweets, according to *La Croix*, a Christian daily newspaper.

Since the 1881 law on freedom of the press, the media's freedom of speech in France has been supervised, not to develop hate speech. This law applies also online; incitement to

hatred and especially racial hatred are forbidden and punished, according to Henri Leclerc (Leclerc, 2001). However, Jean-Marie Charon, a media researcher, noticed that in the public debate, French media has always been accused of promoting hate speech and racial conflicts (Charon, 2014).

The debates on hate speech against freedom of speech have centred on comment moderation, on forums, chats, social networks. There are two practices when it comes to dealing with them: removing contents or organizing debate after publication – against forward verification. Online hate speech seems to be present in comments on each online platform. For example, *Rue89*, an online participatory media, is regularly the target of hate comments. It entrusts moderation of comments to journalists and bloggers, who can promote or delete comments[1], but most of the time, readers vote in favour or against other comments to control the talk[2].

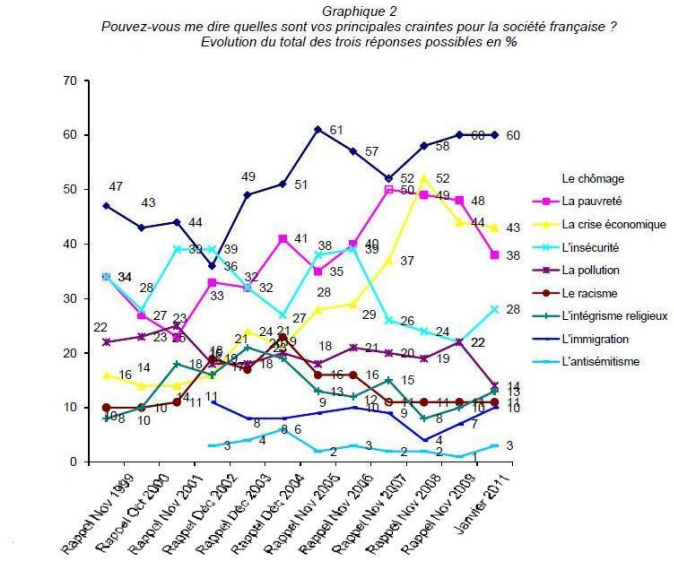
This debate leads to another one since complete removal without any legal or educational processes does not inhibit online hate speech. On the contrary, it creates a feeling of censorship. Considering recent events and feelings of double standards, a public debate appeared on the limits of incitement to hatred and "ordinary" hate speech, sometimes hidden by humour speech[3]. If incitement to hatred is sentenced, "ordinary" racism or xenophobia online, in the media, in political discourse is not punished.

1.2. Statistics on hate speech

In France, ethnic and religious statistics are constitutionally forbidden. There are few exemptions given to institutes who preserve anonymity, but ethnic and religious statistics are socially and morally criticized. This explains the lack of statistics on racism, xenophobia and hate speech.

In January 2011, the CSA (French Audiovisual Council) published a poll about racist feelings. To the question "Can you tell me your main fears, regarding French society?" Racism is stable (10% of the answers), but insecurity (28%), religious fundamentalism (13%) and immigration (10%) have increased since 2010.

[1] Read *Rue89*'s comment's charter : http://rue89.nouvelobs.com/charte-des-commentaires
[2] Read *LesInrocks* : http://www.lesinrocks.com/2015/02/12/actualite/les-commentaires-payants-sont-ils-la-solution-pour-lutter-contre-les-trolls-11561765/
[3] Read *L'Obs*' explanation : http://tempsreel.nouvelobs.com/charlie-hebdo/20150120.OBS0346/une-liberte-d-expression-a-deux-vitesses-7-questions-pour-comprendre.html



To the question "Over the last year, do you think you have been the target of racist behaviours?", people answered "never" for 72% of them, often for 5%, sometimes for 16% and only once for 7%. To the people who think themselves as victim of racism, the CSA asked: "According to you, was it because of: your nationality (52% of them), your religion (8%), or the colour of your skin (27%)".

The 2012 enforcement report of the Interdepartmental Committee Against Racism and Anti-Semitism explained about PHAROS, the national online report platform of illegal content: "Considering the 119,788 reports which were treated in 2012, 9,405 were related to racist or discriminatory content, being a rise of 4.9% compared to 2011. [...] In 2012, the PHAROS platform initiated the 321 legal inquiries, 35 of them fell under xenophobia and segregations, representing 11% of all inquiries"

1.3. Main actors and channels involved

Target groups of xenophobic/racist hate speech

In France, specific groups are the targets of hate speech. Due to their presumed ethnic affiliation, Arabic and Romany population are victims of stigmatizing speech and racism. Due to their country of origin, North Africans or Sub-Sahara Africans are targets of xenophobia. Hate speech also aims at injuring people because of the colour of their skin. Furthermore, Jews and Muslims are both target groups of hate speech because of their religion.

Groups of perpetrators

In France, one main far-right political party has perpetrated hate speech in France, the Front National. There are also movements spreading hate speech, which are interlinked, such as Riposte laïque (Secularist Retaliation), Bloc identitaire (Identity Block), Terre et Peuple (Land

and People). They are organised through online media, such as *Novopress.info*[4]. Students spreading hate speech are also organized in a violent federation called Groupe Union Défense (Defence Union Group).

Country-specific web channels and popular social media

Hate speech can be found in global social media, such as Facebook or Twitter. Most of the racist contents can be found in comments. Instagram and Youtube are known to be infected by racist contents. Further, there are country-specific web channels spreading hate speech. *Minute*[5] is a professional media linked with the far right political movement. In 2012, Riposte laïque's website[6] was sentenced for incitement of hatred. Discriminatory movements have developed media strategies, using Facebook pages, blogs and new media, such as Whatsapp and Skype.

However, we can also notice that participative media, which want to express tolerance and an open editorial line, are subject to racist comments. For example, blogs by the online newspapers *Mediapart* and *Rue89* have had to deal with it.

1.4. Responses: Institutions and monitoring agencies dealing with the issue of hate speech

CNCDH (Commission Nationale Consultative des Droits de l'Homme) is an independent governmental commission. Each year, it produces a report on racism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia. In 2004 and 2015, it insisted on online hate speech. It gathers NGOs such as:

- **LDH** (Ligue des Droits de l'Homme – Human Rights League)
- **LICRA** (Ligue Internationale Contre le Racisme et l'Antisémitisme – International League against Racism and Anti-Semitism)
- **MRAP** (Mouvement contre le Racisme et pour l'Amitié des peuples – Movement against Racism and for peoples frienship)

PHAROS is the national online report platform. Reports made on Licra or Point de Contact platforms are, if necessary transferred to PHAROS (Plateforme d'Harmonisation, d'Analyse, de Recoupement et d'Orientation des Signalements, managed by l'OCLCTIC (Office central de lutte contre la criminalité liée aux technologies de l'information et de la communication).

Name	Web	National/ Regional/ local level?	Scope (issues covered)	Reports produced (and year)

[4] Read *L'Obs* about plot websites : http://rue89.nouvelobs.com/2015/01/23/charlie-hebdo-sont-sites-parlent-complot-257284
[5] http://www.minute-hebdo.fr/
[6] http://ripostelaique.com

CNCDH	http://www.cncdh.fr/	National Public institution	Human Rights	Fighting racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia report (2004 and 2015)
FORUM DES DROITS SUR INTERNET	Closed in December 2010	National Public institution	Mediation between web stakeholders, watchful activities, international initiatives	
LDH	http://www.ldh-france.org/	National NGO	Human Rights	
LICRA	http://licra.org/	National NGO	Online report platform of racist content	Annual activity report (2013)
MRAP	http://www.mrap.fr/	National NGO	Racism	Cyberspace and the fight against racism issues (2008-2009)
OCLCTIC	https://www.internet-signalement.gouv.fr/	National Police department	Illegal content, treated by 13 policemen	Report platform PHAROS
POINT DE CONTACT	http://www.pointdecontact.net/	National internet access provider NGO	Online report platform for : hate speech, child pornography, incitement to suicide, glorification of terrorism, justifying crimes against humanity, offensive content easy for minors to access	
SENAT	http://www.senat.fr/	National Public institution	Youth, media, new media, protection of minors	Assouline's report (2008)
TRALALERE	http://www.tralalere.com/	National NGO	Educational digital content: Serious game on hate speech for teenagers (12-15)	Stop la violence! http://www.stoplaviolence.net/
Union des étudiants juifs de France	http://uejf.org/	National NGO	For young Jews representation	Fighting against online hatred convention (2015)

2. Mapping of the social media activity of xenophobic parties, organizations and movements

2.1. Introduction to the parties, organizations or movements and rationale for selection

In order to select 5 far-right parties, organisations and movements, the research focuses on the POMs pointing their discourses at young people and/or aiming at influencing media semantic. Thus, the French far-right party, the Front National – which recruits young supporters and occupy a large place within major media – was selected. In addition, four other far-right organisations and movements were selected: media and violent groups.

Front National (FN)

The centre of research and documentation for the social, economical and cultural new order advent (Centre de recherche et de documentation pour l'avènement d'un ordre nouveau dans les domaines social, économique et culturel), known as the New Order (Ordre nouveau) is a political movement classified as neo-Fascist (especially by J. Algazy and P. Milza, history professors). In 1972, it creates le Front National (FN). It is a far right-wing party. Even though contesting this wording, the party concentrates on topics that divide society, such as security, national priority or immigration. Presided by Jean-Marie Le Pen until 2011, his daughter now holds this function. The historian Michel Dobry defines le Front National not as a fascist one but as a party that triggers fascism. Jean-Marie Le Pen and Bruno Golnisch, an executive of the party have been sentenced respectively for Holocaust denial and denying crimes against humanity. Representatives, executives and activists regularly attack migrants, especially Roma, North Africans and Muslims.

FN gets its first victories during the legislative elections of 1986. In 2002, Jean-Marie Le Pen receives enough votes (16.86%) to confront Jacques Chirac, the outgoing French president, in the second round of the presidential elections. However, the party achieved its best results in the 2012 presidential elections. Marine Le Pen gathered 17.9% of the votes cast. At the last European elections, FN came up to the first party, with 24.86% of votes cast.

FN has a movement engaging young people, created in 1973 by Jean-Marie Le Pen, le Front National de la jeunesse. It is now called FN jeunesse (Youth FN) which pairs up with Les Jeunes avec Marine (Young people with Marine), an organisation centred on the candidate, during presidential elections.

Riposte laïque

Riposte laïque is an online media, created in 2007. It presents itself as belonging to the secularist ("laïc") movement but the website promotes far right-wing opinions and participates in shared actions with the Bloc identitaire. The website gives itself over to open anti-Muslim remarks in most of its articles. It presents itself as a politically independent website, giving space to different types of contributors such as ex-Trotskyist personalities, for example one of its founder, Pierre Cassen or to FN writers. Riposte laïque says it lets different tendencies, or even opposed tendencies free to express themselves. It gathers for example some feminists, such as Anne Zelensky and anti-abortion activists, such as Myriam Picard, but their contributions are only centred on the denunciation of Islam. It claims to have an antiracist, humanistic background, but the anti-racist organisation MRAP[7] demonstrated that this selective secularism (laïcité) did not match with the universal fight

[7] Mouvement contre le racisme et pour l'amitié des peuples – Movement against racism and for friendship between peoples

against racism[8]. Riposte laïque echoes many racist theories, such as Eurabia's one, fantasising an Islamic invasion or the 9-3 rumour, blaming mayors from Seine-Saint-Denis[9] of paying migrant inhabitants to move in other towns, for example Niort.

In October 2009, Riposte laïque denounced weekly Islamic prayers in the public space, in la Goutte d'Or, a disadvantaged district in Paris, holding them as a part of the Islamic invasion plot. This buzz insured a media audience to these theories and could be used by right and far-right representatives. The medium co-organised with the Bloc identitaire a "sausage-wine pre-dinner" (apéro saucisson-pinard), to fight against "Muslims invaders". They organised the "European Islamisation conference" (Assises sur l'islamisation en Europe). Some members of Riposte laïque have been sentenced for racist and anti-Muslim statements, such as Pierre Cassen, Pascal Hilout and Christine Tasin.

Bloc identitaire

In France, le Bloc Identitaire has particulary embodied the Identity Circle of Influence (mouvance identitaire), a political movement across Europe, which appeared at the end of the XXth century.
The Bloc identitaire was created in 2003 with the name Bloc Identitaire – Mouvement social européen (Identity block – European social movement). Its logo – a wild boar – refers to a book cover by Guillaume Faye, a French far-right journalist and writer. Le Bloc Identitaire promotes "another Europe", which should be regionalised. It focuses on a so-called "European spreading of Islam". It goes against multiculturalism, which it accuses of being responsible of social isolation. Dominique Venner is one of its most influent ideologists. He is a French essay writer and a former member of Jeune Nation (a nationalist movement) and of the Organisation de l'armée secrète (OAS, a politico-military organisation defending French Algeria). The Bloc Identitaire claims 2,000 members and gathered 600 activists at its annual conference in 2009, in Orange (a town in the south of France). The members of its board come from different organisations, especially Front National, Jeunesses Identitaires and Génération Identitaire. The movement stood for elections in the southern French region Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur from 2004 to 2010; however, no one of its lists was elected. Its doctrine is based on the refusal of an ethnic melting pot and "Islamic imperialism". It promotes migrants' expulsion.

The Bloc Identitaire created the media organ *Novopress.info*, which presents itself as an international press agency. From 2005 to 2009, the Bloc Identitaire published a bimonthly magazine, *ID Magazine*. From 2003 to 2014, it organised many "Soupes Identitaires" (Identity soup), in different French and Belgian big cities, especially in Strasbourg and in Paris. The distinctive feature of this soup kitchen is to give out pork in order to exclude Jews and Muslims. It was banned from Strasbourg in 2006, but went on until 2014 in Paris.

Terre et peuple

[8] http://www.mrap.fr/contre-le-racisme-sous-toutes-ses-formes/riposte-laique-le-mrap-denonce-la-laicite-a-sens-unique
[9] 93rd French department which is a Parisian suburb area and receive a strong immigration. The origin of the 2005 riots took place in this department.

Terre et Peuple is a French association created in 1994 and started in 1995 with Pierre Vial, Alain Touraine, Christophe Bordon and Pierre Giglio as board members. They come respectively from the Nouvelle Droite (a fascist organisation) and the Front National. It promotes ideas close to the Identity Circle of Influence. It claims itself from the neo-paganism doctrine, a "rooted identity" based on Gaul inheritance. Thus, the doctrine is based on biological racism. Terre et Peuple and the Bloc Identitaire both created the Representative Council of White Associations (referring to an anti-racist organisation, the Representative Council of Black Associations).

Terre et Peuple publishes a media organ, the quarterly magazine *Terre et Peuple*. It runs the publishing house of la Forêt. Each year, it gathers approximately forty participants in its Summer University – "Journées du Soleil". This organisation is a member of the Union de la droite nationale, a far-right political confederation.

Jeune Nation

Pierre Sidos is François Sidos'son, an ex-member of the Jeunesses Patriotes and a senior official in the Milice, a paramilitary organisation of Vichy in charge of the fight against French resistance. The Milice helped the Gestapo to arrest French Jews and people who did not want to accomplish the "Service de Travail Obligatoire" (an organisation set up by the Germans which forced French workers to go and work in Germany). François Sidos was shot in 1946. Pierre Sidos created l'Œuvre française in 1968, which was dissolved in 2011. This movement mixed neo-fascism, Pétainist ideas[10], anti-Semitism and catholic fundamentalism. After its dissolution, members gathered around Jeune Nation, which was created in 1949. It became an active organisation in July 2013 and joins different extremist organisations: les Amis de Pierre Sidos, la Communauté de liaison et d'aide nationaliste, les Cyriatides (nationalist women), France Nation, la Flamme, *Rivarol* (monthly national magazine) and *le Journal Militant* (revue nationaliste) published by les Jeunesses nationalistes, a violent movement forbidden in July 2013 as a consequence of Clément Méric's murder[11]. Its creator, Alexandre Gabriac is known to be the youngest representative in France, on a Front National list. He was expelled of the Front National in 2010 after the publication of a picture on which he can be seen in front of a swastika, doing the Nazi salute. Many of these organisations use a Celtic cross as their logo.

2.2. Interpretation of the mapping data

To understand POMs' activity on social media, the FanPage Karma statistics and data was used. This data was completed with content analysis of posts and interactivities between the parties', organisations' and movements' platforms. Thus, the mapping data (see the mapping data collection table in the annexes) highlights specific practices.

Front National

[10] Pétain was the head of the French state during the Second World War. He organised in Vichy an authoritarian regime and collaborated with the Nazi governement.

[11] Clément Méric was a far-left militant of Action antifasciste Paris-Banlieue and Solidaires Etudiant-e-s. He was killed the 5th of June 2013. Five people are under investigation.

There are three phases of development in the implementation of Front National's communication within the social media. Firstly, in 2009, it invests Facebook and Twitter. Secondly, it invests complementary media, Dailymotion, Youtube and Google+ for video podcasts in 2011/2012. Thirdly, in 2014/2015, it invests the latest trendy social media for pictures, such as Instagram and Flickr. Marine Le Pen becomes officially the president of the party in 2011. It is obvious that in those phases she wanted to renew the image of the Front National, making it socially acceptable and washing its contents from racism and anti-Semitism.

The links between the different webpage of Front National are well organised. They all refer to the official webpage and most of them refer to the other social media webpages. Most of those pages are doubled or tripled with Front National for youth or personified webpage of Marine Le Pen, the president of Front National. Those pages were not taken into account in the mapping activity but these local webpages on social media repost and re-tweet from official webpages and website of the Front National.

Regarding the most used words on the social media platform, le Front National focuses on the French political agenda. The official speech concentrates on nationalism and French interests. Their communication focuses on press releases and European and local elections. They also use terminology such as "national interest". The dissemination of these topics is particularly implemented on Facebook, with 219,931 fans. But interactivity is bigger on Twitter, with only 72,294 followers, but an average of 45 posts a day on Twitter and only 6.8 a day on Facebook.

Riposte laïque

Riposte laïque has recently renewed its social media platforms. It has been active on social media since 2007, but recreated a Facebook page in 2012. As an online media, Riposte laïque is centred on its official webpage, providing multimedia articles. Its social media pages are focused on linking to the official website and specific posts from this website.

Riposte laïque has regular posts. It uses social media platforms to disseminate its articles 6 or 7 times a day. Its articles and posts focus on North African migration, Islam, "Muslim migrants", jihadists, terrorism, and "remigration", which means emigration back for people who are supposed to be immigrants. It disseminates through its official website and social media platforms different articles, books and videos incriminating Muslims and accusing them to invade France.

Bloc identitaire

Bloc identitaire has the same target as Riposte laïque. It focuses on North African migrations. It is known to be violent groups. Its communication on social media platforms is less active, but it has more followers because it is locally implemented. Thus, it reposts different local "Génération Identitaire" Facebook pages.

Terre et Peuple

As a new organisation, Terre et Peuple has only few members, fans, and followers. The organisation is still settling and tries to develop its paper media activities.

Jeune nation

Jeune nation is the most active selected POM on Facebook and Twitter. Even if its official Facebook and Twitter pages are recent, it has a great number of followers, with a good interactivity. The main target of Jeune nation is young nationalist people, which can explain this big interactivity between the POM and its followers.

It is the only selected POM using Vkontakte (Russian social network in Europe). It remains unexplained.

2.3. Comparative elements of the parties', organizations' and movements' use of social media

The five different POMs use Facebook as a showcase. On this social media platform, the posts highlight the organisations and their topics. Facebook is used as auto-promotion platform: "Front", "Bloc", "Terre", "Peuple" and "Jeunes" are the top best words of POMs on Facebook. Facebook allows only one link to an external website. Thus, POMs reference their official webpages. But Facebook gathers different posts: links and reposts of the official website, video posts from Youtube and Dailymotion. For each POM, Facebook is the social media platform with most fans. However, their pages are not interactive since on the majority, fans cannot post and the speech is controlled and organised.

Interactive fans use Twitter. Twitter profiles have fewer followers than Facebook but 63% of French users of social media used Facebook in 2014, and only 15% of them used Twitter (Harris Interactive study on 2,000 internet users aged 15+).

As for videos and images, they are important for the 5 selected POMs. If Facebook can be used to post photos, their YouTube platforms have a lot of fans: 1,786 for Bloc identitaire, 4,567 for Riposte laïque and 12,599 for the Front National. The main use of YouTube videos is to repost them on other social platforms, such as Facebook or Twitter.

Except for the Front National, the far-right organisations and movements present themselves as an alternative media, giving real news against the controlled discourses of governmental, Semitic or Muslim lobbies.

2.4. Reflections from the interviews

Professionals

All the professionals knew the five different parties, organisations and movements selected. They attributed them different roles: a political party influencing policy debates and public policies, racist media influencing semantics fields and violent organisations. In order to promote their roles, they use, according to the professionals, different methods such as

media impact, intimidation or public gatherings. Some of the professionals see in those 5 organisations different links, from a semantic field, to the recruitment of followers.

The lecturer of information and communication sciences thinks that online platforms and especially social media platforms are decisive for those POMs existences:

> "From what I understand, they are tiny groups, the Front National recruit young people in tiny groups. But even though they have a network, most recruitment comes via internet, not directly. Basically, the Front National and the far-right in France have a much bigger online presence than they do offline. In real life I mean." [FR-P3]

Even though the journalist, the president of the civil society organisation and the lecturer refuse to talk or to have any kind of relation with those 5 parties, organisations and movements, the president of the civil society organisation proposed to include hate speech perpetrators in a dialogue process in order to redress hate speech. According to the legal department manager interviewed, only legal fight is effective and should be reinforced:

> "One way is to delete content and the other is to take legal action against the person who committed the offence. Where internet is concerned, we are faced with a problem of identifying the people who write hate content. Websites and blogs do not have notices, even though they are compulsory, that are supposed to be there to flag content. So we often have to contact someone. We can't contact the author or the editor, you know there's the principle of cascading authority. We have to contact hosts, except that hosts only have two alternatives. Either they contact editors and ask them to delete the content. And if it is not deleted promptly, within 48 hours going by jurisprudence, then the host can cut off the website. That's how websites get deleted. There are two hosts in France at the moment, OVH and Overblog. Both are in France and have to comply with French law, especially the 2004 LCEN law that governs trust in the digital economy and enables the host company to delete content as soon as they are aware of its nature. In fact it's not enabled - the host actually has to delete content that has been notified. So, by what we call LCEN notifications, in reference to the law that governs trust in the digital economy, we manage to obtain deletions or withdrawals. Sometimes articles are withdrawn and sometimes whole websites are deleted. Basically, that's like taking the scum off the sea with a teaspoon, not only in terms of quantity but also because a site can be closed today and reopened tomorrow. So it's very difficult to counteract, it just keeps coming back." [FR-P4]

Young people

Regarding the selected parties, organisations and movements, all the young people interviewed did know the Front National, the major far-right party in France. They also knew Marine Le Pen, its president and/or her father, Jean-Marie Le Pen, its former president. They have heard about the party in major media, especially on TV. Half a dozen of the 18+ know an activist or a young representative of the Front National personally. They blamed it and considered it as an excluding movement. Most of them refuse to discuss or to have contacts with activists of the Front National.

Only few young people knew Riposte laïque and Bloc identitaire. Some have come across Riposte laïque website or articles and some have already seen Bloc identitaire's sticker in the street. They considered them as more radical organisations than the Front National. One of the interviewees thought that the Front National recruits young people from those organisations.

Due to large media coverage, the young people interviewed said to better know the German Pegida movement, or the Franco-Swiss essayist and film-maker Alain Soral's and the French comedian Dieudonné M'Bala M'Bala's websites and organisations, such as Quenel +[12].

3. Experiences from the ground

26 young people were interviewed, consisting of 21 girls and 5 boys between the ages of 16-25. Young volunteers, Service Civique volunteers[13], university students, secondary school students and audiences of youth cultural centres participated in the research through 3 local federations of la Ligue de l'enseignement.
4 professionals were interviewed in order to get insights from different perspectives: the legal framework, a civil society organisation's perspective, an academic point of view, as well as a journalistic experience. It was not possible to interview a professional from the French platform Overblog despite several attempts.

3.1. Sample and sampling process

Professionals

During the sampling process of professionals, different points of view on hate speech and on the practices of social media were gathered. We had a global point of view from the president of the civil society organisation in France. He gave us a secular and anti-racist approach of non-formal and informal education. A journalist was interviewed to receive a media and practical overview. To collect an academic insight, a senior lecturer of information and communication science participated to the research. In order to get inputs from a legal approach, the legal department manager of a French NGO against racism and anti-Semitism was interviewed. This NGO manages a reporting platform.

Young people

In order to access the field and to coordinate interviews with young people, three local federations of la Ligue de l'enseignement established contact: Paris[14], Nièvre[15] and Hérault[16]. Therefore, a sample of urban and rural young people was represented. In Paris, 5 current or ex-Service Civique volunteers and people going to local youth cultural centres were interviewed. In the Nièvre region, interviews were organised with young volunteers

[12] See Quenel+ on: http://quenelplus.com/
[13] French civic service system where volunteers receive compensation
[14] French capital
[15] The Nièvre is in the middle of France, in the region of Burgundy
[16] The Hérault is a costal area in the south of France affected by unemployment

and Service Civique of le PAC des Ouches, a cultural centre in Nevers. In the Hérault region, current and ex-Service Civique volunteers of la Ligue de l'enseignement 34 participated as well as a class of high school women – with a professional focus on proximity services and local life – were interviewed.

Instead of the question "Where are you from?", preference was given to "Where were you born?". Thus, it was impossible to get how they perceive their origin, but a large scope of social, national and cultural backgrounds were represented. Only 20% of the young people interviewed were men. This can be explained because the proximity services and local life class was completely feminine. Moreover, 59% of la Ligue de l'enseignement's volunteers in Service Civique are young women, against 41% of young men, in 2014. In terms of socio-economic backgrounds, it is difficult to reach young people outside of the formal system. Appointments with two young people not in education, employment or training, aged between 20-24, were cancelled. As a matter of fact, there is a gap between the low-skilled youth average in France and the sample of the research carried out.

	INSEE 2013		Sample of young people interviewed	
	15 – 19	15 – 19	20 – 24	20-24
None, Certificate of primary education	4,2	0	7,7	0
Certificate of secondary education	2,5	0	5,0	0
Professional qualification	2,8	0	13,0	10
Baccalaureate	2,8	0	18,4	10
Short university education	0,1	0	8,2	10
Long university education	0,0	0	6,6	20
Initial studies	87,6	100	41,1	50
Total	100	100	100	100

3.2. Professionals

Four professionals were interviewed. Regarding their different roles and backgrounds, interviews highlight insights of social construction of hate speech, channels and contexts of exclusion, the responsibility of major media and the online legal framework.

3.2.1. Main insights from the interviews (in relation to the profile and institution of the person interviewed)

The president of the civil society organisation gave insights from a civil society organisation perspective, in order to understand the social and economic context in France, with an approach through non formal and informal education and diversity. The president of the civil society organisation explained how young people could face unemployment, and eviction from inner city areas. Looking for an explanation, they encounter scapegoats through television: migrants.

> "First of all, there's this context of social exclusion, where social ties no longer exist or are no longer natural. People look for scapegoats. On the other hand, but the two are linked,

hate speech is a beginning, or rather a discourse of dissatisfaction. The second way of talking, but which is also dissatisfaction in a way, is part of a logic concerned with eradication. I'll explain. It's a logic that looks for a scapegoat, where you try to rid the public arena of everything that upsets it, or upsets your vision of it. That ends up essentialising a number of disturbing situations. It's the case for Islam, which is essentialised by the far-right in France at the moment, just as they essentialise the vision that we have of republican tradition. That leads to political movements that have never been secular taking over the concept of secularity and using it as a means to rid the public arena of anything that hampers their vision. [...] The more social exclusion creates hate strategies, like the terrorist attacks in early January, the more you see these eradication logics appear. The "I told you sos", that's them. [...]But the problem is, that brings us to 30%. Thirty percent from working class backgrounds, young, uneducated. That's the three parameters that define the National Front electorate and who don't like Arabs, who don't like Muslims, people who are sufficiently unintelligent to put "Arabs, Muslims, terrorists" in the same sentence. To them Islam is North Africa and possibly Sub-Saharan Africa. Islam of the colonies in a way. That's their culture, their view of reality." [FR-P1]

"When for a long time we said [Front National voters were] 'the poor people who had nothing, all that, who gave up', now you hear the experts, the specialists, like Nonna Mayer of Mediapart say on the evening of the first round of the election that in fact the Front National electorate is made up of the middle classes, people who have a little something to protect, to preserve. They've got something and they see everything's all over the place, competition everywhere, the world is open, that what they have is not necessarily safe. So those are the ones who are tempted by social separatism." [FR-P2]

A journalist involved in the fight against racism and xenophobia, explained how hate speech could spread through online "trolls". She had insights on online public space and speech through debate and community control of hate speech. She also explained how journalists and media professionals could be responsible of hate speech, because they need to create some buzz.

"I mean, you can't control everything and at the same time want freedom. So it's part of the game and yes, we do need regulatory bodies but it seems to me that the responsibility of structured media, and what I think is a priority, is to provoke constructive debate and to refrain from the temptation to create buzz, to attract attention to themselves, to generate clicks based on hatred. [...][Soral] made the video and put a photo of me like the CRIF's (Representative Council of French Jewish Institutions) lackey journalists. […] I preferred to treat that with disdain. Because he's a troll. So, as soon as you give him something, well it's like all trolls, as they say "don't feed the trolls". Because they'll always pick up on something. But, well, if it happens again I won't react the same way, that's for sure. [...] Autoregulation is the answer. There should be moderators on threads. There should be an "alert" button. And people should be regulating too. There should be someone who umpires a conversation to stop the hate speech and keep the most harmful trolls under control." [FR-P2]

A senior lecturer of information and communication science in University Paris VIII gave us insights of youth approaches and practices of media and especially new media. She

explained how young people could construct their point of view through media, which can conduct to hate speech.

> "The problem with hate speech is that the media are founded on logics that could be described as neoliberal. The discourse of entertainment programmes is a discourse of extreme competition, of status; it puts a value on exclusion. That sort of speech destroys all form of solidarity or portrays it as a weakness and so to me, it sows the seeds of the exclusion speech." [FR-P3]

The legal department manager of a French NGO against racism and anti-Semitism was able to give specific information on online hate speech. The NGO manages a reporting platform and gathers statistics on reported contents. She explained the different types of reporting platforms, the legal context of different social media and their approach of hate speech and freedom of speech.

> "So, to give you our figures for 2014: 1728 incidences of hate content were reported. You know I mentioned prosecution, content liable to prosecution and the problem with hosting in the US. That together, we were able to act on 23% of those cases. So, that means in 77% of cases, we can't do anything. So, what do we find? Mainly social media. Facebook accounts for 31% of alerts, 18% come from Twitter, 17% social media in general, 12% blogs, 8% forums and 12% videos, mainly YouTube and Daily Motion. And 1% games, video games. [...]So we've set up partnerships with Facebook and Twitter, like most antiracist authorities, such as EJF, SOS, the MRAP, so we have regular meetings, a partnership, methods of flagging etc. But Facebook reacts much more quickly than Twitter. At Twitter they have trouble taking action, trouble with their concept, in their view of internet; they are a lot more... At Facebook, they understand that it's in their interest to delete content to have a real... That said, you have to remember that Facebook and Twitter don't have, are not proactive, but that's also true of YouTube. I mean, they respond when we report content to them, but they don't keep a lookout themselves. So, even if we tell Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, content will still spread and filter through." [FR-P4]

3.3. Young people

Young people had the choice between being interviewed alone, or within a group of two or three people. 8 young people were alone during the interview, 6 young people were in a duo and 12 were in a trio. Thanks to interactivity, small groups elaborated and balanced reflections on their uses of social media and on hate speech.

3.3.1. Uses of and approach to social media by young people

All of the young people interviewed explained they use social media in order to stay in touch with friends, family or other volunteers. Most of them use them to inquire about associative news, sport news or political news. One of the interviewees explained that she does not use Facebook anymore. She did not want to face controversies and personal attacks that she noticed on her fellows' walls. Another person thought of deleting her account because she thought Facebook was a loss of time but she did not manage to do it:

"There was a time when I thought of stopping [Facebook], [...] it's a bit like an addiction, but it's not easy to delete your page and in the end I realised that it's quite handy, you can reach a lot of people who react quickly." [FR-YP3]

"Anyway, social media is voyeurism." [FR-YP19]

In terms of frequency of use, there are two different types of users. The ones who use social media platforms through their computers are connected longer, for 2 or 3 hours, in the evening or during the weekend than the ones who use them through their smart phones. They check Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or Snapchat for 5 to 10 minutes every hour or every two hours.

They all know all of their friends and followers. They are ex or current classmates, colleagues and friends. They do not feel any fear to share ideas, events and news with them because all of the interviewees were told not to share private contents. A large part of the sample expressed concern about sources and source verifications.

"We clearly need more information. Yet, we are part of a generation that has all the up-to-date technological tools to hand, but that doesn't use them properly." [FR-YP9]

"It was quite an interesting page that is very up-to-date. It presents what's going on in the world but the titles they choose for the photos and videos are biased." [FR-YP13]

"There are often videos about the end of the world, the apocalypse and that terrorism is going to invade us. We don't really know where that comes from. So I'm really wary." [FR-YP26]

3.3.2. Channels, contexts and main actors of online hate speech according to the experiences of young people

According to the experience of the young people interviewed, one of the main channels of online hate speech is mainstream media. They accuse media and journalists to create some "buzz" while showing violent suburbs where a lot of migrants live without any balance and sometimes with orchestrated contents.

"But I think the media play a role in inciting this hatred because you always see the same thing in documentaries. For example, last Sunday, Zone Interdite or Capital [French TV shows] I can't remember which, was about the suburbs, again." [FR-YP5]

They also think that media disseminate elites' speech and especially discriminatory speeches. Another insight is online hate speech in the comment sections and public discussions. According to them, hate speech is not directly expressed in articles, posts or official positions, but rather in the comments posted by Internet users.

In terms of contexts, most of them expressed that specific contexts crystallise online hate speeches such as hostage takings and terrorist murders, as shown in the examples of the attacks on the newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* and the Kosher supermarket in January 2015, as well as the case of Mohamed Merah in March 2012, who killed 7 people in Toulouse and

Montauban (in the south of France), including 3 children in front of a Jewish school. Political events can also be the beginning of online hate speech: elections, and especially presidential elections in 2002 and 2012 or the reforms by ministers Taubira, the current French Minister of Justice, or Vallaud-Belkacem, the current Minister of Education. Both are ministers with foreign origins, which make them the targets of hate speech. Some of the young people pointed out cultural events to be contexts of online hate speech such as the football world cup or Miss France elections.

> "[During the] last presidential elections, many of us realised that we knew a lot of people who talk hatefully and... have an extremely stereotyped outlook. You heard things like "yes, but if the left gets in, it'll all be about people on benefits who take advantage of the system and there'll be more and more immigrants and they'll take our jobs". The same thing happened during the events [terrorist attacks in Paris, ed.] in January. It was more focussed on islamophobia, it was hate speech, like "yes, but I don't understand, why aren't Muslims in the street to say that they're against all this?" [...] But there were lots of people, authors, journalists who said "I'm French and I feel sorry for Muslims because they're being picked on". I know why they did that, but at the same time, I think it was too much, because it was actually another way of pointing the finger at Muslims." [FR-YP1]

> "On 11 January when she put "this is all because of the bougnouls " [derogatory word for Arab] etc., I commented that she shouldn't get everything mixed up, that Muslim doesn't mean terrorist and that not all Muslims are Arabs, she said "shut up bougnoul, you should be burning by now"." [FR-YP6]

> "Last summer, I posted a photo about a current event, the World Cup or something like that. Algeria played against I don't know who and there was trouble in Lyon. So I posted a photo of someone who said "this is France, not Algeria". After that, it was Baghdad [i.e. war, ed.] in the comments. One of my friends got angry with another of my friends. Elias is Chechen and Benoît is French and there were insults and racist comments, [...] "you're a dirty Chechen", "Arabs have no place in France", things like that." [FR-YP9]

Few participants showed that external events could heighten online hate speech: Ferguson and Baltimore demonstrations and Palestinian and Israeli conflicts. They also met discriminatory speech during the presidential elections in 2012, or during the discussion of the law on same sex wedding in 2014.

Regarding main actors of online hate speech, the interviewees told us that everyone could be a victim and everyone could be a perpetrator. Some of them identify racist classmates or friends without any specific demographic sign. In a theoretical thinking, some of them pointed the finger at political elites and far right organisations. Few interviewees tried to figure out demographic signs of hate speech perpetrators: rural young people, educated students in individualizing courses, such as business school students. A group of three people pointed out that hate speech perpetrators could hurt people:

> "They made a film, do you remember?— with the youngsters from Le Banlay and somebody reworked the poster and put chimpanzees instead of Arab and black faces and published it on the internet and the kids were really hurt." [FR-YP6]

In terms of victims, they first do not identify specific groups targeted by online hate speech. According to them, everyone can be the target of hate speech, because of his or her appearance, the colour of his or her skin, political ideas, gender, sexual orientation, clothing style, religion, etc. But when young people try to recollect specific expressions, they noticed islamophobia, mixed with discourses against North-African immigration, anti-Roma, anti-Semitism or negrophobia.

> "The same old things, "it's always the Arabs", "it's always the Muslims, we shouldn't let them in", that sort of hackneyed, but absolutely horrible phrase... we've always heard them, but this time you heard it ten times more." [FR-YP2]

One of the young women also noticed anti-Christian speech. She made confusion between nationalities and religions. She imagined a war between French-Christians and Muslims:

> "I saw an article saying that pork was going to be forbidden in school canteens and the next minute it was all over Facebook. It was about the Muslim religion because it was about pork and from then on, some people gave their opinions respectfully, saying "no, I don't think it's a good idea" whatever and then others went into great debates. French people saying it's crazy, I mean Christians saying 'they should do as we do", really extreme language, [...] it was really anti-Muslim and at the same time there were Muslims who published things like "we're going to invade you, we're burning your flag". Everyone was at war, you know. And then Jews are mixed up in the middle of all that. It's completely crazy. [...] Personally, I'm Christian and when I heard completely racist comments against my religion, I thought "What? Are they serious?" I mean religion aside, someone who talks like that, who insults Christians [...]. And I said to myself "are they serious", they can say what they think, they can say they think that this or that is bad, but they can't say, and I quote: "it's shit"." [FR-YP17]

3.3.3. Responses and reactions

There are four different types of responses and reactions to online hate speech. Some of the young people don't do anything, some of them haven't met any hate contents yet and others refuse to participate to discussion, because they don't want to advertise or to highlight the posts and because they think that debating does not lead to change hate speech perpetrators' point of view.

> "If someone says something disturbing about your religion for example, you shouldn't answer back." [FR-YP16]

Another reaction expressed during the interviews was to only comment or like another comments in order to influence the chat, but who refuse to entirely take part in the talk not to waste time and energy for no result. They also refuse to inflame the discussion.

> "That's to create a buzz. We don't really take time to take a step back. Of course, it's only human to answer back when you see words like that. Of course, it's tempting to reply virulently and say "that's rubbish, you idiots" but it would be interesting to explain things to each other, calmly." [FR-YP26]

Another response to online hate speech is to take part in the talk. Some of the young people explained that if you are open-minded, if you listen carefully to other arguments and if you answer gently, who can find a way to agree and to lead hate speech perpetrators away from hate discourses. But a number of interviewees also think that online discussions are easily inflammable and prefer discussing *in real life*, to influence others positions.

> "We worked on how we can avoid getting angry when broaching a sensitive subject. [...] In fact, it's good to be open to what the other person says [...], to listen and reformulate what the other person says, which shows the other person and ourselves that we were listening. After that, [...] you can put forward another argument [...]. There really has to be a discussion." [FR-YP3]

The last step they identify is to alert or to delete the content by themselves. Only one respondent obtained the removal of a Facebook page after she reported it. For the other interviewees, even if half of them have already used the reporting mechanism, it is useless and inefficient. They never had any contact with any moderator. Some of the Facebook and Twitter users deleted friends and people they followed when they saw hate contents.

> "There's all that, I don't know what you call it, comment regulation where you can denounce someone, flag up discrimination or [...] hate speech and all that. But it's no good re-publishing them or showing them because when you publish a message you give it exposure, so I think it's best to delete them." [FR-YP25]

> "When someone goes too far and insults people or uses violent language, you report it, and other people can see what happens and report it themselves because they realise that the person went too far." [FR-YP15]

3.3.4. The concept of hate speech in the eyes of young people

All the young people felt that the concept of hate speech was related to sensitive perception, to non-rational positions. They opposed hate speech to love and affiliated it to reject. Furthermore, they do not differentiate types of hate speech. According to young people, racism, islamophobia, anti-Semitism, homophobia, sexism, and every kind of discriminatory speech can be taken into account in the concept of hate speech. Moreover, some of them think that distinguishing hate speech based on religion, nationality, ethnicity or colour of the skin from other segregations represents an obstacle to the fight against hate speech.

> "It's become commonplace. I mean, little things, little words, like monkey, banana, things like that. I mean the words themselves are banal. They shouldn't be allowed." [FR-YP9]

> "Someone who's different, an outsider, who doesn't behave like everyone else, whether it's the way they dress, or behave is always excluded or rejected." [FR-YP19]

> "Take for example websites that publish articles from other media, like the magazine Minute. Minute is far-right. Or things about Christiane Taubira [black minister of justice, ed.], racism that is almost bestial, things with monkeys, bananas, gorillas. [...] We've all seen the way she's been mocked and it's not really about her politics. You can disagree

with her judicial policies, you can debate them, but often, the things you hear about her are about the colour of her skin, that's all. She attracts attention because she's a woman, and black too and she's got power." [FR-YP26]

"It's not statements like 'we're going to break some bougnoule, blacks, send them back where they came from'; it's more subtle, like 'we'll have a quieter life, be safe, in our own country'." [FR-YP26]

4. Concluding remarks and recommendations

4.1. Recommendations for prohibiting, redressing and inhibiting online hate speech

Remarks and recommendations from young people, professionals and institutional or associative reports are distinguished. But many of them echo others. Young people, professionals and reports are balanced between regulation, social inclusion and freedom of speech.

Young people

Most of the young people interviewed thought that raising awareness of young people was a good way to counter online hate speech. These responses might be irrelevant because the interview guidelines make a tacit recommendation to do so.

"I think, for example, that as far as mediation is concerned we should do workshops on hate speech on social media, that sort of thing, and raise awareness among younger people that there are things you can do to make a difference.[...] I get the impression that it's always about raising awareness among the younger generations. It all seems to be their fault." [FR-YP1]

"So you make a commitment, you sign a little, I don't know, charter — not a 10-page thing that you never read, just a little one that says 'I promise not to say blablabla' and then [...]you get a warning like 'you pronounced the words...'...'next time your account will be deleted'." [FR-YP2]

"That's what's interesting in human relations, it's our differences, otherwise we're all clones, and what's the point of that?" [FR-YP4]

"We need to do something on it in class, something a bit different. We should watch videos, we love watching videos at school." [FR-YP18]

Another recommendation was to create an inclusive debate around differences and recognition of others and inclusion. They propose this option against limitation of online freedom of speech:

"We shouldn't be excluding the far-right, we should be trying to bring them back into the fold, into society, put them in the middle, so that they can see how things can work

without having to be racist. Because if we exclude them, they're going to be more extreme. That's why I don't think it's a good idea to shut them out." [FR-YP3]

"It would be a shame to restrict internet because of people like that because it should be all about freedom and creation." FR-YP-8 (answering): "If you restrict freedom on the internet, you end up depriving everyone and anyway, people who think like that will still think like that, even if you prevent them from speaking their minds." [FR-YP9]

"In the end I think, there's certainly a lot of violence and lots of insulting on the internet and in speech... that sort of speech is not rare, but I realise that often, the response is quite positive because when someone is attacked, even by several people, [...] there are always several people to take his or her defence." [FR-YP15]

"OK, we're going to be watched sort of, but it's for a good reason [referring to government secret services]. But then I think, if we haven't done anything wrong... It's a bit worrying really, I mean, we do have a private life." [FR-YP19]

Finally, three young people proposed filters, regulations, through law, code, or moderators to limit online hate speech:

"There's too much freedom. Well... it sounds silly to say too much freedom but... I don't know exactly how the system works, but you regularly hear on the news that some things can be posted without the webmaster knowing. [...] We need more filters, but then it's a sensitive issue to know what you want to or don't want to say and to know how to say it but... we definitely need a filter." [FR-YP25]

Professionals

There are 7 different types of recommendations within the interviews of professionals. Most of them are close to those expressed by the young people:

1. Regarding online hate speech, most professionals considered that the French legislative arsenal, especially 1881 and 2004 laws, is sufficient to countering hate speech online. Hence, the legal department manager of the NGO proposed not to modify anything but she also admitted that legal actions are not efficient enough online:

"So, by what we call LCEN notifications, in reference to the law that governs trust in the digital economy, we manage to obtain deletions or withdrawals. Sometimes articles are withdrawn and sometimes whole websites are deleted. Basically, that's like taking the scum off the sea with a teaspoon, not only in terms of quantity but also because a site can be closed today and reopened tomorrow. So it's very difficult to counteract, it just keeps coming back. [...]Proliferation is truly huge. On social media, as soon as an account is flagged, a Twitter or Facebook account, you can be sure that the person will open another straightaway. They lose their followers or friends, which does cause them trouble. But it's never-ending. Never-ending. There's a little, I mean we are battling with two or three users on Twitter. One who publishes really horrible hate content and his account was called Shoananas [a denial of the Holocaust]. So that was Shoananas, we deleted it, then Shoananas1, we deleted it, Shoananas2, we deleted it and we've just noticed he's now on

Shoananas14. So every time, we flag it to Twitter, it gets closed, and he opens it again." [FR-P4]

2. Some proposed to **inhibit hate speech through code**.

"On the question of the web as a public arena, that question comes up often, to consider the commercial aspect of internet, its economic logic, it's built on an economic model that is purely commercial with extreme competition and a focus on quantity rather than quality and that means a certain number of platforms —algorithms, let's say—focus on speech, on far-right websites." [FR-P3]

3. Others preferred to **let online communities handle it themselves**.

"Autoregulation is the answer. There should be moderators on threads. There should be an 'alert' button. And people should be regulating too. There should be someone who umpires a conversation to stop the hate speech and keep the most harmful trolls under control." [FR-P2]

4. Professionals recommended to **better train youth professionals** in order to give them skills to deal with online hate speech issues.

"Undoing hate speech means understanding immigration. So the first suggestion is teaching. Before you can counter hate speech, you have to understand what it is based on and teach people about the fantasies that hate speech feeds on." [FR-P1]

5. Some proposed to make platforms and media aware of their responsibilities.

"I mean, you can't control everything and at the same time want freedom. So it's part of the game and yes, we do need regulatory bodies but it seems to me that the responsibility of structured media, and what I think is a priority, is to provoke constructive debate and to refrain from the temptation to create buzz, to attract attention to themselves, to generate clicks based on hatred." [FR-P2]

"About the media, the next thing in the conversation was 'you must seek information, read the media and especially different sources.' She retorted 'but the media manipulate us'. And that's where you get another problem: distrust of the media and... it's true that if we want to fight hate speech in the media, the media have to be credible." [FR-P3]

6. The journalist and the president of the civil society organisation thought that fighting against social, economic and gender inequalities could contribute to fight against hate speech.

7. The president of the civil society organisation also thought that a debate of idea was far better than punishing and forbidding and deleting hate speech content.

"You need to talk to those people. It's those people who we should be turning to to dismantle all this hate speech. And they make up 30% of the population. [...] To us, popular education is liberating, it helps unpack things, contrived speech, discourse based on appearances. [...]The fight against hate speech must not become a censorship of free

speech. That would mean they had won. In the end, only their discourse has been taken into account to silence anything that might disturb them. [...] Of course, when there is incitement to racial hatred, there is violation of the law and when there is terrorist discourse, it has to be countered. But the real fight is the battle of minds, fighting through education, fighting through emancipation. Bans are only a stopgap solution. Bans should be used when necessary but we shouldn't consider that banning is the only response possible. [...] First, I think we should accept that everything can be debated. There are no forbidden questions in a public debate." [FR-P-1]

Secondary data review

Two reports summarise institutional and associative recommendations. In 2010, Isabelle Falque-Pierrotin, State Councilor, Online Rights Forum president, produced a report on the fight against online racism (Falque-Perrotin, 2010) with a complete overview of recommendations found in other reports. She offered three propositions:

- Improving statistics on online hate speech: mainly through PHAROS,
- Avoiding racist speech banalisation: helping NGOs to express themselves in online media, training lawyers on online hate speech specific features, explaining legal prosecution, training comment mediators and promoting communication between NGOs and public institutions, especially with regard to a young and vulnerable public,
- International coordination.

In February 2015, the CNCDH and UEJF both worked on online hate speech. The CNCDH also recommended improving statistics on online hate speech and helping NGOs. It proclaimed freedom of speech against new laws and sentences. It asked to improve the 1881 law against improper prosecutions. It recommended creating a national online hate speech research committee. The UEJF[17], through Olivier Ertzscheid, information and communication researcher, asked for an international law to force social media to publish algorithms and codes, which determine the release and organisation of contents. Thus, the online community could influence them.

Recommendations	By whom	For whom
Workshops on hate speech and social media to raise awareness among the younger generation	Young people	NGOs
A charter to commit against online hate speech	Young people	Social media users
Favouring travels to get to know the other person	Young people	Young people
Bringing back the far-right into society	Young people	Journalists, other institutions
Media education to use information and technological tools properly	Young people	Educational institutions
Ignoring hate speech not to highlight it	Young people	Social media users
Delete comments not to give hate speech exposure	Young people	Social media users
Filter comments on social media	Young people	Social media providers
Stop picking on National Front supporters to get an overall approach of security rhetoric	Young people	NGOs, journalists, EU and other institutions
Not to censor free speech	NGO	All institutions working

[17] Union des Etudiants Juifs de France – Jewish Students Union of France

		with issues related to hate speech
Make media aware of their responsibilities on regulation and refrain temptation to create buzz	Journalist	Journalists
Auto regulation	Journalist	Social media providers and social media users
Fight on political grounds rather than on religious grounds	Lecturer	EU institutions, other institutions
Provide credibility for media	Lecturer	Journalists
Coding access to comments to inhibit hate speech	Lecturer	Social media providers
Answering to reports of online hate speech to encourage citizenly action	NGO	Police, other institutions
Create partnerships between authorities, NGOs and social media providers	NGO	Police, NGOs, social media providers
Raise awareness among youth professionals	NGO	NGOs, other institutions
Fight against inequalities to fight against hate speech	NGO	EU institutions, other institutions
Improving statistics on hate speech	Public institution	Police, NGOs, EU institutions, other institutions
Avoiding racist speech banalisation	Young people, public institutions	All institutions working with issues related to hate speech
International coordination against online hate speech	NGO, public institution	EU institutions, other institutions
Create an national online hate speech committee to counter hate speech	NGO	All institutions working with issues related to hate speech
Publish algorithms and codes to allow community to influence them	Lecturer	Social media providers

4.2. Concluding remarks

The economic, social and political climate in France is inflammable and favourable for hate speech. Inequalities increase. Media, political elites and far-right parties, organisations and movements finger point at religious and ethnic minorities. Since the last presidential elections in 2012 and the January 2015 events in Paris, the tension tends to increase on social separatism. Institutions and NGOs deal with an increase of online hate speech, but they face legal and material obstacles.

Far-right parties, organisations and movements seem to gain political, media and semantic grounds. The Front National gains votes and Riposte laïque gets media audience. The Front National uses the boundaries between political expression and hate speech to spread social exclusion discourses. They perfectly understand and use different social media platforms to reach and recruit young people.

Muslims and Arabs are currently the most segregated population in France. However, professionals and young people propose to take into account all the categories of exclusion within the fight against hate speech. Most of them favour a global approach of hate speech in order to reinstall the desire to be a society.

Experiences from the ground show how difficult it is to counter hate speech: legal regulation, social debate, media training of young people and youth stakeholders are possible lines of approach to prevent, redress and inhibit hate speech in the new media.

ANNEXES:

- Mapping data collection table

Name of POM	**Social Media Platform**	**Date when joined**	**Number of followers as of March 2015**	**Number of posts in the last year**	**Average nº of posts per day**	**Most frequently used words and level of engagement** **Top words**	**Does it link to the official POM webpage?** **Does it link to other social media of the POM? If yes, which?**	**Any further information**
Front National	Facebook	Aug 2009	219,931 (03.23.2015)	1,533	6.8	Front, Nationale, France, Pen, Marine, communiqué, presse, elections, Nicolas Philippot, vice-président	-Official webpage	
Front National	Twitter	Sep 2009	72,294 (03.24.2015)	1,544	45	@f_philippot, France, nationalité, Front, @nicolasbayfn, contre, politique, presse, européennes, vote	-Official webpage	
Front National	Google +	Jun 2012	1,291 (03.24.2015)			Presse, Valls, Ruquier, Dailymotion, gouvernement , anti-FN, communiqué, point, immobilisme, socialisme	-Official webpage -Youtube	
Front National	Youtube	May 2011	12,599 (03.24.2015)	177			-Official webpage -Twitter -Flickr -Facebook -Google +	
Front National	Dailymotion	Aug 2011	766 (03.24.2015)	9				The official webpage links to Marine Le Pen's daylymotion

Front National	Instagram	Mar 2015	750 (03.24.2015)	9	0.3	Candidats, Marseille, élections, matin, soir, Ravier, départementales, Sud, côtés, Var	-marinelepen.fr	The official webpage links to Marine Le Pen's instagram
Front National	Google play	May 2014	321 (votes) (03.24.2015)					The official webpage links to Marine Le Pen's google play
Front National	Flickr	Apr 2012	4 (03.24.2015)	0	0		-Official webpage	Nothing since 2012
Riposte laïque	Facebook	Jun 2012	6,942 (03.23.2015)	957	7.5	Assises, retweeted, guerre, liberté, musulman, Hollande, crimes, Frère, Taubira, chrétiens	-Official webpage	
Riposte laïque	Twitter		2,223 (03.24.2015)	2,971	6.8	France, musulmans, islamistes, contre, Hollande, FN, Zemmour, guerre, Charlie, djihadistes	-Official webpage	
Riposte laïque	Google +	Jul 2013	168 (03.24.2015)	43			-Youtube	
Riposte laïque	Youtube	Dec 2007	4,567 (03.24.2015)	19			-Official webpage -Google +	
Bloc Identitaire	Facebook	May 2010	39,425 (03.24.2015)	484	1.1	Fabrice, Robert, Bloc, France, Lyon, génération, observatoires, djihad, population, islamique	-Official webpage	
Bloc Identitaire	Twitter	Jul 2009	7,2016 (03.24.2015)	173	1.1	France, islamiste, musulmane, identitaires, djihadistes, femmes, Paris, Bloc, manif, Drapeaux	-Official webpage	
Bloc Identitaire	Flickr	Dec 2008	0 (03.24.2015)	157				
Bloc Identitaire	Youtube	Dec 2008	1,786 (03.24.2015)	17			-Official webpage -Twitter -Facebook -Google +	
Bloc Identitaire	Google +	Jul 2013	39 (03.24.2015)	17			-Youtube	

Terre et Peuple	Facebook	Apr 2014	1,879 (03.24.2015)	238	0.6	Peuple, insoumis, Terre, identitaire, camarades, table, Bréviaire, text, ronde, contacter	-Official webpage	
Terre et Peuple	Twitter		939 (03.24.2015)	329	2.9	Peuple, européenne, Terre, Identitaire, résistance, socialiste, Nationaliste, Europe, journée, traité	-Official webpage	
Jeune Nation	Facebook	Dec 2014	4,162 (03.24.2015)	968	8.6	Français, national, contre, islamique, jeunes, criminels, gouvernement, journalistes, dernières, manifestants	-Official webpage -Twitter -VKontakte	
Jeune Nation	Twitter		1,210 (03.24.2015)	199	6.9	Ecole, France, préférence, étrangère, tombe, délinquant, évoqué, Hess, cadre, lâché	-Official webpage	
Jeune Nation	Google play	Sep 2014	22 (votes) (03.24.2015)					
Jeune Nation	Youtube	Feb 2010	208 (03.24.2015)	19			-Google +	
Jeune Nation	VKontakte		333 (03.24.2015)				-Official webpage	

- Detailed interview sample (table)

Detailed sample - Young people						
Participant code	**M/F**	**Age**	**Residence**	**Origin**	**Level of studies**	**Occupation**
FR-YP1	F	23	Arceuil (94)	Melun (77)	Master 1	Service civique
FR-YP2	F	22	Paris 19 (75)	Dijon (21)	Master 2	Service civique
FR-YP3	F	23	Paris (75)	Germany	Licence 3	Student
FR-YP4	F	19	Nevers (58)	Nevers (58)	Licence 1	Student
FR-YP5	F	18	La Fermeté (58)	Sénégal	Licence 1	Student
FR-YP6	M	22	Nevers (58)	Meulan (78)	CAP	Service civique
FR-YP7	M	23	Nevers (58)		BTS 1	Student
FR-YP8	M	20	Nevers (58)		Licence 1	Service civique
FR-YP9	F	18	Nevers (58)		Terminale	Student
FR-YP10	F	18	Nevers (58)	Russia	Première	Student
FR-YP11	F	18	Nevers (58)	Bourges (18)	Terminale	Student
FR-YP12	F	17	Grande-Pâture (58)	Erythrée	Seconde	Student
FR-YP13	F	17	Nevers (58)	Paris (75)	Terminale	Student
FR-YP14	F	19	Nevers (58)	Congo	Terminale	Student
FR-YP15	F	25	Pontoise (95)	Senlis (60)	Master 2	Service civique
FR-YP16	M	18	Paris 20 (75)	Paris 12 (75)	Terminale	Student
FR-YP17	F	17	Cournonsec (34)	Montpellier (34)	Terminale	Student
FR-YP18	F	17	Saint Gely du Fesc (34)	Montpellier (34)	Terminale	Student
FR-YP19	F	18	Maugio (34)	Montpellier (34)	Terminale	Student
FR-YP20	F	17	Viols le Fort (34)	Montpellier (34)	Première	Student
FR-YP21	F	16	Le Crés (34)	Montpellier (34)	Première	Student
FR-YP22	F	16	Sain Félix de Lodez (34)	Montpellier (34)	Première	Student
FR-YP23	F	16	Montpellier (34)	Montpellier (34)	Première	Student
FR-YP24	F	20	Montpellier (34)	Bulgaria	Première	Student
FR-YP25	F	21	Montpellier (34)	Meulan (78)	Baccalauréat	Service civique
FR-YP26	M	24	Béziers (34)	Rwanda	Master 1	Student

Lexicon

Master 1: First year of master's degree
Master 2: Second year of master's degree
Licence 1: First year of bachelor's degree
Licence 3: Third year of bachelor's degree
CAP: Professional qualification
BTS 1: First year of technical diploma
Seconde: First year of baccalaureate
Première: Second year of baccalaureate
Terminale: Third year of baccalaureate

Detailed sample – Professionals			
Participant code	**M/F**	**Organisation**	**Position in the organisation**
FR-P1	M	Civil society organisation	President
FR-P2	F	Newspapers	Journalist
FR-P3	F	University Paris VIII	Teacher – Researcher
FR-P4	F	NGO against racism and anti-Semitism	Legal department manager

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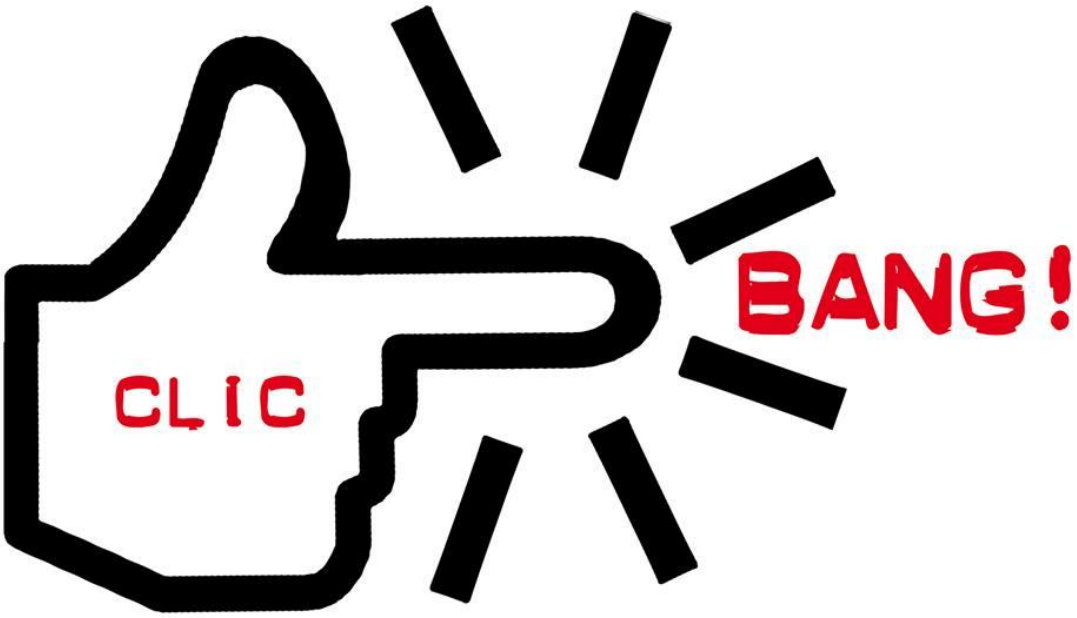
Online hate speech in Italy

Fieldwork report

P R I S M



WORDS ARE WEAPONS.

PREVENTING REDRESSING & INHIBITING HATE SPEECH IN NEW MEDIA

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1. Introduction to the national context

1.1. Economic, social, and political climate in relation to hate speech

As evidenced by the ECRI report on Italy (2012), the Italian political and cultural public debate in recent years has been increasingly characterized by xenophobic and racist elements, fueled on the one hand by the long economic and financial crisis, which is gradually increasing the social divide, leading to widespread dissatisfaction, intolerance and the search for a scapegoat, and on the other hand, by the critical management of the migratory flows of recent years, exploited by much electoral propaganda in Italy and Europe, geared towards nationalist, xenophobic and populist sentiments. In the words of Rivera (2014), socialized anger has been transformed into racism, fueled by "culturally and morally low-level political elites", to the point that racism in Italy is no longer limited to the extreme right wing, extending also to intellectuals or high-level public authorities[1]. The context in which racism is nurtured is that of a crisis that is economic as well as political, cultural and moral, a decline in which racism becomes “shared ideology, common sense, the form of politics" (Burgio, 2010).

For over twenty years in Italy we have seen a continuity of discriminatory and racist practices, thanks to the circular relation among political-institutional[2], media and

[1] As explained by Caldiron (2014), an expert of the extreme right wing in Italy, with the development of the economic crisis, xenophobic attitudes have spread beyond the propaganda of the extreme right wing and populist movements, affecting larger and politically heterogeneous areas and involving also high-level public representatives. According to Caldiron, interviewed in the present research (IT-P5), the Italian context differs in some ways from that of other European countries:

- The participation of the extreme right to the government coalitions of the last 20 years: political parties of Fascist origin (by way of the Movimento Sociale Italiano) and xenophobic parties like Lega Nord have been part of center-right wing government coalitions since 1994 and their members have had important roles (President of the Chamber of Deputies, Minister of Internal Affairs). This has given them legitimacy and visibility to the same extent as the other main political parties: since they were not considered as extremists, media (especially TV channels) have conveyed their ideas and rhetoric.
- The absence of a critical reflection on Italy's Fascist and colonial past after WWII meant that the political and rhetorical positions that were actually in line with that past were normalized and accepted instead of being firmly and commonly rejected.
- The mutual influence on rhetoric and ideas among extreme right-wing and other political forces, starting from center-right ones, that, in some cases, such as social themes and immigration, have proven not to be less radical than the extreme-wing, as the widespread nationalist slogan "Italians first" shows. This once again has extended the influence of the smaller extreme right-wing groups.

[2] The many repressive initiatives taken by the authorities in recent years at a local and national level (see Rivera, 2008; VV.AA., 2009; Giovannetti, 2012), bear witness to a State racism that sees the problem of social marginalization and immigration only in terms of social threats to be faced with police measures. This fuels the "politics of fear" and reinforces the idea of an opposition between Italians on the one hand, and immigrants or Roma on the other. In the common perception, Italians are discriminated in favor of the other two categories, who benefit from preferential access to social welfare.

social racism repeatedly denounced by Annamaria Rivera (2008)[3]. Politicians and public authorities often communicate racist and xenophobic messages, increasingly using social media as their main communication channel, and traditional mass media to spread and legitimate these messages as normal public discourse, often appealing to freedom of speech.[4] Politicians of various orientations often support this argument for free speech in these instances, evidencing a lack in large sectors of society and political parties of "sharing values and practices associated with the rejection, condemnation and firm and unambiguous opposition to racism, xenophobia and sexism" (Zola, 2014). There are few initiatives of denunciation, promoted by some private associations; the tendency of authorities to punish expressions of racism in soccer stadiums seems to be more common, at least in recent years (Lunaria, 2014).

Traditional media still play a central role in representing reality and orienting public opinion[5]. Political discourse and media discourse contaminate each other, bouncing prejudices and biases back and force; the difference with the past is that this happens at a much faster pace thanks also to Internet and social media. Social media, in particular, provide an opportunity for a more direct and immediate relation between political-institutional representatives, citizens and media operators (and increasingly between the first two categories, bypassing media operators). This risks reinforcing and accelerating the above-mentioned circular propagation of racism (Naletto, 2014a).

[3] See, e.g., Rivera, 2008; 2009.

[4] An exemplary case was that of the ex-Minister for Integration of the Letta government (2013-14), Cécile Kyenge, a native of Congo, who was subject to sexist and racist attacks (first on the Internet and then on traditional mass media), using the most traditional repertoire of racist ideology, such as comparisons with banana-eating monkeys, by numerous members of Lega Nord and Forza Nuova, including the Lega Nord senator Roberto Calderoli. Calderoli was granted immunity from prosecution by the "Giunta per le Immunità" of the Senate (the committee which evaluates whether to recognize the immunity to a deputy or to authorize its prosecution), thanks also to the votes of senators of the Democratic Party, of whom Kyenge was a member. Not everyone has gone unpunished however: Fabio Rainieri, regional councillor of Lega Nord in Emilia-Romagna, in January 2015 was sentenced to one year and three months detention and 150,000 euros in damages for having published on Facebook a photo of Kyenge with the face of a monkey. The crime was the same for which Calderoli was given immunity by the Senate, that is "defamation with the aggravating circumstance of racial discrimination" (see "Offese Roberto Calderoli a Cecile Kyenge, il Pd lo «assolve» in Giunta per le immunità. Ma scoppia il caso tra i dem", L"Huffington Post, 06 February 2015, available at: http://www.huffingtonpost.it/2015/02/06/-offese-calderoli-kyenge_n_6631348.html).

[5] The obsessive association foreigner/criminal continues to be the interpretative framework through which the question of immigration is approached, through the constant emphasis on and manipulation of cases of crimes committed by foreigners, some real and some imaginary, and the exploitation of deep-rooted fears in people, also through actual campaigns against specific ethnic groups (Rivera, 2008). As mentioned by Chiodo (2014), the language of media operators often does not follow the principles of the "Carta dei doveri del giornalista" (1993) nor the guidelines for the application of the "Carta di Roma" (2012), which are Journalist's Codes of Conduct.

1.1.1. The public debate on hate speech vs. freedom of speech and hate speech in the new media

In Italy the public debate on the line between freedom of speech and hate speech in the new media has developed mainly in recent years, mostly in the wake of offensive and sexist comments directed against men and women in public positions[6]. In response not only to hate speech in the Internet but more in general to questionable behavior in the Internet, there have been various politicians and authorities who have called for regulating Internet and for stricter laws against hate crimes[7]. There have also been a number of bills proposed[8], which however have never been passed due to widespread opposition, especially by MPs, journalists and opinion leaders, who worry that excessive regulation of the use of the Internet might end up infringing on freedom of speech. On the other hand, various law experts[9] maintain

[6] Among those that have had the greatest echoes are the vulgar and aggressive attacks to the President of the Chamber of Deputies, Laura Boldrini, posted on the Facebook page of Beppe Grillo, leader of the Movimento 5 stelle (an influential political movement), who had provocatively asked members, "What would happen if you find Boldrini in your car?" (see "Grillo scatena insulti on-line: «Che fareste in auto con Boldrini?». Poi lo staff M5s li cancella. Attacchi ad Augias", La Repubblica, 1 February 2014, available at: http://www.repubblica.it/politica/2014/02/01/news/grillo_attacca_boldrini_sui_social-77461212/).

[7] Italian legislation does not include a specific norm against discrimination and hate speech on the web; courts have assumed an extension of the existing norms to the Internet. The present norms on discrimination and hate speech, also through mass media, are the following (Bonomi, Pavich, 2014):

- **Law 13 October 1975, n. 654**, which ratified the UN Convention on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination of 21 December 1965, introduced the crime of instigation to discrimination or violence against specific national, ethnic or racial groups, and punished with a detention of 1 to 4 years "whoever spreads in any way ideas based on racial superiority or hate", or "who incites people in any way to discriminate, or incites to commit or commits acts of violence or provocation to violence, towards people because they belong to a national, ethnic or racial group".
- **Law 25 June 1993, n. 205 (the so-called Mancino Law)**, which in its earliest version lowered the sanctions established by Law 13 October 1975, n. 654, namely detention up to three years for whoever spreads in any way ideas based on racial superiority or hate, or whoever incites people in any way to commit acts of discrimination, detention from six months to four years for whoever incites to commit or commits acts of violence. Religious discrimination is also punished.
- Law 25 June 1993, n. 205 was subsequently modified by **Law 24 February 2006, n. 85 ("Modifiche al codice penale in materia di reati di opinione")**, currently in force, which reduced its scope, specifying and limiting the actions to which it applies (the term "spread" has been replaced by "engage in propaganda", which designates a more specific activity; in the same way "incitation" has been replaced with "instigation". The sanctions have also been reduced (detention up to one year and six months or, alternatively, a fine of 6,000 euros for those who engage in propaganda characterized by racist ideas, or who instigate people to commit or who commit acts of discrimination.

Recently the discussion has resumed on the possibility of extending the Mancino Law to include discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, a proposal supported by all the main Italian LGBT associations. Another proposal would extend the law to cover discrimination based on disabilities.

[8] For example that of ex Minister Riccardi in 2012, re-proposed by the Minister for Integration Kyenge during the Letta government (2013-2014): see "In Italia manca una legge contro il razzismo on-line", Avvenire, 19 January 2015, available at: http://www.cartadiroma.org/news/razzismo-on-line-in-italia/; another proposal was advanced by Alessandra Moretti, MP of the Democratic Party on 4 February 2014 (see law proposal on the website of the Chamber of Deputies at http://www.camera.it/leg17/126?tab=2&leg=17&idDocumento=2049&sede=&tipo=).

[9] See e.g., "Giù le mani dal Web. Insulti in Rete: cinque pietre dello scandalo", Wired.it, 7 March 2014, available at: http://www.wired.it/Internet/web/2014/03/07/giu-le-mani-dal-web/; "Web and

that present laws are sufficient to act against hate crimes committed through the Internet.

While there are many who claim that the Web has produced a world in which "everything is much more anonymous and therefore falsifiable", granting impunity (Andrisani, 2014), there are others, like IT expert Andrea Ghirardini, who argue that most anonymous on-line profiles could easily be uncovered by authorities in the case of a crime and that "being really anonymous on the Web requires a knowledge beyond that of the average person". The problem of tracking people on-line is, in his view, "almost never technical, but rather bureaucratic", i.e. due to the slowness with which responses can be obtained from foreign social networking platforms, or to the lack of adequate means and resources for investigating[10]. It is also underlined that in many cases the authors of hate speech posts are not anonymous at all, since they do not bother in the least to hide their identities because they do not perceive the contents they publish as illicit or illegitimate, nor are they ashamed of them[11]. These contents, often based on urban legends and unfounded rumors, show, according to some[12], that the problem of racism and hate speech should be addressed from the top, tackling the ecosystem of mainstream information, where news are often not objective, documented and carefully evaluated, and were ideas and opinions originate before being spread by social networks[13].

In any case, the border between on-line and off-line is becoming increasingly porous and the impact of the one on the other is often underestimated[14]. One must in any

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diffamazione, le leggi ci sono. Ma l"Italia punta verso Indonesia and Filippine", Il Fatto Quotidiano, 9 March 2014, available at: http://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2014/03/09/web-e-diffamazione-le-leggi-ci-sono-ma-litalia-punta-verso-indonesia-e-filippine/898250/; "Gianni Morandi e la sua «lezione» sull"Italia and i social network", Il Fatto Quotidiano, 23 April 2015, available at: http://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2015/04/23/gianni-morandi-e-la-sua-lezione-sullitalia-e-i-social-network/1615969/.

[10] See "Giù le mani dal Web. Insulti in Rete: cinque pietre dello scandalo", Wired.it, 7 March 2014, available at: http://www.wired.it/Internet/web/2014/03/07/giu-le-mani-dal-web/.

[11] This, for example, is what happened in the days following the tragic shipwreck of 19 April 2015, in the Channel of Sicily, in which almost 1000 migrants perished. There was an explosion of racist comments on Facebook by non-anonymous subjects (whose profiles provided personal photos and information such as place of residence, work, etc.), which were echoed on the Internet and on the Facebook pages of newspapers. The comments cited news of crimes, in many cases a mixture of urban legends, traditional beliefs and racial prejudice, confirming how distortive information, not only in social media, but also in the more traditional ones, fuels prejudice and hate in increasing sectors of the population.

[12] E.g., the expert in law and new technologies Guido Scorza (see "Gianni Morandi e la sua «lezione» sull'Italia e i social network", Il Fatto Quotidiano, 23 April 2015, available at: http://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2015/04/23/gianni-morandi-e-la-sua-lezione-sullitalia-e-i-social-network/1615969/).

[13] It is true, however, that so-called "counter-information" websites and social profiles often make up and spread false news, characterized by hate and racial prejudice against Roma and other minorities, which are amplified by the Internet and achieve a visibility that would be impossible for them through traditional mass media. See below for further discussion of this aspect.

[14] The risk of an ad hoc legislation, according to some, is that of confusing the medium with the content, establishing a distinction between on-line and off-line (what the sociologist of social media Nathan Jurgenson calls "the prejudice of digital dualism"), which is obsolete for the digitally native generations, in which there is a continuum between real life and digital life. See the writings by

case consider the characteristics of the Internet and especially of social media, which make them an extraordinary amplifier of any content, including hate speech: they make it easier to hide one's identity (although this anonymity is illusory in most cases), they provide immediacy, pervasiveness and wide dissemination of contents, the possibility of amplifying and replicating messages among users and media, their social validation (through Facebook "likes" or sharing), their persistence on the Web (they also put limits to the right to oblivion). Furthermore, one should not underestimate the easiness with which websites that communicate illegal contents can be hosted on servers based in countries with more tolerant legislation, protecting them from penalties by Italian authorities.

1.2. Statistics on hate speech[15]

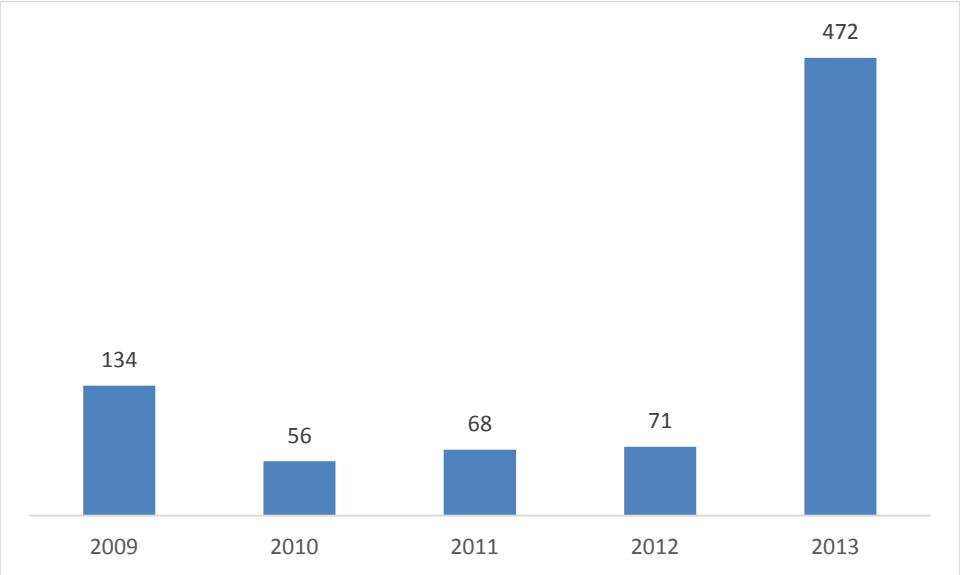
According to data collected by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Ocse (ODIHR)[16], in 2013 Italian police has recorded 472 cases of hate crimes, a marked increase over previous years, thanks to improvements in the recording system of these crimes. However, there aren't any available data on trials and sentences, nor are available any disaggregated data on hate speech and/or discrimination cases.

Jurgenson on his blog, Cyborgology (http://thesocietypages.org), especially "Digital Dualism and the Fallacy of Web Objectivity", 13 September 2011, available at: http://thesocietypages.org/cyborgology/2011/09/13/digital-dualism-and-the-fallacy-of-web-objectivity/.

[15] Producing accurate statistics on hate speech is very difficult given the wide tendency to under-reporting and under-recording, especially in Italy. Therefore, official data gives only a very partial idea of the phenomenon. Furthermore, available data on discrimination and hate crimes, gathered both by authorities and by private organizations, are often fragmentary and difficult to compare. UNAR (the Italian Equality body) has encountered the same difficulties in trying to aggregate data from different sources (its own data, that of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, other institutional and private sources), in order to support the first National Plan against racism, xenophobia and intolerance (a plan proposed a few years ago as in other countries, which is however still being developed). With the goal of dedicating a section of the Plan to the statistical analysis of the phenomenon and its development, the working group noted the importance of improving the collection of statistical data and identifying specific "discrimination indicators", necessary to improve the understanding and ability to contrast the phenomenon (UNAR, 2013).

[16] See database on-line on ODIHR website, available at: http://hatecrime.osce.org/italy.

Figure 1 – Hate crimes recorded by police (2009 – 2013)



Of the hate crimes recorded in 2013, 226 (48%) had to do with religious discrimination[17]; 194 (41%) with racism and xenophobia[18]; 52 (11%) with discrimination against LGBT people[19].

Based on the reports on discrimination received by the UNAR (National Office against Racial Discrimination), in 2013 for the first time reported on-line discrimination cases were more than the off-line ones: more than a quarter of cases detected or reported (26.2%) refers to the mass media (16.8% in 2012). In absolute terms, 354 cases of discrimination in the media were reported, most of them occurring on social networks[20]. In 2014, UNAR recorded 347 instances of racist manifestations on social media, of which 185 (more than 50%) on Facebook, and the rest on Twitter and YouTube . There were other 326 hatred expressions in the links that shared the above contents, bringing the total number of instances to almost 700[21].

[17] This category includes anti-Semitic, anti-Muslim, anti-Christian and all other anti-religious hate crimes.

[18] This category includes crimes registered as committed with a bias against "Race/color", "Ethnicity/national origin/minority", "Citizenship", "Language" and "Roma and Sinti".

[19] More than half of the crimes with racist or xenophobic motivations (52%) consists of threats and 31% of physical attacks. Acts of vandalism or property damage are much rarer. In the case of crimes based on religious motivations, instead, 40% consists of damage to property, physical aggressions account for 6% and acts of vandalism for only 2%. Threats account for 17%, whereas for the remaining 35% of the crimes there is no information on the type.

[20] The above data was disseminated by UNAR at a conference in Milan, on 3 March 2014, and cited by da Andrisani (2014).

[21] See "Immigrati, l"incitazione all"odio è on line: 700 episodi di razzismo sui social nel 2014", Redattore Sociale, 24 April 2015, available at: http://www.redattoresociale.it/Notiziario/Articolo/482471/Immigrati-l-incitazione-all-odio-e-on-line-700-episodi-di-razzismo-sui-social-nel-2014.

For its part, OSCAD (Observatory for security against discriminatory acts of the Ministry of Interiors), between Spring 2011 and January 10, 2014, received 150 reports of discriminatory and hate contents on websites and Internet profiles (23% of total reports)[22]. Only in the last period, from 1 June to 31 December 2013, OSCAD had 65 reports (28%) of cases occurring on the Internet[23]. The no-profit organization Lunaria (2014), between 1 September 2011 and 31 July 2014, recorded 82 cases of verbal violence on websites, blogs and social networks. Its data show a rapid increase: from 8 cases in 2011, to 24 in 2012, to 41 in 2013.

A research coordinated by the Italian "Unione forense per la tutela dei diritti umani"[24] (2012), reports "a troubling increase in phenomena of incitation to racial hatred in political discourse and in the media, especially towards Roma and Sinti, as well as an increase in racism spread by new media, such as the Internet and social networks". Similar conclusions are found in the report on anti-Roma manifestations by Osservatorio 21 luglio (2014): in the period from 16 May 2013 to 15 May 2014, the association recorded 241 cases of discrimination and/or hate speech, with an average of one episode every two days[25]. Of these, 48% took place on on-line newspapers and 39% on offline newspapers. In 72% of the cases, the author was a politician or public authority and in 18% of the cases a journalist. In 28% of the cases, the author was a member of Lega Nord party, followed by Forza Nuova (10%) and Popolo della Libertà[26] (9%). As for cases of false information, the report cites articles in leading national newspapers (*Corriere della Sera, La Repubblica, Il Messaggero*) as well as in many local newspapers.

The data on anti-Semitism on the Internet is also worrying: according to a CDEC report (2010), there has been a notable increase in the number of Italian websites and discussion groups characterized by racism and anti-Semitism[27], from 800 in 2008 to 1200 in 2009. The report also evidences the worrying spread of anti-Semitism in countless social network profiles.

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[22] From the spring of 2011 to 10 January 2014, OSCAD received 644 reports: 268 of these concerned discrimination acts that constituted crimes. Of these, 183 led to concluded trials leading to the arrest of 91 people (see “Razzismo, OSCAD: il 55% delle discriminazioni avviene per motivi razziali”, press release by the trade union UIL, 15 January 2014, available at: http://www.uil.it/immigrazione/newssx.asp?id_news=2730).

[23] From 1 June to 31 December 2013, OSCAD received 231 reports. Of these 55% had to do with race, 28% with sexual orientation, 11% with religion. See “Razzismo, OSCAD: il 55% delle 11000 discriminazioni avviene per motivi razziali”, press release by the trade union UIL, 15 January 2014, available at: http://www.uil.it/immigrazione/newssx.asp?id_news=2730.

[24] Study presented by a network of Italian associations (among which Associazione 21 luglio, Associazione Carta di Roma, Lunaria and ASGI) as part of the thematic discussion of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) on incitation to racist hate.

[25] These cases do not include those cataloged in the study as “stereotypical discourse", a category introduced in the 2013-14 report (in the previous 2012-13 report, this category had been subsumed in that of incitation to hate and discrimination). See Osservatorio 21 luglio, 2014.

[26] Until 2013, this was the name of the center-right wing party led by Silvio Berlusconi.

[27] As for the 50 websites with anti-Jewish contents, they go from the more virulent ones like Holywar, which published a list of high-profile Italian Jews, to those centered on the criticism of Israel and Sionism, to the conspiracy theory ones, which explain events of the past and present as the result of conspiracies, to negationist ones, which deny the existence of the Shoah. The latter ones have considerably increased in the 2007-2010 period (CDEC, 2010).

More in general, in 2002, the Italian Federation of Partisan Associations (FIAP)[28] counted circa 150 extreme right-wing blogs, forums and profiles. According to the data provided by the councilor for IT safety of the Ministry of Interiors, in 2009 the Police discovered 1200 racist websites and discussion groups, up from 800 in the previous years[29]. More recently, Caiani and Parenti (2013) estimated the presence of about 100 extreme right-wing organizations with active websites, a third of which with ties to foreign organizations.

1.3. Main actors and channels involved

The significant increase of the number of migrants crossing the sea to Italy in recent years has fueled the rhetoric of the "invasion" and of the supposed dangers associated with it, from contagious diseases to the more recent “Islamic terrorism”. While from the early 90s onwards social stigma was applied to the individual ethnic groups of migrants who were the first to arrive in Italy (Albanians, Moroccans, Rumanians, Chinese), nowadays it is mostly directed against Muslims in general. Therefore, there is a transformation of the image of migrant in an Islamic tout court and, hence, even terrorist[30]. In more recent years, with the economic crisis and the increasing number of migrants from overseas, the emphasis has been also on the economic unsustainability of migration, which is blamed for the shortage of social services for Italians[31].

Contempt for Jews, Roma and Sinti people has always been widespread. The latter ones, in particular, continue to play a role very similar to that historically attributed to the Jews, characterized by the usual prejudices about their alleged propensity for deviance, violence, petty crimes; however, violent acts such as burning of Roma settlements have not been uncommon in recent years (Bontempelli, 2014)[32]. While

[28] See “I nazisti invadono la Rete”, Il Manifesto, 24 January 2003, available at: http://www.brianzapopolare.it/sezioni/storia/20030124_nazisti_invadono_rete.htm. See also “«Clicca clicca, alalà»: i siti della vergogna. Proclami nazisti ed esaltazione dei lager: studiosi a confronto a Bologna sugli spazi Web della destra”, L"Unità, 9 June 2003, available at: http://cerca.unita.it/ARCHIVE/xml/90000/86669.xml?key=Luca&first=701&orderby=0&f=fir.

[29] See “Web and antisemitismo: un connubio sempre più pericoloso”, Mosaico Informazione and cultura ebraica, 24 November 2011, available at: http://www.mosaico-cem.it/articoli/web-e-antisemitismo-un-connubio-sempre-piu-pericoloso.

[30] An association already present in collective discourse in the past, because the Moroccan community was one of the first and the largest in Italy.

[31] On the mass media, information on public spending is often manipulated to suggest that foreigners are the main beneficiaries of social welfare (Naletto, 2014b). Members of Lega Nord, Forza Nuova and CasaPound have distributed free bread in various Italian cities to denounce the "disproportionate" amount of public resources and services in favor of migrants and refugees, in a period in which Italians are increasingly suffering the consequences of the economic crisis (Naletto, 2014a).

[32] According to a recent survey by the *Pew Research Center* (2014) on the attitude towards Roma, Muslims and Jews in Italy, France, Spain, United Kingdom, Germany, Greece and Poland, Italy is first for anti-Roma feelings: 84% of the interviewed sample is hostile towards or afraid of Roma and Sinti, though their community amounts to only 180,000, that is 0.23% of the total population (70,000 of these are Italian citizens). Racism towards this category also reflects the improvised and highly discriminatory character of the policies with which national and local authorities have managed over the last decade, the presence on its territory of such populations, treated as a "calamity" to be faced

in the case of Roma and foreigners, racism is present both in the media and in institutional discourse, in the case of Jews racism is less explicit because limited by the historical condemnation of anti-Semitism. In general, the number of verbal or physical attacks against Italians of Jewish religion is limited[33] and notably less than the ones reported in other European countries (CDEC, 2010)[34]. However, anti-Semitic prejudices and stereotypes continue to be present in private discourse and sometimes even in the public discourse of politicians and intellectuals. The number of anti-Semitic websites has also greatly increased, as already mentioned.

The political party that more than any others has managed to successfully appropriate the populist, nationalist and xenophobic spirit present in Italy as in the rest of Europe in recent years has been Lega Nord[35], which is born as a regionalist party in Northern Italy: initially focused on the goal of the secession of Northern Italy, it has more recently adopted a radical and nationalist policy in the wake of the French Front National, and managed to attract voters tied to extreme right-wing groups like CasaPound and Forza Nuova[36]. Its racist ideas, centered on the rejection of "multi-racial society" and in "defense of Christianity threatened by the extra-EU invasion", were actually part of Lega Nord's original ideology and are in part directly derived from national-socialist ideology (Rivera, 2011). While at a national level, Lega Nord presents itself as an alternative to other right-wing movements "in the historical role of representative of the neo-Fascist galaxy"[37], at a European level it has consolidated its alliance with the Front National of Marine Le Pen[38].

In recent years, especially thanks to the new media, we are experiencing what Bontempelli (2014) calls a "polycentric proliferation" of hate speech, which has

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by police forces, by forcefully removing settlements. These policies have fueled social resentment and hostility towards these groups. Notwithstanding the fact that in February 2012 a national strategy for the inclusion of Roma people has been launched (UNAR, 2012), the policy of forced evictions has continued, though less publicized by mayors and the media. In the opinion of Bontempelli (2014), we have thus arrived at a "normalization" of these racist practices, turning discrimination into an "ordinary procedure". This does not mean, however, that racism towards Roma in the media and among the common people is decreasing, as indicated by the above-mentioned data.

[33] According to CDEC data, in Italy the recorded violence acts against Jews were 53 in 2007, 69 in 2008 (Lebanon War), 53 in 2009, about forty until November of 2010 (see. CDEC, 2010).

[34] These are mainly acts of vandalism, such as offensive e-mails sent to Jewish institutions, profanation of cemeteries and graffiti (CDEC, 2010).

[35] On the influence of Lega Nord on the public debate see Rivera, 2009; Peruzzi and Paciucci, 2011.

[36] See “Lega Nord, l’estrema destra ora parla «padano»”, il manifesto, 5 September 2014, available at: http://ilmanifesto.info/lestrema-destra-ora-parla-padano/.

[37] See “Lega Nord, l’estrema destra ora parla «padano»”, il manifesto, 5 September 2014, available at: http://ilmanifesto.info/lestrema-destra-ora-parla-padano/.

[38] Marine Le Pen has announced the creation of a group in the European Parliament called “Europe des Nations et des Libertés”, which will include Lega Nord and other xenophobic and eurosceptic groups (see “Il Front National e la Lega formano all’Europarlamento gruppo di estrema destra”, La Repubblica, 15 June 2015, available at: http://www.repubblica.it/esteri/2015/06/15/news/il_front_national_e_la_lega_formano_all_europarlamento_gruppo_di_estrema_destra-116935966/. The intention of establishing an alliance between Front National and Lega Nord had been already announced in January 2014 (see “Le Front national et la Ligue du Nord veulent s’unir à Strasbourg”, Le Monde, 24 January 2014, available at: http://www.lemonde.fr/europeennes-2014/article/2014/01/24/le-front-national-et-la-ligue-du-nord-veulent-s-unir-a-strasbourg_4354241_4350146.html#CbmBmbcaMGZckB5G.99).

become increasingly pervasive: along with political subjects, there are local webnews, self-produced information and "counter-information" blogs, Facebook groups and private Web pages. The "disintermediation" favored by social media[39] increases the risk of a viral spread of false or distorted information[40], helped by the anonymity of the authors, which circulates in a rapid and uncontrolled way on the Internet, with no verification or belated verification: from this perspective, the Internet can favor the spread of demagogy and propaganda (Caiani and Parenti, 2013).

1.4. Responses: Institutions and monitoring agencies dealing with the issue of hate speech

At an institutional level, to protect and promote basic rights and oppose discrimination (including hate crimes), the Italian government has established, in September 2010, an Observatory for security against discriminatory acts (**OSCAD**), under the Ministry of Interiors, an interforce observatory that includes members of the national police and of the Carabinieri, presided by the Central Director of Criminal Police. OSCAD receives reports from institutions, associations and private citizens, also through a dedicated e-mail address (oscad@dcpc.interno.it), and promotes activities of awareness raising, information, prevention and education[41]. OSCAD receives reports both directly and through UNAR (Ufficio Nazionale Antidiscriminazioni Razziali), a government office against discrimination[42]. In case of possible penal relevance, it passes the case on to the competent police office[43].

[39] Social media are rapidly transforming the media ecosystem (Colombo, 2013) making it possible to directly connect with a vast public, to personalize and individually control contents and messages, with an ensuing "dis-intermediation", i.e. a decrease in the power of the so-called "mediators of general interest," such as newspapers, magazines, TV, political elites and journalists, etc. (Caiani and Parenti, 2013). The public has not only the possibility of receiving news and information from subjects and channels outside mainstream communication (e.g. "counter-information" websites), but also to share them, to convey them, to comment directly on the website and social pages of the subject that has published them, becoming an active part of the flow of information and distribution of contents (see “A proposito di Hate Speech”, Libertà di Stampa and Diritto all"Informazione, 11 June 2015, available at: http://www.lsdi.it/2015/a-proposito-di-hate-speech/).

[40] Sometimes just urban legends that promote hatred, as the news spread in the beginning of 2014 according to which from 1 April 2014 Roma people could take advantage of free public transport (see “La bufala dei rom che possono viaggiare gratis sui mezzi pubblici”, Giornalettismo, 21 marzo 2014, available at: http://rs.gs/u7Y).

[41] Among the various initiatives, on 29 May 2013 OSCAD signed an agreement with ODIHR - Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the OSCE, with which the Italian Department of Public Safety adheres to the training program “TAHCLE” - Training Against Hate Crimes for Law Enforcement, aimed at training police officers on prevention and contrast of hate crimes.

[42] Based on a 2011 agreement, OSCAD and UNAR collaborate on a series of activities, from more practical ones to training and awareness raising ones. In particular, OSCAD transmits to UNAR all reports that do not refer to crimes, while UNAR forwards to OSCAD all reports that refer to crimes and therefore require the activation of investigation and judiciary procedures by the police.

[43] In the Italian police forces there isn’t a single office responsible for hate crimes, but many, depending on the type of crime and victim (anti-Semitism, homophobia, etc.). The problem is compounded by the already fragmented organization of Italian police forces (for example the Polizia di Stato is a civil force that depends from the Department of Public Safety of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, while the Arma dei Carabinieri is a military force that is part of the national armed forces and

In the case of crimes committed on the Internet, usually the competent office is the **Postal Police** (Polizia Postale e delle Communicazioni), which is also a member of the OSCAD. The Postal Police is a section that is specialized in crimes committed through the various media, including cybercrimes. To help discover crimes, the Postal Police has instituted an on-line "Police station" or “Commissariato di Pubblica Sicurezza”, with a website (www.commissariatodips.it) and a Facebook page. These are used both to provide information (also through its on-line forum) and to receive reports on crimes committed on the Internet[44]. However, as we shall see, the on-line Police station receives very few reports; in almost all cases, the Postal Police acts upon information received from OSCAD. It also collaborates with the educational activities organized by OSCAD.

UNAR[45] office is part of the Department for Equal Opportunities of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. As the Italian Equality body it has the function of ensuring equal opportunity and check the effectiveness of the existing instruments against discrimination.

More specifically, UNAR:

- helps the victims of discrimination with penal or administrative procedures;
- issues recommendations and opinions on discrimination;
- investigates cases of discrimination to the extent allowed without infringing on the prerogatives of judicial authority;
- Promotes campaigns, projects, studies, training programs and meetings on discrimination in collaboration with NGOs and associations[46].

In its recent reports, ECRI (2012; 2015) underlines some of the problems in the Italian Equality body:

- its institutional collocation under the Italian Presidency of the Council of Ministers limits its de jure and de facto independence, which such a body requires;
- its responsibilities are too limited because:
    - current legislation on UNAR’s competence does not refer specifically to discrimination based on color, language, religion and citizenship, but only on ethnic origin and race[47];

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depends from the Ministry of Defense. Yet they both perform police functions in areas such as contrasting crime, judiciary activities or public order.

[44] Reports must be ratified by a physical office of the Police within 48 hours or they lose validity.

[45] Instituted with legislative decree 9 July 2003, n. 215, in application of EU directive n. 2000/43 CE.

[46] As already mentioned, UNAR collaborates with OSCAD and the Postal Police not only on awareness raising and training activities, but also on a more practical level, for example demanding the removal of comments or websites, or reporting cases to the Prosecutor's office, for them to verify whether they constitute crimes under the Mancino Law on instigation to racial hatred. UNAR also deals with cases that do not constitute crimes. In this case, action is more complicated and consists of dissuasive practices towards the authors and the collaboration with the managers of social media.

[47] ECRI (2015) notes that, even if the work of UNAR continues to cover grounds of discrimination based on ethnic origin, race, religion, sexual orientation and gender identity, as well as on personal convictions, disability and age, no legislation has yet been enacted to extend formally UNAR's

- UNAR is not entitled to bring legal proceedings in discrimination cases.

Besides these institutional bodies, there are private associations[48] that monitor and report cases of racism and discrimination (including hate speech). Among these, one of the most active is **Lunaria**. Founded in 1992, Lunaria is engaged in awareness rising, communication, training, monitoring[49], reporting and denouncing activities, especially in the political and institutional debate and in sports[50]. Cases of discrimination are reported to UNAR, with which it has a closer relation, and more rarely to OSCAD (although UNAR will forward cases to OSCAD if they are subject to prosecution). As noted by Naletto (IT-P1, Lunaria), "the outcome depends on the seriousness and the evidence of the reported case": in some cases the reported webpages and Facebook profiles have been obscured by authorities[51], while in other cases, notwithstanding repeated reports (as in the case of the website www.tuttiicriminidegliimmigrati.com) this has not happened, for reasons not known to Lunaria[52].

competence to cases of discrimination on grounds of color, language, religion and citizenship. In 2010 an internal administrative act describing the specific tasks of each government body extended UNAR's tasks to combating discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender, age, disability, religion and personal convictions. This act was renewed in 2012 and UNAR's report to the Parliament relating to 2012 activities reflects this extension of competence. Nevertheless, since UNAR's establishment in 2003, its statutory powers remain restricted to combating "discrimination based on race and ethnic origin" (Legislative Decree No. 215 of 9 July 2003 transposing EU Council Directive 2000/43/EC implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, Article 7).

[48] These include associations of magistrates and lawyers against discrimination, such as ASGI (Associazione per gli Studi Giuridici sull'Immigrazione), representatives of religious communities and ethnic minorities, like the Jewish community of Rome and Associazione 21 luglio (a no-profit organization dedicated to the protection of the civil rights of Roma and Sinti), no-profit associations dedicated to the protection of civil and social rights in general (such as ARCI, COSPE, Rete antirazzista, to cite only a few).

[49] The association runs a website (www.cronachediordinariorazzismo.org) in which collects the manifestations of racism found daily. As illustrated by Grace Naletto, president of Lunaria, one of the witnesses we interviewed (IT-P1), although sometimes the association receives reports from third parties, sometimes by private users, about the content of social media profiles or sites Internet newspapers, in most cases it is aware of such incidents and events through its direct and daily monitoring.

[50] Football stadiums are among the places where racist behavior against foreign people is most frequently displayed, at times also in very serious forms.

[51] An example of a positive result is the case of the Italian section of the US Stormfront forum, a neo-Nazi group, which was reported on several occasions by Lunaria and other associations. In November 2012, four moderators of the forum where arrested and sentenced for incitation to racial and ethnic hatred.

[52] It is not easy to know the outcome of the cases reported to the police because of the rules on the protection of the confidentiality of investigations.

2. Mapping of the social media activity of xenophobic parties, organizations and movements

2.1. Introduction to the parties, organizations or movements and rationale for selection

Based on a survey of existing literature, it has been possible to create a list of the parties, organizations and movements more active in propagating hate speech, which would include the following categories:

- websites associated with extreme right-wing parties or movements;
- anti-Semitist websites (neo-Nazis and/or Catholic fundamentalists, anti-Sionists, negationists, conspirationists;
- So-called xenophobic and racist "counter-information" websites.

Among these we selected the more influential ones on the political/public life, the ones more present on the Internet (i.e. those with the highest numbers of users), and those more active on social media. The final selection was therefore the following:

1. **Lega Nord**
   Main populist party among those belonging to the Italian extreme right. Born as a regionalist movement for the secession of Northern Italy, it is nowadays a nationalist, xenophobic party and an ally of the Front National of Marine Le Pen. It received 8% of the votes in the parliamentary elections of 2008 and 12% in the regional elections of 2010[53].

2. **CasaPound Italia**
   Extreme right movement, nowadays an ally of Lega Nord. It has had little success in elections (always less than 1%)[54] but it is highly visible thanks to an intelligent use of the media, especially social networks, and for its commitment on social issues, especially housing problems for Italians. It includes the student organization "Blocco studentesco".

3. **Forza Nuova**
   Neo-Fascist political movement, characterized by xenophobia, anti-Romanism, anti-Semitism, Catholic fundamentalism, homophobia. One of the first extreme right movements to use social networks, Forza Nuova has acquired good visibility even if it has always had limited electoral success (less than 1%)[55].

[53] Data of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.
[54] Data of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.
[55] Data of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

4. **Resistenza Nazionale**
   A xenophobic and racist "counterinformation" website[56]. Through a website, a blog and Facebook profile, it disseminates news taken from other websites and Facebook pages that are connected to it, like identita.com, tuttiicriminidegliimmigrati.com, voxnews.info, the Facebook pages “Italia agli italiani”, “Stop agli immigrati” and others.

5. **Losai.eu/Radio Spada**
   Network of websites managed by young Catholic extremists, who support Catholic supremacy, anti-Semitism, conspiration theories and Islamophobia, though not always in explicit terms.

2.2. Interpretation of the mapping data

2.2.1. The uses of social media

In terms of the use of social media by parties, organizations and movements, based on the data collected in March and April 2015, the following emerges:

1. **Lega Nord**
   The party is extremely active on social networks: its Facebook and Twitter profiles publish circa 2 posts an hour on average. It is more active on Twitter (49 posts a day on Twitter and 46 on Facebook). In March 2015, it received 177.850 likes on Facebook and had 12.049 followers on Twitter.

   a. Even more popular are the profiles of the **leader of Lega Nord Matteo Salvini**: 986.457 likes on Facebook (on which he is very active, with an average of 11 posts per day) and 178.000 followers on Twitter.

[56] There are many interesting examples of racist and xenophobic "counter-information" websites and Internet profiles. These claim to report news that are censored by mainstream media. In reality they publish false news on immigrants and Roma, or distort real ones by omitting details and emphasizing others, to spread intolerance and hatred. These websites are often connected to each another and extreme right organizations (though some claim to be free and independent). While they have been reported on several occasions by organizations like Lunaria, they have never been shut down or sanctioned. For example, on the blog *identita.com* a post explained the strategy according to which the various Web pages belonging to the same network and managed by the same people, "are kept «separated» for security reasons, in order not to offer the System a «single» target to strike against". However, the authors are very keen to point out that all together the websites would collect "on average, each day, approximately 70 thousand unique users. The various Facebook pages and those on other social networks do the same. [...] If they were a single website, this would be one of the most read in Italy". The declared goal is that of "mobilizing all patriots in a cultural guerrilla warfare that must attack the Web through social networks. *Identità* and all the websites of *Resistenza Nazionale* will become weapons used to spread ideas and news”. Therefore the authors invite all “guerrillas” to mobilize, because thanks to them “propaganda will spread [...]. It is the time for the cultural battle to save Italy". From the cultural battle, the argument goes on to more concrete political goals: "Our websites are ready to support candidates who are against immigration, against citizenship to immigrants and against laws that limit freedom” (see the post “Resistenza Nazionale: verso la battaglia per l"Italia” published on the blog *identita.com* on 2 August 2013, http://xn--identit-fwa.com/blog/2013/08/02/resistenza-nazionale-verso-la-battaglia-per-litalia/).

2. **CasaPound Italia**
   About 1-2 posts per day on its Facebook profile and 2.2 on its Twitter profile. It has a growing popularity, especially its Facebook page (more than 115.000 likes at the time of the survey), with frequent comments and interactions by users. It has 11.000 followers on Twitter, but with much less interactions. Its YouTube channel is scarcely used (3.925 subscribers).

   a. Its student movement, **Blocco Studentesco**, is popular on Facebook (11.000 likes), much less on Twitter (2.000 followers).

3. **Forza Nuova**
   About 2-3 posts per day on its Facebook and Twitter profiles, less active on other channels. Unlike CasaPound, it is more active on Facebook (2.9 posts per day) than on Twitter and this is reflected also in the fact that it has more likes on Facebook than CasaPound, but less followers on Twitter: 135.527 likes on Facebook, 6.787 followers on Twitter.

4. **Resistenza Nazionale**
   Fairly active on social networks (2.2 posts per day on Facebook, 8.7 posts per day on Twitter). About 24.000 likes on Facebook, where it has regular posts, comments and interactions by and with users. It is less popular and has less interaction on Twitter (721 followers) and YouTube (194 subscribers). One must keep in mind, however, that Resistenza Nazionale is part of a network of websites/profiles/pages that together have a greater number of followers: for example, the Facebook profile of the twinned website Voxnews.info alone has 43.000 likes.

5. **Losai.eu**
   About 2-3 posts per day on its Facebook and Twitter profiles; more active on Facebook (3 posts per day). On Facebook 15.200 likes; 1.981 followers on Twitter.

   a. Its twinned website **Radio Spada** has 12.350 likes on Facebook and 1.036 followers on Twitter, but is more active, especially on Facebook, with an average of 12 posts per day.

All the Facebook and Twitter pages have a link to the official website of the party/organization/movement. In the case of Resistenza Nazionale, there are links to other "counter-information" websites/pages, managed by the same people (*Tutti i crimini degli immigrati, Voxnews, Identità, L'Italia agli italiani, Stop agli immigrati-clandestini*). The Lega Nord Facebook page has links to its Twitter and YouTube channels; that of Losai.eu to its YouTube channel.

2.2.2. Content of the channels in relation to hate speech

As for the contents observed in the March-April 2015 period:

1. **Lega Nord**
   Xenophobic and racist content seems more common on Facebook than on Twitter: in the first channel the most common word was “rom” (Roma), along with "popolo" (people), "governo" (government) and "immigrati" (immigrants).

   a. On the Facebook profile of **Salvini**, the most common words were "Italiani" (Italians), "Italia", "immigrazione" (immigration), "lavoro" (job). The most common hashtags were: #casapound, #renziacasa (Renzi go home), #stopinvasione, along with those connected to elections, as #iovoto (I vote), #questavoltavotolega (this time I vote for Lega), #iovotolega (I vote for Lega), #ioscrivosalvini (I’ll write Salvini).

2. **CasaPound Italia**
   Great emphasis on social issues (housing, jobs, school, welfare) from a nationalist perspective (one of the most common words is "sovranità", i.e. the sovereignty of Italians, along with the slogan "prima gli Italiani", i.e. “Italians first”). There is also a lot of emphasis on immigrations with calls for stopping immigration and expelling immigrants who arrive on Italian coasts (among the more popular hashtags are #stopinvasione, i.e. stop the invasion by immigrants.

   a. **Blocco studentesco** pays more attention to the opposition against government policies on school and university (one of the most frequent words is "corteo", i.e. demonstration)

3. **Forza Nuova**
   Among the most common words are those that suggest opposition (e.g. "contro", i.e. "against") and those having to do with social issues, again from a nationalist perspective ("case”, i.e. “housing”, "italiani", i.e. “Italians”, "lavoratori", i.e. “workers”, "famiglie", i.e. “families”). Contents associated with propaganda for the movement are also common (among the most common words is "tesseramento", i.e. "new membership").

4. **Resistenza Nazionale**
   Its main focus is real or invented crimes committed by immigrants. It also carries out a stigmatizing campaign against specific categories such as Muslims. The more frequent words are "crimini" (crimes), "immigrati" (immigrants) and "islamico" (Islamic). One of the most common hashtags is again #stopimmigrazione (stop immigration).

5. **Losai.eu**
   Most words have to do with faith and proselitism, like "credere" (believe), "condividete" (share), especially on the twin website **Radio Spada** ("Cristo", Christ; "giorno", day; "Dio", God; “signore”, Lord; "popolo", people), which presents Catholic beliefs as historical or scientific facts.

2.3. Comparative elements of the parties’, organizations’ and movements’ use of social media

The analysis of social media shows that Facebook and Twitter are the most common channels. Other channels are scarcely used, especially Google Plus: though all monitored groups are members, nobody uses it.

While Lega Nord and CasaPound Italia seem to prefer Twitter, others are more active on Facebook. Twitter seems more commonly used by parties and the more structured organizations, I a more similar way to the use of traditional political media. However, it is interesting to note that Matteo Salvini, the leader of Lega Nord, is extremely active on Facebook, where his page is much more popular than that of his party. This is an evident case of personalization of a party. Thanks to the charisma of Salvini, Lega Nord was able to regain a lot of support after the decline of 2011, partly due to the financial scandals in which the previous leaders were involved.

The less popular group among the monitored ones is the Catholic fundamentalist network Losai.eu/Radio Spada, which seems more of a niche phenomenon, with less ability to broaden its consensus. As for the public of the "counter-information" websites, it is less easy to define, since the linked websites and pages, though managed by the same group, are distinct: it would be necessary to know the number of unique users who visit these channels, but this data was not obtainable through the adopted mapping instruments.

The analysis of the most common contents and words confirms that each group has its specific issues on which it constructs its discourse: attention to social issues and traditional "Italian" values in the case of CasaPound and Forza Nuova; xenophobic attitude towards immigrants and Roma in the case of Lega Nord and Resistenza Nazionale (the latter with a greater tendency towards criminalization and islamophobia); finally, religious proselitism in the case of the Catholic network.

Based on what we are able to observe through the kind of released mapping, hate speech seems to rely more on traditional key words typical of populist and new right wing rhetoric ("people", “sovereignty", "Italians", "immigrants"), than on evidently hateful words (the harshest expression from this perspective being the hastag #stopinvasion): in other words, the rhetoric of hate speech does not employ openly violent expressions. The reason may be both that of avoiding sanctions and remaining within the limits of the ordinary and commonly accepted populist rhetoric typical of the public debate.

2.4. Reflections on the mapping from the interviews

Regarding the monitored groups, the interviewees (young people, professionals and experts) are more familiar with Lega Nord, CasaPound and Forza Nuova in terms of groups that are more frequently responsible of hate speech contents; in particular, the last two movements are those that provide more material to the monitoring of Lunaria, the association of civil rights we interviewed. Along with these cases, Lunaria has repeatedly reported the contents of the websites, pages, profiles, blogs and forums that belong to the network of Resistenza Nazionale, like www.tuttiicriminidegliimmigrati.com.

The young people also cited the political movement Movimento 5 stelle[57] as a subject often accused of racism and xenophobia. While the Movimento 5 stelle claims it is neither left wing nor right wing, on some issues like Euroscepticism, immigration and Roma it has taken positions very similar to the ones of the radical right[58]. Losai.eu and Radio Spada instead are not very well-known, which confirms the above impression of a niche phenomenon.

As for the use of Web channels, Andrisani (IT-P2, Lunaria), one our key informants, argues that the use of social networks by perpetrator subjects/groups has largely replaced the use of websites and blogs, on account of their greater capacity to transmit contents and propaganda. Furthermore, as noted by Andrisani (IT-P2, Lunaria) and De Vita (IT-P4, Polizia Postale), while in a blog the administrator is legally responsible for posted comments and is therefore led to censor hate speech, in open social media platforms the responsibility lies with the individual user. Administrators can therefore allow offensive content (replicated through sharing and socially validated through "likes") without risking penalties.

As for forums, according to Caldiron, an expert on extreme right groups in Italy (IT-P5), again the need to avoid penalties can lead administrators to censor posts that

[57] The movement, born as a virtual community around the blog of its leader, Beppe Grillo, and the social network Meetup, in the elections of 2013 obtained 26% of votes in the Chamber of Deputies and 24% in the Senate. Grillo's blog (which has 1,775,084 likes on Facebook and 1.86 million Twitter followers) is one of the most popular in Italy.

[58] For a list of his statements on immigration, see “Beppe Grillo e l’immigrazione: le sparate degli ultimi anni”, L’Espresso, 11 October 2013, available at: http://espresso.repubblica.it/palazzo/2013/10/11/news/beppe-grillo-e-l-immigrazione-le-sparate-degli-ultimi-anni-1.137304. In particular, in regards to the recent arrivals of migrants from overseas, Grillo appears to compete with Lega Nord, sounding the alarm for the risk of epidemics: "Italy has become the waiting room for desperate people [...]. We will have more and more racism and epidemic diseases". See “Immigrazione, Grillo all’attacco: «Basta tabù, via i clandestini sui barconi. Rischio malattie»”, La Repubblica, 20 October 2014, available at: http://www.repubblica.it/politica/2014/10/20/news/grillo_via_clandestini_blog-98595622/). Grillo also referred to the arrivals of immigrants as invasions that generate "a state of war [...] a social conflict that no one knows how it will end" (see “Grillo: via gli immigrati irregolari o 4000 sarà stato di guerra”, SkyTG24, 22 April 2015, available at: http://tg24.sky.it/tg24/politica/2015/04/22/migranti_emergenza_sbarchi_governo_renzi_critiche_salvini_grillo.html).

propose concrete actions rather than simply venting feelings, as in the case of *Vivamafarka*, an on-line forum frequented by extreme right militants and sympathizers.

Social networks, according to the professionals interviewed, are used by the monitored groups mainly to comment, often in a manipulative way, political and crime news, and orient public opinion. As for the comments on the news, Caldiron notes how they do not lead to an actual debate, but simply allow people to vent their feelings and express their opinions, often in brutal terms.

Social media are also frequently used by political movements to publicize their initiatives, publishing posters that summarize their positions or photos of militants at demonstrations, publicizing their public role in the debate on key terms and demonstrating their activism on certain issues (although the representation of such activism may be overstated, as noted by Caldiron). Social networks are also used to communicate the appointments among the members of a group, especially when they are very far apart geographically.

The use of social media to arrange and communicate initiatives can be considered a form of transition from virtual to real activism, a troubling phenomenon in the case of far-right groups. In general, the Web has assumed an important role for far-right organizations, for many aspects, as noted by Caldiron (IT-P5):

- **Possibility to spread ideas more easily and directly to a potentially larger public[59], facilitating indoctrination**[60], also due to the greater credibility attributed to contents for the sole fact of being on-line[61].

- **Proliferations of websites, virtual communities and small extremist groups**[62]. Not all these presences on the Internet correspond to real-life organizations;

[59] According to Caldiron (IT-P5), the world of virtual communities that gravitate in the extreme right is composed of much more people than real militants; this public includes people of different political and social backgrounds: “Ranging from young people of Lega Nord families or anyways from areas where Lega Nord is very popular, to traditional members of extreme right, to middle class and families of patriotic tradition, but also completely different subjects, like those who have become politicized at the stadium, in their neighborhoods, and therefore are socially related to other experiences. All this does not usually occur in politics, you are almost never able to put all this together, while it is much more noticeable on social networks”.

[60] For the extreme right, the Internet is, as affirmed by Caldiron (2013), “an immense ideological laboratory, where theses that would otherwise have circulated only in very limited areas have spread enormously". As noted by Caldiron, in 2010, Interpol warned that the Internet was becoming a new tool for the indoctrination of the younger generations to extremist theories, noting that this aspect poses a challenge to the police forces, given that "many behavior associated with this radicalization are not criminal per se", which makes it difficult for the authorities to intervene. According to Interpol, within a few years the more dangerous extremist websites have gone from a few dozens to thousands. Interpol is particularly concerned over the recruiting "of young vulnerable individuals of the middle class who are not usually considered in the monitoring and in the investigations of the authorities”.

[61] For this reason, according to Caldiron (IT-P5), especially for young people the Internet, and especially social profiles of extremist groups, can be an effective tool for political training and literacy, even accidentally.

many are virtual communities with few members, often residing in small towns far apart from one another.

- **Greater visibility, especially for small groups**[63], also in the media, than would normally be possible in the light of their limited resources, in terms of physical presence in the territory and ability to influence[64].

- **Strengthening of networks and connections among various far-right organizations**, at a national and international level. Internet provides an opportunity to connect a fragmented reality, through few common ideas, battles, moments when they agree on slogans and specific goals, although often unrealistic. This allows them, in a more illusory than real way, to represent themselves as a community, in which there are areas of ongoing debate thanks to social media.

On the basis of the elements so far explained, many sustain the Internet could radicalize the debate, not only among users who regularly visit the websites and channels of the more extreme groups, but also among others. As asserted by Stevens and Neumann[65], two researchers of the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation of King's College, London, the Internet exposes even casual users to the ideas of extremist groups and makes it possible to form virtual communities with ideas and behaviors that would be unacceptable in normal society[66]. Caldiron (IT-P5) also thinks that the Web can have an indoctrinating and radicalizing function (as an example he cites the impact of websites and forums like Stormfront or Holy War, but also the blogs frequented by Anders Breivik). However, it remains uncertain, in public debate, whether this radicalization tends to be limited to the symbolic level and discourse (so-called "keyboard activism"), or if the risk of it turning into real action constitutes a concrete threat.

The case of Stormfront Italia for example suggests the possibility of such a transition from "keyboard activism" to concrete actions. As noted by Andrisani (2014), the case is significant since "from a group active only on the Internet it has gradually turned into an organization whose goal is not solely that of spreading discriminatory ideas

[62] The Internet and in particular social media facilitate the growth of "light" organizations, capable of working with little resources and great flexibility and of reaching a potentially wide public of digital activists (Caiani and Parenti, 2013).

[63] The proliferation of websites, profiles on social media and virtual community has increased the already fragmentary character of the Italian extreme right, which consists of a lot of small groups and movements, often in conflict with one another, with constant disputes over leadership.

[64] According to Caldiron (IT-P5), the increasing importance in recent years of CasaPound Italia and its only partly successful effort to become a national leading far-right organization, is a result of its ability to use the media, including its websites and profiles on social media.

[65] See Caldiron, 2013.

[66] As noted by Ravenna (2012), "social media, by transforming users in creators of contents [...] not only convey ideas but also a discussion that gives them a certain degree of legitimacy". The risk, according to Ravenna, is that of thus creating a culture in which, for example, "anti-Semitism is socially accepted especially by young people and in which there is less resistance not only to express it but also to constitute/participate to actual hate networks".

based on racial hatred through the Internet, but also that of acting outside, for much more concrete objectives, such as acts of violence"[67]. Therefore, Andrisani concludes, there is a fine line between virtual and real. This risk seems confirmed by Giancarlo Capaldo, head of the Anti-terrorism Pool of the Public Prosecutor's Office of Rome after the arrests of people connected to Stormfront: "Terrorist criminals use the Web as an instrument of aggregation since it offers a great opportunity, due to the anonymity granted by the Internet". According to the investigators, the members of Stormfront had established contacts with Forza Nuova, CasaPound and the far-right political party Fiamma Tricolore; furthermore, they were planning an attack on Roma camps, as revealed by the Police commissioner of Rome, Fulvio della Rocca: "The rapidity of the investigation has most likely prevented more serious problems in some localities of Northern Italy"[68].

3. Experiences from the ground

3.1. Sample and sampling process

In the choice of professionals and experts to interview, we have tried to put together a heterogeneous sample, which would include different social actors that deal with the issue at different levels, from the institutions to the associations of civil society, up to field of academic research. Particular attention was paid to the public debate on legislative aspects and on the legal instruments available, which has a central role in the wider debate on hate speech in Italy. For this reason, as part of our sample we interviewed two lawyers who have explored the issue of hate speech and its relation with freedom of speech, each according to his or her specific field of study and specialization.

The sample includes 7 key informants[69], is fairly representative of different approaches to the phenomenon according to the professional roles and ideas on

[67] See sentence n. 884113 of the Tribunale di Roma of 8 April 2013, which convicted four people. According to the Judge, Stormfront had been transformed in "a brand to be used in the extreme and racist right area, a sort of Web franchising, which makes it possible to use the symbol if one has a network of computers and pays the owners of the rights in the US". Stormfront, "though rudimentary in its structure, configures the crime of association to commit crime". This, according to the Judge for preliminary investigations (Gup), is evidenced by the fact that the accused ones "interacted not only virtually, but met in person in some cases. In this context, they collected the money to be sent to the US referents of the website and to be used for circulating leaflets and various publications". Thus, for the first time a web-based association was identified as a criminal conspiracy.

[68] See "Forum neonazista Stormfront, operazione di polizia postale and Digos: arresti and perquisizioni in tutta Italia", L"Huffington Post, 16 November 2012, available at: http://www.huffingtonpost.it/2012/11/16/blitz-contro-antisemitismo-stormfront_n_2142414.html?utm_hp_ref=italy.

[69] The interviewed professionals and experts are the following:

1. Grazia Naletto, president of Lunaria, no profit association for the defense of civil rights, which carries out monitoring, reporting, awareness raising, information activities on these topics [IT-P1];
2. Paola Andrisani, referent for the monitoring activities on discrimination and on-line hate speech in Lunaria [IT-P2];

what could be the most effective strategies for preventing and combating the phenomenon, according to the different knowledge, skills and sensitivity of each informant.

As for the sample of young people, we have reported initial difficulties in the availability of these people to be interviewed. In consideration of this, in order to facilitate the fieldwork, we chose to focus on a sample which preferably presented the following characteristics:

- included in an age range from 18 to 30 years old, that is, older than the range from 15 to 25 years old originally planned: in fact, we assumed that young adults could be less reluctant to be interviewed and able to provide more significant information on the phenomenon.
- preferably composed of young people of foreign origin, or second generation, potentially more exposed to hate speech.

As we will see more in detail below, the sample includes 20 young people, all active users of social media. The group is rather heterogeneous and sufficiently representative in terms of gender, sociocultural background, age and integration level in Italian society. Most of them are Muslim and their religion is the more exposed one to xenophobic and racist attacks in Italy at the moment.

3.2. Professionals

3.2.1. Channels, contexts and main actors of online hate speech according to the experiences of professionals

In general, professionals and experts seem to agree on the causes of the phenomenon of online hate speech, on the responsibilities of the context and on the role played by Web channels in determining and amplifying it:

- **Responsibility of the political class**: hate speech is encouraged significantly by the political debate, not only by far-right actors/groups. Public figures, because of their role and influence, should be more careful of the messages they send; unfortunately, this is often not the case and some of these figures offer a negative model that becomes socially legitimized. Penalties are rarely applied to

3. Stefano Chirico, head of the Secretariat of OSCAD (Osservatorio per la sicurezza contro gli atti discriminatori), Observatory for security against discriminatory acts of the Ministry of Internal Affairs [IT-P3];
4. Roberto De Vita, contact person of the Postal and Communication Police [IT-P4];
5. Guido Caldiron, expert of the Italian extreme right, who has particularly studied its use of the Internet [IT-P5];
6. Barbara Giovanna Bello, lawyer, executive coordinator of the anti-discrimination Service of ASGI (Associazione per gli Studi Giuridici sull'Immigrazione) and temporary researcher at the Università degli Studi of Milan. She deals with discrimination and hate crimes issues [IT-P6];
7. Guido Scorza, lawyer, Professor of Law and New Technologies. He has worked particularly on on-line hate speech [IT-P7].

high-level public figures, which also limits the deterrent effect of punishment. In general, in politics as in other areas of society, there is a lack of shared values centered on the respect for fundamental rights and the habit of explicitly condemning racist and xenophobic manifestations.

> "When important public figures say things that are quite bad and do not suffer any consequence, the effect is not a positive one. […] In regards to certain words there should be a response, though not necessarily a penal one, even limited to a general condemnation, because in my opinion this has an impact" (IT-P3, Chirico, OSCAD).

- **Responsibility of the media** and, in particular, the still central role played by traditional media in orienting the representation of reality and influencing the public debate, stimulating aggressive forms of confrontation.

> "The discussion on new technologies should not lead us to underestimate the even greater normalization of hate speech occurring through the old [media]" (IT-P3, Chirico, OSCAD)

- **Characteristics of the medium**: according to Naletto (IT-P1, Lunaria), the web, and social networks in particular, help spread and amplify hate speech because they facilitate an extremely rapid bottom-up and transversal communication, in which messages can potentially be replicated an infinite number of times. Furthermore, social media make immediately "public" individual acts and behaviors that were once limited to personal environments and networks (family, friends, the pub, etc.). Social media also created a sensation of anonymity and impunity: individuals are more likely to express ideas they would not express in other situations for fear of being criticized or punished. They often express them without being aware of the amplification effect of the Web and therefore of the seriousness of their actions. The Web produces an "illusory" depersonalization in regards to reality; however, according to Chirico (IT-P3, OSCAD), precisely because of this, most hate perpetrators limit themselves to "keyboard activism" and do not engage in real actions. According to De Vita (IT-P4, Postal Police), the sensation of anonymity is illusory, because the authorities are nonetheless able to identify the authors of illegal contents, even though the prosecution of the crime reveals is more complex.

> "We call it the «syndrome of anonymity». Why «syndrome»? Because actually it is not true. In the end we manage [to identify them]; obviously we get as far as the keyboard, as to who is behind it… maybe in the family there is a father, two adult children, perhaps young men who go to the university, while the father busts his back in a factory. The IP from which the message originated can be related to a house, a family and you cannot report all the three of them, criminal liability is individual in Italy" (IT-P4, De Vita, Postal Police).

The representatives of the Lunaria association and those of OSCAD and of the Postal Police agree on defining on-line hate speech as a lasting phenomenon, which peaks in correspondence with events exploited by xenophobic and racist propaganda, such immigrant arrivals or terrorist attacks. Among the more recent trends, the interviewees cite the increasing association among xenophobia, racism with islamophobia. Anti-Gypsyism and anti-Semitism seem more constant and less subject to variation over time. In particular, according to our referents of OSCAD and the Postal Police, while these two attitudes are both common, anti-Gypsyism is characterized by the more aggressive manifestations. This is reflected also in a different sensitivity that the security forces seem to have towards the two phenomena: on the one hand, the historical and generalized condemnation of anti-Semitism has led over time to build a partnership and established a relationship of trust between the Jewish community and law enforcement; on the other hand, the traditionally discriminatory attitude of Italian institutions and society towards Roma communities is reflected in a lack of sensitivity also in the security forces.

> "Thank goodness, Jewish communities in Italy have no problems in their relationship with the police; whatever happens, the collaboration is, for obvious historical reasons, consolidated and strong" (IT-P3, Chirico, OSCAD).

> "If I were to say which is the issue where there is a total distrust, to say the least, I would have to say Anti-Gypsyism: this is the issue in which, frankly speaking, even among the police (because the whole society feel like this) there is the greatest mistrust" (IT-P4, De Vita, Postal Police).

As for hate perpetrators, the general normalization of racist and xenophobic discourse in the public debate has led to the spread of hate speech in larger areas of the political and social arena. As a consequence, the profile of hate perpetrators is more diverse than in the past.

> "Compared to the past, when certain messages were actually still rather limited […] and restricted to niches, especially those of the far right, with the birth of the movement of the Lega Nord there has been a change. This not only thanks to the spread of social media, but also because of the way the public debate has been oriented […]. It is obvious that the worst messages are those sent by organized far right groups, but in reality a certain type of messages has been normalized in the public debate" (IT-P1, Naletto, Lunaria).

The parties, organizations and political movements that have provided more material to Lunaria's monitoring are the best-known far right groups like CasaPound Italia and Forza Nuova, and in the more general right-wing macro area, Lega Nord. Alongside these better-known groups, there are many tiny groups that gravitate in the extreme right, along with countless individual profiles of militants or sympathizers, which are too many be monitored, as admitted by Andrisani (IT-P2, Lunaria).

The representatives of OSCAD and the Postal Police, however, prefer not to place emphasis on a specific political area and stress that hate speech is very generalized and often expressed by individuals rather than by organized groups. However, they admit that in the past there have been cases associated with far-right groups, like the Italian section of Stormfront, but stress the fact that these groups are closely monitored and that at the moment they do not seem active in this sense.

Finally, the representatives of Lunaria cited, among the more frequently monitored websites and profiles, the "counter-information" ones, which convey contents useful for hate campaigns, which are sometimes taken up even by traditional communication media.

3.2.2. Responses and reactions

3.2.2.1. Critical issues

An element that emerges from the interviews is the difficulty of studying the phenomenon through data. This is a result of the wide-spread presence of the phenomenon on the Internet, which makes it difficult to monitor; on the other hand, as confirmed both by OSCAD and by Lunaria, hate speech is widely characterized from under-reporting and under-recording tendency, as well as in the more general case of discrimination phenomena, especially in contexts where awareness on these issues is not common.

> "Data on hate crimes in Italy are always very limited, to say the least: if you compare the data in the international context, the UK with, just to say, 45,000 cases and you show up with a few dozens and Greece with maybe one or two. Does that mean you do not have that phenomenon? Probably not everyone pays the same attention to that phenomenon" (IT-P3, Chirico, OSCAD).

One of the obstacles to data collection is the fact that there isn't a single office of the police forces (Polizia di Stato or Carabinieri) that deals with hate speech and hate crimes, so it is difficult to have an overall figure on the phenomenon. Actually, the Police (Polizia di Stato) do have a single official system of data collection, a single database (SDI - Sistema Di Indagine) in which all crimes are listed divided by type. OSCAD is therefore able to extract data about discrimination crimes as categorized in the Mancino law (racial, ethnic, national and religious discrimination crimes), although it can divulge only those that are not part of ongoing investigations. Nevertheless, Chirico (IT-P3, OSCAD) warns that these data can give only a very partial picture of the phenomenon, because of the spread of under-reporting tendency and to the scarce visibility of OSCAD e of the reporting channels it offers, among victims, associations and institutions. In an effort to address this problem, OSCAD is trying to expand its relationship networks at a national and European level and to collaborate with various bodies and organizations[70], also because its limited

[70] On the relationships at a European level, Chirico (OSCAD) stated that, "perhaps, we are better known abroad, for the various initiatives and projects we have participated in: we have done a lot of

financial resources do not allow it to publicize its existence and activity on a large scale. Also the channel that Postal Police has made available, i.e. the so-called on-line Police Station, is little known to the point that in 2014 it received only 2 reports.

Another reason the phenomenon is under-reported, according to Chirico, is the limited reporting tools allowed by Italian legislation, which does not allow "third part report" or anonymous on-line reporting, that are internationally acknowledged as more effective tools[71]. As an alternative, within the limits of the law, OSCAD has activated an email address through which victims can contact the Observatory either directly or through an association, so they can be placed in contact with a police officer who is aware of the issue.

Summarizing, according to Chirico, the contrast to hate speech is hindered by various factors, especially related to the investigative-judicial apparatus:

- The **lack of sensitivity and awareness** on hate crimes and discrimination, not only in the police forces but also in society in general.

  > "These phenomena, which in the international contexts are well known and studied, are little known in Italy: among the police officers (but things do not change very much in other contexts), if you speak about hate crimes, under-reporting, under-recording, racial profiling, people don't know what you're talking about, because in Italy we still don't have this sort of wide-spread sensitivity. […] There is no in-depth generalized knowledge [of such phenomena]. I'm not talking about hate crimes but about discrimination in general; if on these issues there is a backwardness in the police, this is part of the backwardness of Italian society. I don't think the police have a specific peculiarity: they reflect the general climate of the country. If a country is advanced on certain issues, even the police will be, otherwise they won't. [The] low level of awareness in the public and political debate [...] is reflected in the police officers, as in all categories: journalists, judges, scholars, everyone" (IT-P3, Chirico, OSCAD).

- The **low priority** given to the issue by the authorities responsible for monitoring, investigating and prosecuting this type of crimes, due to a general lack of interest in the problem and to the fact that other problems, towards which there is a greater awareness by institutions and the general public, attract more resources, a problem emphasized by the current economic crisis. In addition, there is the objective difficulty to monitor an unlimited area like the Web and to prosecute every single illegal act or illicit behavior. As a result, the police rarely engage in an

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things with the Council of Europe, with FRA, with ODHIR. [...] We participate to the Group on hate crimes created by FRA last November [2014] and we are the leaders of the subgroup Training because it was acknowledged that we have a certain expertise that we have been gradually developing. So day by day we build a network of relationships through word of mouth and collaborations".

[71] In the United Kingdom hate incidents can be reported to the police either by the victim or by someone acting on their behalf. Third-party reporting status allows organizations to act as representatives of victims who are unable or unwilling to report to the police directly" (OSCE-ODHIR, 2009).

active monitoring of the phenomenon beyond the reports it receives, and, in any case, they tend to intervene only in only in cases of hate speech considered "relevant", as well as prosecutors do.

> "In theory, the police must acquire information about crimes also independently, without waiting for a report, but there is a problem of resources: as usual, we live in a system where there are few resources and many things to do. […] On the other hand, my impression (but I'm speaking as a citizen rather than a police officer) is that […] the fact that there are structural and extremely serious criminal phenomena, on which there is an abundance of studies and data, whose seriousness cannot be denied, such as the mafia, leads to (but this is only my impression) not consider other things a priority. […] If the problem is removing photos that offend a Jew or a Muslim, since there are billions of them on the web, it is hard to be always effective" (IT-P3, Chirico, OSCAD).

- **The objective technical and bureaucratic obstacles faced by investigators and prosecutors** in criminally relevant cases of on-line hate speech. The procedure for dealing with these cases is complex. Postal Police usually performs a preliminary evaluation through publicly available information (such as checking whether the account is in Italy or abroad, if it is associated with dangerous organizations, etc.). If a crime has indeed been committed, Postal Police informs the prosecutor, asking for permission to carry out more in-depth investigation, usually decrees for acquiring information from social network providers. It is at this stage that the greatest difficulties emerge: the slowness of the Italian judicial system, due to the excessive workload; the fact that social networks are normally managed by private companies based in the US, which therefore must answer to a legislation that is much more protective of freedom of speech than the Italian or European one. Not only the US legislation, but also the self-imposed rules of these providers are distant from Italian and European legislation. For this reason, Italian authorities often meet with resistance by social media platform managers in providing data that would allow them to identify the authors of illegal contents; not even the instrument of the rogatory seems able to overcome these obstacles.

> "In countries where the servers are located, either you have no references and don't know who to speak with (like little islands in the Pacific and stuff like that), or, in very civilized countries like the US, you have that country's policy on freedom of speech to the extent that it is not considered a crime there and so it is extremely complicated. They [the US] also have privileged relationships with social media platforms and it is not easy to alter this balance. [...] t is not like the Italian police can simply contact Google, YouTube or whoever and that's it… They are corporations that tell you «this is the policy of the company»" (IT-P3, Chirico, OSCAD).

Nevertheless, says our contact person of the Postal Police, usually authorities are successful in identifying the author through more in-depth investigations:

"First of all we have to identify the responsible person, stop the crime as prescribed by the Italian penal code and often they ask us for a rogatory, which takes a certain time and which goes to the judicial authorities of the other country, but even with the rogatory we sometimes meet with resistances. So we are up against objective difficulties: if the crime is serious we manage to go all the way […] We are often able to bypass… because usually the authors are all in Italy and somehow we manage to identify them, also through their friendships on Facebook, we more or less are able to limit the geographical area…" (IT-P4, De Vita, Postal Police).

Anyway, there is also the problem of the reluctance of the social media managers to remove offensive contents, whether it is a post, a video, or something else. Considering the difficulty of dealing with the problem through traditional tools like the rogatory, due to the slowness of the bureaucracy and the legal system as well as the resistance of the interlocutors, the most effective approach seems that of establishing collaborative relationships with individual States and with the social media managers[72].

"There is a combination of factors: there are the rules established by our Code of Criminal Procedure, which tell us how to act, with the procedural difficulties we mentioned before; there are international relationships which vary from country to country, so that with some countries we manage to have a good collaboration because there are some accelerated procedures: for example, with the US it's called «MLAT», which is a specific procedure to accelerate the exchange of information while waiting for the specific authorization (or the rogatory). Managing to establish a privileged relationship with all countries would obviously be a great help for our activity, however it finds an obstacle also in terms of another aspect which limits our rapidity, namely the platform managers, who also take their time; their collaboration is necessary [in order to have a successful procedure]. There are many things that have to fall into place" (IT-P4, De Vita, Postal Police).

[72] Also in the case of Stormfront Italy, in which after the first trial four men were convicted in November 2012, the current legislation in the United States, where the platform forum is located, hindered preliminary investigation activities under the international judicial cooperation system. It was also impossible to obtain any collaboration from the administrators of the US Stormfront forum, which was created by Don Black, leader of the Ku Klux Klan. In relation to these problems, the head of the anti-terrorism Pool of the Public Prosecutor's office of Rome, Giancarlo Capaldo, declared: "The rogatory is an obsolete instrument. With some countries, including the US, we have begun to establish very productive collaborative relationships, which are becoming fruitful". In this case too, the Postal Police investigated on the IT activities carried out by the four men in Italy and was able to find the necessary evidence for their arrest. The agents of the Postal Police themselves stress that: "The fact that a website is abroad does not grant impunity and for us identifying the person that from Italy has committed a crime on the Web is not difficult at all" (see "Forum neonazista Stormfront, operazione di polizia postale and Digos: arresti e perquisizioni in tutta Italia", L"Huffington Post, 16 November 2012, available at: http://www.huffingtonpost.it/2012/11/16/blitz-contro-antisemitismo-stormfront_n_2142414.html?utm_hp_ref=italy).

Therefore, various circumstances and factors contribute to the final result, from the kind of international relationships, to the willingness of the social media managers to collaborate, and, last but not least, the sensitivity and speed of the judiciary, two aspects which are often connected: if the prosecutor is sensitive to the problem the judicial procedure can proceed quickly enough. In any case, the slow pace of the judicial system (necessary to ensure the rights of the accused one, to gather proofs and recognition of legal certainty) appears insufficient compared to fast-paced rhythm of the web. This may limit the certainty of punishment.

> "As for the outcome, almost all our cases are pending. You can find a sensitive public prosecutor, who emits all the necessary decrees, then you have to notify them and, in the space of 4 years, except for Stormfront [case], I think none of the cases were closed, they are all pending. It is the whole judicial apparatus that is very slow: all the notifications, you must have the data, then you have to ask for another decree to know to whom is associated the IP used for the connection with the provider, then another decree and more time goes by" (IT-P4, De Vita, Postal Police).

> "The resolution would be to speed up the trials. But the police must work according to the current legislation; as members of the police forces we are not entitled to say «They should do this or that». We would all be happier if the trials were speedier and the guilty were fairly punished, the sentences were adequate to the crimes and were effectively applied. How to do this is a matter that pertains to politics, we cannot express our opinions on this" (IT-P3, Chirico, OSCAD).

For her part, the president of Lunaria, Grazia Naletto (IT-P1), admits that lack of sensitivity on the importance of contrasting on-line hate speech is partially reflected even among the associations that fight for the protection of civil rights. This does not promote the systematic use of all the tools and channels that can be activated and, therefore, the adoption of appropriate responses to the phenomenon. A first obstacle is, according to Naletto, that reporting often leads to nothing, especially reporting to social media managers, due both to the slowness of the response and their unwillingness to act. Twitter, in particular, seems more reluctant to adopt stricter self-regulations than Facebook, according to Naletto. Giving the great difficulty of acting at an international judicial level, the effort of the institutions to induce the social media managers to collaborate with them is the only strategy that seems to have paid, especially in the case of Facebook. Anyway, the work of monitoring organizations and associations can also play an important role, as their joint pressure to denounce various cases, combined with the pressure of public authorities, seems to have persuaded the social media managers to pay more attention to this phenomenon, according to Naletto.

> "Maybe in the very recent period [the social media managers] have become more careful, because the monitoring and reporting activity has increased in social media and also there have been some initiatives aimed at raising the

awareness of the managers themselves, especially Facebook… […] I know that also the institutions have promoted initiatives that have tried to involve the social media managers […]. If, on the one hand, there are reportings that are acknowledged by the manager and, on the other hand, an intervention of the responsible authorities, then there can be results" (IP-P1, Naletto, Lunaria).

The discussion about making social media managers more responsible actually is a complex and controversial one, because the platforms are private companies that are not formally required to act in the public interest, as noted by lawyer Guido Scorza (IT-P7). However, we believe it is appropriate that the managers of those universally used channels, which have a crucial influence in the daily life of people, are sensitized and encouraged to contribute to combat the phenomenon, at least in its more serious forms, as well as all other actors in society. Indeed, also Scorza believes that negotiating with the managers certain standards of self-regulation would be more fruitful in contrasting the phenomenon than the limited number of penalties toward violent or illegal behaviors that the judicial system can manage to impose.

"[The fact that], instead of discussing about legislation, we are discussing about self-regulation, is an absolutely appropriate thing, because we gain that elasticity and that ability to adapt to the speed of the events, which is the reason I'm against any new regulatory intervention [i.e., an ad hoc legislation]. […] So, in my opinion, with respect to phenomena that are going to be increasingly related to certain platforms, it is necessary for the managers of those platforms to take responsibility in terms of adopting rules that are suitable for regulating these phenomena […]. This is the right direction, because […] the answer certainly cannot be that of trials in the courts, quantitatively" (IT-P7, Scorza, lawyer)

Until now, it seems that managers have tried to balance the protection of the safety and rights of people, with freedom of speech and the protection of private interests, also because whenever they impose restrictions or censor contents they risk losing users.

"There is problem of how to [regulate social media]: it doesn't look like there is a lot of interest [by managers] and it is very difficult also for managers to intervene in such episodes. I however have the impression that they hide behind the principle of the freedom of speech, while the real problem is that of losing users" (IT-P5, Caldiron).

Also the intervention by the platforms managers seems dependent on the "importance" assigned to the case and to the victim, so it is much more likely to occur if an authority of a country is involved, rather than a common person.

"Certainly, we use privileged relationships [with social media platforms] for our work, there are continuous contacts that have led almost to a personal relationship [with the managers], because there is a daily collaboration, but

> on the other hand you cannot go beyond that… Yes, the institution, the minister, the one that in your country [Italy] is the authority, those are the ones the manager protects, but common people that in your opinion are slandered but not for us, then for them there is a different type of attention, I'm not saying it is less, it's different. So saying that a social media is more careful than another is something I cannot really say because it varies from case to case" (IT-P4, De Vita, Postal Police)

Anyway, the fact that reporting cases is often ineffective is not the only problem, according to Naletto. There is an established tradition of activism for cases of discrimination in civil courts, on which, also thanks to the advocacy work of ASGI (Associazione per gli Studi Giuridici sull'Immigrazione, i.e. Association for Legal Studies on Immigration), there is now a rather developed jurisprudence. On the contrary, in criminal courts, especially in relation to hate crimes with racial or ethnic motivations, associations generally do not appear yet adequately prepared and structured, since there are still no solid experience in legal services or general assistance for victims of xenophobia and racism. That is mainly because of the financial cost of a penal case, as well as for a lack of knowledge of the legislation and the way it can be used.

> "There is still not a wide-spread knowledge and awareness that would help using all the tools that can be used to counter this phenomenon. [...] On the criminal level, we are certainly less organized, also for the reasons I was saying: realistically, suing someone can be a risk, because if you lose you have to pay not only for the cost of the trial but eventually also to compensate the person you brought to trial. In any case, beyond this, I think there is a lack of knowledge of the specific legislation and on its possible use [...], while instead, in terms of the fight against homophobia, there is a different type of experience, certainly more widespread, various services also at a local level, etc. This means that evidently there are also some associations that are still not adequately organized to address issues like these" (IT-P1, Naletto, Lunaria)

3.2.2.2. Responses

Given the main problem of the lack of awareness on the issue, in implementation of the EU provisions, OSCAD began in 2011 a series of training and information activities both internal (for police officers) and external (e.g. schools), in collaboration with other institutions and organizations[73]. A particularly delicate aspect of the training activities concerns the issues of relationship with Roma communities, which are the most exposed to hate crimes. The initiative is praiseworthy, however it risks being ineffective if it is not accompanied by actions aimed at increasing the awareness in the society as a whole, from schools to mass-

[73] For example, Amnesty International is in charge of the course on human rights in the police training seminars on anti-discrimination.

media to institutions, and aimed at promoting a concrete change in institutional policies, no longer discriminatory towards such communities.

> "If I interact with Roma people just because I go and arrest them every day on the underground, you can tell me whatever you want, but I can't get your message. Also because good aspects do not come out in the media. To overcome certain problems, the whole society should mobilize, through education, communication, in order to avoid certain stereotypes, certain deeply-rooted attitudes" (IT-P3, Chirico, OSCAD).

Precisely because of the need for an in-depth action in the collective imagination, undermining prejudices and stereotypes, it is necessary to plan a training and information activity that should be constant and long-lasting, as underlined by the refepresentatives of OSCAD and the Postal Police and by the president of Lunaria.

> "It is something that, hopefully, will be fruitful in the mid and long term, it is not something that you can do once and the problem is solved. [...] The more training and awareness raising you do the better it is, also because the issues are so complex, articulated, interconnected that it's not like you can take care of it in half a day, especially because you live in a context that is not very advanced on certain issues. We have taken the first steps in this area and they are very significant" (IT-P3, Chirico, OSCAD)

Considering essential to increase the level of awareness and knowledge about the phenomenon of all actors involved, at various level, in prevention and law enforcement, at the time of survey Chirico expressed OSCAD and Postal Police intention to start planning activities focused on cooperation between different institutions and organizations (such as the police, the judiciary, particularly the investigators, NGOs). It would also include joint training activities and experiences sharing among the various stakeholders: a work of fundamental importance, although complex, because Italian public administrations tend to be self-referential, hierarchical structured and scarcely collaborative.

As for external training, OSCAD, like UNAR[74], has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Education, for the prevention of the phenomenon and the education of young people to a more responsible use more of the Internet.
The meetings in schools, however, are not aimed solely at educating young people, but involve also teachers, the families of the students and local institutions. For example the project "Vita da social", carried out in 2014 and in the first semester of 2015, consisted of an itinerating campaign on the risks of the Internet and on cybercrime, aimed at primary and secondary school students, but also their teachers,

[74] See "Immigrati, l'incitazione all'odio è on line: 700 episodi di razzismo sui social nel 2014", Redattore Sociale, 24 April 2015, available at: http://www.redattoresociale.it/Notiziario/Articolo/482471/Immigrati-l-incitazione-all-odio-e-on-line-700-episodi-di-razzismo-sui-social-nel-2014.

family members and anyone interested. The project used a truck with multimedia facilities which stopped in the squares of the main Italian cities.

> "It is important to work at various levels, [the problem is] an iceberg and must be addressed at various levels, with various instruments. The most in-depth ones is education, awareness increasing in schools, in families. Even if it is not easy. The lack of knowledge generates diffidence, prejudice, detachment, fear" (IT-P3, Chirico, OSCAD).

As we can see, education is crucial for our informants, along with the need to develop a multi-agency and collaborative approach to the phenomenon, establishing relationship networks also with civil society organizations.

> "We have relations with many NGOs in the context of LGBT rights. [...] We have made a lot of progress: 10 years ago the idea that the police could collaborate on a stable basis on training activities with Amnesty International or with an association of lawyers experienced in gay rights was difficult to imagine, but now we're doing it. [...] Many associations have my contacts. For us it is extremely important" (IT-P3, Chirico, OSCAD).

As mentioned above, also for civil society organizations it is strategic to build relationships and collaborations, in order to strengthen their lobbying and advocacy activity. There is a greater chance of success when various subjects jointly draw attention to cases of hate speech and ask for a response of the authorities. In many cases, through initiatives carried out on social media, pressure groups have been created to demand that a Web page or a profile be shut down[75].

[75] More recently, in May 2015, various organizations (Federazione Rom and Sinti Insieme, Associazione 21 luglio, Lunaria, ASGI and ARCI) collectively sued to Public Prosecutor's office of Rome the Euro-MP Gianluca Buonanno, who in a well-known Italian TV show repeatedly called "gypsies" the "dregs of society," for which he was also applauded by the spectators. Later, Buonanno also uploaded the video of the transmission on his Facebook page, but later it was removed by the social network managers, who also blocked the page for 24 hours (see "Gianluca Buonanno bloccato da Facebook, il leghista perde le staffe: «Mark Zuckerberg è come il Califfo»", L"Huffington Post, 04 March 2015, available at: http://www.huffingtonpost.it/2015/03/04/buonanno-bloccato-faceboo_n_6800806.html). The associations believe that such statements are configurable as a crime, because they fall within the provisions of Law 654/75, that, in ratifying the Convention of New York, in any way punish those who spread ideas based on the superiority of the "race" or hatred "racial ", and those who incite discrimination against persons belonging to a national, ethnic or "racial" groups. According to the associations, the authorities can assess the criminal implications of the "opinions" of Gianluca Buonanno because, although he is currently a European MP, they were expressed in the exercise of his functions, according to the most recent interpretations of constitutional Court, and thus they are not covered by parliamentary immunity (see the press release by ASGI published on 28 May 2015 on the website of the association: http://www.asgi.it/notizia/associazioni-presentano-esposto-contro-leuroparlamentare-buonanno-e-le-dichiarazioni-contro-la-comunita-rom/).

3.2.2.3. The debate on regulatory and legal instrument

As already mentioned in the first chapter[76], one of the central questions concerning on-line hate speech in Italy is that of available legal instruments. Among the interviewees, the representatives of Lunaria (IT-P1 and IT-P2) complain about the inadequacy of the Italian legislation and invoke a reform through the adoption of a specific law, mainly on the basis of the following reasons:

- The Mancino law precedes the spread of the Internet and does not regulate certain specific aspects of the Web. Naletto (IT-P1), however, believes that such reform of the legislation should be adopted at a European level.

- The Mancino law is too restrictive in terms of punishable crimes (it identifies only four types of discrimination based on ethnicity, nationality, religion and language minorities). As a consequence, says Naletto, there are forms of clearly racist propaganda that cannot be legally sanctioned, which limits the action of civil organizations[77].

- The Law of 24 February 2006, n. 85 ("Modifiche al codice penale in materia di reati di opinione"), has modified the Mancino law, reducing its scope and limiting the severity of penalties. In this regard, Lunaria asks for a restoration of the original provisions.

Scorza, a lawyer (IT-P7), instead believes that the current legislation is sufficient to fight on-line hate speech, as well as aggressive verbal manifestations during sport events, which are not regulated by specific norms. It is Scorza's opinion that it would be counterproductive to try to regulate in detail a phenomenon whose borders are hard to define (What is a crime of opinion? What is freedom of speech?), especially in the case of expressions not explicitly illegal but "borderline": the discretion of the court would inevitably remain very high and someone could take advantage to compress the freedom of expression.

> "I'm much more worried about the inevitable drift that would occur, that is, the limitations on the freedom to express one's ideas [...]. We would simply be putting on the table an element of juridical uncertainty which, depending on the historical and political period, on the national and international context, could be manipulated according to the needs of the moment, with an inevitable degree of discretion. [...] Extending the list of types of hate speech crimes would certainly make a victim in the freedom of speech, for an uncertain advantage: the potential offenders are too many [...], I don't think that the deterrent effect created by the sole existence of a specific crime

[76] See in particular paragraph 1.1.1 in the section on the public debate on hate speech.

[77] Furthermore, as noted by Chirico (OSCAD), the current legislation does not mention specifically discrimination crimes based on sexual orientation or disability and for this reason it is not possible to extract the specific data on these crimes from the databases of the police and obtain a better understanding of the phenomenon.

> would avoid the risk that the 30 million of Italians who use the Internet offend a given category of person" (IT-P7, Scorza, lawyer).

Also lawyer Bello of ASGI (IT-P6) believes that on-line crimes can be effectively prosecuted even in the absence of specific norms, which would be hard to define because of the problem of protecting free speech. On the other hand, extending the categories listed by the Mancino law, though in theory a positive thing, in her opinion, would be particularly problematic, since hate can be directed against a potentially infinite number of categories (e.g. hate towards women, towards disabling obesity, etc.).

On the other hand, both Naletto (IT-P1) and Caldiron (IT-P5) draw attention to the fact that penalties are rarely applied in Italy in case of hate crimes. For example, though the law identifies racism as an aggravating circumstance, the norm is rarely applied. Similarly, while Law n. 645 of June 20, 1952 (the so-called legge Scelba) instituted the crime of apology of Fascism (forbidding also racist propaganda), it has been rarely applied. The reason is not only to be found in the blurry border between freedom of expression and hate crime, but to a large extent also in the fact that racist and discriminatory rhetoric is widespread in the political and public arena, as illustrated by Caldiron.

> "The real problem is not that the Internet is the wild West, the problem is that our entire country has become the wild West [...]. Acting against incitation to racial hatred when the whole public debate is often characterized by it... The expression «Italians first» […] is the main discourse […] of a political leader [the leader of Lega Nord] who has 15-16% of the votes. So it is very difficult to intervene from this point of view. [...] Often the risk is to define as dangerous and extraneous to the public debate what actually is, but only in its most brutal aspect [...]. In the same way I think one should sanction also those rhetorics that, on issues like immigration and the presence of Muslim citizens in our country, propose evidently discriminatory solutions, and in this case too it's not a matter of opinions, since these are opinions that have consequences for human beings" (IT-P5, Caldiron).

Also Scorza notes how the violent rhetoric adopted by many politicians has become one of the main problems, adding however that this is not a problem that can be simply solved by a judge because it has to do with culture and values as a whole. In his opinion it would be more effective to educate to the use of social media and mass media, particularly public TV channels, as tools for fostering dialog, rather than what happens today. It is also his opinion that, in the case of hate crimes committed by public figures, their role should be an aggravating circumstance rather than grant immunity, given their influence and responsibilities. On this subject, Bello (IT-P6), given the difficulty of modifying the present system which grants immunity to MPs, suggests using peer pressure strategies, such as the temporary suspension of the MP from his party.

On the other hand, the difficulty of prosecuting people and the ambiguity of the legislation regulating on-line rights are perceived as serious obstacles by many legal practitioners. For this reason, Bello (IT-P6), as a lawyer, confirms the opinion of Lunaria, namely that in Italy it is essential to increase the knowledge of the many tools available for protecting victims, not only the legal ones, but also forms of dissuasion and mediation, which have the additional advantage of offering greater privacy to the victims.

> "Certainly reporting to the police is important, [...] you get a sentence and that sends an important message [...]. But there is also all the monitoring work that leads to advocacy actions, which, from my perspective (and this is my personal opinion), at least in my experience, is crucial, because otherwise when in case of [an offence to ex Italian minister] Kyenge[78] you make the report, but how many Kyenge report to authorities? Because they are afraid, or because they believe they cannot afford a trial and perhaps have no trust in institutions… So the two things must really go together. [...] In Italy, compared to Common Law countries, we started talking about advocacy later. This in the area of anti-discrimination, of hate speech and of thousands of other areas" (IT-P6, Bello, ASGI) .

It is therefore necessary, as stated by Bello, to accompany legal actions with "an entirely different cultural work, which goes through advocacy, networking, campaigns, building of a network of associations of lawyers" who are able to constantly monitor and identify the best legal tools to intervene.

Finally, one must take into account the limits of the legislation, not only the Italian one, in regards to an area so elusive and difficult to contain within geographical boundaries like the Internet, where even if you shut down a page its contents are replicated and shared a countless number of times, or where one can avoid being shut down by transferring to platforms abroad in countries with which it is sometimes difficult to cooperate. The case of Stormfront Italia is exemplary. Its members have prevented the website from being obscured by using anonymous proxies hosted in other countries. The website is still active and visible and its users continue to post racist messages[79].

3.3. Young people

Of the twenty young people interviewed, 60% were males and 40% female. 47% have been living in Italy for more than 10 years, 20% for less than 3 and 15% were born in Italy. Many are from the Middle East, especially the Maghreb, but also from Africa, Asia, Latin American and Eastern Europe. More than half is 26-30 years old;

[78] The ex-Minister for Integration of the Letta Government (2013 – 2014) Cécile Kyenge, born in Congo, was subject to racist and sexist attacks on the Internet, which were largely publicized by traditional media.

[79] Some time after the conviction of the 4 moderators of the forum, 14 users have been charged with the same crime. This second trial has started in October 2014: See "Antisemitismo and ingiurie: processo Stormfront, altri 29 indagati alla sbarra", La Repubblica, edizione di Roma, 30 October 2014, available at: http://roma.repubblica.it/cronaca/2014/10/30/news/antisemitismo_e_ingiurie_processo_stormfront_altri_29_indagati_alla_sbarrra-99308362/.

31% is between 21-25 and 16% is 18. 60% is Muslim and 15% Catholic. For 25% of them this information was not available[80].

3.3.1. Uses of and approach to social media by young people

The most used social medium[81] is Facebook: all the interviewed young people use it every day, while only some of them use Twitter. Social networks are considered as effective ways to manage one's network of friendships and acquaintances and to meet people. They represent a "network of possibilities", that of staying in contact with everyone, though most of the interviewed young people have never met most of the people they interact with on social networks, who are distinct from the groups of "real" friends they meet every day[82].

3.3.2. Channels, contexts and main actors of online hate speech according to the experiences of young people

Most of the interviewees say that they have found hate speech contents on social networks. The groups against which these contents are directed are: immigrants, Roma, homosexuals and, referring to cases of hate speech by Islamic extremism groups, the West and Westerners. Offensive contents occur as part of ordinary conversations among strangers or take the form of comments or "likes" on pictures, jokes, or observations posted by others. No cases of personal attacks or violent episodes towards the interviewees have been reported. All of them said that hate speech is very common on social networks but not necessarily only among young users. The most active group seems the 30-40 years old one.

Most of the respondents focuses on the fact that hate speech is particularly animated and disseminated by political figures (Salvini and other members of the Lega Nord mostly, but not only).

> "Often there are pictures posted on a website, on the webpage of a political party and then there are the comments by ordinary people, people who saw it…. Comments against Roma, immigrants… often Muslims, these three, let's

[80] For full details see the attached interview sample table.

[81] The use of social networks has grown exponentially in recent years and involves a growing segment of the population. According to the 43th annual report by Censis, published in early 2015, 19.8 million Italians use at least one social network. The percentage of people who know about Facebook and YouTube is highest among those aged 14-29 (90,3% and l"89.2% respectively). The percentage is high also among adults (64.2% and 64%) and decreases significant only among old people (24.6% and 22.9%). In the latter group the percentage of actual users is also extremely low (around 1.5%). More than half the young people, instead, use Facebook (56,8%) and more than two thirds use YouTube (67,8%). There is also a significant percentage of adults who use YouTube (23,5%). See CENSIS, 2014.

[82] Facebook is the most used social network and is accessed mainly via personal computers but also through smartphones. People used it from a minimum of 2 visits per day to a maximum of 4 hours per day. It is usually used to communicate with friends, to meet other people, to inform oneself and express one's opinions and find out those of others on various topics. For this reason, the pages followed vary depending on the specific interests of the interviewed young people (music bands, study groups, political-cultural associations, etc.) each one of which has various simultaneous interests.

say, are the most targeted ones. [...] It seems like there's been a significant increase in this kind of talk compared to the past. There are some parties and groups that in my opinion are dedicated only to publishing a certain type of news and giving them more importance than they have in reality and they systematically do this kind of work" (IT-YP19).

"You know what the problem is? If I see that a politician incites hatred, speaks in violent ways, in racist ways, I will do the same, as a member of society, right? They think that it is freedom of speech… I don't see it that way, so obviously if I see my parents behaving in a negative manner [...] I follow my parents because they are the example I look up to … It's the same thing when we find ourselves in a particularly difficult economic and social situation and I see the politicians that should lead me on the right path who, instead, completely lead me astray, and I behave like them" (IT-YP8).

"I think there are groups and political movements that foster hate more than others because that's their slogan, that's the one they count on to get more votes [...], because by giving this idea that everything that's wrong, everything that's bad is the fault of a group, you create a scapegoat" (IT-YP3).

While in many cases the author of racist posts and comments are politicians and public figures, which of course amplifies the impact of the message, according to the respondents, one should not underestimate the role of "ordinary people", who, through their comments, express and spread offensive contents and hate discussions. The new social media (in particular Facebook, Twitter, etc.) have become places where people vent their dissatisfaction and the main media for discriminatory contents.

"I think there are people who join a given political party or anyways have their political ideas... but often it is precisely the ordinary people, I mean... not my personal friends but, you know, friends of friends or people who share the same Facebook page with me, you know" (IT-YP15).

According to the interviewees, one of the main causes of the spread of on-line hate speech is the anonymity, the sense of impunity, not having to take responsibility for your actions or words in front of real people. What many fear is that what gets posted on the Internet is bounced and multiplied, thus obtaining great visibility, while remaining practically anonymous.

"On the Internet, it is easy to post offensive comments because you can create false profiles…. you can say anything you want without being judged... you can judge without being judged" (IT-YP5).

"it’s as if there was a wall between them and me and therefore they feel free to say whatever they want" (IT-YP20).

3.3.3. Responses and reactions

Only one fourth of the interviewees claimed to have intervened to counter the arguments, opinions or comments, but most of them think it is useless and unfruitful. Their reaction tends to be mild, some of them left groups because of offensive comments but, in general, they have a laissez-faire attitude, they prefer not getting into a conversation with the authors of the comments by responding, they think it would be useless.

Similarly, although the interviewees were aware of the norms governing the use of Facebook and the possibility of reporting improper use, only two of them over twenty reported racist pages to Facebook managers, and only in one case the page was shut down, after many reports by various users.

> "The reporting method is clear, however, I tell you, it looks like a joke, because if you tell me «you can report it» but in the end there are no consequences, I stop reporting stuff. [...] Comments can be erased while with pages it's more difficult. But it's useless: comments can be erased but then others are posted, instead if you shut down the page you solve the problem, you know?" (IT-YP8).

> "I didn't do it because I say «there's no point», I mean, the person continues to have those bad ideas; actually, now, also thanks to this survey you're doing, I'm realizing one should do it, because continuing to allow comments like those ones, which tend to remain on a webpage and therefore can be also shared by other people, could incite even more people to hate" (IT-YP15).

None of the young interviewees has ever reported hate speech to the police: they seem less aware of the legal tools at their disposal and many wonder about the border between freedom of speech and respect for others. Some believe that there should be more restrictive norms on the use of social media, others believe that education and dialog are essential.

> "In my opinion, this is not freedom of speech, it'is abuse of speech… because we get to the point that you abuse your right to speak to hurt other people… at that point it's no longer a right" (IT-YP5).

> "Freedom of speech can be allowed until you don't offend certain kind of people, at least" (IT-YP9).

> "If someone did something [would react], a lot of FB pages would no longer exist. I think it is necessary to intervene with more restrictive norms, but seriously, regulating this thing, obviously. Here it's not a question of freedom of speech because if you offend someone… or you can also say that in a polite manner, you can support certain positions and nobody denies you that right, but if you say «kill them», or «bulldozers on Roma people», or «gas is the

solution», that's not the same thing, that is not freedom of expression" (IT-YP20).

Although all the respondents were aware of the spread of discriminatory and racist comments on the Internet, they do not seem to recognize the more indirect attacks towards them, as evidenced by comments like the following:

> "Certainly they can be offensive but… I don't feel offended because I see it from a another point of view, I don't see myself [as an] immigrant, but they can be offensive indeed" (IT-YP10).

> "Today I don't want to be, I don't want to consider myself Muslim, I don't want to consider myself Moroccan, I take up and leave and make my own life, nobody is persecuting me… so frankly, when I hear those things, I cannot really relate them to the social category they are directed against" (IT-YP8).

3.3.4. The concept of hate speech in the eyes of young people

It is interesting to note that none of the respondents has ever received information on hate speech and its spread over social media, and that they have never heard of campaigns against on-line hate speech. Though in general, all of them seem to have clear enough idea of the concept and a definition of hate speech of their own, none of them has heard about the topic in school, or at university, on the workplace or from the media.

> "The incitation to hate can be also very subtle, it is the creation of an enemy, exploiting situations, problematic situations [...] It justifies one's capacity to impose oneself" (IT-YP10).

> “It means insulting a person without knowing him, that's what hate is” (IT-YP8).

The interviewees believe that young people should be more involved in the fight against hate crimes, but also that the schools, teachers and organizations should be more up to date and teach the ethical and responsible use of social media.

4. Concluding remarks and recommendations

4.1. Concluding remarks

Young people and professionals tend to agree on the fact that the Web and especially social networks create a sensation of anonymity and impunity and that on-line hate speech is a common phenomenon. However, professionals seem more aware of the cultural and political context and stress that the real problem is not the web, but the political and public debate, which has become increasingly permeable to racism and xenophobia. Therefore, they seem more proactive and aware of the need to report and combat the issue than young people.

The Web is part of real life. There is a circular process of mutual contamination and fostering: in a cultural and social context in which the feeling of intolerance is very common, it is easy for this to be reflected on the Web and vice versa. Hate speech on the Internet is an expression of a larger phenomenon, in the political/public debate: it is widespread in everyday public life, through various forms and channels, including through Web and social media. You cannot fight a phenomenon without considering its context.

The debate on the effects and "responsibilities" of new media must not lead to underestimating the normalization and legitimization of hate speech through traditional mass media and political propaganda.

Penalty is an important tool, but just one of the available ones. Both young and the professionals agree that it is important to consider the existing legal and regulatory instruments (which should be more frequently and effectively applied), but they are not sufficient to tackle complex issues such as hate speech crimes, which require a constant and long-term ethical, cultural and political battle, by all social actors, aimed at generating the capacity to contrast and considerably limit the phenomenon in society.

For this purpose, all the interviewees believe that it is necessary to educate people, making all actors (public institutions and civil society) able to take action and to address the problem through information and awareness raising campaigns, but also to provide support, advocacy and protection of victims.

Respondents believe that a different cultural attitude should establish itself and spread across the whole society: from ordinary citizens to politicians, from school teachers to journalists, up to the public opinion in general. The responsibility and self-regulation of social media managers, administrators and providers is essential as well.

Finally, both young people and professionals stress the need for a greater awareness of the problem and of educating people to a more responsible and ethical use of the Internet, starting from the schools.

4.2. Recommendations for prohibiting, redressing and inhibiting online hate speech

- **Adaptation of the national legislative and regulatory framework:**
  - **Strengthening the legislation** against hate speech and racial discrimination, by restoring the original scope of the Mancino law and the severity of the penalties it provided, so that they can be proportionate and dissuasive (IT-P1, IT-P2).

- **Extending the categories of individuals protected** by the Mancino law, which are presently limited to race or ethnic origin, nationality, religion and linguistic minorities (IT-P1, IT-P2, IT-P6)
- **Adopting strategies and tools that facilitate the reporting of hate speech, not only by vulnerable victims but also by third parties**, such as "third part reporting" (IT-P3).

- **Responsability of public representatives, politicians and opinion makers:**
  - **As for party leaders and politicians,** it is recommended that, given their function as public officials and their influence, they abstain in their public statements from using hate speech or promoting stigmatizing stereotypes and prejudices; to be proactive in the fight against hate speech in political discourse (interviewed professionals and young people, Associazione 21 luglio). Possibility to provide peer pressure measures such as temporary suspension from the party (IT-P6), or considering the fact of being a public representative as an aggravating circumstance in case of hate speech (IT-P7).
  - **In regards to high-level public figures and members of the government,** it is recommended that they promptly and resolutely condemn all cases of hate speech, in particular those involving politicians or public representatives, and stress that hate speech is incompatible with international, European and constitutional principles (interviewed professionals and young people, Associazione 21 luglio).

- **Responsability of media professionals:**
  It is recommended that the President of the Order of Regional Journalists and the President of the National Order of Journalist ask firmly for the principles of the Carta di Roma to be respected and to apply them rigorously in the case of penalties. In the same way, on-line newspapers directors are invited to avoid replicating and spreading stereotypes and prejudices (interviewed professionals, Associazione 21 luglio).
- **Reinforcing the mandate of UNAR** (Ufficio Nazionale Anti-discriminazioni Razziali) ensuring its full independence de jure and de facto; formally extending its powers by ensuring that the pertinent legislation refer not solely to discrimination based on ethnic origin or race, but also on color, language, religion, nationality and national origin; authorizing it to bring legal proceedings (ECRI).
- **Allocating adequate human and financial resources to law enforcement agencies and to the national equality body, in order to carry out a more extensive and effective monitoring** of the phenomenon: they should be able to give a picture, although not exhaustive, on the evolution of the phenomenon and its use by perpetrators groups/movements (IT-P1, IT-P2, IT-P3, IT-P4).

- **Multi-agency interventions and collaborative networking:**
  - **Encouraging collaborative and multi-level projects** involving various stakeholders (Public Administrations, Equality body, Police, Judiciary, University and Research Institutes, civil society organizations, minority

representatives, etc.), both on a national and local level, to outline a shared strategy for preventing and contrasting hate speech (IT-P1, IT-P2, IT-P3, IT-P4, IT-P6).

- **Encouraging networking among different subjects of civil society,** so that they can promote more advocacy and lobbying actions in social media and in society, draw attention to cases of hate speech and solicit sanctions (IT-P1, IT-P2, IT-P6).
- **Promoting a greater collaboration among the police and civil society organizations**, on the one hand, in order to help the police discover cases of hate crimes and hate speech; on the other hand, in order to make organizations aware of all the legal instruments available for reporting cases of hate speech, so that they can promote them and help contrasting the phenomenon of under-reporting (IT-P1, IT-P2, IT-P3, IT-P4).

- **Awareness raising, communication, education interventions:**
  - **Allocating more public resources to awareness raising and information campaigns for citizens** on the issue of hate speech and the reporting instruments available. These campaigns should be carried out also using modern communication channels, i.e. those available on the Internet, in order to reach both hate victims and perpetrators more directly (IT-P1, IT-P2, IT-P3, IT-P4, interviewed young people).
  - In particular, through the collaboration among the Ministry of Education, UNAR, the Police, human rights organizations, minority representatives, continue to foster **educational and awareness raising activities in schools** on a regular basis, involving teachers, students and families, aimed at a more responsible use of the Internet (IT-P3, IT-P4, interviewed young people).
  - **To promote a widespread knowledge among the civil society associations of the regulatory, legal and victim support tools**, in order to urge a more effective combating of the phenomenon, promoting the empowerment of actors who are able to undertake advocacy and protection of victims (IT-P1, IT-P6).
  - Also by allocating more financial resources, **continuing to promote awareness rising and training activities for the police forces** on hate speech and hate crimes in general, on a national and regular basis, increasing the awareness of the problem, of the tools to fight it and promoting a more tolerant and respectful culture in the police forces themselves (IT-P1, IT-P2, IT-P3, IT-P4). In particular, it is essential to provide both a general knowledge of hate crimes and discrimination to all police operators, and a more specific and up-to-date knowledge on online hate speech for police investigators (IT-P3, IT-P4).
  - **Promoting more awareness raising, information and training activities on hate crimes and hate speech also in the judicial apparatus** (prosecutors, judges, lawyers associations, etc.), so that it can effectively ensure the application of the existing rules and adopt all the tools at its disposal to sanction these issues, starting from the recognition of the aggravating factor of racism in ordinary crimes.

- **Arranging workshops and meetings among various stakeholders** (police, judiciary, civil society organizations) to exchange experiences and establish collaborations (IT-P3, IT-P4).

- The complexity of the issue requires an intervention strategy not limited to national boarders, but also **at a European and international level**:
  - **Harmonizing legislations among European countries and encouraging a greater legislative and judicial collaboration at an international or at least European level**, as indicated by the Additional Protocol to the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime (IT-P1, IT-P2, IT-P3, IT-P4, IT-P6).
  - **Promoting more fruitful collaborations with social media managers and providers** (interviewed professionals).

Recommendation	**By whom**	**For whom**
Reform current legislation and allow third party reporting	Police, NGOs	Legislators
Induce political and institutional representatives to assume their responsabilities, to avoid hate speech and firmly condemn it.	All professionals and young people	Politicians, institutions
Induce media professionals to avoid hate speech and to firmly condemn it, respecting their professional ethics.	All professionals and young people	Media professionals, Order of Journalists
Reinforce the powers of the national Equality body (UNAR)	ECRI	Institutions
Allocate human and financial resources to the police and the national equality body, to effectively monitor and combat hate speech	Police, NGOs	Institutions
Encourage collaborative and multi-stakeholder actions on a national and local level, developing a joint strategy for preventing and fighting hate speech	Police, NGOs, lawyers/legal experts	Police, prosecutors, NGOs, social media providers, journalists, institutions, universities and research institutes
Encourage networking among various civil society actors in advocacy and lobbying activities	NGOs, lawyers/legal experts	NGOs, lawyers/legal experts' associations
Promote a greater collaboration among the police and civil society associations	Police, NGOs	Police, NGOs
Allocate more public resources to awareness raising and information	Police, NGOs,	Institutions

campaigns for citizens on hate speech and the legal instruments available, starting from schools	Young people	
Promote a more widespread knowledge of the regulatory, legal and victim support tools	NGOs, lawyers/legal experts	NGOs, lawyers/legal experts' associations, Equality body
Also through greater financial resources, continue to promote wide-spread long-term actions aimed at increasing the awareness, expertise and training of police forces	Police, NGOs	Institutions, Police, NGOs, lawyers/legal experts' associations, Equality body
Promoting more awareness raising, information and training activities on hate crimes and hate speech among lawyers/legal experts and judiciary	Police, NGOs	Judiciary, lawyers/legal experts' associations
Arrange workshops and meetings among various stakeholders (police, judiciary, civil society organizations) to exchange experiences and establish collaborations	Police	Police forces, judiciary, lawyers/legal experts' associations, NGOs
Harmonize legislations among European countries and encouraging a greater legislative and judicial collaboration at an international or at least European level	Police, NGOs, lawyers/legal experts	EU institutions and countries
Promote more fruitful collaborations with social media providers	All professionals	National and European institutions, social media providers

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Annexes

Annex 1: Mapping data collection table

DATA COLLECTION									
Name of POM	**Social Media Platform**	**Date when joined**	**Number of followers as of March 2015 (provide exact date when checked)**	**Gender distribution of most active fans (FB)**	**Number of posts in the last year (Mar 14 – Feb 15)** **YouTube : Total nº of videos. When was the last video uploaded?**	**Average nº of posts per day (FB, Twitter, Instagram)**	**Most frequently used words and level of engagement (FB)** **Top words (Twitter, Instagram)**	**Does it link to the official POM webpage?** **Does it link to other social media of the POM? If yes, which?**	**Any further information**
Lega Nord	Facebook	18/07/12	177850	N/a	12442	46	Frequency: rom (Roma), matteo, allearmi (to arms) (to arms), salvini, ore, nord, federale (federal), governo (government), renziacasa (Renzi go home), veneto Engagement: rom (Roma), matteo, popolo (people), salvini, renzi, zaia, governo (government), immigrati	Website Twitter YouTube	

							(immigrants), stato (State), cittadini (citizens)		
Lega Nord	Twitter	01/02/08	14150	N/a	12049	49	Top words: rom (Roma), matteo, ore, nord, salvini, inviare, piazza, tuo, tv, renziacasa (Renzi go home)	Website	
Lega Nord	Google+	N/a	65930	N/a	0	-	-		
Lega Nord	YouTube	29/02/08	5112	N/a	Tot. n. videos: 932 Last video: February 2015	-	-	Website Google +	
Lega Nord	Instagram	N/a	176	N/a	9	0,1	-		
CasaPound Italia	Facebook	26 december 2003	115k	N/a	428	1.2	CasaPound, Stefano, Simone, Italia, CPI, Roma, Sovranità (sovereignty), Renzi, Sostieni (support), Clicca (click) 10 words with high engagement level: Casapound, Stefano, Renzi,	Link to the official website	

							Iannone, Popolo (people), Sovranità (sovereignty), Roma, Milano, CPI, Italia More frequent hashtags: #Casapound #foibe Hashtag ad alto livello engagement: #stopinvasion #corteo #umbria #marò		
CasaPound Italia	Twitter	november 2010	11k	N/a	779	2.2	Casapound, tutti (all), Roma, Milano, contro (against), grazie (thank you), stefano, sostenere (support), italiani (Italians) Top hashtag: #casapound #foibe #stopinvasion #solidarietà #cultura #bolzano #stoconmirko #conferenza #annouono #lanciano	Link to the official website	

CasaPound Italia	Google +	N/a	226	N/a	0	0	-	Link to the official website and to the Facebook page	
CasaPound Italia	YouTube	22 may 008	3925	N/a	Last video published on 23 march 2015. Tot. n. videos in the last year: 3		-	Link to the official website and to Google+	
Blocco Studentesco (CasaPound Italia)	Facebook	14 september 2010	11 k	N/a	117	0.3	10 parole più frequenti: Blocco, Casapound, Studentesco, Roma, Fabio, Ricordo (memory), Martino, Italia, Corteo (demonstration), Settimana (week) 10 words with high engagement level: Martino, Fabio, Ascoli, Roma, Italia, Lombroso, Questo (this), Video, Corteo (demonstration), October More frequent hashtags: #studentesco #blocco	Link to the official website	

							#bloccostudentesco #Fermo #Latina #Ascoli #Casapound #Napoli Hashtag ad alto livello engagement: #Roma #Pordenone		
Blocco Studentesco (CasaPound Italia)	Twitter	october 2012	2 k	N/a	137	0.4	Blocco, studentesco, Roma, delle, contro (against), nuova (new), scuole (schools), pubblico (public), ricorda (remember), foto (photo) Top hashtag: #bloccostudentesco #studentesco #blocco #ascoli #fermo #napoli #latina #trento #ritrovatestesso (findyourself) #libri (books)	No	
Blocco Studentesco (CasaPound Italia)	Google +	N/a	2	N/a	0	0	-	No	
Blocco Studentesco	YouTube	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	-	-	N/a	It hasn't any YouTube

(CasaPound Italia)									channel, its contents are conveyed through CasaPound Italia YouTube page.
Forza Nuova	Facebook	13/09/10	135527	N/a	1163	2,9	Frequency: radiofn, lavoratori (workers), scuole, nuova, contro (against), nostre (our), forza (force), tesseramento, Fiore, gender Engagement: case, italiani (Italians), lavoratori (workers), impegno (commitment), contro (against), italia, famiglie (families), forza (force), tesseramento (membership), pagare (pay)	Website	
Forza Nuova	Twitter	01/09/12	6787	N/a	192	2	camerata (comrad), mai (never), affidare (entrust), forza novista, della (of), rom (Roma),	Website	

							tonino, present (Here!), rienzo, stato (State)		
Forza Nuova	Google+	N/a	300	N/a	0	-	-		
Forza Nuova	YouTube	03/03/11	1240	N/a	Tot. N. videos: 17 Last video: November 2014	-	-	Website Google +	
Forza Nuova	Instagram	N/a	551	N/a	6	0,04	-		
Resistenza Nazionale	Facebook	20 march 2011	24k	N/a	789	2.2	Frequency: VoxNews, Crimini (crimes), Immigrati (immigrants), Tutti (all), Leggi (read), Diffondi (pass on) Top hashtag: #voxnews Engagement: Crimini (crimes), Immigrati, Tutti (all)	Link to the official website	The selection of most frequent words on Resistenza Nazionale page is very short (not up to 10).
Resistenza Nazionale	Twitter	October 2011	721	N/a	3,123	8.7	VoxNews, immigrati (immigrants), crimini (crimes), tutti (all), degli (of the), islamico (Islamic), oggi	Link to the official website	

							(today), Dresda, Charlie, Casarini Top hashtag: #stopimmigrazion (stopimmigration)		
Resistenza Nazionale	Google +	N/A	9	N/a	0	0	-	Link to the official website	
Resistenza Nazionale	YouTube	29 march 2008	194	N/a	Last video pubblished on 8 december 2013. Tot. N. videos in the last year: 0	-	-	Link to the official website and to social profiles (Facebook, Twitter) Link to: - Gianni Togni's Google+ page -Website and Twitter profile of http://tuttiicriminidegliimmigrati.com/ - affiliated Website www.identita.com - Affiliated Facebook pages: "Italia agli italiani" and "Stop agli immigrati"	The official YouTube channel of Resistenza Nazionale is its administrator Gianni Togni's one.
Losai.eu	Facebook	22/06/10	152000	N/a	4248	3	Frequency: questo (this), maurì, video, condividete (share), sempre, sai, credere, daniele, bambini, vedere Engagement: mondo (world), notizia (news), masse (masses), continueranno (they will continue), condividete (share), dicono (they say), sempre (always), credere, daniele,	Website YouTube	

							nostro (our)		
Losai.eu	Twitter	01/11/10	1981	N/a	2219	2	daniele, questa (this), dell (of the), video, maurì, sai (you know), gli (him), mai (never), nuova (new), credere (believe)	Website	
Losai.eu	Google+	N/a	446	N/a	0	-	-	Website	
Losai.eu	YouTube	07/07/10	19881	N/a	Tot. N. videos: 145 Last video: February 2015	-	-	Website Google +	
Losai.eu	Instagram	N/a	-	N/a	-	-	-		
Radio spada (Losai.eu)	Facebook	24/11/12	12350	N/a	4783	12	Frequency: tutta (all), figlia (daughter), Cristo (Christ), giorno (day), Dio (God), signore (Lord), questo (this), nostra (our), gesù (Jesus), santo (saint) Engagement: quaresima (Lent), figlia (daughter),	Website	

							cuore (heart), peccato (sin), popolo (people), vita, Cristo (Christ), Dio (God), signore (Lord), nostra (our)		
Radio spada (Losai.eu)	Twitter	01/06/12	1036	N/a	122	10	Top words: della (of the), sull (on the), radio, più (more), nuovo (new), alla (to the), perché (because), prima (before), chiesa (Church), nelle (in the)	Website	
Radio spada (Losai.eu)	Google+		27	N/a	0	-	-		
Radio spada (Losai.eu)	YouTube	10/02/13	188	N/a	Tot. N. videos: 51 Last video: february 2015	-	-	Website Google +	
Radio spada (Losai.eu)	Instagram	-	-	N/a	-	-	-		

Annex 2: Detailed interview sample table

Professionals:

CODE	NAME	LAST NAME	GENDER	ROLE	ORGANIZATION	SCOPE (ISSUES COVERED)
IT-P1	Grazia	Naletto	F	President	Lunaria (no profit association)	Civil, social and human rigts
IT-P2	Paola	Andrisani	F	Referent for monitoring	Lunaria (no profit association)	Civil, social and human rigts
IT-P3	Stefano	Chirico	M	Head Secretary	OSCAD (Observatory for Safety against Acts of Discrimination of the Ministry of Interiors)	Acts of discrimination
IT-P4	Roberto	De Vita	M	Referent	Postal and Communications Police (specialized office of the State Police)	Criminal and administrative violations in the area of communications (including cybercrimes)
IT-P5	Guido	Caldiron	M	Journalist, expert	-	Extreme right-wing
IT-P6	Barbara Giovanna	Bello	F	Lawyer	ASGI (Association for Legal Studies on Immigration)	Discrimination, hate crimes
IT-P7	Guido	Scorza	M	Lawyer; Professor of Law and New Technologies	-	Law and New Technologies

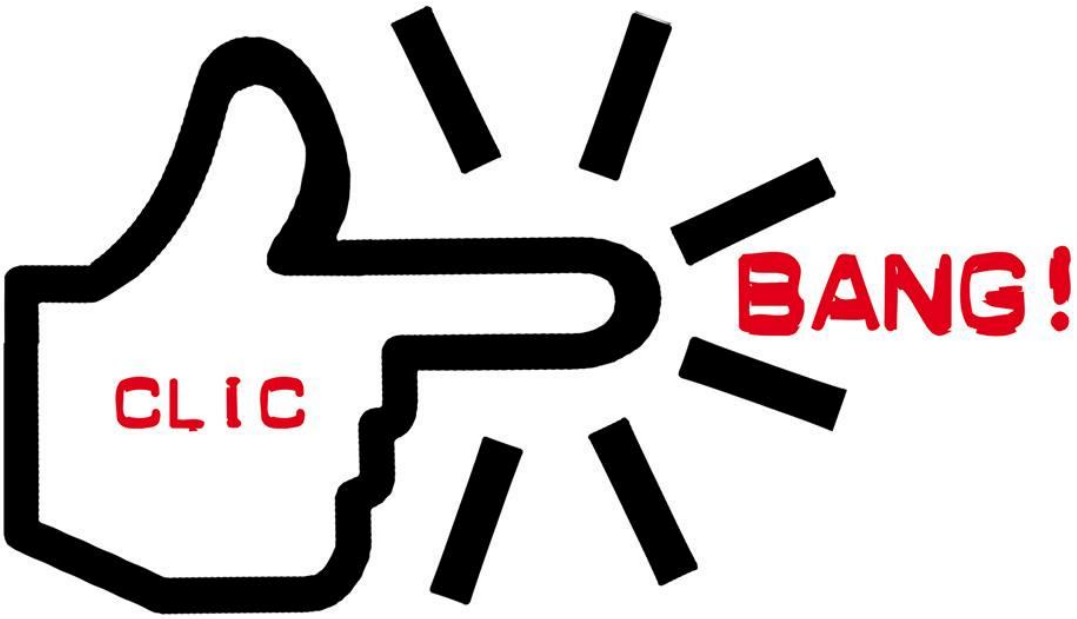
Young people:

CODE	GENDER	AGE	COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	RELIGION	RESIDENCE IN ITALY
IT-YP1	MALE	30	SYRIA	MUSLIM	6 MONTHS
IT-YP2	MALE	23	ND	MUSLIM	3 YEARS
IT-YP3	MALE	27	BANGLADESH	MUSLIM	13 YEARS
IT-YP4	FEMALE	28	BANGLADESH	MUSLIM	19 YEARS
IT-YP5	MALE	18	MOROCCO	MUSLIM	BORN IN ITALY
IT-YP6	FEMALE	21	ALBANIA	ND	12 YEARS
IT-YP7	MALE	28	CENTRAL AFRICA	CATHOLIC	4 YEARS
IT-YP8	FEMALE	21	MOROCCO	MUSLIM	17 YEARS
IT-YP9	FEMALE	28	BELARUS	CATHOLIC	3.5 YEARS
IT-YP10	MALE	26	PANAMA/PERU	ND	13 YEARS
IT-YP11	MALE	23	SENEGAL	MUSLIM	10.5 YEARS
IT-YP12	MALE	29	BANGLADESH	MUSLIM	6 YEARS
IT-YP13	MALE	ND	ND	MUSLIM	ND
IT-YP14	FEMALE	29	ETHYOPIA	CATHOLIC	24 YEARS
IT-YP15	FEMALE	25	MOROCCO	MUSLIM	ND
IT-YP16	MALE	18	MOROCCO	MUSLIM	BORN IN ITALY
IT-YP17	FEMALE	18	SENEGAL	MUSLIM	BORN IN ITALY
IT-YP18	MALE	23	SRI LANKA	ND	15 YEARS
IT-YP19	MALE	30	SRI LANKA	ND	25 YEARS
IT-YP20	FEMALE	27	ETHYOPIA	ND	ND

Online hate speech in Romania

Fieldwork report

P R I S M



WORDS ARE WEAPONS.

PREVENTING REDRESSING & INHIBITING HATE SPEECH IN NEW MEDIA

I. Codreanu

FDP

With financial support from the Fundamental Rights and Citizenship Programme of the European Union

1. Introduction to the national context

1.1. Economic, social, and political climate in relation to hate speech

In the last 25 years, after the fall of communism in December 1989, Romania continuously tried to overcome the socio-economical gap with the western European countries and struggled to grasp its European identity. It is an ongoing process that in the late 90's met some serious regress when the political instability and aggressive nationalism reflected on the quality of inter-ethnic relations in Romania. Thus, 19th – 22nd of March 1990 are to be remembered in the Romanian recent history as the most violent day when massive street confrontation took place in Tirgu-Mures city[1] between the Romanian population and the Hungarian population. After three days of violent confrontations, five people were killed and another 278 were injured[2]. Roma community is another national ethnic group that during the time faced hostile attitudes and actions. During 1990 – 1997, in various regions of Romania there were reported 30 violent clashes between the Romanian population and Roma communities. The aftermath of these reported conflicts show at least three Roma people killed and many collateral damages[3].

Looking at this history of violence that targeted two of the most important national ethnic groups in Romania[4] we could easily state that those were the dark post-communist ages of Romania. In the same time period, due to the new democratic framework and to the liberalization of the political arena, various ethnic parties (such as Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania) and nationalistic parties (Greater Romania Party) started to animate the Romanian politics, tackling delicate and dormant issues regarding the multicultural and multiethnic cooperation.

If the early 90's were dominated by irresponsible politicians that tormented the Romanian society with populism and nationalistic themes, by the late 90's the new European project somehow deflated the radical attitudes within mainstream politics. The year 2000 presidential elections were a heavy milestone for the Romanian democracy when the Romanians had to choose in the second term of elections between Ion Iliescu (the first elected president after 1989, the representation of neo-communism in Romania) and Corneliu Vadim Tudor[5] (president of Greater Romania Party, a radical ethnocentric party). Eventually, Iliescu won the elections with almost 67% of votes, despite he was being perceived as the symbol of neo-communism in Romania and the general opinion was that Romanians went for the lesser evil in that year.

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[1] Placed in Mures county were the Hungarian community represents more than a third of the general population

[2] http://www.digi24.ro/Stiri/Digi24/Special/Reportaj/Reportaj+Digi24+conflict+interetnic+martie+1990+Targu+Mures (accessed on 22nd of June 2015)

[3] Istvan Haller – 20 years of unsettled conflicts: http://www.sferapoliticii.ro/sfera/138/art04-haller.html (accessed on 22nd of June 2015)

[4] According to 2011 national census, the Hungarian population represents almost 7% of total population and the Roma population is about 4%

[5] Corneliu Vadim Tudor died on 14th of September 2015, at age of 65. His disappearance is currently subject to many eulogistic messages from high rank politicians and mainstream media, despite Vadim's nationalistic and xenophobic reputation.

The long political and institutional reforming process that preceded Romania's integration within European Union (1st of January 2007) eroded the hard core nationalistic discourse in Romanian politics and radical parties such as Greater Romania Party became less attractive for Romanians. Yet, shortly after Romania's European accession a new ethnic narrative was fermenting in the public arena: Romania's prestige within European Union. Due to various incidents reported in other EU countries, which allegedly were provoked by Romanians, the public opinion at Bucharest tried to find an explanation. Romanian media was soon to discover that those Romanian were, actually, Roma and consequently a clear delimitation of Roma from Romanians[6] was necessary in order to preserve Romania's perception abroad. This racist narrative is still popular within the general public and occasionally is being used by Romanian conservative politicians for electoral purposes only. Until now, such exotic legislative initiatives did not get political support and no Romanian politician seems keen to fully endorse radical initiatives that would antagonize the interethnic landscape. Yet it is worth mentioning that until now no Romanian politician has fully and publicly denounced populist or racist sideslips.

Soon after Romania's EU accession, within the public opinion was to be observed a mild revival of ethnocentric attitudes that consisted in a mix of Euroscepticism and subtle populist messages due to repeated critics coming from Brussels about Romania's poor performance on various strategic areas. Moreover, since 2012 Romania the intensity of ethnic nationalism has increased as Social Democratic Party won both the general elections and the European elections under the populist-nationalist slogan "Proud to be Romanian". In 2014, the president of Social Democratic Party, Victor Ponta, first credited to win the presidential elections, consistently attacked his counter candidate due to his ethnicity (German) and his religion (Protestant). Eventually, Mr. Ponta did lose the elections.

After 25 years of democracy, Romania is still looking its way in understanding diversity, multiculturalism and its failures in integrating some constitutive ethnic groups. If the first democratic decade was extremely violent and bloody, the next decade could be comprised as an age of compliance and acceptance of European values. The global economic crisis and the general discontent on the establishment triggered again false fears and reanimated classic narratives on the scapegoats on duty: Roma community that puts in peril Romania's perceptions abroad, the Hungarian menace that will lead to our national integrity or even LGBT rights which are seen as a direct offence and threaten for the Romanian cultural legacy. All combined express a conservative Romania that is more responsive to extreme right stimuli than to social-democratic values.

1.2 Statistics on hate speech

In Romania, the focus on studying hate speech phenomena and on providing longitudinal and in-depth analysis is very inconsistent.[7] "Hate Speech in Romania" study provides a

[6] On 10th of September 2010, a Romanian deputy issued Bill 668/2010 - Proposal for official use of Gipsy denomination instead of Roma. On 5th of April 2011 the bill was rejected by a parliamentary commission.

[7] (Hate speech in Romania – national integrated report, 2014). The report "Hate speech in Romania" is the very first initiative in this matter and it was issued by Civil Society Development Foundation (a Romanian umbrella

synthetic overview on the phenomena both on national and international level. According to the authors, the main targets of hate speech in Romania are: Roma, Hungarians, Jews and LGBT, while the most active perpetrators are the media (as a generic actor), politicians and opinion leaders.

A longitudinal study on the portrayal of Roma in media and cultural productions, during 1990 – 2011, confirm the conclusion that Roma is the most common target both of hate speech and stereotypical representation[8]. According to the authors, "the nowadays Roma inherits a heavy baggage of negative stereotypes and social roles, that it is being preserved almost intact within the collective mentality for 20 years now" (Toma, Codreanu, 2014). The most substantial conclusion of the study is that, in time and along with the technological progress, there has been an attitudinal transfer between journalists and their audience. If in the early 90s journalists were the most active hate speech perpetrators and the vast majority (almost 90%) of news items on Roma were negative and offensive against Roma, in the late 2000s mainstream media became quite neutral towards Roma, while the audience became extremely reactive and offensive against Roma.

In 2010 and 2011, a consortium formed by two national NGOs and an equity body [9] explored the attitudes of online readers towards Roma within 5 major media outlets. In this concern, two major topics from media agenda that were potentially hate-speech triggers were selected. The first case study focused on media coverage on Bill 668/2010 – Proposal for official use of Gipsy denomination instead of Roma, initiated by Silviu Prigoana, deputy within the Romanian Parliament. This topic was being investigated within September 2010 and April 2011. The second case study focused on a more general issue that, in theory, could not be subject to ethnic controversies: the begging phenomena (timeframe – January to November 2011). Both case studies revealed the gap between journalists' neutral attitude on Roma and users' unbalanced reactions, whose tendency of negative labelling varied from 54% to 84%. Moreover, both case studies revealed that about 10% of total users comments consisted in direct and explicit hate speech messages that were subject to legal sanctions.

Another study, issued by Istvan-Peter Ianto Petnehazi on "User-generated hate speech: Analysis, Lesson Learnt, and Policy Implications. The Case of Romania" (2012) which included a descriptive analysis on more than 6000 user comments within 7 media outlets, since March 2011 to April 2012, has covered an extensive sample of target groups: Roma, Hungarians, Jews and LGBT. Petnehazi identified 22 types of hate speech that varied from insults to explicit instigations. Hate speech markers were identified in almost 38% of the analyzed comments. The hate percent (Petnehazi, 2012) ranged from 36, 40% on LGBT to 42, 30% on Roma.

Apart from these sporadic diagnostics on Romanian hate speech there are regular sociological studies that measure the social distance between the general population and

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NGO that develops and manage key interventions among Romanian NGOs) in 2013 – 2014, as a part of its strategic approach on promoting initiatives that aims at redressing hate speech and discrimination within Romanian society.

[8] (FDP, 2014 – Study on mass culture and social perceptions and attitudes towards Roma)

[9] The consortium consisted in ActiveWatch – Media Monitoring Agency (a human rights NGO specialized in media rights and research), National Council for Combating Discrimination (national equity body) and For Democracy Association (policy think tank)

the minorities. By 2010, The National Ethnic Barometer pointed out that since year 2000 the level of intolerance in relation with Roma community decreased from 75% in 2000 to 65% in 2010. This slow but constant evolution could be explained by the consistent work of Romanian CSOs in organizing awareness campaigns and in monitoring discriminatory actions in Romanian society. Also, the modernization of the institutional and legal framework that aims at inhibiting discrimination, combined with the European oriented public discourse might contributed to slightly changes in Romanians' perceptions on Roma (Toma, Codreanu, 2014).

1.2.1 Main actors and channels involved

Despite its young and tormented democratic life, Romania has marginal extremist movements and actors. Their inconsistent presence in the public arena is peripheral and many times it falls into derision. In terms of online presence their presence is limited in closed inactive and small groups that cannot reach the mainstream agenda.

Greater Romania Party was the first nationalist party to be founded shortly (in June 1991) after the fall of the communist regime (in December 1989). During the time, the party and its leaders have built a sound reputation of being racist, xenophobic, and chauvinist and anti-Semite. Since 1991, the party is being run (with one year interruption within 2013-2014) by Corneliu Vadim Tudor, a very charismatic and controversial politician that during 1992 to 2004 succeeded to place Greater Romania Party within the Romanian Parliament. In 1992, Greater Romania Party won 22 mandates in the Parliament and four years later, in 1996, won 27 mandates. In 2000, Greater Romania Party won almost 25% (121 – absolute value) of the eligible mandates within the Romanian Parliament and its leader, Corneliu Vadim Tudor reached the second term within the presidential elections. For Greater Romania Party and Corneliu Vadim Tudor year 2000 represents the peak of the political significance. Since 2008, Greater Romania Party did not get any seat in the Romanian Parliament. Despite his party decline in mainstream politics, Vadim ran for European Parliament elections in 2009 and won a mandate that expired in 2014, when he ran again for a new mandate and lost.

Another radical politician that has risen from Greater Romania Party is Gheorghe Funar who ran for 12 years the city of Cluj-Napoca (1992 – 2004) and has been a member of the Romanian Senate between 2004 and 2008. Funar, who joined Greater Romania Party in 1997, is famous for his chauvinistic views in relation with the Hungarian community in Cluj-Napoca (which represents about 19% of the total population, estimated at more than 317.000 inhabitants in 2002) and in general. Although Funar never over classed Corneliu Vadim Tudor in terms of charisma and effervescency, in 2013, after prolonged scandals within the party, he was elected president of the party. This "coup d'état" - as it was described by the dethroned Vadim from the head of Greater Romania Party - was to be settled a year later when Corneliu Vadim Tudor took back his leader position after a court decision was formulated on this internal issue. Gheorghe Funar ran for the presidential elections with no party affiliation and got voted by less than 1% by the Romanian electorate.
This radical nationalist triad, formed of Corneliu Vadim Tudor, Greater Romania Party and Gheorghe Funar, is a clear evidence of the decay and erosion of the formalized nationalism in Romania after 2008. Despite their access to mainstream politics and media, and despite

having their own publications (Tricolorul[10] – online newspaper and Greater Romania Magazine – national weekly magazine) the traditional radical voices did not succeed to overcome the general oblivion. Nowadays, Greater Romania Party faces a great deal of problems starting with financial difficulties and ending with Corneliu Vadim Tudor's public appearances which are mostly related to entertainment industry and tabloid topics.

A similar trajectory was followed by the New Right Organization, founded in 2000, that is promoting a national-orthodox doctrine and who's core values are cantered on some controversial figures in Romanian history, mainly leaders of Legionnaires movement that activated in Romania between World War I and World War II and promoted a hybrid ideology that tackled both orthodoxy and fascism. As opposed to Greater Romania Party, the New Right Organization did not focus on creating a visible and persuasive leader and tried to act as an organized entity. Their main activities target Roma, Hungarians and LGBT community. The New Right Organizations does not have a consistent presence in the public arena and mainstream media. Since 2007, the New Right Organization is organizing a counter-march, called "The Normality March" that takes place in the same day with "Gay Fest" (usually in June). 2007 Gay Fest edition is to be remembered as the most violent parade, when more than 100 extreme right supporters – including members of the New Right Organization - tried to physically attack the participants, but with no success. From year to year, the New Right Organization faces the reduction of participants that are willing to manifest against LGBT community and the counter-marches are quite placid. Also, the New Right Organization organizes various protests and marches against Roma community and Hungarians in Romania (especially in Harghita and Covasna, two Romanian counties were the Hungarians are the majority), but their events do not get coverage within national media nor do they get popular on the Internet. Moreover, the organization faces intestine disputes looking for legitimacy and a proper representation, as the current leader is being contested by some members that quit the organization during 2013 and 2014. As for their communication strategy, the New Right Organization is quite inactive in online and social media and therefore they are barrely noticeable in the public arena. New Right Organization's Facebook pages are fragmented, with a poor activity, without an unitary strategy.

If the traditional hate prepetators somehow failed to consolidate their presence within the Romanian society, since august 2014 a new conservative and nationalist politician uprised on the radical politics stage and he seems to overcome the nationalistic void that was created by his predecesors. Bogdan Diaconu, a young politician, age 36, quit the current ruling party (Social Democrat Party) and founded a new political formation, the United Romania Party, in Aprilie 2015. Diaconu is a member of the Romanian Parliament since 2012 and he constantly promotes anti Hungarian messages and recently revived a populist legislative bill that aims at replacing the current denomination of Roma into Gypsies. As opposed to the other radical actors, Diaconu is very present in the media agenda both by his frequent contributions on a blogging platform that is hosted by a major media outlet in Romania (Adevarul Holding) and his social media activity. Taking into account the current political distress in Romania, his

[10] In 2007 Corneliu Vadim Tudor revived a nationalistic brand, Tricolorul newspaper and ever since it became the main communication platform for the party. There are no data on Tricolorul's audience since the publication is not enlisted to the national registry of publications. Nowadays, Tricolorul is available online.

ability to engage quite a massive online community and his rapid evolution, Bogdan Diaconu should be considered a challenge for the nationalism and hate speech phenomena.

1.2. Responses: Institutions and monitoring agencies dealing with the issue of hate speech

National Council for Combating Discrimination (NCCD) was established by art. 16 of the Government Ordinance no. 137/2000 on preventing and sanctioning all forms of discrimination and it is the most important equity body in Romania. Between 2002 and 2013, NCCD analyzed 6324 cases that tackled various forms of discrimination. Some of the radical actors that are mention in the current report have been, during the time, sanctioned either with administrative fines or public recommendations. In 2006, NCCD fined the New Right Organization for hosting on the official website racist and xenophobic articles and imposed their removal[11]. Also, NCCD is the very first equity body that sanctioned high rank politicians for discriminatory declarations. Former president Traian Basescu has been subject to NCCD sanctions both in 2007 and 2013 for discriminatory speech against Roma community, Bogdan Diaconu in 2010 for anti-Hungarian declarations and Corneliu Vadim Tudor for sexist remarks in 2013. In 2014, NCCD president, Mr. Csaba Asztalos declared that the strategic approach of NCCD is more focused on debating the discrimination climate in the Romanian society instead of enforcing punitive actions against hate perpetrators.[12]

National Audiovisual Council (NAC) was established by art. 10 of Law no. 504/2002 - Broadcasting Act and is an autonomous public authority under parliamentary control that acts as a guarantor of public interest in the audio-visual landscape. The Law no. 504/2002 include specific provisions that entitles NCA to suspend broadcasting licenses should an audio-visual channel promote or accept public incitement to hatred on ethnic, racial or religious bases (article 95/1). In 2002 NCA used this legal provision and suspended the broadcasting license to a private national television (OTV) for promoting some "anti-Semite, xenophobic, discriminatory and defamatory" allegations formulated by Corneliu Vadim Tudor, president of Greater Romania Party at that time. NCA's drastic decisions was subject to public controversies since the members of NCA failed to consistently motivate their decision, and therefore they were accused of censorship and abuse of power.[13] Eventually, OTV started to broadcast again in 2004 until 2013, when NCA definitively withdrawn OTV's broadcasting license for persistent violation of the Audiovisual Law and Code and for cumulated unpaid fines. Between 2008 and 2013, NCA communicated 16 sanctioning decisions to various national and regional media outlets for promoting and allowing racist and defamatory declarations in different contexts. Two of the 16 sanctions were grounded on the poor and unconvincing moderation within some TV shows where Corneliu Vadim Tudor formulated hostile and inflammatory opinions that could easily be interpreted as incitement and hate speech.

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[11] Press release issued by NCCD on 27th of September 2007 which mentioned New Right Movement sanctioning: http://cncd.org.ro/noutati/cauta/Comunicat-de-presa-43/ (accessed on 1st of July 2015)

[12] Interview with Csaba Asztalos, president of NCCD within *Study on mass culture and social perceptions and attitudes towards Roma*, issued by FDP in 2014.

[13] This case study has been included in *2002 - Romanian Free Speech Annual Report*, issued by Media Monitoring Agency in 2003.

As opposed to NCCD and NCA who seem to be the most active institutions in monitoring and sanctioning hate speech, the Ombudsman, the civil courts and the prosecutor offices in Romania do not provide public data that would lead to the conclusion that these institutions make use of the legal provisions that aims at combating and sanctioning hate speech. Yet, Romania has adapted its legal framework and has one of the most up-to-date legislation package in order to redress and sanction hate speech and hate crimes, and any other form of discrimination.

2. Mapping of the social media activity of xenophobic parties, organizations and movements

2.1. Introduction to the parties, organizations or movements and rationale for selection

When selecting the actors included in this section we took into consideration several criteria such as: history, political platform, participation in mainstream politics and public visibility. One of the most important conclusions is that extremist and xenophobic formations in Romania have identity issues, their political brands being eclipsed by their leaders. Therefore we opted to enlist in this section both the most prolific extremist organizations and their leaders.

Founded in 1992, Greater Romania Party is one the oldest radical parties in Romania that played more than a decade in the first league of Romanian politics. According to the official statutory documents[14], Greater Romania Party "is a center-left party, national oriented that stands for pluralism in politics and society, and aims at relocation of the relations within the society under the rule of law, constitutional democracy and social justice." Officially, Greater Romania Party has local branches in each county of Romania and in smaller cities, but the exact number is not known. Additionally, there are no official data on the number of members and there is a major contrast between Corneliu Vadim Tudor's allegations[15] that set the number of member at around 300.000 and other sources[16] that quote the membership at about 37.000 people. Moreover, since its formation, Greater Romania Party has been dominated by the impulsive and strong personality of Corneliu Vadim Tudor. Since 2008, the party is being marginalized in the national politics and lost both members and supporters.

Corneliu Vadim Tudor followed the same pattern as Greater Romania Party, eroding his political carrier and credibility due to his tempestuous public appearances. Vadim has a long

[14] According to the official website of Greater Romania Party: http://prm-central.ro/statut/ (accessed on 6th of July 2015)

[15] Press release issued by Corneliu Vadim Tudor on 27th of July 2013, quoted by hotnews.ro (news platform): http://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-politic-15268248-corneliu-vadim-tudor-exclus-din-prm-gheorghe-funar-ales-noul-presedinte-partidului.htm (accessed on 6th of July 2015)

[16] According to an analysis regarding the political parties in Romania published by stiripesurse.ro (news platform) on 10th of September 2014: http://www.stiripesurse.ro/cati-membri-au-partidele-din-romania-ce-partid-a-pierdut-din-adepti_931222.html (accessed on 6th of July 2015)

history of violent reactions against the Roma and Hungarian communities, and he is well-known for negation of the Holocaust. Starting with 2004, during the electoral campaign, Vadim changed his public discourse on Jewish community and tried to reconcile with the Romanian leaders of the Jewish community, but with no success. In 2013 he temporarily lose the leadership of the party, after the members of the board accused him of irresponsible behavior and for discrediting the party. In his place is elected Gheorghe Funar, another controversial member of Greater Romania Party, but the new president of the party loses his position after less than six months, when a civil court decided that Corneliu Vadim Tudor was the legit president of the party and his impeachment was not statutory.

Since 1997, when Gheorghe Funar joined Greater Romania Party he was perceived as the right hand of Corneliu Vadim Tudor. Funar is famous for his anti-Hungarian attitudes and for his unusual populist measures that he took as he was mayor of Cluj-Napoca city, such as painting all city benches with the same colors from the Romanian flag. Funar never reached Vadim's popularity and magnetism, but he took his chances and ran for presidential elections in 2014 with no party affiliation. He did not pass the first election tour where he gathered only 0,47% of the votes.

New Right Movement is an ethnocentric extremist movement, founded in 2000 that has 40 branches in Romanian counties. There are no official data regarding the membership affiliation. According to their mission the New Right Movement "want to build a Romanian Romania, a national Christian state, independent and sovereign, dignified and prosperous". In this concern, all their activities are promoted as a tribute to the fathers of Romanian Legionnaire Movement that flourished between the two World Wars and were affiliated and inspired by the Nazi doctrine. New Right Movement has a syncopated presence in the public arena and occasionally organizes thematic protests against the Hungarian and Roma community, and against LGBT community. Moreover, recently, the movement passed through various internal disputes and contestations of the current leadership. In this context, New Right Movement occupies a marginal place in Romanian society and it is not perceived as a relevant and serious threat for the public order.

Finally, the mapping process revealed a new figure in the extremist landscape that has a continuous ascension mainly in online communities. Bogdan Diaconu (age 36), is a member of the Romanian Parliament since 2012 (when he was enlisted in Social Democratic Party) and since April 2015 he officially registered a new political formation, United Romania Party. The official doctrine of the new party is National Democracy and it's focused on "defending national territory and the reunification of Basarabia." Diaconu is notorious for his extreme views on the Hungarian community and, more recently, on Roma community. As opposed to the other radical actors, Diaconu has an aggressive communication strategy, he is very active in online media and he gets access to several national TV news channel. For this reasons, Diaconu and his party are perceived as forms of nationalism revival in the Romanian society.

2.2. Interpretation of the mapping data

Corneliu Vadim Tudor's official Facebook page was created on 26th of October 2010. During the investigated time period (1st of March 2014 – 28th of February 2015) Vadim's page cumulated almost 28.000 new likes and increased from 57.894 to 85.850 likes. Within this

time period the page hosted 795 posts that cumulated 259489 likes, 36143 comments and 61430 shares. The average number of Facebook posts is about 2,97 and the most frequent words used by the host were: Romania, Romanians, nation. Corneliu Vadim Tudor owns a Twitter account that it has been inactive since 2009.

Gheorghe Funar's official Facebook page was created on 9th of October 2014, a week after the debut of the electoral campaign and started with 737 likes. Until 28th of February 2015 Funar's Facebook page reached 901 likes and hosted 96 posts that cumulated 2779 likes, 408 comments and 1627 shares. Funar has been active only 46 days within October 2014 – February 2015, with an average rate of 2,23 posts/day. The most frequent words that were from the same lexical family: Romania, Romanians. Gheorghe Funar is not present in other social media.

On 28th of October 2014, New Right Movement created a new official Facebook page and, according to the page administrators, that was their fifth attempt as Facebook has closed previous versions of the page. On 22nd of May 2015 the administrators of the page were explaining to one of the community members that "Facebook put down more than 15 pages created by us because we used the Celtic cross, so we choose to be cautious." The new Facebook page of New Right Movement started from 946 likes and by the end of February 2015 reached 1126 likes. During this time, there were published 304 posts (the average rate is at 3,14 posts/day) that cumulated 2521 likes, 151 comments and 1217 shares. Once again, the most frequent words present on New Right Movement's Facebook page were related to Romania and Romanians. The New Right Movement has a dedicated Twitter account that it is inactive since 2011. Also, the official YouTube Channel has 476 subscribers and during the monitoring period hosted 14 videos, the latest one being published on 5th of December 2014.

Bogdan Diaconu's official Facebook page was created on 1st of March 2012. On 1st of March 2014 Diaconu already had 6553 and by the end of the investigated period he was reaching 110007 likes, with a dramatic increase of over 44000 likes within a year. In the same time frame, in 357 days he constantly published 983 posts, at an average rate of 2,75 posts/day. All his posts gathered 771964 likes, 89682 comments and 220769 shares. Apart from the traditionally most used words (Romania, Romanians) , Bogdan Diaconu managed to engage his community and the most frequent words that generated a high rate of engagement were: Hungarian(s) and UDMR (The Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania). Diaconu is very active on Twitter too, where he has 539 followers and posts 4,8 tweets per day, mostly the same content from his Facebook account and links to his blog. His YouTube channel has only 14 subscribers and 7 videos published in 2012 and 2013.

Greater Romania Party has a diffuse presence in social media, especially on Facebook were there are various inactive groups and fan pages that uses the identity of the party. The only Facebook page that claimed to be official has 902 likes. Due to some issues regarding the privacy settings no other data could be extracted for the purpose of the research. Additionally, the official YouTube channel of Greater Romania Party has 45 subscribers, hosts 27 videos, the latest one being published on 5th of January 2015. No other presence within social media was identified.

2.3. Comparative elements of the parties', organizations' and movements' use of social media

The analysis on the use of social media reveals without a doubt that there is a dramatic gap between the traditional extremist entities and Bogdan Diaconu, the most fresh and new extremist figure in the political arena. As all investigated entities turned out to use the same narrative that is centred on national identity, Diaconu was the only one capable to engage his online community promoting anti-Hungarian messages.
Also, the analysis reveals that Bogdan Diaconu is the only actor that frequently uses Twitter platform in order to optimize the audience reach on his Facebook account or on his blog that is hosted by a national newspaper, Adevarul.
Finally, we noticed that none of the analyzed POMs use their YouTube channels to extend their communication strategy.

2.4. Reflections from the interviews

In order to complete the mapping of social media activity of the most present extremist entities in Romania, all professionals and young people that were interviewed within the project were asked specific details about the 5 selected actors and their presence in social media.

As for the 8 interviewed professionals they all were familiar with the 5 extremist actors, but did not specifically follow their online activity:

> "I do not monitor their Facebook accounts and I am not even looking for them. I think some of them are so low profile that it doesn't even worth the effort. Let them be in their small world. I become more vigilant only when close friends and colleagues warn me about something messy on one's Facebook account." [RO – P 3]
> "They are so marginal that they do not worth looking for. (…) I cannot recall any visible actor that in the recent years would act exclusively in the hate speech paradigm." [RO – P 6]

When asked about Bogdan Diaconu's rapid evolution in creating a massive online community the general opinion among the interviewed professionals is that he will not succeed to transfer this virtual community in the real life:

> "Ultrasensitive topics may reach a certain type of audience, but do not attract so much sympathy and confidence to be converted in votes. With controversial topics one could win at best notoriety, but not votes." [RO – P1]
> "Diaconu has no chance because people have more specific needs. He has nothing to offer, he won't be able create a relevant party that has something to say." [RO – P 4]
> "I think that Diaconu has no political and social impact. He is irrelevant." [RO – P 5]

Two of the interviewed professionals manifested a reserved attitude towards Bogdan Diaconu's evolution and compared his profile to Nigel Farage:

"Diaconu tries to follow the same path as Corneliu Vadim Tudor. He is a Nigel Farage look alike, except he is not targeting the immigrants yet, since it is not a major issue for our society" [RO – P 2]
"If things will continue in this trend, in the next two years we will have a new Nigel Farage. This is why we chose not to publicly react against him so we would not raise his popularity." [RO – P 6]

On a general note, all professionals agreed that the internet and social media are the main tools used by politicians to promote their agenda, where they quietly observe how people mobilize, even in incivility or hate speech:

"Today I think social media is very important, and that's why the politicians talk about Facebook's Party. For example, our Prime Minister is constantly communicating on Facebook and on Twitter very important activities. I think our President speaks more on Facebook than on television or in public debates. Politicians have begun to understand the importance of online communities, especially since there is capacity to mobilize, to create new social movements. People gather and greatly mobilize online. Participation in the street is quite frail, timid. If you manage to gather in the street a few hundred or few thousand people is already a success. And mobilization is primarily made on social networks and comes in a horizontal direction, not up-bottom." [RO – P 1]
"In social media you cannot avoid offensive comments. There is no real moderation. You cannot control what people talk and that shouldn't be the purpose. The most important are the institutional accounts. People would not comment if they weren't triggered." [RO – P 4]
"Facebook helps the exhibition of hatred. Social media has decisively democratized the hate speech." [RO – P 5]

3. Experiences from the ground

3.1. Sample and sampling process

In order to complete the secondary data review within the project we addressed to 32 young people and collected mainly insights from their daily life in social media and their perception on hate speech phenomena. Additionally, we interviewed 8 professionals that are dedicated either to redressing and inhibiting hate speech or are studying the phenomena.

The eight professionals were selected from Bucharest (capital of Romania) and represent four major activities. Three of them were selected from NGO sector and are actively involved in counter speech initiatives and awareness programs that tackles hate speech in Romanian society. The professional panel also include two media professionals that are responsible with managing the editorial and the user generated content within a blogging platform that it is integrated within the online edition of a national newspaper and within the related social media accounts. Other two professional come from academia and social research field and they are specialized in media studies, political marketing and political studies. Moreover, the interviewees' panel included one representative of a national equity body that is dedicated to combating all forms of discrimination.

The 32 young people that were interviewed within the project were selected from three geographical areas in Romania: Cluj-Napoca city (15 respondents), Arad city (14 respondents) and Bucharest (3 respondents). As for gender distribution, 17 of them are girls and 15 are boys, aged 16 to 24 years. When selecting the interviewees no ethnic criteria were applied, yet the operators did follow their personal opinions on ethnicity and on the relationships between the majority and minorities in Romania. Only one interviewee claimed that she was a Serbian ethnic (second generation).

3.2. Professionals

3.2.1. Main insights from the interviews

All professionals pointed out in that Romania is not yet confronted with a virulent extreme right movement, barring in mind that in the next years the phenomena might get a bigger proportion provided the socio-economic climate will deteriorate and Romania will have to manage sensitive issues, such as massive migration, that the Western European countries have to deal with at present:

> "Hate speech is motivated by socio-economic aspects. Ethnicity is not the fundamental problem, but the social aspect is because there is the misconception that the stranger puts in peril the social security. (…) As the quality of life will improve and our country will effectively join the EU, Romania will become an interesting place for immigrants and here we have all chances to increase hatred on migrants. As Vintila Mihailescu once said: "Each country has its own Gypsies". For now, in our country and in Eastern Europe, the radical right has a problem with traditional minorities." [RO – P 1]

> "I think the New Right Movement have a chance to speculate and to grow upon the frustration created by poverty and lack of opportunities. In Hungary, the Jobbik movement has speculated the social exclusion in small towns and villages. Sadly, at this moment, there is no alternative discourse to ridicule the mythology that is being promoted by the New Right Movement." [RO – P 4]

A possible explanation for the extreme right movement's lack of vitality could be found within the moderate neo-populist orientation of all mainstream parties that occupy the first seats in the political arena:

> "There are all sorts of radical structures that fail to empower because the left and right messages are already taken. Extremist parties have little chances to progress in this area because the major parties have stolen their promises and voters." [RO – P 1]

> "It is shocking that in Romania there is a perception that everything is legitimate in an electoral context. Populism is widespread and is everywhere. We like to say that no extremist party has won the European Elections. They didn't win because level of ethnocentrism in Romania increased compared to late 90's and has become acceptable." [RO – P 4]

"Lately politicians seem reluctant in perpetrating hard core hate speech. They rather touch sensitive strings on Romanian society. For example, they are not talking necessarily about Roma, but they do talk a lot about the Romanians and their perceptions abroad." [RO – P 6]

"When cultivating hatred and false fears the political capital is growing. And since politics and economics are directly related it's easy to identify who's the winner of this game." [RO – P 7]

When asked about the main actors that promote or encourage hate speech, all interviewed professionals identified media as one of the most favourable environment for hate speech and incivility to thrive:

"There is a huge problem with the quality of the content. Offensive language it is much easier to occur when you do not provide quality content. (…) There is this appetite for sensationalistic headlines, as if the article will be more visible, and you will benefit from this situation. In fact, you do not win anything, you just spread a new hatred line. The so called online audience is nothing but a bogus." [RO – P 4]

"Mainstream media uses perversely hate speech targets. They think that if they confirmed some prejudices they will receive clicks." [RO – P 6]

The media professionals describe their daily work as a constant negotiation both with their readers and contributors that claim free speech even when they use offensive and harmful messages:

"It's very frustrating for me, a young professional, to be put in the position to explain to an author that is using our blogging platform the differences between free speech and hate speech. Also, my editing work is misinterpret as censorship, despite my honest efforts to create a credible debating space." [RO – P 2]

"In the last two years I got used with various insults and threats coming from different readers that had their comments banned. First they use all kind of arguments, from insulting my maturity or IQ to warnings that they will take legal actions because we imposed censorship. Eventually, they calm down and play by the rules." [RO – P 8]

3.3. Young people

3.3.1. Uses of and approach to social media by young people

All interviewed young people are highly connected within social media and use them on daily basis for communicating with friends and school coleagues and for leisure activities. With one exception who voluntarily suspended her Facebook account, all respondents have active accounts. Instagram is the second most used social media platform by 25 of the 32 interviewees. Six of the 32 respondents declared that they frequently access ask.fm, an online community where users can open various threads and receive feedback from the

community. Additionally, most of the interviewed young people use communication apps such as WhatsApp or Snapchat.
All respondents have special privacy settings on their Facebook accounts and are familiar with Facebook's terms and conditions, although they did not fully read them.

3.3.2. Channels, contexts and main actors of online hate speech according to the experiences of young people

Most of the interviewees mix up hate speech acts with incivility and cyber bullying and do not have a clear perspective on the phenomena. Also, 29 of the 32 interviewees have identified offensive language and incivility:

> "In most cases strangers are those who insult you. With your friends is a different story because usually the insults are more like a joke or a confirmation of your friendship." [RO – YP 2]
> "People joke a lot on the Internet. Sometimes a joke is misinterpreted and things escalade. People start attacking and threatening each other. (…) I saw this kind of situations mainly on Facebook groups." [RO – YP 23]
> "It didn't happen to me personally but in general there are certain groups that distribute all sort of jokes and memes that might be offensive, might be misinterpreted and one thing to another appear all kind of disputes." [RO-YP 26]

Most of the interviewees weren't able to identify specific topics or moments that contribute to online incivility or hate speech. According to five of the respondents domestic politics contribute to online incivility and they evoked 2014 Presidential elections as a major trigger for offensive and hate messages, when people with different political views were very confrontational and aggressive. Young people (4) consider that sports torment users' online behaviour, especially on sport groups or fan pages. Another four respondents vaguely indicated "Romanians are coming" documentary as a hatred trigger, although they mostly heard about the event from mainstream media:

> "During the last presidential elections I noticed many insulting comments and statuses. People were attacking each other and some of them acted as if they can freely express whatever was crossing their mind." [RO –YP 15]
> "Offensive comments appear especially on elections or when there are major sport events or when media present various scandals with politicians."[RO – YP 19]
> "I heard about the 'Romanians are coming' documentary and there were tons of hard messages. There was so much hate in those comments against Gipsy or Roma. I don't like the term Gipsy, I prefer Roma. I think that Gipsy denomination it's insulting by itself." [RO – YP 27]

One of the most important findings from the interviews that were organized with young people is that none of the 32 interviewees voluntarily or pro-actively is following any of the included in the mapping section of the current report. Moreover, most of them did not recognize all 5 extremist actors, with the exception of four young people who were familiar those entities' agenda and general via contextual sources.

When asked about the common perpetrator's profile in social media, they provided heterogeneous responses, although most of them pointed at younger people that are active in social media:

> "Young people and politicians use offensive language, as if they enjoy to demean the others."[RO – YP 9]
> "Average people are more offensive because they think they can say anything they want and feel, because no one knows them." [RO – YP 16]
> "Mostly teenagers use an offensive language, but lately I see many elders that discovered Facebook and other social networks. They seem worse than teenagers." [RO – YP 17]

According to the interviewed young people, the general incivility and hate speech are encouraged by the physical distance and by the lack of direct contact between users:

> "It is much easier to hide and to use the keypad as a weapon in order to insult and to offend. If one would meet face to face his victim the situation would be completely different" [RO – YP 24]
> "When you're nothing but an avatar it is much easier to react and to comment upon certain topics, because you know that no one will follow you in the real life. Online you are freer to manifest and to express your opinions than in your daily life." [RO – YP 5]
> "They cannot be directly affected. They just seat in front of the desktop and use write. Not being put in the position of looking the other in the eye gives them automatically more courage." [RO – YP 23]

3.3.3. Responses and reactions

When observing or confronting with hate speech or uncivil messages most of the interviewed young people chose not to react, except when they are direct targets or one of their friends are subject to incivility. Only three of them have used the report functionality that is provided by Facebook but they did not do a follow-up to verify if Facebook community answered their reports. Therefore, most of the young people opt for the block, spam and unfriend functions that are more efficient and instantly remove feeds from users they consider to be uncomfortable.

Most of the young people chose not to react against hate speech and labelling that targets generic or vulnerable categories since there are not personal and private matters:

> "There is nothing you can do and after all it's their opinion. If you know that what they say it's wrong it's not worth thinking about their perceptions."[RO – YP 5]
> "Usually I try not to get involved in disputes, only if I can really help. (…) But when you try to help eventually you get in middle for what it's worth."[RO – YP 15]
> "Sometimes I feel revolt because it's not fair and I feel like I need to intervene but I am afraid of other reactions and that I would be perceived as a meddler." [RO – YP 28]

Taken together the answers young people provided on this item we can extrapolate and conclude that young people either became immune against hate or offensive speech or they are very cautions when chosing their battles as they are aware of the counter reactions that could worsen the relations within social media.

3.3.4 The concept of hate speech in the eyes of young people

As stated before, young people encountered some difficulties in grasping the concept of hate speech and the most common confusion was related to offensive speech or cyber bullying. Due to the structure and the flow of the interview, when asked to provide a personal definition of hate speech most of them provided intuitive yet vague answers:

> "Hate speech occurs when you offend or aggress one person or a group just because they are members of different minorities with different racial origins, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation."[RO – YP 8]
> "Definitely it is related to hate and envy. Probably it is about frustration and the hatred that prevails between human beings." [RO – YP 17]
> "It is a radical speech that aims at persuading the masses to join harmful causes, such as the extermination of a religious or racial group." [RO – YP 24]

4. Concluding remarks and recommendations

4.1. Recommendations for prohibiting, redressing and inhibiting online hate speech

All interviewed professionals outlined that a major priority for the Romanian society is to protect and promote free speech and human rights within consistent public debates coordinated by the media and politicians, as part of a general educational process that targets all social categories. As for specific actions that should be initiated or extended as a general practice, in order to redress or inhibit hate speech, the selected professionals suggested that the hate speech problem should be addressed mainly to the media and politicians that occasionally trigger hatred within the Romanian society. Within this national awareness and educational intervention program teachers should be intensively trained to acknowledge and promote human rights since they are more likely subject to racist attitudes.

In this concern, Romanian media should change its current practices and focus on quality-content in order to attract quality-audience that would be less willing to engage or to accept hate speech. Also, media outlets should train their staff members in order to efficiently and substantially provide moderation services within their online platforms. According to the professionals, the moderation process must be interactive and responsibly explained to the perpetrators.
One professional suggested that private companies should take distance and denounce advertising contracts with media outlets or online platforms that promote hate speech.

Interviewed young people mostly insisted on more educational, both formal and informal, programs that aims at raising awareness and at providing efficient tools to inhibit hate speech.
Some of the young people recommended that Facebook should enable filter programs to eliminate offensive speech while other suggested that Facebook policies should be more drastic that should lead to total ban for users that have a history of hateful and harmful behavior.

Country	**Recommendations**	**By whom**	**For whom**
Romania	National debates on promoting and protecting free speech with respect for human rights.	Professionals	Media Politicians
	De facto sanctioning when hate speech occurs	Professionals	Judicial authorities Equity bodies
	Educational framework centred on human rights and diversity	Professionals	Educators Government
	Media outlets should insist on quality content and quality interactions with their audiences (even when moderating their activity)	Professionals	Media
	Sponsors should not advertise and associate their brands with media outlets that trigger hate speech	Professionals	Private companies
	Schools should include more formal and informal activities that promote human rights and anti-discrimination (tools to fight against hate speech)	Young people	Educators
	Social media platforms should improve their facilities in order to efficiently report and eliminate hate speech messages – to some extent, total ban of users that promote hate speech	Young people	Social media platforms

4.2. Concluding remarks

The overall picture on hate speech in Romania reveals various gaps in media and politicians' accountability and in general population's education and attitudes towards diversity and inter-cultural dialogue. Moreover, the not so promising socio-economical perspectives made room for new radical voices that are trying to enforce an alternative discourse, more ethnocentric and Eurosceptic than the one already used by the traditional yet confused parties. In a bird's eye Romania's radicalization is a matter of time and there is no turning back. This worrying diagnostic should not be perceived as a fatality yet as an opportunity since we have identified the problems and the proper measures to be taken in joint ventures, which enable academia, CSOs and national equity bodies that work for promoting and protecting human rights.

ANNEXES

DATA COLLECTION									
Name of POM	**Social Media Platform**	**Date when joined**	**Number of followers as of March 2015**	**Gender distribution of most active fans (FB)**	**Number of posts in the last year (Mar 14 – Feb 15) YouTube: Total nº of videos. When was the last video uploaded?**	**Average nº of posts per day (FB, Twitter, Instagram)**	**Most frequently used words and level of engagement (FB)** **Top words (Twitter, Instagram)**	**Does it link to the official POM webpage?** **Does it link to other social media of the POM? If yes, which?**	**Any further information**
Corneliu Vadim Tudor	Facebook Twitter	Oct 2010 April 2009	85.850 265	N/A -	795 -	2.96 -	Romania, Romanians -	-Official webpage -	Twitter account inactive since 2009.
Gheorghe Funar	Facebook	Oct 2014	901	N/A	96	2.23	Romania, Romanians	-	Active on Facebook only 46 days.
New Right Movement	Facebook Twitter YouTube	Oct 2014 Sept 2009 Oct 2010	1126 9068 476	N/A - -	304 14 – 5th of	3.4 - -	Romania, Romanians - -	Official webpage - Official website	Prior to October 2014 their Facebook account has been suspended due the violation of Community Standards. Twitter account inactive since 2009. In total there are

					December 2014				108 videos that reached 167.991 views.
Bogdan Diaconu	Facebook	March 2012	110007	N/A	983	2.75	Romania, Romanians, Hungarians, DAHR	Personal website	Within march 2014 – February 2015 the number of fans almost doubled. Extremely active.
	Twitter	June 2011	539	-	N/A	4.8	N/A	-	
	YouTube	Sept 2012	15	-	0	-	-	Personal website, Facebook account and Twitter account	His channel host only 7 videos from 2012 and 2013.
Greater Romania Party	Facebook	N/A	902	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Fanpage Karma couldn't return insights due to either technical problems or due to account's settings.
	YouTube	Sept 2014	45	-	27 – 5th of January 2015	-	-	-	-
INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA OF EACH POM									
Corneliu Vadim Tudor	On 1st of March 2014, Corneliu Vadim Tudor had 57894 fans on Facebook and by the end of the investigated period he has reached 85.850 fans. He has been active 267 days within March 2014 – February 2015 and his 795 posts were appreciated by 259489 people (likes). In addition, his posts cumulated 36.143 comments and were distributed/shared by 61.430 times. He is using his personal account both for political/electoral purposes, both personal (poems, pictures, and links to press articles).								

	His Twitter account is inactive since 2009.
Gheorghe Funar	Gheorghe Funar's Facebook account is active since 9th of October 2014 and it has been active only 46 days within the monitored period. Funar started in October 2014 with 737 fans and by the end of February 2015 he has reached only 901 fans. Within October and February he published 96 posts that cumulated 2779 likes and generated 408 comments. Gheorghe Funar's posts were shared by 1627 times.
New Right Movement	New Right Movement's new Facebook page was launched on 28th of October 2014 and started with 946 fans. By the end of February 2015, the number of fans increased to 1127. During late October to February there were published 304 posts that were appreciated by 2521 people and generated 151 comments and 1217 shares. New Right Movement is also active on YouTube where they have 476 followers and where they published 14 videos (the last one published on 5th of December 2014).
Bogdan Diaconu	Bogdan Diaconu is the most active radical politician in social media (he posted regularly 357 days since 1st of March 2014 to the end of February 2015). During the investigated period, Diaconu reached 110.007 fans (in February 2014 he had 65.533 fans) and published 983 posts (average 2,75 posts/day) that were appreciated by 771.964 people, generated 89682 comments, and were distributed by 220.769 times. On Twitter, Diaconu has 539 followers and has an average rate of posting at 4,8 tweets/day. On YouTube Diaconu is very inactive with only 15 subscribers and 7 videos that were published prior to 2014 (2012 and 2013).
Greater Romania Party	Greater Romania Party has a diffuse presence on social media and the only data that could be collected via Fanpage Karma suggested that the official page would have 902 fans. No other data were available and by the time of finalizing this report the technical support team could not provide complementary data. On the official YouTube channel, Greater Romania Party has only 45 subscribers and within the monitoring period has published 27 videos (the latest was published on 5th of January 2015)
COMPARATIVE ELEMENTS	
There is a net gap between the traditional POMs (Greater Romania Party, Corneliu Vadim Tudor, Gheorghe Funar and New Right Movement) and the new comer, Bogdan Diaconu who seems to be more substantial in promoting his key messages at very high frequency. As opposed to Diaconu, the traditional POMs promote heterogeneous content that vary from domestic politics to miscellaneous topics from the media. All monitored POMs have a high addressability on Romania and Romanians, but only Bogdan Diaconu managed to reach a high engagement level by promoting anti-Hungarian messages. Eventually, Diaconu is the only politician who engaged his fans while the other POMs did not succeed.	

SAMPLE PROFESSIONALS			
Crt	***Gender***	***Domain***	***Expertise***
1	m	Academia/Research	political marketing and consulting, social media and electoral campaigns, political science
2	f	Media	senior coordinator of an integrated blogging platform within the online edition of a national newspaper, journalist
3	f	NGO	counter speech, anti-discrimination expert
4	f	Academia/Research	communication studies, media effects, digital behavior
5	m	National Equity Body	anti-discrimination law enforcement, solid background as human rights activist and blogger.
6	m	NGO	counter speech, anti-discrimination expert, currently is coordinating a local project dedicated to redress hate speech in Romania
7	f	NGO	counter speech, debate and public speaking, human rights activist, high school teacher
8	m	Media	coordinator of the Community Desk within the online edition of a national newspaper, management of user generated content

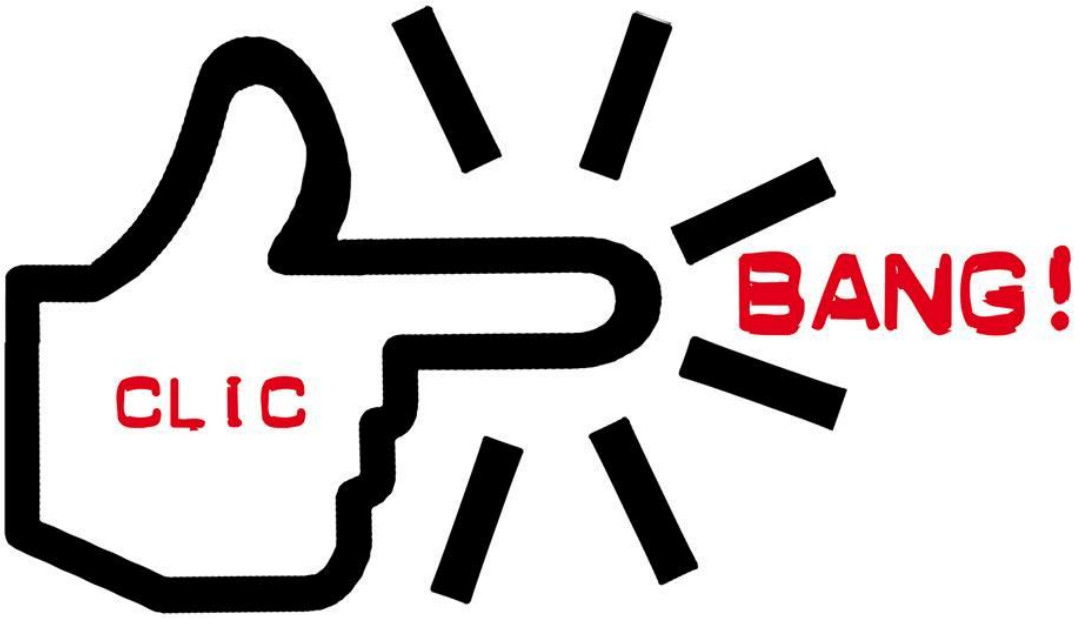
SAMPLE YOUNG PEOPLE			
Crt	***Gender***	***Age***	***Education***
1	f	17	high school
2	f	17	high school
3	f	17	high school
4	f	17	high school
5	f	17	high school
6	f	17	high school
7	m	16	high school
8	m	16	high school
9	f	18	high school
10	f	18	high school
11	m	19	faculty
12	m	20	faculty
13	m	19	faculty
14	m	19	faculty
15	m	22	faculty
16	m	18	high school
17	f	24	master/employee
18	m	17	high school
19	m	18	high school
20	m	18	high school
21	f	20	faculty
22	m	18	faculty
23	f	23	faculty
24	f	24	faculty
25	m	22	faculty
26	f	20	faculty
27	f	20	faculty

28	m	17	high school
29	f	23	master/employee
30	f	16	high school
31	f	17	high school
32	m	16	high school

Online hate speech in Spain

Fieldwork report

P R I S M



WORDS ARE WEAPONS.

PREVENTING REDRESSING & INHIBITING HATE SPEECH IN NEW MEDIA

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With financial support from the Fundamental Rights and Citizenship Programme of the European Union

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1. Introduction to the context of hate speech in Spain

1.1. Economic, social and political climate with a direct impact on hate speech

Following the general pattern across Europe, hate speech expressed on the internet is an increasing issue in Spain. This needs to be analysed in view of the deterioration in general of the situation for migrants and minorities during the economic recession - unemployment levels have risen, particularly affecting migrants and the Roma community. In addition to this, some of the more indirect consequences of the economic crisis has been the shift of focus and resources from equal treatment policies, and at the same time an increase in ethnic or racial discrimination in general (Rey Martínez 2014). In this sense, racism is affecting the lives of many immigrants, ethnic and religious minorities in Spain, with prejudices and discrimination suffered especially by the Roma and Muslim communities. Although direct racism is condemned in public discourse, concerns about irregular immigration are often publically expressed, and racism is often times privately tolerated (ENAR 2014). In this regard, much of the racism in Spain can be defined as "liquid racism", meaning that it is subtle and indirect, hiding behind assumptions and implicit claims (Rey Martínez 2014).

Politically, extreme right parties tend to have marginal electoral success in Spain (Pro Igual 2012). This report includes an analysis of some of these parties, presented in chapter 2. More importantly, however, the governing Popular Party tends to attract a wide range of the right-wing electorate and does express a rather harsh discourse against migrants, and especially against undocumented migrants. In general, monitoring agencies are concerned that xenophobic political discourse and hate speech is on the rise, with some media channels contributing to the dissemination of negative stereotypes against specific groups (ENAR 2014). In this regard, civil society organisations have expressed concern about the invisibility of the issue of racism, discrimination and hate crimes, not only in public and political discourse, but also in the official records, something which largely stems from the lack of official data in the law enforcement and justice systems, further detailed in section 1.3 (ECRI 2011). Along the same lines, Barcelona's Prosecutor for Hate Crimes and Discrimination emphasises that current statistics would be a good basis for preventative work and a key element in the fight against manifestations of intolerance, which is of particular importance in a society where hate crimes and discrimination are on the rise (SDOD 2013).

1.2. The public debate on hate speech versus freedom of speech

Within the public debate in Spain, as in many other countries, hate speech is commonly raised as two fundamental rights in conflict: *freedom of speech*, to protect opinions stated in public and the *prohibition of discrimination*, protecting persons and collectives from behaviours which lack respect, humiliate or depreciate them in relation to certain features, such as ethnicity (Rey Martínez 2014).

As further exposed in the project's interviews with experts, the balance between freedom of expression and hate speech is still a challenging issue in Spain:

"Freedom of expression does not cover everything and we are relativising opinions especially in relation to cyberhate - opinions and groups which later can be dangerous, because the convening power through the social media is important" [NGO Legal expert, ES-P2][1]

"We have to find limits, and the limit that hasn't been established is the aspect of dignity of persons, of respect of persons and collectives and we need to find that adequate balance in the debate […] We're doing a laboratory analysis without considering that this is very important in the work on the ground" [Prosecutor, ES-P4]

In fact, the public debate on the limits of freedom of speech has recently been revitalised in view of a coming law change of July 1st 2015[2], which among other things limits the freedom of speech to a higher degree. This law has been criticised by a wide range of opponents referring to it as "Ley Mordaza"[3]. This has to be seen in light of the previous dictatorship, which still influences the debate on freedom of speech in Spain to a great extent; thus making both the general public and academics lean towards defending it to the extreme.

1.3. Statistics and recent legal cases in relation to online hate speech

Despite the requirements by international institutions, up until now there has been no official statistical file of hate crime related incidents in Spain. This absence of statistics has been highlighted by various international institutions and NGOs, and has contributed to a severe lack of knowledge on the actual extension of the problem. This in turn may lead to invisibility of such crimes in Spain and the consequent lack of criminal, policy, and preventative measures (SDOD 2013). However, it should be emphasised that a change is currently underway, as in December of 2014 the Ministry of Interior presented a national protocol for law enforcement agencies for filing suspected hate crimes, also including protocols for "hate crimes committed through the internet and social media" as well as a web for victims support.[4] Furthermore, special prosecutors for hate crimes and discrimination have been established in all 50 provinces of Spain over the last few years (FSG 2014).

As a consequence of the previous lack of systematic compilation and classification of hate related crimes, current statistics are rudimentary and most data come from reports and complaints to NGOs. The exception is Catalonia where the autonomous police force Mossos d'Esquadra had already established a specific protocol for hate related crimes in 2010[5].

[1] Please section 3.1 for further analysis of the interviews with professionals working with issues related to hate speech, and Annex 2 for the full interview sample.
[2] Ley Orgánica 1/2015, de 30 de marzo, por la que se modifica la Ley Orgánica 10/1995, de 23 de noviembre, del Código Penal
[3] "The gag law", mainly referring to some severe limitations to freedom included in the law, such as defining demonstrating without a permit as a very serious infringement ("infracción muy grave") penalised with fines up to 600.000 euros.
[4] "Protocolo de actuación fuerzas de seguridad del estado ante los delitos de odio y conductas que vulneran las normas legales sobre discriminación". Source: http://www.interior.gob.es/web/interior/prensa/noticias/-/asset_publisher/GHU8Ap6ztgsg/content/id/2990387. In this regard, the EU project FIRIR should also be mentioned, which has developed a training manual for law enforcement agencies "Handbook for training security forces in identifying and recording racist or xenophobic incidents" and which has trained around 800 agents in Spain.
[5] "Procedimiento de hechos delictivos motivados por el odio o la discriminación"

These cases are reported to the Barcelona Prosecutor for Hate Crimes and Discrimination[6], who indicates that although investigations relating to hate speech on the Internet and in social media have increased in the last few years, much work is still to be done. Furthermore, independently of any figures exhibited, the volume of crimes committed and not reported is estimated to be very high at around 80%[7], a figure that the State Council for Equal Treatment for Ethnic or Racial Themes elevates to almost 96% (SDOD 2012; MCI 2012).

Taking the above into account, 1.172 cases of *hate crimes*[8] were reported to the police in Spain during 2013, of which 381 were related to racism (Sos Racismo 2014). In contrast, Movimiento Contra la Intolerancia estimates the number of cases they collect each year to as high as 4.000 (MCI 2012). In addition to this, the latest Report by the Prosecutor for Hate Crimes and Discrimination describes several cases directly related to online hate speech. In this regard it is worth including these cases as illustrations: two ongoing cases are against neo-Nazi groups for spreading their music and ideology through the internet[9], one case is against another neo-Nazi group for threats to an Islamic cultural centre, two cases are against blog owners for spreading incitement to hatred, discrimination and violence with racist and anti-Semitic motives, one case directly linked to social media, against the administrator of a Facebook page for xenophobic and anti-Semitic comments, and finally one sentence convicting the neo-Nazi association "Frente Obrero Joven" of incitement to discrimination, hatred or violence using the Internet and social networks (SDOD 2013).

1.4. Main actors and channels involved

1.4.1. Target groups of xenophobic/racist hate speech

Reports specify several main target groups for racism, discrimination and hate speech in Spain[10], including Muslims, Roma, Jews and undocumented migrants (ECRI 2011, ENAR 2012, MCI 2012). Among these groups, the Muslim community is especially highlighted as currently being a target of hate speech and discrimination. In this regard, islamophobia in political discourse has increased since the outset of the crisis, with extremist parties radicalising their public statements (ENAR 2013) and some reports indicate that the increase in islamophobia is substantially larger in the new media and social networks than in the traditional media (Observatorio Andalusí 2013).

Moreover, the target groups are also reflected in the different existing observatories, such as the Observatory of anti-Semitism; the Observatory Andalusí, an institution monitoring the situation of Muslim citizens and Islamophobia in Spain; and the Federación Secretariado Gitano, which works with Roma issues including the monitoring of discrimination and hate crimes. Regarding islamophobia there is also a growing social movement in Catalonia trying

[6] This was the first service of this kind established in Spain. All provinces should now have a special prosecutor for hate crimes and discrimination.
[7] In view of the results evidenced by the EU Midis Survey on Minorities and Discrimination (FRA 2009).
[8] It should be noted that this concerns hate crimes in general, as there is no specific data on hate speech
[9] "... using modern and expansive systems of computer communication such as the Internet and social networks, thus taking advantage of the potential offered by anonymity and allowing for effective, rapid distribution to low cost and transnational reach" (SDOD 2013).
[10] Because of the scarce official statistics on hate crimes and hate speech, and therefore on the target groups of these incidents, reports mainly highlight target groups of racism and discrimination in general.

to combat the current wave of hate against Muslims, led by the Unitat Contra el Feixisme i el Racisme, and active on social media under the motto #StopIslamofobia.

1.4.2. Groups of perpetrators

Incidents of racist and xenophobic character in Spain involve both individual and collective perpetrators, including neo-Nazi groups, radical political parties and extremist football supporters, with hate speech arising mainly in neo-Nazi contexts and radical bands' concerts; sport events, especially football matches; *comments on blogs and social networks*; and discourses of extremist political parties (ENAR 2012).

With regard to online hate speech, Spanish extreme-right groups are reported to increasingly use the internet to spread their messages and recruit followers (Caiani and Parenti 2011); and the NGO Pro Igual highlights Plataforma per Catalunya, España 2000 and Democracia Nacional as "the most egregious examples of officially-registered political parties spewing hatred and xenophobia" (Pro Igual 2012). The openly xenophobic Plataforma per Catalunya has managed to obtain seats at the municipal council level relying to a large extent on the internet to recruit member and voters (Hernández 2010) and has also been investigated by Barcelona's Prosecutor for Hate Crimes due to statements made on Facebook against Muslims and Moroccans (ENAR 2012). This party is further described in chapter 2.

Additionally, hard-core football fans called "ultras" should also be taken into account. These are hooligans with extreme right ideologies, with the main groups being Ultras Sur of FC Real Madrid, Boixos Nois of FC Barcelona and Brigadas Blanquiazules of FC Espanyol. These groups are generally active on Facebook, in addition to having their own websites (MCI 2012).

However, as exposed in section 1.3, up until now, the *prosecuted cases of online hate speech* have mostly originated from perpetrators with a neo-Nazi ideology[11], of which some also have connections with officially registered racist and xenophobic parties, such as Alianza Nacional and Movimiento Social Republicano (Pro Igual 2012). This highlights the importance of the context and the obstacles to making legal cases against online hate speech unless it is either generated by clearly anti-democratic groups with a high level of internet dissemination, or expressed as a clear threat against a specific person.

1.4.3. Country-specific web channels, popular social media and hate speech

Clearly far right groups use the internet to spread their propaganda. In lines with this, the Spanish Observatory of Racism and Discrimination[12] emphasises the increase in hate speech on the internet as one of the main problems in the context of racism and discrimination (Consejo para la no discriminación 2011). Likewise, ENAR highlights that "the internet presents new challenges in tackling the diffusion of racist discourses. Facebook, blogs and the 'comments' feature of online newspapers are often used to disseminate stereotypes and xenophobic ideas with little control by the owners of these sites" (ENAR 2013).

[11] The NGO Pro Igual points out that in recent years the neo-Nazi movement has undergone a tactical transformation, focusing more on the popularisation of xenophobic slogans and recruitment of disenfranchised young men, and they are also better organised and financed than before (Pro Igual 2012)

[12] Abbreviated as OBERAXE

In this context it should be underlined that social media has a wide outreach in Spain, with approximately 78% of Spanish Internet users registered in a social network, and in the case of young people between 15 and 20 as many as 98% (MCI 2012). Facebook seems to still be the preferred social network in Spain. Using this preference of Spanish youth, neo-Nazi groups seeking to connect with young people tend to focus on social networks and YouTube, turning the 2.0 web into a refuge for extreme intolerance, with over 10,000 ultras and neo-Nazis organized on different social media platforms (MCI 2012). In addition to this, in 2011 NGOs reported more than 200 web pages, blogs and forums set up by neo-Nazi groups (ECRI 2011), and the number is likely to have increased over the last few years.

In regard to hate speech specifically against the Roma community, the Fundación Secretariado Gitano reports hate speech comments mainly on Facebook, but also on YouTube and Twitter, as well as in general and specialised discussion forums such as ForoCoches.com[13], in addition to specific and extremely hateful anti-Roma blogs and websites[14] as well as several cases of hate speech against Roma people in the comments sections of digital newspapers (FSG 2014).

1.5. Responses: Institutions and monitoring agencies dealing with hate crimes and hate speech

The following table is a – most likely non-exhaustive - listing of institutions and agencies monitoring or in other ways dealing with hate crimes and hate speech in Spain, focused on those which receive complaints by victims. The issues covered by each agency is briefly described in the column "Scope" and any reports published in the column "Reports".

Name	Web	Level	Scope (issues covered)	Reports
Movimiento contra la intolerancia: Oficina de Solidaridad con las Víctimas de la Discriminación y delitos de odio	http://www.movimientocontralaintolerancia.com denunciamci@gmail.com	-National (by phone) -Local offices -Internet	-NGO dealing with any issue in relation to discrimination, hate crimes and intolerance. - They have a phone number where victims of any hate crime can get advice and support for filing a complaint. - "Oficina para Denuncias de Delitos de Odio en Internet" for reporting online hate speech, assisted by a lawyer channelling complaints to the special prosecutors	Annual RAXEN reports 2001 - 2012
Oficina de Información y Denuncias de Sos Racismo		7 local offices in Cataluña, Aragón, Gipuzkoa, Bizkaia,	- Belongs to Sos Racismo, NGO working against racism and xenophobia - The Office of Information and Complaints is a free personal service for victims of racist discrimination with social and legal resources for mediation and	

[13] A forum to discuss cars.

[14] Such as http://antigitanismo.blogspot.com or http://antigitanos.blogspot.com.es. The further has now been deleted, but the latter is still open spreading hateful propaganda as of February 19 2015, despite attempts by the Fundación Secretariado Gitano to get it shut down.

		Asturias, Madrid and Navarra.	conflict resolution to restore violated individual rights, as well as training resources, counselling and other, paying particular attention to victims of double discrimination such as youth and women. - Not all of the offices have procedures for receiving online hate speech complaints	
OPRAX – Observatori de Polítiques racistes y Xenòfobes	http://www.oprax.org		-Part of Sos Racisme Catalunya - Monitoring instrument for racist and xenophobic politics and discourses (mainly offline) in Catalonia.	
Pro Igual	http://proigual.org	National	- NGO, monitoring and campaigning in the fields of discrimination, hate crimes and migrants' rights. They conduct an annual web-based survey for victims of hate crimes: http://proigual.org/projects/survey-on-hate-crimes/	"Hate Crimes in Spain" Reports 2010-2013, submitted to the OSCE
Fundación Secretariado Gitano	http://www.gitanos.org	National and local	-Association that aims at the integral promotion of the Roma Community -They provide legal advice to Roma victims of discrimination; inform about rights and ways to complain about violations; coordination with private lawyers for victims; produce legal reports; monitor cases, etc.	Annual reports on Discrimination and the Roma Community 2005 - 2014
National Police	http://www.interior.gob.es/web/servicios-al-ciudadano/delitos-de-odio	National	-The Spanish police has recently elaborated a triptych for hate crime victims, where online hate speech is included ("Do not forget messages or insults received to your social network profile, your e-mail or your phone") and victims are encouraged to report by phone to the National Police or Guardia Civil.	
Prosecutors for Hate Crimes and Discrimination		Provincial	- Specialist prosecutors for hate crimes and discrimination. - The first was installed in Barcelona, but in the last few years special prosecutors have been installed in all 50 provinces	Reports by the Prosecutor Service of Barcelona 2012 and 2013.
Ayuntamiento de Madrid: Grupo de Asistencia Jurídica Contra el Racismo y la Xenofobia	http://web.icam.es/page/5/Atenci%C3%B3n_al_Ciudadano	Local Public adminis-tration service	- Service composed of lawyers specialized in the fight against discrimination and racism; legal defence for persons and entities who may have been harmed because of discrimination, racism and xenophobia; Guidance and counselling in the fight against discrimination, racism	

			and xenophobia; Assistance and defence of victims of discrimination.	
Ayuntamiento de Barcelona: Oficina de No Discriminación	http://www.oficinanodiscriminacio.com/ http://w110.bcn.cat/portal/site/DretsCivils/menuitem.2d5d62cf16397c0ebe9f993720348a0c/?vgnextoid=0000000760143135VgnV6CONT00000000000RCRD&lang=es_ES	Local Public adminis-tration	- Defending the rights of people in general, with special attention to groups discriminated because of gender (sex and sexual orientation), origin (immigration and cultural minorities), physical and mental health, age (especially children and the elderly) and economic and /or social status of the city of Barcelona - Complaints can be made through an online form and the service advices victims e.g. on bringing complaints to court.	Annual reports 2002-2012
Observatorio del Antisemitismo	http://observatorioantisemitismo.fcje.org	National	- The Observatory receives reports of anti-Semitic acts in Spain through its website and through Jewish and anti-racist organizations. It also has a volunteer group monitoring possible cases of anti-Semitism.	Report on Anti-Semitism in Spain in 2012
Observatorio Andalusí	http://observatorio.hispanomuslim.es/ ucide@ucide.org	National	- Belongs to the Unión de Comunidades Islamicas de España - Monitors the situation of Muslims and islamophobia in Spain - Individuals can send their observations and reports by email	Annual reports and barometer 2003-2013

2. Mapping of the social media activity of xenophobic parties, organizations and movements

2.1. Rationale for selection of the parties analysed

It is evident that online hate speech in Spain does not only flourish in extreme right circles, but rather is present in the wider social and political spectrum, especially since the outset of the economic crisis. However, for the mapping in the Spanish context we have chosen to look into the social media usage of entities from the more extreme anti-immigration stance, and their extent of following, in order to analyse their outreach and possible impact in social media, as online arenas where the majority of young people interact on a daily basis. Therefore, we have focused on political parties from the Spanish far right, which can be roughly divided into four groupings with fluid boundaries in terms of membership and connections: (1) Nostalgic Franquist, Falangist and ultra-religious organizations; (2) Right-wing populist parties with various degrees of radicalism; (3) Neo-Nazi and nationalist revolutionary organizations; (4) Forces with party alignments and extreme-right-wing football fans (Büttner 2011). In this regard, observers estimate the existence of around 70 far right groupings in Spain, of which 20 are political parties. According to police figures, the total membership number of all the groupings is around 10,000, whilst Movimiento Contra la Intolerancia states 15,000. In regard to gender distribution, men dominate the scene, with female participation reaching only around 20 percent (Büttner 2011).

Hence, five far right political parties were chosen: Plataforma per Catalunya (PxC), España 2000 (E2000), Movimiento Social Republicano (MSR), Democracia Nacional (DN), and Alianza Nacional (AN). These mainly belong to the second group above - right-wing populist parties, but the majority have roots in and connections to the third group (neo-Nazi organizations). All of the selected parties have been highlighted in the secondary data review as spreading racist and xenophobic hate speech, and with an active presence in social media. While PxC, E2000 and MSR all have seats in municipal councils[15], DN and AN do not, but belong to the coalition of right wing parties "La España en Marcha" (LEM)[16]. The latter two, together with MSR, were specifically selected because of their blatantly racist roots and close connections to neo-Nazi groups (Pro Igual 2012, Büttner 2011). Each party is briefly described in section 2.3., below, in relation to the interpretation of the social media data collected.

2.2. Methodology

Following the initial selection of the parties based on the rationale above, their official web sites were visited to look for social media links, in order to list all social media platforms used by the parties. Searches on Google of “the name of the party + name of social media channel” (e.g. “Plataforma per Catalunya +YouTube”) were also conducted as well as on the social media platforms in order to find any accounts not linked by the official webs.

[15] At the time of writing, in April 2015.
[16] This coalition also includes the political party FE-La Falange and the association Nudo Patriota Español (NPe).

Once there was a listing of the social media channels of each party, the online tool FanPage Karma was used to collect the following information for each of their channels of each party: Date when joined; number of followers/likes; followers' gender distribution (Facebook); number of posts in the last year[17]; average number of posts per day (during the last year) and for YouTube total number of videos and date of last upload; most frequently used words and user engagement in the last year (Facebook) and top words in the last year (Twitter); links between the different social media and the official web; any further information.

Furthermore, visits were also made to the different social media profiles for a general content overview; however, no additional analysis of hate speech content on the sites was conducted. Therefore, it should be emphasised that the analysis is much limited and that this activity should be mainly seen as a descriptive mapping of the social media activity of a limited selection of far right parties potentially spreading hate speech.

Finally, in order to obtain further indicators of these parties' outreach on social media, the familiarity with the parties and any encounters with these on social media were inquired into during the fieldwork phase, both in the interviews with professionals and with young people. This is briefly reflected in section 2.4.

Below we describe some elements of the data collected in relation to each party.

2.3. Description and interpretation of the data collected in the mapping

2.3.1. Plataforma per Catalunya

The openly xenophobic Catalan party Plataforma per Catalunya (PxC) was founded in 2002 and entered their first municipal elections in 2003, winning a seat in five Catalan municipalities. In 2011 they grew massively from 17 to 67 councillors, relying largely on the internet for recruiting members and voters, The Platform's political program is based on the opposition to mass immigration, considering this a threat to the Catalan and Spanish identity, which is also reflected in the party slogan "Primer els de casa"[18]. The party is widely considered an anti-Islamic, racist and xenophobic political force and was in 2011 investigated by Barcelona's Prosecutor for Hate Crimes following statements made on Facebook against Muslims and Moroccans (ENAR 2012).

Regarding their social media activity, PxC joined Facebook and Twitter in October 2011 and is currently quite active on these channels, and in particular on Twitter, with an average of 8.7 tweets per day, compared to 6 posts per day on Facebook. The party's fairly high activity rate on their two main social media platforms corresponds well with experts' reports on the party's electoral success stemming from a very active campaigning on the internet. Notwithstanding, the amount of followers on any of the channels is still rather low - the highest number being on Facebook, with 5.846 page likes in comparison with 1.749 Twitter followers. Concerning gender distribution among the followers, based on the most active followers in the last thirty days[19] of the analysed time period[20], 78% are male and 22% female, as could be expected based on expert reports. Meanwhile, the party's YouTube

[17] From March 2014 to February 2015
[18] "First the ones from home"
[19] February 2015
[20] March 2014 to February 2015

channel is only a year old, and seems not to have been a priority, with only 14 videos, 34 subscribers and 7.200 channel views. In terms of linking the different channels, there are some mutual links between the official webpage and the social media profiles, i.e. there seems to be a social media strategy for connecting the party's different web platforms, at least to some extent

Regarding content, during the time period analysed "Islamic", "immigrants", "Spain" and "Catalans" are among the most commonly used words, much in line with the party's political agenda. The same words are also amongst the ones with the highest level of follower engagement, in addition to "jihadists". Although this does not provide information on hate speech per se, it seems as though the topics of Islam and immigration awake debate among PxC followers.

2.3.2. Democracia Nacional

Democracia Nacional is an extreme right political party founded in 1995, which defines itself as "transversal" and "socio-patriotic", but has a clear neo-Nazi background, and a strong anti-immigration stance. DN belongs to the right wing parties coalition "La España en Marcha" (LEM) and does not have representation at any political level.

Looking at their social media presence, DN has the highest activity level and the highest amount of followers on Twitter, which they joined in 2011 and where they now have 6.100 followers and an average of 2.7 tweets per day. Their current Facebook account was created as late as January 2015, and their statistics for last year can therefore not be calculated, but in the last few months their posting frequency has been quite low (1.6/day). According to some informal sources, DN has previously been active on Facebook with other accounts, which possibly have been shut down. In the past they have also been fairly active on YouTube, with 64 videos, 196.000 views and 372 followers, however, their last video was uploaded in 2013. With regard to links between the different websites of the party, there are mutual links between the official webpage and the social media, but no links between the different social media platforms. Interestingly, their YouTube channel also provides a phone number and a link to their official discussion forum, where the most active thread is "News on immigrant crimes"[21], also underlining the party's anti-immigration stance and its followers interest in demonising immigrants.

Concerning content, the most frequent words used are "Spain", "Spanish", "threatening", "our" and "Europe", while the words "borders", "ours", "threatening" , "accounts", and "police" have gathered the highest level of engagement, aligning with their focus on the "Spanish" and perceived threats from outside.

2.3.3. España 2000

The right-wing populist populist party España 2000 was founded in 2002 and gained their first municipal council representative in the 2007 elections. Presently they have five seats in four different councils with a political programme based on the defence of a Spanish national identity and opposition to immigration. In March 2014 the NGO Hogar Social Patriota, which is closely linked to the party, implemented a highly mediatic distribution of

[21] 275 pages of discussion with 4116 messages as of April 13, 2015. http://foro.democracianacional.org/

food only to "Spanish persons in need", following the model of Greece's Golden Dawn - in the municipality of Orriols where around 30% of the population are immigrants. Furthermore, the party's leader, José Luis Roberto, has been investigated for hate speech during a demonstration in 2002, after being reported by several NGOs, including Sos Racismo.

In terms of social media presence, E2000 joined Facebook in late 2009 and currently enjoys quite a high following, with 17.186 page likes. However, their activity rate last year only reaches an average of one post every two days. They're only slightly more active on Twitter, with 1.1 posts per day, but with a lower amount of followers (6.068). The party is also quite active on YouTube, since 2008, and now has 140 videos with a total of 536.000 views and 668 subscribers. As regards links between the different online platforms, the official webpage links to all channels and vice versa, however, there are no links between the different social media platforms, showing a lack of a comprehensive social media strategy.

Regarding social media content, the most common words revolve around the abovementioned food distribution, with words such as "Spanish", "food", "help" and "distribution" amongst the ones with highest levels of follower engagement.

2.3.4. Alianza Nacional

Alianza Nacional was founded in 2005 with a fascist and neo-Nazi orientation. Declaring themselves heirs of the European fascisms, arguing that nationality should be based on "ius sanguinis" ("blood right"), their motto is "Nación, Raza, Socialismo" ("Nation, Race, Socialism"). Similar to Democracia Nacional, AN also belongs to the LEM coalition and does not have seats in any council. The party is under investigation to possibly become illegalized, following an assault in a Madrid bookstore[22] on September 11 2013 (the Catalan National Day) when members of AN together with members of Democracia Nacional and La Falange entered shouting "You don't fool us, Catalonia is Spain", throwing tear gas at the assistants.[23]

In terms of social media presence, AN has a Twitter and a YouTube account, but are not very active on any of these platforms. No information has been found on whether they have been active on Facebook or other social media in the past. On Twitter, which they joined in late 2012, the party has 6.738 followers and has shown more or less daily activity in the last year. In contrast, their YouTube platform only has 19 videos with a total of 76.000 views and 278 followers and the last video was uploaded a year ago. With respect to internal links, there are mutual links between their official website and Twitter, but no links to YouTube, pointing towards the lack of a social media strategy.

Regarding content, among their top words on Twitter are "Spain", "our", "against", "national", "separatism", "Spanish" and "front", highlighting their focus on the "national" and "Spanish".[24]

[22] La Blanquerna

[23] El Pais "Doce detenidos por el ataque al acto de la Generalitat en Madrid por la Diada" http://politica.elpais.com/politica/2013/09/12/actualidad/1378966553_500212.html

[24] As the party does not have a Facebook account, there is no data on follower engagement to be collected.

2.3.5. Movimiento Social Republicano

Movimiento Social Republicano (MSR) was founded in 1999 and while it describes itself as patriotic-socialist, it integrates radical segments of the neo-Nazi scene (Büttner 2011) and is better characterised as neo-Nazi or neo-fascist. The MSR previously had an unsuccessful electoral alliance with España 2000 and Frente Nacional, and currently has one seat in one municipal council.[25] In 2009, the MSR chairman Juan Antonio Llopart was sentenced as managing director of the publishing house Ediciones Nueva Republica for justifying the Nazi genocide (Büttner 2011).

Looking at the party's social media presence, MSR is active on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, with their highest activity rate and following on Twitter.[26] Their current Facebook account was created only in August 2014 meaning that statistics for the whole last year cannot be calculated, however, since then their average of posts per day has been only 0.6, which can be considered very low. According to some sources, MSR have previously been active on Facebook with other accounts since October 2011. They joined YouTube already in March 2008, but have not been very active, with only 398 subscribers and 26 videos[27]. In terms of internal links, there are mutual links between Facebook, Twitter and the official web, but no links to YouTube. Their Facebook page also links to Twitter, while the information on YouTube also includes a mobile phone number.

Regarding content, among both the most frequent and most interactive words are "national", "youth", "our", "social", "help" and "families".

2.4. Reflections on the parties from the interviews with young people and professionals

It is quite relevant that all the professionals interviewed were familiar with the groups selected for the mapping, although Movimiento Social Republicano seems to be slightly lesser known than the rest. In addition to the parties analysed, NGO representatives mentioned Nueva Democracia[28], and VOX, whereas several interviewees also mentioned Ciudadanos, as parties spreading hate speech, although in a more nuanced and polished version. A common view is that those parties that disguise themselves as not so extreme may be more dangerous in terms of spreading xenophobic discourses as they reach more people. There are also several mentions of PP – the party currently governing Spain - both the local branches and the general party, with some experts emphasising that this party has never renounced its nationalist and totalitarian principles and that it is currently undertaking a campaign against immigrants.

Most of the young people interviewed were familiar with Plataforma per Catalunya, and España 2000, followed by Alianza Nacional, and Movimiento Social Republicano being the least mentioned. Other groups not included in the analysis but seen as xenophobic by the

[25] In the municipality Heras de Ayuso, Guadalajara, with 260 inhabitants.
[26] With 4.553 followers and an average of 3.4 posts per day.
[27] The last video was uploaded in May 2014
[28] Which actually attacked the NGO's offices in Madrid and then uploaded the video of the attack onto their web; this is currently a legal case.

youngsters were VOX, and Casal Tramuntana[29]. Furthermore, the overwhelming majority of youngsters recall a TV spot by the PxC:

> "A very illustrative ad about the PXC ideology appeared on public TV! Since they had representation they had to appear on the public space; it was two girls skipping the rope with some music and suddenly it read *is this what you want for your city?* Suddenly the music changed and the two girls had full burqa, and they put *first the ones from home*" [ES-YP9]

However, most do not follow any of the included parties on social media, or looked at their pages; one young person who was sent PxC propaganda by an extended family member (whom he later blocked) via email also mentioned that they obtained 5 deputies in his city, which he finds worrying. One informant remembers the abovementioned food distribution by España 2000.

Youngsters agreed these parties are xenophobic and racist, and some even identified them as fascist; however some think that precisely because they are so open about their views, they are not as dangerous as those who camouflage their real intentions, the people who generalise entire collectives, or those who reproduce hateful discourse without realising. Comparative and conclusive notes on the parties' use of social media

2.5. Comparative and conclusive notes on the parties' use of social media

As we have seen above, not surprisingly the parties' preferred channels are Facebook and Twitter, followed by YouTube. Interestingly DN and MSR have fairly new Facebook accounts, which suggests that their previous accounts have been deleted, whilst Alianza Nacional is the only group not active on Facebook. None of the groups are active on Instagram or any further social media platforms. Of the groups studied, PxC is the most active on social media in general and has also gained large part of its following through this strategy of active online presence.

In general, the highest activity rates are observed on Twitter, where PxC has by far the highest activity. Also the highest amounts of followers are found on Twitter, with an average of around 6.000 followers. The exception is España 2000 with more than 17.000 followers on Facebook, compared to PxC's just above 5.800.[30] This points to the general conclusion that the outreach of these parties is not very broad.

When looking at the content based on the most frequent words and user engagement, there are no major differences between the channels nor between the parties, with content revolving around protecting the national against external forces, and words such as "Spanish", "national", "our", "borders", "threatening" and "Europe" amongst the most common ones. The only party that brings in content directly related to hate speech through this limited analysis is PxC for which "immigrants" and "Islam" are among the most commonly used words, and "jihadists" a word with a high level of user engagement. This gives us some information about the interests of the party and its followers, but does not witness of hate speech per se. It is also evident that events related to the parties during the time of analysis greatly influence the results, as in the case of the food distribution by E2000.

[29] A far right youth organization

[30] The other groups range between 1.400 and 2.200 followers on Facebook.

Unfortunately, due to time constraints, no deeper analysis of the social media channels' content in relation to possible hate speech has been conducted.

As a concluding remark, one could say that these parties mostly preach for the already convinced on social media, and that, considering their relatively low number of followers, their influence is marginal. None of the young people interviewed – although taking into account the small sample this should not be seen as necessarily representative - had entered their web platforms, nor do they remember seeing them on social media. However, many of the interviewees do remember seeing a TV spot, reminding us of the still existing outreach of the "older" media channels, which perhaps serve content in a more passive manner, whilst on social media people actively choose what to follow and may therefore not encounter hate speech or more extreme political views unless they specifically look for this.

3. Experiences from the ground

3.1. Professionals working in fields related to hate speech

3.1.1. Sample and sampling process[31]

In order to gather views from a range of professionals working in fields related to online hate speech, we have interviewed representatives from the following institutions:

- *S*ervei de Delictes d'Odi i Discriminació de la Fiscalia Provincial de Barcelona (Service for Hate Crimes and Discrimination of the Public Prosecutor of Barcelona), which was the pioneering prosecutor service of this kind in Spain. The person interviewed is the coordinating prosecutor, who is considered a key expert in Spain on hate crimes, hate speech and discrimination;
- Mossos d'Esquadra (the Catalan Police), which was the first Mediterranean police force to establish a specific protocol for hate crimes and discrimination. The person interviewed is a superintendent who was involved in the planning, elaboration and implementation of this protocol;
- Sos Racismo, which is an important Spanish NGO dealing with issues related to racism and xenophobia. The persons formally interviewed is their main legal expert, as well as a legal assistant, in addition to informal consultations both with Sos Racismo Guipozkoa as partners of the project, and Sos Racisme Catalunya;
- Espacio del Inmigrante, which is a grassroots association for immigrants, highly active on social media and blogs. The person interviewed is the coordinator of the organisation

3.1.2. The general context of hate speech in Spain according to the professionals interviewed

The general view of the institutions interviewed is that there has been a rise in hate speech in the last few years – more or less since the outset of the economic crisis. The NGO Sos Racismo perceives an increase in the anti-immigration discourse in politics, so that the general discourse against immigrants is now harsher, with concepts previously defined as politically incorrect now used openly and to a higher extent. In this regard, they observe that hate speech is articulated everywhere, from the next-door neighbour to politicians, but that the latter obviously have a much greater responsibility:

> "The impunity, in that sense we see a change, before, I don't know if people thought it to themselves or not, but at least they didn't say it directly to immigrants [...] You can be listening, while having a coffee, to those at another table and as an immigrant, what they say may not be directed towards you, but you feel attacked in that sense" [ES-P3]

The NGO's legal expert recognises a multiplier effect by social media, with events such as Charlie Hebdo, creating peaks, but with the "normalised" discourse always in the background. The professionals also observe that the way of transmitting news about immigrants may influence in creating a climate where hate speech can prosper.

[31] For the detailed sample please see Annex 2.

In addition, some of the interviewees emphasise that racism in the media and online should be conceived as a structural issue, manifested not only through racist comments, but also through the institutionalisation of certain stigmas and images that don't favour respect for "the other":

> "In Catalonia or Spain, I think one of the problems is that the racism is not perceived as such, it is hidden. Here nobody will formally say they are racist, but in everyday life there is racism in the air, symbolic, legal, physical borders, it has to do with those looks and that sometimes they don't even look at you, sometimes you're invisible." [ES-P5]

The grassroots organisation also perceives the police and other institutions as part of the problem, e.g. in the way that the police often uses aggressive language in an institutionalised manner when talking to immigrants. This is somewhat recognised by the police representative interviewed, as she admits that this kind of behaviour has been part of the police in the past. However, she also underlines that they are actively working on changing the police culture in this regard, but that it is a slow process.

Similarly, the prosecutor is highly aware of the general context of xenophobia and racism, and the effects of hate speech as he points out that:

> "These victims have always been invisible and vulnerable and also, the perverse effects produced by this kind of discourse are not directly perceived, but rather produced at medium- or long-term, and in victims that don't report" [ES-P4].

In the following sections we will take a closer look at the perpetrators and victims, the channels of hate speech and the reporting mechanisms, according to the professionals interviewed.

3.1.3. Main perpetrators and target groups of online hate speech

According to Sos Racismo the far right groups with extreme anti-immigration and islamophobic discourses are not very organised in Spain, and hence quite marginal. On the other hand, as is briefly discussed in section 2.4., the bigger parties such as VOX, Ciudadanos, Plataforma per Catalunya, or even the governing Partido Popular, have a more polished and nuanced discourse and a wider reach, and therefore may contribute to a higher extent to a xenophobic climate. In the case of these parties it is also more difficult to distinguish the limits of freedom of expression, since they take more care in hiding their most extreme stances.

In terms of target groups of hate speech in Spain, in lines with the reports reviewed in chapter 1, all of the professionals interviewed agree that the main victims are immigrants in general, Muslims, and Roma people (especially those from Romania), with an increase in islamophobia over the last few years. In this regard, the police perceives increasing fear and prejudice against Muslims, manifested through complaints from people accusing Muslims of being possible terrorists because they have observed some – to them – abnormal behaviour. So, interestingly enough, the awareness of the rise of islamophobia does not reach the police through complaints for discriminatory actions or hate speech placed *by* Muslims (which certainly do exist but is much underreported) but rather through reports *against* Muslims, demonstrating this islamophobia.

Furthermore, experts also point out that aporophobia (fear of the poor) is growing in Spain, and that homophobia is still an issue to consider. Additionally, being a woman means multiple discrimination – especially in the case of Muslim women – this does not necessarily mean *more* discrimination, but rather *other types* of discrimination and hateful comments.

3.1.4. Online channels of hate speech in Spain

The experts interviewed take online hate speech seriously, and believe that it should be perceived in the same manner as any crime committed "offline":

> "Crimes are not only committed on the streets, but also online […] Internet is a very powerful diffusion tool, for good and for bad, and for young people it's their bookshelf from 10 years of age, and this discourse gets to them" [ES-P4]

In terms of hate speech on social media, they point out that racism on these channels tends to be "rawer" than that faced on the streets, because of the possibility of anonymity. In lines with this, the prosecutor underlines Twitter as the social media platform with the most cases of hate speech – precisely because of the high number of anonymous profiles on this platform. The NGOs also affirm that they receive hateful and offensive messages against them as anti-racist entities mostly through Twitter, but also through Facebook.

In addition to social media, experts emphasise the comments section of digital newspapers as a problematic area where hate speech tends to flourish, also in large part because of the anonymity offered. Furthermore, other pages and forums not seemingly focused on anti-immigration or connected to far right groups, are highlighted. These discussion arenas may in fact be more effective in spreading hate speech than more marginal webs or social media pages by far right groups, because of the high number of people they attract, and not only those with already established opinions.[32]

3.1.5. Responses and tools from the perspective of professionals

As noted in the introduction, the underreporting of hate speech is massive and this is corroborated by both the prosecutor and the police. In addition, those victims that do report normally don't go directly to the police or the prosecutor, but rather to an NGO, which then advices them and accompanies them to the police if needed. Therefore both the police and the prosecutor greatly value a good relationship with the entities that defend the victims, in order to explain the mechanisms available and, most of all, build trust to increase reporting. In contrast though, the grassroots entity interviewed explain that they do not trust the police and as a matter of fact, believe that the police is part of the problem in view of their treatment of immigrants. Therefore, the association has never placed a complaint with the police; however they have sought support from Sos Racismo in the past.

In fact, one major issue in improving the reporting seems to be that the most common target groups of hate speech do not tend to report. According to Sos Racismo, this is linked to the normalisation of hate speech and racism as part of life for many immigrants, who often don't speak out because of fear:

[32] A forum to consider in this regard in Spain is one of the biggest discussion forums in Spain, ForoCoches, a car forum where topics unrelated to cars are also widely discussed. This forum also emerged in reports reviewed and were mentioned by some of the young people interviewed.

> "Immigrants themselves have assumed the role of 'well, that is what corresponds to me being an immigrant, so I won't give it much importance and continue with my life', and here we need to educate everyone not to put up with this kind of situation" [ES-P3].

In this regard, the lack of awareness of the possibility to report hate speech is also emphasised – or rather that hate speech actually is a crime that can and should be reported - both among the autochthonous population and immigrants. But then again, the NGO itself does not seem to promote this possibility much either, seemingly because of a lack of resources; for example, its Catalan branch does not even include online hate speech in their case typology, and consequently does not collect complaints in this regard. Also, while victims do reach out to NGOs to verbalise what happened to them, they are often hesitant to file an official complaint with the police.

Consequently, Sos Racismo receives few complaints about online hate speech; their legal expert remembers only two cases from 2014: One in relation to a beauty contest where the winner, of Colombian origin, received racist comments through the contest. [33] In the end the mall that organised the contest deleted the comments from their web. In the second case, a Facebook group made racist comments about a photo, but as they could not identify the person in it, no legal action could be taken. In general, the NGO's legal expert perceives the tools to report online hate speech as few and ineffective, mainly consisting of the penal code, with all its limitations.

Nevertheless, in terms of complaints to the police, internet hate speech is a continuously increasing issue, but also one for which they lack preparation - they are only just beginning to be prepared to deal with hate crimes on the streets. Therefore, a specific police unit[34] deals with online hate speech and works closely with the prosecutor, who usually does a first evaluation of the cases, and in fact receives most of the complaints directly, meaning that the police often investigates by order of the prosecutor. Furthermore, because of a lack of resources, the police do not investigate online hate speech unless there is a specific complaint by a concrete victim. Hence, it seems very difficult to make a hate speech case against a collective in general. They do, however, investigate all complaints received – but the interpretation of the freedom of speech usually makes only direct threats viable as cases possibly leading to legal action.

Now, looking at the cases of online hate speech actually reported to the police or prosecutor, the latter exposes that currently in Catalonia, many of the cases are related to hate speech against Catalans. One such case entails anti-Catalan tweets in the aftermath of the Germanwings plane crash in March 2015, which are now under investigation. This contrasts with the police's view that there has to be a concrete victim and not just a general collective affected. In this regard it is interesting that while the vast majority of online hate speech, such as that against Muslims, is neither reported nor investigated, that targeting the autochthonous people seems to be so to a greater extent.

[33] The victim is among the young people interviewed for this study, see section 3.2.

[34] It should be emphasised that this unit deals with *all* online crimes, so the resources for actually investigating online hate speech are scarce.

Furthermore, there is not much jurisprudence on hate speech in Spain, and according to the prosecutor, Spanish judges tend to overlook international jurisprudence. Instead they seek advice in academic writings, which in Spain tend to fiercely defend freedom of speech since, as we saw in section 1.2, the debate is still influenced by the former dictatorship.

Further in terms of prosecution, these is a clear difference between prosecuting cases of hate speech on normal web pages and on social media in that the servers hosting the web pages are obliged by legislation to facilitate information. In this regard, international collaboration is also possible, although the prosecutor perceives the system as inefficient. Social media companies like Twitter and Facebook, on the other hand, tend not to collaborate. Hence, if a tweet containing hate speech originates from an anonymous account, it is impossible to obtain the owner's information from Twitter, and therefore investigate anonymous profiles on social media are not investigated. This is also related to the limitless freedom of speech in the US, where most of these companies are registered. Therefore, those who aim to spread hate speech are likely to use servers located in the US or Canada. This is summoned in the following words of the prosecutor:

> "The problem with justice is that it has borders, but today's criminality does not." [ES-P4]

Another crucial element in prosecuting online hate speech is the context. Thus, when investigating a case of possible hate speech on Twitter not only the statement itself is considered, but also the whole profile - the person behind it, previous tweets (e.g. racist statements), and the actions after the tweet (is there remorse?) - in order to analyse whether the phrase is surrounded by a *discourse* of hate speech. In this sense, a single phrase may be offensive, but still not legally defined as hate speech (provided that it is does not directly incite to violence), unless there is a surrounding discourse.

Finally, another obstacle to inhibiting hate speech, reported by the experts interviewed, is that digital newspapers and social media providers tend to view themselves as mere intermediaries for discussion, and consequently take little or no responsibility for the content of the discussions.

3.2. Young users of social media

3.2.1. Sample and sampling process[35]

For the purpose of this research young users of social media between the ages of 20 to 31 years old have been interviewed, including 11 men and 6 women from different ethnic and educational backgrounds. We have included some victims of hate speech (racist, xenophobic and homophobic remarks) both on social media and in everyday life; it is worth mentioning that some have been affected when it came to their feminist militancy, gender bias and discrimination (females and gay men), and not specifically because of their race or origin. Moreover, Catalan youngsters have seen anti-Catalan sentiment on social media, particularly after the German wings accident and have thus felt offended and discriminated against.

[35] For the detailed sample please see Annex 2.

3.2.2. The concept of hate speech in the eyes of young people

Most of the youngsters interviewed were either not aware of the concept or have heard of it but were not sure about the definition, whereas a few others were able to gauge it because of the words themselves or because it was raised when arranging the interview. They all mentioned not having had any type of concrete information at school or from family on that respect. Consequently they were not familiar with any campaigns such as the No Hate Speech Movement[36]; however some mentioned having seen the videos of other campaigns on YouTube, such as #StopRacism from FIFA, anti-racism campaigns in Denmark, "It gets better" an anti-homophobia campaign.

3.2.3. Uses of and approach to social media by young people

The most commonly used social media site among youngsters is Facebook, used mainly for keeping in touch with friends, former classmates and family, receiving information, or instant messaging; very few reported using it to meet new people. There is an important transnational dimension to the use of Facebook as several informants use it to remain in touch with friends and family who live faraway. In fact many youngsters mentioned it as their preferred channel, but mainly because most of their friends are on it.[37] Twitter is used only by a handful of the youngsters interviewed, although they are not very active and seldom publish anything, but when they do they mainly promote their work or share other people's work. Other youngsters mentioned that even though they have a Twitter account they rarely use it because they believe the site is difficult to comprehend and use. Instagram is the third most popular with fewer users, some following only people they know, and a few claiming that the site has an "artistic vibe" to it and affirming that a lot of people use Instagram as means to disseminate their work and promote themselves. Skype was also mentioned by a couple of people as they tend to use it to stay in touch with people abroad. Additionally, there was mention of an online gaming platform (League of Legends) on which hate speech is pervasive due to its anonymous nature. Lastly, there was widespread mention and use of Whatsapp which was not initially considered for the study, nevertheless, the examples of use and content of some messages make it crucial to be taken into consideration at least for the Spanish context. These responses raise the question of whether or not the concept of social media among youths has changed given that their usage suggests it is broader than anticipated and it goes beyond the main sites initially considered in this project.

Some of the youngsters interviewed mentioned that social media is just an extension of the things they normally do, and they claim to behave just like they do in their everyday lives:

> " I think that my way of behaving in social media is exactly the same as I would do in person, I try to avoid saying things that I would not say in person" [ES-YP5]
>
> "Well I actually use it to do the same things I would do in real life but it just enhances it, meaning in social life why do you have friends for? […]If you have friends well it

[36] A current youth campaign by the Council of Europe, against hate speech, racism and discrimination in their online expression. http://www.nohatespeechmovement.org/

[37] Additionally, several youngsters mentioned that they use Facebook as an agenda given that its calendar function reminds them of birthdays and upcoming events, or demonstrations posted by pages or groups which they follow.

> could be for lots of things, for chatting, receiving information and you can do many things. Social media for me works the same way only that they give you a possibility of complete temporality and instantaneity." [ES-YP13]

By contrast, others believe that people create characters online and therefore behave completely differently online. Moreover when asked if they believe that people feel freer to say offensive things online, the majority of informants agreed that anonymity, no fear of repercussions contributes to this. Also, the fact that there is more support in the form of "likes" for those making racist comments, empowers those making hateful comments. Young people also see a trend to not be so openly racist when they sense they might be exposed or sanctioned. However, they emphasized that people continue to be racist through normalized everyday expressions and in subtle inconspicuous ways, often through jokes with racist undertones. Moreover youngsters believe that people tend to a higher extent to make offensive remarks when they feel they are in a trusted environment with friends, having neither hesitation nor reservations about what they say. It is important to point out that both WhatsApp and private Facebook groups were often mentioned as the places were most likely hateful commenters converge and have freedom to say what they please. Interestingly enough, some others believe that Facebook groups can serve as a way for certain groups to interact without fear of being harassed or receiving hateful comments:

> "There is like a new feature, actually it's not new but it's more and more frequent on Facebook to avoid hate speech and attacks which is the private groups. I mean you can publish some things on your Facebook wall which are seen by everybody, but there are things you keep for yourself and you only talk about it in the private group, because you know it's a protected space and that the people who participate let's say will always be on your side this way". [ES-YP4]

> "I do not notice anyone being there to register or regulate the type of comments being made […] whatever someone reports, Facebook does not dedicate itself to persecute it, it does dedicate to persecute images of naked bodies, which makes people feel safe, the idea of being untouchable and that pages don't report you […]For sure people feel freer to speak". [ES-YP7]

Also, youngsters are aware that sources of information can get lost or diffuse, which allows for discourse to be manipulated or taken out of context:

> "Let's imagine we are really good friends and you share news about gender violence in southern Spain and you say *how horrible* then I share it and also say *how horrible* […] but many times you don't know who posted that article originally, and maybe that person said *women are shit they must be killed,* so then there is like a transformation of discourse [...] and the loss of original posters. [ES-YP4]

Finally, youngsters state that usually, the information circulates faster than they are able to process it, so the almost immediate sharing of such information can also lead to misunderstandings. They do point out that those who share without taking the time to read and to put the post into context contribute to the distortion of discourse. Furthermore, the pages, groups and profiles seen by youngsters during their everyday use are not specific to a

single geographical location, hence the information they obtain circulates rapidly and beyond physical borders.

3.2.4. Channels, contexts and main actors of online hate speech according to young people

In order to explain the specificities of the channels, in the following sections the experiences of hate speech in each channel mentioned by the young people interviewed are briefly discussed.

Facebook: According to these youngsters, those making offensive comments vary from other youths, friends of friends, to anyone with access to a particular post. There was mention of recurrent polarized debates mainly taking an "us versus them" attitude, mostly triggered by *memes*[38], photos, videos or news articles. Debates also emerge on newspapers' Facebook pages such as El Pais and La Vanguardia, as well as on pages such as Foro Coches (car forum). In addition, youngsters believed that people are not as racist on Facebook because their photos and real names are displayed on their profiles; however people then create fake or alternate profiles[39] which are used to harass or make offensive comments online.

> "Yes recently I saw the profile of a girl who wrote that she wanted to meet new people, but said she doesn't want Arabs, nor Blacks, nor people from outside only people from her country […] When I read that my heart hurt because I told her you also leave because nobody wants you either, she responded you go back to your country you negro [expletive]" [ES-YP1]

Whatsapp: Among the most used channels, there was indication of prevalent circulation of racist memes either through private groups or one to one messaging[40], and people freely making racist jokes because there is a feeling of security and trust.

> **"**I just remembered one but it was through Whatsapp, but it's ok right? It wasn't sent to me but to a friend and he showed it to me. The photo was a woman on the bus wearing a burka and she had a plastic bag next to her […] it had a star and the bag read "boom" , but it was like an actual photo of the metro or something, the phrase on it read *you're scared shitless, right?* Something like that, I have to show it to you because it is very rough." [ES-YP11]

Youtube: Youngsters consider that this particular channel makes users easy targets for hateful comments on videos, "haters" and trolling[41]. Frequently the comments are

[38] An image, video, piece of text, etc., typically humorous in nature, which is copied and spread rapidly by Internet users, often with slight variations.

[39] Referred to online as socks or sock puppets: An online identity used for purposes of deception; in reference to hand puppet made from a sock, originally referred to a false identity assumed by a member of an Internet community while pretending to be another person. The term now includes other misleading uses of online identities, such as those created to praise, defend or support a person or organization, or to circumvent a suspension or ban from a website. A significant difference between the use of a pseudonym and a sock puppet is that the latter poses as an independent third-party unaffiliated with the puppeteer. In the context of Spain the expression is known and used by some informants, others simply refer to it as "fake profile"

[40] See annex for sample images provided by informants.

internalized and deemed as an unavoidable part of the online experience. There are, however, plenty of videos on which polarizing debates emerge, so the original poster then has to explain and engage in exchanges with other users:

> **"**I saw a video where an African-American guy […] said *and I'm really proud that both my parents are black,* it produced a macro debate about if that was racism or not […]I don't think it was all that big a deal, but he was being called racist, being called a lot of things" [ES-YP9]

On the other hand, many users recalled seeing positive videos against homophobia, gender violence, or racism. However, youngsters pointed out that the comments are not all positive, therefore the idea that *"haters gonna hate"* remains, thus normalizing the existence of hateful comments.

Online newspapers: Youngsters believe that the more anonymous users can be on a site, the more they let loose while commenting. In their opinion, there seems to be more support (positive responses or "likes"/up-votes) on racist comments. Furthermore, anti-racist commenters or those who call out the xenophobic nature of the headlines or of specific comments get attacked and accused of siding with "the enemy" by the other users.

> "In a Basque newspaper they had published about a boy who was born in Madrid and was chosen by the national Spanish football team… [...] The headline said he was a son of *patera*[42] […] comments were about him not being from here, there were offensive comments" [ES-YP2]

> "I have a lot of contact with activists who are involved with anti-islamophobia campaigns and those people have received sketchy and explicit attacks, both during the Charlie Hebdo attacks and before […] When a person tries to defend or to make certain realities within Islam visible, that person is criticized a lot, and these people really have been insulted […] One is a public figure of activism and a strong figure of European Islam, the insults came from people who probably read her article in some newspaper so they were not writing on her [Facebook] wall but they were writing on La Vanguardia's wall as a response to her" [ES-YP4]

There were plenty of similar examples, and youngsters believe that often, the headlines and articles themselves are racist, thus continuing to fuel xenophobic and racist sentiments.

Online Gaming: *League of Legends* is a multiplayer online battle arena[43]. The informant with experience of this game revealed that the platform has zero tolerance for hate speech, even though he also recalls seeing some of the most "brutal" comments there:

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[41] *Trolling* refers to any online behavior that is meant to intentionally anger or frustrate someone else in order to provoke a response.

[42] A patera is a small wooden raft; some African immigrants use them to cross the Gibraltar strait trying to reach Spanish shores.

[43] By July 2012 it was the most played PC game in North America and Europe in terms of the number of hours played. As of January 2014, over 67 million people play it per month, 27 million per day, and over 7.5 million simultaneously during peak hours.

> "Video games or networks where you have an avatar and are somewhat anonymous, that is where people *explode* on the racist subject, I mean, terrible things! So I'm on the video game and you *kill* me and I find out you are Jewish, then they will be talking about Hitler for 2 hours, you're black? Then they talk 2 hours about the Ku Klux Klan […] I see that on Facebook people control themselves more than on the videogames or anything else [...] It is very brutal" [ES-YP14]

He added that the reporting mechanism in place is quite simple and intuitive, and that the administrators almost immediately follow up reports. He mentioned that he does notice an improvement on people's behaviour after their first ban.

Twitter: Many of the interviewees are bystanders on this site, with very few actually participating and even less of them willing to engage in a discussion with offenders. Overall, the youngsters agreed that there are racist statements with plenty of re-tweets. The most common examples given were after the German Wings crash, misogynist accounts and several more with misogynist undertones or jokes, neo Nazi accounts; and in fact following the Charlie Hedbo attack, the third most used hashtag in Spain was *"kill all Muslims"* ("matad a todos los musulmanes")[44].

3.2.5. Most common contexts and topics in which hate speech emerges

Throughout the ethnography, youngsters mentioned a variety of topics they believe to be the causes for hateful comments and heated exchanges on social media. They range from reports about the barrier with Morocco, posts encouraging or justifying the persecution and discrimination of Roma, Latin, African and Muslim communities, and statements or memes reinforcing negative stereotypes, misogynist or anti-feminism.

> "For example on El País, I have read a few comments speaking for instance of people coming from Latin American countries to go back to their countries, even a few headlines were speaking of how gold there has run out and that was the reason why they have come, so even the headlines are racist, and then the comments supporting the idea that Latinos came to take everything they could and now that there is nothing they are going back" [ES-YP7]

Overall, the majority of informants recall seeing anti-Catalan sentiment coming from other parts of Spain after the Diada *(The National Day of Catalonia*[45]*),* and more so following the Germanwings crash, given that the victims were mostly of Catalan origin and a few Latinos, tweets were used to dehumanize and mock those who died in the accident[46]:

> "There was that plane crash in France, there was a group of people on Twitter, I believe they were from Madrid, I'm not sure, but they said *Oh it's all good! The Spaniards who died were not Spanish they were Catalans*, as if it was a minor loss, and as a result, again lynching between pro-Catalans and pro-Spanish and it even seems you always have to pick a side." [ES-YP10]

[44] *#JeSuisCharlie and #JeNesSuisPasCharlie* were the first two, #StopIslam was also among the most used hashtags on twitter, and several newspapers reported the trend. Some images calling for violence against Muslims also circulated via twitter, an example is included in the annex.
[45] This day is perceived by many as a demonstration of independentism.
[46] As mentioned in section 3.1.5 this is now a case under investigation.

For those making racist and xenophobic posts, the hijab and Islam as a whole are often seen and depicted as directly opposing European values and gender equality. There are also posts claiming it is a backwards ideology and it must be stopped before it is too late. Consequently, following the Charlie Hebdo attacks the overwhelming majority of informants report seeing countless posts on social media and all agreed that it was a very polarized debate and it seemed everyone had to choose sides.

> "Well you already put the example, the Charlie Hedbo incident, Facebook the following day was a fight to the death between the *je suis Charlie* and the *je nes suis pas Charlie,* and it was like *boom*! [ES-YP13]

Several youngsters expressed their disappointment when people whom they thought were more able to scrutinize a situation to its root causes joined the discussion by supporting the magazine in the name of freedom of expression. Many of the interviewees also emphasized that they either didn't make posts regarding the attacks, tried to position themselves in an impartial position, or they joined the *je nes suis pas Charlie* side. Furthermore, most of them insist that it was too much information circulating too quickly and many people didn't take the time to read and process it. In addition, anti-veil or xenophobic posts disguised as an attempt to problematize Islam, while advocating for female emancipation at the same time were also reported as causes for heated arguments.

In fact gender issues were markedly mentioned by some of the women interviewed, who have been called *feminazi* after posting any videos against *machismo* or evidencing gender inequalities. By the same token, there was mention of offensive comments concerning physical appearance, publicly scorning those who do not meet current beauty standards. It is worth mentioning that there is a racial component to these comments, assigning certain negative characteristic to specific nationalities or ethnic groups. One informant, who participated in a beauty contest, received countless offensive comments; she reported it to SOS Racismo because the organisers did not take it seriously nor took any measures to stop the abuse.[47] The harassers were another contestant and her mother who were not anonymous and recruited their contacts to follow suit; even threatening the informant's physical integrity via Facebook, to the extent that she needed medical attention due to the stress this caused her.

> "For example if someone is Latina, obviously you will be attributed the worst or things that are not even true […] they think we are inferior, that we have a lower cultural level […]that why would people even vote for me knowing that we don't even have enough to eat, that we didn't even have social media, that we were the worst." [ES-YP6]

She also recalls seeing several hateful comments on Facebook and Twitter about nationalities and weight during the Miss Universe pageant. Another female informant also revealed that even though she has not been target of racist comments on Facebook, someone wrote that she "must go on a diet ASAP" [ES-YP10] on her photos from the beach, in this case she did not report nor respond, but simply removed the person from her contacts.

[47] This case is also mentioned by the Sos Racismo representatives interviewed.

3.2.6. Responses and reactions to online hate speech by young users

Overall, there was consensus around the idea that social media, and the internet in general, is extremely difficult if not impossible to regulate. Additionally several youngsters believe that social media companies have no interest in implementing harsher policies and tackling hate speech on their channels, and that any measures already put into place are insufficient. On the whole, young people believe that social media companies do not have any authority to decide what should be censored.

Furthermore, across the board youngsters' initial reaction is disbelief, as they are unable to understand why people would say those things. Some youngsters are quite indifferent and minimize the impact of hate speech, whereas others have normalized it and consider online hate speech inevitable even though they themselves are part of the main target groups. By contrast, other reactions range from anger to sadness. However informants also think that usually, the people who make offensive comments do not even know its implications, either due to a low cultural level, or because they are reproducing the discourse they see and hear on TV and other media.

In terms of reporting, most of the young people have claimed to know how to report offensive content on Facebook, although some seem to mistake *untagging* or removing advertising with reporting hateful content. In contrast, the majority of the informants are not aware of how to report such content on Twitter, while those who mentioned Instagram say they do know how to report content. By and large youngsters have not reported offensive comments, posts, or pages mainly because they do not believe it merits being reported or they believe the commenter is *trolling.* The most significant reason interviewees mentioned for not reporting, however, is that they believe that no action will be taken and there would be no consequences for the offenders. In fact those who have reported hateful profiles or pages and even got their friends to report them, have revealed that there was no prompt response from Facebook, and if there was, it was to inform them that the content did not meet the site's criteria to be taken down:

> "There was a [Facebook] page […] they had put the pig prophet Mohammed and they had put a caricature of a pig […] I reported it and I shared it with my friends but it is not even taken down […]There are things that they really should remove and they don't and there are things they should allow and they remove it" [ES-YP2]

Those who have been victims of hate speech online do not tend to blame the offenders, but rather consider them ill-informed or lacking life experiences. Others, as bystanders, think that those making offensive comments are ignorant, have not travelled, or have not met people from other places:

> "To me they are people who do not know anything important about humans, they believe that only they can exist in the world and dominate the world" [ES-YP1]

> "They don't see the consequences and one is blinded and doesn't see it is a hateful comment, a discriminatory one, they don't realize its reach and what all that can generate" [ES- YP3]

Moreover, informants think little is done to control, prevent or fight hate speech in general, and they think people do it more online because of anonymity, the lack of consequences, also because they see minimal, if any, reaction against those making offensive remarks. In addition youngsters think that people do not care or simply watch and stay on the side-lines, thus condoning and perpetrating this type of behaviour.

> "I think that people on social media, because there is no one who would see it and who knows them, they feel enabled to say what they think. On social media people say what they think, but not so on the street" [ES-YP2]

Overall there was doubt when it came to reporting to the police because youngsters believe there is deep rooted institutional racism; they were also reluctant to believe that the government would fight xenophobia given current immigration policies in place. Moreover Facebook itself has been the focus of debate because many believe the network places more attention on policing women's bodies[48] than censoring violence and hate speech. Additionally, those who have tried to engage in dialogue and reflect with those making hateful comments on Facebook, and even more on online newspapers, report a backlash from either the original poster or the other users who support the comments.

In terms of young people's involvement in the struggle against online hate speech, in general youngsters agreed they should get more involved:

> "Look […] to me this thing of when you are young you're a revolutionary and when you're older you are for the establishment and you are an inveterate bourgeois truly does not convince me at all. When you are young you must fight against injustices and also when you are old, I don't think that young people have special leverage, they do just like any other sector of society" [ES-YP12]

At the same time they don't know up to what point it would make a difference. Others expressed that everyone should get involved mainly by leading by example, yet others are not sure if regulation of what is said on the internet is entirely possible, and there is also concern about freedom of speech among some youngsters.

48 E.g. through removing breast feeding or menstruation related pictures; Instagram also has been criticized for this. See annex for related online articles.

4. Concluding remarks and recommendations for preventing, redressing and inhibiting hate speech

4.1. Recommendations for preventing, redressing and inhibiting hate speech

4.1.1. Recommendations found in the reports consulted

Most recommendations from the reports, and especially those previous to 2014, concern improving the systems of collection and classification of hate crimes in order to obtain more reliable statistics, but as detailed above, this is already being implemented.

Specifically regarding the fight against online hate speech, the Simon Wiesenthal Centre recommends a user based manner, seeing if the terms of the specific platform are violated and reporting to the service itself, which is something that any user of the platform could do.[49] For this, more awareness is needed among users (MCI 2012). In this regard there is an interesting example of response in Spain, namely the platform "Yo también denuncio las páginas racistas, intolerantes y discriminatorias" ("I also report racist, intolerant and discriminatory pages") with a Facebook page bringing together over 6000 users and a blog, detailing how to report hate speech[50]. Initiatives like this on social media platforms is a way of raising awareness and could contribute to increasing the reporting of hate speech by users within the platforms.

4.1.2. Recommendations by the professionals interviewed

All the professionals interviewed refer to public awareness campaigns and training as crucial for improving the reporting of online hate speech. Those especially targeted by hate speech must be made aware of the fact that this can and should be reported and be motivated to do so. However, awareness raising is also key in inhibiting and preventing hate speech. Internet users should learn that not only do their hateful online statements have pervasive effects on the target groups and the societal climate, but that some of these statements are actually criminal. In this regard, the Catalan police give talks both in schools and for associations of especially vulnerable collectives, but would need more resources for further awareness raising among the general public. In fact, when developing the protocol on hate crimes and discrimination, they established an e-mail for anonymous reports of discrimination, however this has not been used as they lacked resources for dissemination. In this sense, the Metropolitan Police in London is mentioned as a good example in how they use pins, pens, flyers, etc to disseminate information on e.g. how to report. The police also acknowledge that they still need to develop more awareness and sensitivity to these issues, building trust with the community, to improve the reporting rate, something which is easier in smaller and local police forces. More diversity within the police force would also contribute in this regard.

Both the prosecutor and the NGO representatives emphasise that states need to take this type of crimes more seriously, and not view them as harmless. A way of doing this could be

[49] See also the Anti-Defamation League's Cyber-Safety Action Guide: http://www.adl.org/combating-hate/cyber-safety/c/cyber-safety-action-guide.html

[50] https://yotambiendenuncio.wordpress.com/. Unfortunately this platform seems not to have been very active in the last few years

the creation of special police units to "patrol" the web for hate speech. The prosecutor does, however, perceive an ongoing positive change in how the police view these issues - e.g. in the week before the interview a musical band was arrested because their lyrics incited to violence and discrimination against disabled people – but also the justice system needs to take a bigger interest in this.

Furthermore, Sos Racismo argues that more tools are needed to report online hate speech. Also those who are not direct victims should be able to place complaints in a formal way, and, more importantly, be encouraged to react and act against online hate speech as internet users. In this sense, the project PROXI[51] is brought forward as an example. This project observes and analyses hate speech related content in the comments sections of digital newspaper, and also encourages users to participate providing them with tools to counteract hate speech.

4.1.3. Recommendations by the young people interviewed

The majority of youngsters correlated the increase in hate speech to a loss of values. When asked about how this could be tackled they pointed to respecting others and our differences. Almost unanimously youngsters said that leading by example is essential, and everybody should do it. A few agreed that the only way to tackle this behaviour is by raising awareness and better education both at home and at school through workshops especially at an early age; they also believe more involvement from all institutions is needed. In addition, a handful of informants pointed out that hate speech cannot be properly addressed unless the existence of racism is acknowledged first, as they believe people will continue to repeat and normalize discriminatory behaviour.

Table 4.1.3a Summary of recommendations:

Recommendation	By whom	For whom
Public campaigns to raise awareness among the population that online hate speech can and should be reported	Police Prosecutor NGOs Young people	All institutions working with hate speech
States need to take hate speech more seriously and conceptualise it as a crime. In this regard, special police units could be installed to patrol the internet in the same way that they patrol the street.	Prosecutor	State's justice system
Harder sentences for spreading hate speech	Prosecutor	State's justice system
Better international collaboration for online crimes	Prosecutor	International justice system
More tools to report online	NGO	

[51] http://www.observatorioproxi.org/

Those who are not direct victims should also be able to place formal complaints with the police or prosecutor	NGO	Police and prosecutor
Increased user engagement through reporting to the social media platforms	NGO	General public
Societies need to acknowledge the structural racism that exists and fight this on all levels	NGO	Society as a whole
Educational and sensitization workshops about hate speech and discrimination for youths especially at an early age.	Young People	State's education system
Better education at home and at school: to respect others and our differences, and raising awareness about hate speech.	Young People	State's educational system, older people (particularly those with children)
Leading by example (not making hateful or discriminatory comments) both on social media and outside of it.	Young People	All governmental institutions and representatives and the community as a whole

4.2. Concluding remarks

The ethnographic work conducted clearly supports reports that racist and xenophobic hate speech exists in Spain, and reveals that young people come into contact with discriminatory, racist and xenophobic stances on social media and other online forums such as the comments sections in digital newspapers. Professionals working in areas related to racism and xenophobia are increasingly aware of the growing issue of online hate speech. However, they often seem to feel unprepared for taking on the possibly very high amount of complaints if they actively encourage internet users to report cases of hate speech.

With regard to comparing the views of young people and of professionals, both groups see the prevailing presence of racism in the Spanish society and there is agreement concerning the target groups for hate speech, though young people added that both men and women are also targets if they have feminist views; they also added that physical appearance can be the basis for hateful comments, particularly on sites where users expose themselves (e.g. YouTube, Instagram).

Looking at specific channels, young people in Spain tend to relate to WhatsApp as social media, whereas this was not brought up in any of the interviews with professionals. This discrepancy might be related to contrasts between the public and private arenas in that what is posted on Twitter and Facebook is public to a higher extent, which is what professionals working on these issues are more concerned about. However, images shared through Whatsapp can also have a significantly wide reach as they circulate via one to one

messaging and possibly through private groups which in turn keep sharing them. This might be worth taking into account for future analysis. Also when it comes to the form of the content, as we have seen, youngsters tend to make a wide use of images (memes) for online communication and include them as examples of possible hate speech.

In view of discussing the different attitudes and experiences of the two main groups interviewed, it should be emphasised that the definitions of hate speech used in the interviews with young people and professionals were slightly different, which obviously influences the content. In the interviews with young people a broader definition of hate speech than the strictly legal one was used[52], this could be referred to as "perceived hate speech", whereas the professionals mainly tackled the subject from a legal point of view, but also their definitions differed depending on the perspective of each expert. The discrepancies in their responses might also be related to the differences in the types of interviews conducted, and perhaps to a generational gap in the use of technology. Youngsters tend to be more familiar with what is actually happening online, given that many of them "live" on social media, i.e. it is integrated in their everyday lives to a higher extent. Whilst the objective of interviewing the professionals selected was mainly to complement any information found in reports, the young people explained their own experiences, some as target groups and/or victims of hate speech. By and large, the information gathered from youngsters is data not collected or reflected in most reports. This is an advantage of adopting an ethnographical perspective, to talk to people about their lives, experiences and attitudes, because it does reveal a relevant perspective, too often overlooked.

Finally, the PRISM research has mainly focused on the victims and target groups of online hate speech. This work has evidenced the need for further qualitative research also on the perpetrators, not only considering the organised extreme stances, but also the "ordinary" internet users who may not come clean with their opinions in face-to-face encounters but hide behind their screens to spread hateful messages. Acknowledging the possible methodological difficulties of this type of research, considering the anonymity of many of the users spreading hate speech, we still believe it would be crucial to learn more about the motivations of these persons.

[52] In the cases where the young people interviewed were not aware of the concept of hate speech, we talked about it in terms of "offensive comments" or "racist comments".

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Spanish Observatory on Racism and Xenophobia (OBERAXE) (2012) *Handbook for training security forces in identifying and recording racist or xenophobic incidents*

Yo también denuncio las páginas racistas, intolerantes y discriminatorias – *web page*: https://yotambiendenuncio.wordpress.com

Annex 1: Data collection for the mapping in Spain

Name of organisation	Social Media Platform	Date when joined	Number of followers as of March 2015	Gender distribution (FB)	Number of posts in the last year (Mar 14 – Feb 15) YouTube: Total nº of videos. Last video upload?	Average nº of posts per day	Most frequently used words and level of engagement (FB) Top words (Twitter, Instagram)	Does it link to the official POM webpage? Does it link to other social media of the POM? If yes, which?	Any further information
Plataforma per Catalunya plataforma.cat	Facebook	Oct 2011	5.846	M: 78% F: 22%	956	6	<u>Frequency:</u> Plataforma Catalunya/PxC, nuestro, Robert Hernando (the leader of the party), islámica, inmigrantes, nostres, catalanes, España, casta, contra <u>Engagement:</u> nuestro, islámica, inmigrantes, nostres, catalanes, España, yihadistes	- Links between official web and Facebook - Link to Twitter	
	Twitter	Oct 2011	1.749	-	3.205	In the last year: 8.7	Frequency: PxC, contra, Catalunya, Pujol, islamista, Plataforma, denunciado, casa, nuestra, España	- Links between official web and Twitter	
	YouTube	Feb 2014	34	-	Videos: 14 Last upload: Feb 2015 Views: 7.200	-	-	- Link from official web but YouTube does not link to the web	

Democracia Nacional democracianacional.org	Facebook	Jan 2015	1.401	N/A	53 (since Jan 2015)	1.6	<u>Frequency</u>: Nacional, Democracia, nuestras, España, palabras, amenazantes, Europa <u>Engagement:</u> nuestras, Nacional, amenazantes, cuentas, entrevista, fronteras, recibe, policías	- Links between official web and Facebook	This is a new page, started in January 2015. DN has previously been active with other accounts since February 2011
	Twitter	July 2011	6.100	-	987	In the last year: 2.7	Frequency: Nacional, España, DN, Democracia, Nuestro, español, contra, patriotas, voto, europeas	- Links between official web and Twitter	
	YouTube	Mar 2009	372	-	Videos: 64 Last upload: Sept 2013 Views: 196.000	-	-	- Links between official web and Youtube - The channel information also provides a phone number to the organization as well as a link to a discussion forum	

España 2000 espana2000.org	Facebook	Dec 2009	17.186	N/A	214	0.5	Frequency: España2000, nuestra, españoles, presentación, alimentos, denuncia, nacional, Alcalá, política, ayudas, municipales, reparto, Europa, alcalde, localidad. Engagement: nuestra, españoles, alimentos, denuncia, ayudas, reparto, alcalde, delito, operación, ningún, caseta, localidad, necesitadas, Xirivella.	- Links between official web and Facebook	
	Twitter	Jan 2011	6.068	-	392	In the last year: 1.1	Frequency: España2000, españoles, contra, nuestra, Alcalá, ayudar, Islámico, presentadores, reparto, España	- Links between official web and Twitter	
	YouTube	Feb 2008	668	-	Videos: 140 Last upload: Dec 2014 Views: 536.000	-	-	- Links between official web and YouTube	

Alianza Nacional lostuyos.net	Twitter	Oct 2012	6.738	-	395	In the last year : 1.1	Frequency: España, nuestra, contra, nacional, separatismo, Pedro Pablo, acto, española, marcha, frente	- Links between official web and Twitter	
	YouTube	March 2011	278	-	Videos: 19 Last upload: March 2014 Views: 76.000	-	-	- No links between the official web and the channel	The channel name is Madrid An - the Madrid branch, but it states that it is the official channel.
Movimiento Social Republicano msr.org.es	Facebook	Aug 2014	2.200	N/A	156	0.6	<u>Frequency</u>: MSR, nuestro, social, España, jóvenes, nacional, ayudar, familias, denunciar. <u>Engagement</u>: MSR, nuestro, social, España, jóvenes, nacional, ayudar, familias	- Links between official web and social media - Link to Twitter	This is a new page started in August 2014. MSR has previously been active on Facebook with other accounts since October 2011.
	Twitter	Jan 2012	4.553	-	1.255	In the last year: 3.4 Feb 2015: 3.2	Frequency: nuestro, MSR, social, voto, nueva, españoles, contra, Facebook, ayudáis, públicos.	- Links between official web and social media	
	YouTube	Mar 2008	398	-	Videos: 26 Last upload: May 2014 Views: 106.480	-	-	- Link to official web, but web does not link to YouTube. - The information also includes a phone number.	

Annex 2: Detailed interview sample

Detailed sample – Professionals			
Participant code	**M/F**	**Organisation**	**Position in the organisation**
ES-P1	F	Mossos d'Esquadra	Superintendent involved in the development of the Protocol for Hate Crimes and Discrimination
ES-P2	M	Sos Racismo	Legal expert
ES-P3	F	Sos Racismo Guipozkoa	Legal assistant
ES-P4	M	Servicio de Delitos de Odio y Discriminación de la Fiscalía Provincial de Barcelona	Coordinating prosecutor
ES-P5	M	Espacio del Inmigrante	Coordinator

Detailed sample - Young people						
Participant code	**M/F**	**Age**	**Residence**	**Origin**	**Level of studies**	**Occupation**
ES-YP1	M	20	San Sebastián	Cameroon	Secondary school	Mechanic
ES-YP2	M	24	San Sebastián	Morocco	Secondary School	Cook
ES-YP3	M	20	Barcelona	Saudi Arabia	Adult education	Student
ES-YP4	M	28	Barcelona	Argentina	University degree	Part-time work, travel agency
ES-YP5	M	24	San Sebastián	Nicaragua	A-levels	Fruit store manager and clerk
ES-YP6	F	23	Irun	Colombia	University	Student
ES-YP7	F	25	Bilbao	Ecuador	University-Bachelor's degree	Student. Employed-minor's protection services
ES-YP8	M	30	Mallorca	Spain		
ES-YP9	M	29	Mataró	Mataró	University degree	Student- Masters level.
ES-YP10	F	31	Barcelona	Bolivia	University Degree	Student- Masters level. Social Worker
ES-YP11	F	23	Tiana	Tiana	University (journalism)	Student. Practices at a theatre organization.
ES-YP12	F	27	Barcelona	Barcelona	University	Student- Masters Aspiring actress.
ES-YP13	M	25	Ferrol-Barcelona	Barcelona	University	Student- Masters
ES-YP14	M	20	Barcelona	Pakistan/Kashmir	Secondary school	Baccalaureate student /Theatre clerk
ES-YP15	F	25	Barcelona	Castellón	Secondary School	Waitress
ES-YP16	M	25	Barcelona	Gabon	Secondary school	Waiter/ Event organiser
ES-YP17	M	23	Castellón	Castellón	Secondary school	Waiter

Annex 3: Images and references from the interviews with young people

The following are examples of the images and memes which circulate via Whatsapp, showed to the interviewers by some of the young people interviewed in order to illustrate hate speech content:

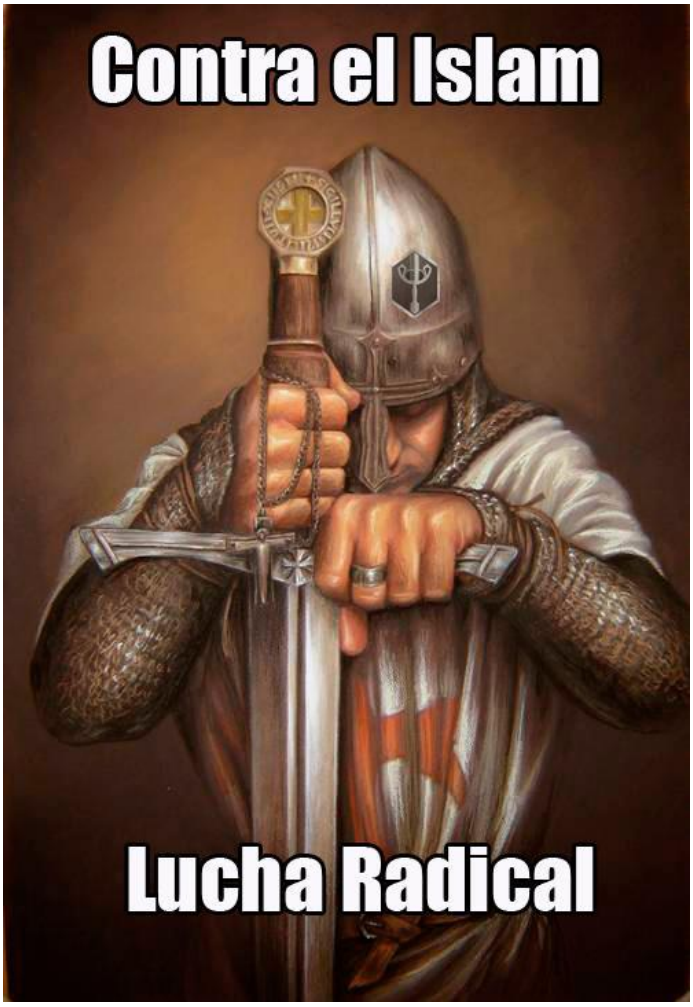
Figure 1: "Does it scare you shitless or not?"

Figure 2 "Solid state, liquid state, Islamic

Figure 3 "I'm coming from the hair salon and you haven't said a word"

Figure 1 In reference to a famous anime called Dragon Ball (bola de drac in Catalan) with regard to the ebola outbreak

Figure 2 Tweet from España Radical "against Islam a Radical fight"



Links to videos and relevant articles:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BKr9yxDDqr0 spot Plataforma Per Catalunya uploaded in 2011 which still generates comments (many in favour of the spot and against immigrants, and Muslims)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PLV9zP7Df1nvlsGTmUNFgBGzXvQhL8S0P7&v=Gpo-JIfUNpk Video published by VOX España March 2015, entitled "Andalucia 2018" uses newscast format to show the Cordoba Mosque returning to Muslim hands and a Islamised Spain by 2018, asking voters *do you want a future like this? We can still change it*

http://www.algemeiner.com/2013/09/17/facebook-under-fire-for-allowing-hate-speech-against-jews-to-proliferate-online/

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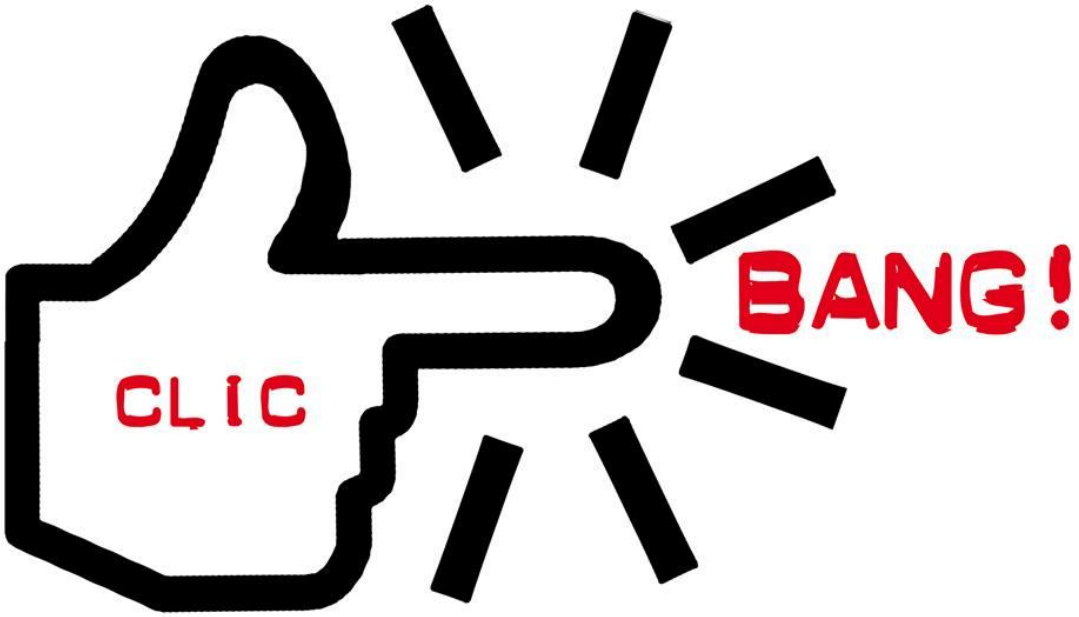
Online hate speech in the UK

Fieldwork report

P R I S M



WORDS ARE WEAPONS.

PREVENTING REDRESSING & INHIBITING HATE SPEECH IN NEW MEDIA

Roxana-Elena Preotescu
July 2015

ROTA

With financial support from the Fundamental Rights and Citizenship Programme of the European Union

Disclaimer

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Executive summary

The exponential advance of the Internet and social media as a means for communication and news consumption has been mirrored by a proliferation of extremist and hate based antagonistic activity. The peculiarities of the Internet, such as anonymity, permanency, itinerancy, immediate revival and transnational mobility foster a landscape where group-focused enmity can be widely disseminated. Whilst it is recognized that all crime is wrong, the defining nature of hate speech, namely hatred motivated by specific characteristics of the targeted individual, makes hate speech particularly corrosive. As the UK partner in the Preventing Redressing and Inhibiting Hate Speech in New Media (PRISM) project, this paper examines the manifestation of online hate speech in the UK.

According to a study by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in 2011: ''group-focused enmity in Europe is not a phenomenon of the political margins, but an issue at the centre of society. Europeans are conspicuously united in their rejection of immigrants and Muslims''. This description resonates with the climate of hostility and wider discontent with British democracy, the anti-immigration and anti-Muslim sentiments voiced by much of the British public. This study shows that immigration is one of the main stated concerns of British people and although not a new phenomenon, this concern has reached historic levels. Far-right parties, as proven by the mapping activity, disseminate hostile sentiments voicing anxiety over the presence of migrants, with a focus particularly on newly arrived migrants, as well as other well-established ethnic and religious groups, like Jews, Muslims, etc.

Troublingly, a strain of hate seems to run through large areas of the media, public and political life in Britain and be easily disseminated and amplified online. The media, by widely serving political elites' views, openly question the consequences of the UK's increasingly multicultural and multi-racial society. This translating into a growing climate of fear and suspicion amongst the British public.

A worrying aspect underlined by the findings from this research is the overt hatred spread by far-right parties, especially BNP (British National Party), National Front, Britain First and English Defence League (EDL). The messages disseminated by these groups communicate the belief that conflict between ethnic and religious group is unavoidable. Moreover, their messages express the view that it is imperative for the public to mobilize in a fight to stop Britain being taken over by migrants, muslims or both. Frighteningly, a significant number of followers share this belief and some appear willing to engage in violence for this cause.

Focusing on xenophobic and racist online hate speech in the UK, it involves a double recognition, namely, the enduring history of prejudice and enmity towards other ethnic groups and the challenge in addresing hate speech due to the abstract nature of the online domain and blurred boundaries between hate speech and free speech, generally.

This study highlights the importance of dealing with the fears of immigration and "Islamization" in the UK. It is often argued that whilst such concerns share old prejudices, they are currently expressed in more subtle and evasive ways than they used to be during the 1960s, for instance. This study, however shows that this "subtlety" is not particularly the

case in the online domain; where some far-right parties and other individuals are overtly and agressively publishing their antagonistic messages.

In terms of prevention of online hate speech, the conventional legal architecture for law enforcement can be questioned. This study recognizes that current legal measures are necessary, but not sufficient to deal with online hate speech/crime. The dynamic and changing nature of the internet rather calls for additional non-legal measures, of which education of young people and awareness raising of the consequences of hate speech should be the leading protective factors. There is more that can be done in order to prevent, redress and inhibit hate speech in the new media. This paper puts forward a number of recommendations in that respect. However, it is recognised that we can only deal with the challenges posed by online hate speech through concerted work, where both legal and non-legal measures are considered and implemented at a multidisciplinary level.

1. Introduction to the national context

Xenophobic and racist hate speech is not a new phenomenon, but one that, through the advanced use and consumption of internet based content and social media, has found new ways to infect British society. In the UK alone, there are more than 37 million social media users (Bartlett and Norrie, 2015). This reflects a new landscape where the way people communicate and get their news is changing; the public relying more and more on the internet as their main source of information. Research shows that social media is increasingly used for communication by individuals and far-right parties, a majority of which broadcast disturbing racist and xenophobic messages. This is usually driven by reports and news articles from mainstream media (Faith Matters, 2014); which has reseulted, in the past years, in alarming surge in reports of online hate speech (Copsey et al., 2013; Feldman and Littler, 2014). Within this context, the present paper provides a national overview of the dynamic forms of online xenophobic and racist hate speech in the UK. It starts with a discussion about hate speech and free speech. It then presents a nuanced picture of manifestations of online hate speech identified through the review of existent literature. This is done by examining the relationship, if any, between the economic, social and political climate and manifestations of hate speech. The use of social media is examined through the identification and discussion of events triggering online hate speech. The paper then considers which are the main target groups, the main perpetrators and the main organizations that deal with hate speech/crime. This research is based on empirical evidence and is informed by a mapping activity of five political parties with a xenophic and largely extremist agenda, as well as semi-structured qualitative interviews with experts and young people.

In view of the complexities posed by online hate speech, the paper suggests gaps in the literature and puts forward recommendations on how to prevent, redress and inhibit online hate speech.

1.1 Free speech vs. hate speech

Hate speech lies in a nexus with freedom of speech, individual autonomy, human dignity, liberty and equality (Gagliardone et al., 2014). The notion of hate speech is, however, a slippery one, as there is no agreed definition of the concept (Copsey et al., 2013). Additionally, the issue is compounded by the fact that hate speech is not expressed in clear language of hatred, but instead, is manifested in the tone of public discourses, in political statements that promote an irrational sentiment of opprobrium and enmity (Article 19, 2009). Nonetheless, for the purposes of this paper, hate speech makes reference to ''every stance purporting to jeopardize the rights of ethnic, religious or national group, in clear violation of the principle of equal dignity and respect for the cultural differences among groups'' (CNR, 2015).

1.2 Online hate speech in the UK context

The UK is recognized as having one of the most developed human rights legislations in the world and despite no clear laws on hate speech; protection is covered by various legal provisions (e.g. Public Order Act, 1986). Noteworthy is that protection against racism extends to the online domain. In other words, in the UK, the medium through which hatred is promoted is immaterial; incitement to racial or religious hatred or violence is illegal in Britain (Feldman and Littler, 2014).

Whilst all crime is wrong, any offences motivated by hatred against the characteristics of the individuals targeted are particularly corrosive for the individuals in cause, as well as for the wider community. This is because hate speech helps normalize and legitimize hate motivated offences. Moreover, the advanced growth of internet facilitates the dissemination of ethnic, racial or religious hatred that portends incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence offline.

To date there is scarce research available on the manifestation of online xenophobic and racist hate-speech in the UK context. Researchers warning that ''much less attention has been paid to online hate crime, which can be the precursor to more physically or threatening offline incidents" (Copsey et al., 2013:11). From the available literature, however, it is recognized that the increased use of social media provides an open space for dissemination of hateful and hostile sentiment –mainly in response to outrageous real life events covered by mainstream media (Burnap and Williams, 2014). Within such context, appalling surge in reports of online hate speech have been recorded (Copsey et al., 2013; Feldman and Littler, 2014). For instance, Metropolitan Police –one of the 43 police forces in the UK- has recorded, in 2013, 500 Islamophobic incidents. TellMAMA (Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks) also reports that it has dealt with 840 incidents compared to 582 anti-Muslims incidents from March 2012 to March 2013 (Press Association, 2013). TellMama most recent report is consistent with data from previous year, the majority of the incidents recorded took place online namely two thirds or 402 out of 548 (Feldman and Littler, 2015). In addition, Commmunity Security Trust (CST) also reports, for 2014, the highest record of antisemitic incidents: 1,168 compared to 535 for 2013 (CST, 2014:4); 20% of the overall total of these incidents involved the online domain. CST states that the figures show an increase in the use of social media as a space where antisemitic messages are disseminated, 20% in 2014 compared to 16% in 2013. A breakdown of the type of incidents reveals that 18

of the 233 online incidents took the form of threats, whilst the remaining 215 were categorised as abusive behaviour (CST, 2014:6).

At a legislative level, the issue of online hate speech is recognized and policy makers have put forward proposals for the introduction of internet ASBOs; to ban people who spread hatred from using certain social media platforms (The Guardian, 2015). At a practical level, following dissemination of hateful and antagonistic sentiment on social media, people have been prosecuted under the Public Order Act, 1986. For instance, in 2012, Liam Stacey (a university student) was jailed for tweeting racially offensive comments about footballer, Fabrice Mumba. He wrote *''LOL (laugh out loud). F*** Muamba. He's dead!!!''* (The Telegraph, 2012). In 2014, football fan, Declan McCuish was sentenced for a year for the following hateful comments: *''black monkey b….''; ''Are you still playing football you ville little f…..monkey'',* which he addressed at two footballers (Daily Record, 2014).

Another recent example of a high profile case of online ''viscous, xenophobic and racist hate speech'' (RT, 2015)[1], which is likely to lead to prosecution, is that of columnist Katie Hopkins. Following the breaking news of Libyan migrant disaster, in which over 800 migrants were said to have lost their lives in the Mediterranean, Kate Hopkins wrote a piece titled:

"I'd use gunships to stop migrants." She further wrote: "NO, I don't care. Show me pictures of coffins, show me bodies floating in water, play violins and show me skinny people looking sad. I still don't care,"…"Make no mistake, these migrants are like cockroaches…. "Once gunships have driven them back to their shores, boats need to be confiscated and burned on a huge bonfire".

Hopkins' comments have been considered a criminal offence under the Public Order Act, 1986. The information she has distributed amounting for threatening, abusive or otherwise insulting language intended or likely to stir up racial hatred and incite violence. The case is still under investigation (Freedman, 2015).

Further about the dynamics of online hate speech in the UK, the available literature shows that the climate of hatred -characterised by targeted discrimination, prejudice and violent attacks- tends to cluster in time and to drastically increase in the aftermath of ''trigger events'' (King and Sutton, 2013). One such example, which has led to an outbreak of hate crimes committed against Muslim communities, is the murder of Lee Rigby[2], in May 2013. In the wake of this incident, TellMAMA and the Association of Chief Police Officers reported substantial rise in anti-Muslim online incidents (Asia News Monitor, 2014).

To date, Lee Rigby's murder is still very much used by individuals and radical groups to spread hateful comments against Muslims. Such manifestations support the notion of ''cumulative extremism'', where one form of extremism can feed off and magnify other forms (Feldman and Littler, 2014). Following Lee Rigby's murder, hatred against Muslims

[1] See website for full article http://www.rt.com/uk/254861-icc-hopkins-sun-legal/

[2] Two Muslim men, Michael Adebolajo and Michael Adebowale killed Lee Rigby, British soldier by running him down with a car. Then they used knives and a cleaver to stab and hack him to death. The men remained at the scene until police arrived. They claimed that they did it for Islam, to avenge the killing of Muslims by the British armed forces (BBC News, 2013)

was spread through social networking sites, like Facebook or Twitter. Awan (2013) states that ''the comments consisted of an 'extremist' and incendiary undertone which attacks the whole ethos of our government's social cohesion strategy and risks as we shall see stoking up more hatred in particular in the case of online Islamophobia'' (p.8).

Another dimension of xenophobic and racist hate speech is that, recently, far-right parties view the online domain as the new frontier for spreading their hostile messages. On hatred targeting Muslims, Feldman and collegues (2013:21) state that "the majority of the incidents of Muslim hate crimes reported to TellMAMA are online incidents and 300-69 per cent of these online cases reported a link to the far-right".

Worth mentioning is that not all hatred comes from far-right parties or that Muslims are the only group targeted. However, whereas official figures show that hate incidents are generally falling, a surge in anti-Muslims attacks has been recorded (Feldman and Littler, 2014). For instance, in 22 months of existence, TellMAMA reported that it has recorded 1,432 anti-Muslims incidents. Two thirds of these incidents relate to threats and harassment made online; some of them targeted mosques, whilst others individuals themselves (BBC5)[3].

Another targeted group, probably ever targeted, is the newly arrived migrants. A host of ethnic groups, ranging from Irish, Asians, Affrico-Carribeans to Europeans have, over the years, made the agenda of mainstream media (The Migrant Voice, 2015). Recently, the media, far-right groups and other nationalist British people have expressed hostile concerns and negativity towards Eastern Europeans. The UKIP, for instance, is an example of political party[4], which through its focus around tougher immigration control is often considered to have an open racist and xenophobic propaganda (Stockham, 2015[5]). In many of their press releases, UKIP's leader, Nigel Farage, and other members of the party have targeted and stigmatized Eastern European migrants by commenting things like: ''People in Romania and Bulgaria are "living like animals" and will want to live in a 'civilised country' like the UK instead'' (Bienkov, 2013).

Despite not illegal, during economically difficult times and in a context where immigration is already the public's main concern, such headlines –easily justified by free speech- foster stereotyping of ethnic groups and feed on public's anxiety over immigration. Additionally, such antagonistic comments, serve a degrading and dehumanizing function leading to manipulation of public's views and feelings towards certain ethnic and religious groups. Usually, their impact transcends the groups targeted, it affectes community relationships and ultimately endangers social cohesion.

Remarkable about xenophobic and racist hate sentiment in the UK, is that an analysis of the public discourses reveals that, in 1889, prejudices and stereotypes against other nationalities were bluntly admitted (The Migrant Voice, 2015). Dissimilar, nowadays, xenophobia and racism are all more rhetoric and subtle. Many of the hostile messages that are disseminated online/offline tend to hide behind the right to free speech and be much

[3] SEE: http://tellmamauk.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/press/audio.mp3

[4] Important to note that UKIP is an independent party and not a far right party, but since it had triggered hostile sentiment against certain minoritiy groups it has been included along the far right parties considered for this research

[5] SEE: http://leftfootforward.org/2015/02/is-ukip-a-racist-party-these-15-comments-would-suggest-so/

more elusive. We are not racist, but…*they* are a burden on our welfare system, *they* take our jobs and oversubscribe our schools (The Migrant Voice, 2015). Noteworthy is however that the increased use of social platforms, like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, offers -due to the perceived anonymity of the users and unawareness of consequences of hateful acts -an open and ''safe'' space for people to disseminate same old prejudices and antagonistic sentiment against new arrivals. Moreover, in a context where social media is no longer confined to the private space, the itinerancy, immediacy, immediate revival and amplifiability of the messages shared portend the creation of a circular process of contamination and manipulation of members of the transnational ''online society''. It is for this reason why there is a need for concerted work, where both legal and non-legal measures are considered and implemented at a multidiciplinary level.

1.3 Economic, political and cultural climate

Another feature of hate speech in the UK is that various political activists are also using the online space to gain popularity and to disseminate hostile, biased sentiment against particular ethnic and/or religious groups. At the time of writing this article, the UK is only two months away from its general election. Within the political debates, opinion polls suggest that, notably, asylum seeking and immigration issues feature exceedingly high in the list of concerns of the British electorate (Blinder, 2014; Bartlett and Norrie, 2015). Printed or online media, have particularly contributed to the creation of such climate. Moreover, the increased usage of the online social networks by far-right groups, especially those with an extremist agenda, like EDL, BNP, Britain First, for example, enables the perfect space for political propaganda, scapegoating and scaremongering of certain people. Generally, in the UK, there is a vast problem of polarization of the issue of immigrants being perceived as coming to this country to get the jobs and abuse the benefits system (Esses et al., 2013)

Moreover, the UK has a history of immigration, manifested intensely after the post war period. From that time to present, British society has been profoundly transformed. Changes have taken place both at a demographic and cultural level; being particularly marked by the transition from a largely-white to a multi-cultural and multi-racial society; where certain ethnic minorities are 'threatening' economic and social security (The Migrant Voice, 2015).

Seen as serving the interests of influential political parties and powerful groups, the media often prey on people's gripe over the situation. As a result, we frequently see unfounded sensational media discourses which portray migrants as ''criminals'' or ''undesirables'', as not belonging to the British society, but rather problematic outsiders that should be ''kept out''. Moreover, a recurrent theme in the media depicts of immigrants, for instance, is that they invade the country; disturb the normal British ways of life, pose threats to security and abuse social resources (Esses et al., 2013) as the headline reads:

''A TIDAL wave of Romanian and Bulgarian immigrants is threatening to swamp Britain — and flood our overstretched jobs market'' (The Sun, 2012).

Furthermore, far-right parties have started to use social media to facilitate the interaction between mainstream media and their supporters. Frequently, conventional news are used to publicize, diffuse and amplify antagonistic and hateful sentiments. A large number of

such messages tend to hide behind the right to free speech and despite not illegal denigrate the human dignity of the targeted groups.

1.4 Responses: Institutions and monitoring agencies dealing with the issue of online hate speech/crime

Hostile sentiments and hate speech in the online domain is a challenging issue for institutions and agencies fighting for individual's autonomy, human dignity, liberty and equality. Given the UK's commitment towards freedom of expression and respect for human dignity, there is a large spectrum of organizations dealing with the issue of hate speech/crime. Figure 3, in annexes, details some of the organizations with focus on xenophobic and racist hate speech/crime in the UK. A number of those organizations, which have informed the selections of the professionals interviewed, are mentioned below:

- TellMAMA -reporting of any form of Anti-Muslim abuse;
- Community Security Trust (CST) ensures the safety and security of Jewish communities;
- Article 19 –human right organization defending the right to freedom of expression and freedom of information
- HOPE Not Hate campaign works to provide a positive antidote to the politics of hate;
- UK Race and Europe Network (UKREN) works to combat race discrimination within a European context;
- NICEM (Northen Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities)-fights to eliminate racial discrimination and to promote racial equality
- Joint Council for Welfare of Immigrants -promotes justice and fairness in immigration, asylum law and policy.

2. Mapping of the social media activity of xenophobic parties, organizations and movements

2.1 Introduction to the parties, organizations or movements and rationale for selection

This section focuses on reporting of the online activity of five political parties with a xenophobic/extremist agenda namely, Britain First, British National Party, English Defence League, National Front and United Kingdom Independent Party on different social media platforms in the UK. The selection of these groups has been informed by the secondary research and by 'Hate Groups' research from Hope not Hate website. The data were collected between 1st of February and 31st of March 2015. All the messages quoted as part of this activity were publically available on the social platfoms used by the parties monitored. The data presented were collected using the online tool Fanpage Karma and by checking the parties' social media profile. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Google+ were the platforms monitored for this activity. To evidence the data quotes and pictures taken from the social media channels are used.

2.1.1 Interpretation of data collection

Britain First

Britain First represents a prolific racist and fascist party which propagandises on issues of Islam, immigration and abortion. Britain First encourages its members to carry on actions like mass emailing and letter writing in a mission to 'Put Britons First'[6]; by this it means that British people should come first, before foreigners, asylum seekers or migrants[7].

According to a report by Faith Matters (2014) exploring how Britain First uses social media to produce an environment that justifies hate during the coverage of the Rochdale child grooming[8], the party relies on online platforms for communication. This monitoring activity also proves that Britain First relies on social platforms to engage with its followers. Comparing the data collected, Facebook and Twitter seem to be the preferred online platforms. The party is popular on social networks; it has 2,300 followers on Facebook, 1,500 on Twitter, respectively, 1.900 on YouTube. Moreover, Britain First is fairly active on each of these social platforms. For instance, on average, it shares 14 posts per day on Facebook and respectively 32 tweets. With regards to the content of the messages that they spread, a word frequency analysis suggest that '*muslim', 'animal', 'halal'* are some of the words that are used frequently (e.g. ''normal behaviour for Muslims…''; ''Muslims are filthy pigs, especially their profet Mohammed''*)*.

Additionally, as the pictures below -taken from Britain First's Facebook page- illustrate, the party uses the online domain to spread messages against immigrants and religious groups, focusing especially on Muslims. Social networks, like Twitter and Facebook offer an open space for Britain First to disseminate their ideology, as well as to make the public aware of their street activities, like the march organized in Luton this June; Muslims are called '*hate preachers'*; and the march is a '*day of action'* organized to *'take hate preachers off our streets!'*

[6] SEE:http://www.hopenothate.org.uk/hate-groups/bf/

[7] (https://www.facebook.com/britainfirstgb/info?tab=page_info)

[8] Nine Muslims men had engaged in sexual activity with children. The group had plied five victims with drink and drugs and "passed them around" for sex

Interesting to note is that Britain First's supporters respond to and engage in the dissemination of hatred. For instance, the announcement on 28th February of the printing of Britain First's own newspaper (bi-monthly publication), has attracted 214 comments, 1,558 likes, 504 shares. The first page of the newspaper, as seen below, expresses an antagonistic and calumnious sentiment against Muslims. What is more, the message has inflamed supporters who commented:

> ''Dirty filthy scum bags...'', or ''Can honestly say everything that Muslims stand for and are associated with repulses me, they are a barbaric, medieval, torturous breed of creature that today's society has no place for. They can't integrate and have no compromise...Do away with the lot of them'' ([9]). Such negative comments allude, in the minds of the readers, to the nature of Muslims, 'dirty filthy scum bags'.

Moreover, a news article posted on Britain First's Facebook page (also posted on their website[10] and Twitter profile[11]) which has as status '*Asylum bill hits £726,000 a day: Immigration policy is a 'shambles' say critics'* further shows supporters' enagagement in

[9] SEE: https://www.facebook.com/britainfirstgb/posts/733621316783132
[10] SEE: http://www.bnp.org.uk/news/national/80-50million-muslims-europe-are-living-welfare
[11] SEE: https://twitter.com/britainfirst/status/572377957341241345

dissemination of hostility and denigration of migrants. On Facebook, for instance, it has a total of 912 likes, 1,042 shares and 311 comments. On the other side, on Twitter, it only had two tweets.

A large number of the messages and pictures that Britain First shares on its online platfoms are not illegal, however can trigger or amount to hate speech. Generally, denigratory allusions are made towards the nature of ethnic or religios groups; endangering the principle of equal dignity and respect for cultural differences. Concerningly, the comments of Britain First's followers on Facebook promote a culture of conflict with no benefits of immigration:

> ''Boom them easy''; ''Chuck the lot of them out''..

Also, further comments promote the idea that it is imperative that the public take actions to prevent immigrants from taking this country over (Faith Matters, 2014):

> 'Scum bag leaches march them off the cliffs of Dover''; ''Send em packing now... UKIP is the answer get uk out of eu before we are overtaking''.

Another example of hateful and hostile message was posted on 2nd of March when Britain First shared a third party video commenting ''*50 million Muslims in Europe and 80% are living on benefits''*. The video and BRITAIN FIRST's comment attracted antagonistic reactions:

> ''They are like locus, devour up everything in its path. People as well. Evil evil religion..... of Peace .....?''[12] .

Noteworthy, is that Facebook offers an open domain for the encouragement and furtherance of such hateful, violence lobbying messages that Britain First shares.

British National Party

From 2001 to 2010, the far-right British landscape was dominated by the British National Party (BNP) [Goodwin and Evans, 2012]. In 2009, for the first time in the history of far-right in Britain, BNP has secured two seats to the European Parliament (Bartlett et al., 2011). The Rise of the UKIP, coupled with the party's own schisms led to a drop in their public presence and support, testified by their 99.7% drop in votes during this year general election (Hooton, 2015). BNP claims to put the interests of British people first. As part of this mission, recently, BNP has focused on campaigning against "Islamification" of the UK, by opposing the founding of mosques to even halal meat being sold in shops[13]. With regards to the use of social media, BNP took advantage of the national and international high profile cases to exploit the anti-Muslims sentiment that emerged in Britain. For instance, following 9/11, BNP disseminated leaflets claiming to share:

> ''The Truth about **I.S.L.A.M** and **I.S.L.A.M** being an acronym for **I**ntolerance **S**laughter, **L**ooting, **A**rson and **M**olestation of women'' (Copsey at al., 2013:12).

[12]SEE: https://www.facebook.com/video.php?v=736026973209233

[13] http://www.hopenothate.org.uk/hate-groups/bnp/ accessed on 06/06/2015)

Recently, BNP has become increasingly drawn to the online space. Much of the online messages disseminated by BNP during this monitoring period express a strong sentiment of antagonism and negativity against ethnic and religious groups, especially Muslims. For instance, on a breaking news article about a Muslim man being charged with child abduction BNP commented:

> ''This scumbag tried to put the 6 year old little girl in the dustbin after he finished with her';

BNP's supporters have responded to this post with other hateful/offensive comments:

> ''The public should know who these nonces are the problem is muslims see no wrong in abusing children they even send their own to be abused by isis.the rope stops them reoffending''[14].

101 BNP followers express support of this overtly hostile and violent message by liking it. On Twitter, the same news article is tweeted with the status:

> ''And the scourge of multiculturalism continues; @bnp would hang child rapists, whoever they are''![15]

In support of the message –which can be read as support against Muslims, incited by the tweet that the party has shared- 10 supporters have rewetted it. Comments, such as the aforementioned, which picture Muslims as extremist and paedofiles, are gravely concerning because they can be precursors to real life offences (Copsey et al., 2013).

Below are some pictures which further illustrate the nature of the hostile, stereotyping message that BNP spreads on social media. The majority of them make reference to immigrants or Muslims and have been posted on Facebook.

[14] https://www.facebook.com/OfficialBritishNationalParty?fref=nf (accessed on 06/06/2015)
[15] http://www.itv.com/news/granada/update/2015-03-30/man-charged-over-burnley-child-abduction/ …

This picture was posted on BNP's Facebook page on 25th March 2015; It was shared 2.063 times; it had 2,612 likes and 660 comments. As the second comments read, a branch of BNP called for the:

> ''Boycott of all companies and organisations selling or using Halal products and services..'. Further comments read: ''How much more will these do gooders inflict on British people it's Britain not Asia or the Middle East if they can't eat it tough''.

Other comments make reference to the idea that immigrants' rights, come before the rights of British people:

> ''We, the indigenous Anglo Saxons are treated like second class citizens in our own country''.

Moreover, there is overall fear of immigration and 'Islamization' of the UK:

> ''The real issue isn't about pork sausages, it's the fact the muslims can DEMAND that they be removed from the school menu, what's the next thing to go just because the muslims want it so?''.

On the same line of thought with BRITAIN FIRST, the solution proposed by BNP's followers is violence against the 'others', in this case, Muslims: '

> 'Kick the Muslim's out send em back where they came from''; ''crap all of them back in the middle east''[16]. The same message is disseminated on Twitter ''We DO NOT want to live in a multicultural dump. Time to start deporting the foreign rubbish! ''[17]

[16] https://www.facebook.com/OfficialBritishNationalParty/photos/a.10150139548435070.332518.71523830069/10153193689440070/?type=1 (accessed on 06/06/2015)
[17] https://twitter.com/bnp/status/581120289523765248/photo/1

Overall, BNP uses the online domain to promote negativity about Muslims. The majority of the posts or photos shared are connected to news articles or real life events which, as specified in the first section of this paper, have a cumulative effect upon hate speech (Copsey et al., 2013). For instance, the picture above, was shared by BNP following a news article from the Daily Mail website, has inflammed alarming reactions from followers, who called foreigners 'animals':

> ''yet again foreign animals straight out of the jungle!!''.

Addionally, there is advocacy that Muslims, who cannot be considered humans, are hanged and that their families are sent back home:

> ''theres people if you can call them human need to be hanged and all their familys kicked out..''[18]

[18] https://www.facebook.com/OfficialBritishNationalParty/posts/10153070174690070

English Defence League

The English Defence League (EDL) is another anti-muslim far-right party for which social media is central to its activities. Founded in June 2009, the EDL has focused on mobilizing support around a single issue, namely 'protecting the inalienable rights of all people to protest against radical Islam's encroachment into the lives of non-Muslims'. In short, EDL is firmly opposing 'the creeping Islamisation of the UK' (Goodwin and Evans, 2012:13). Copsey and colleagues (2013) state that a large number of the online hate incidents reported to TellMama[i] were connected to EDL. Furthermore, Hope not Hate[19] claim that the EDL has gained a massive spike to its followers on social media sites in the immediate aftermath of Lee Rigby's murder[ii]. EDL support grew to over 150,000 Facebook likes. It initiated a web-demonstration and supporters wrote social media statements such as:

> – "NO SURRENDER!! – Kill any muslim u see!!!! – cause carnage on them mother fuckers!!!!!!!!!!" (Mugal, 2014).

As of end of March this year, EDL had 36,000 likes on Facebook, 2,300 on Twitter, 359 on YouTube and respectively, 880 on Google+. An analysis of the frequency of the words on their posts on Facebook reveals *'islam', 'muslim'* to be amongst the most frequent words utilized. Also, the pictures presented below are illustrative of how EDL and its followers use these words to disseminate a hostile and antagonistic anti-Muslim message. The picture on the left, for instance, questions: ''*whatever happened to freedom of speech?..*'' following a call from Luton MP that EDL stops marching in the city as it costs 20.000 to police a demonstration[20]. One of the followers commented:

> ''our government is bullying us to accept cultures that contravene our cultures beliefs laws values and morals..''.

The picture on the right (which pictures a young Muslim man) is a share of the Daily Mail news article; the status that is posted with it '*scum*' incites the reaction of followers, one of whom commented:

> ''when he is caught they should hand him over to the Americans at least they still have the death penalty''.

[19] http://www.hopenothate.org.uk/hate-groups/edl/
[20] http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-beds-bucks-herts-31145062

(EDL) English Defence League
5 February ·

Whatever happened to free speech? Oh.. but wait... Two tier system.

MP tells EDL 'stop targeting town'

An MP tells the English Defence League to stop targeting Luton after it emerged more than £20,000 was spent policing a 12-person protest.

BBC.CO.UK

Like · Comment · Share

163 people like this. Most Relevant

31 shares

Write a comment...

Press Enter to post.

Melanie Lucy Ann McMahon Our government is bullying us to accept cultures that contravene our cultures beliefs laws values and morals ... and ignoring US as law abiding citizens. ... if they protected us and represented what we want ... EDL would not exist. It is our RIGHT to freedom of expression. DO YOUR FUCKING JOBS RIGHT and there will be no EDL

Like · Reply · 50 · 5 February at 20:53

(EDL) English Defence League
28 February ·

SCUM!

Jihadi John: Mohammed Emwazi named as masked man behind ISIS beheadings

British authorities previously declined to name the suspect due to 'operational reasons'

MIRROR.CO.UK | BY ALEX WELLMAN

Like · Comment · Share

273 people like this. Most Relevant

140 shares

Write a comment...

Press Enter to post.

Zacharay Russell When he is caught they should hand him over to the americans at least they still have the death penalty

Like · Reply · 76 · 26 February at 11:19

15 Replies

Martin Sotv Lilley Gather all his family and friends together and fk em off out yhe country. .

Like · Reply · 66 · 26 February at 11:39

Moreover, the pictures below -taken from EDL's Facebook page- further illustrate the anti-Mulims hate sentiment and enmity that EDL disseminates online. The comments that they post provoke supporters who wrote comments like:

> ''chop them up very slowly and heal their wounds in salt.. a Diet of pigs blood and then rape them with a broken bottle''

Such messages represent a clear expression of extremist and inflammatory language which is easily and unchallengedly disseminated on social networks like Facebook. Many of the messages disseminated stereotypes of Muslims as violent or extremists.

(EDL) English Defence League
9 March ·

Just concerned?

http://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/11843141.display/

MP's concern over calling victims of child abuse 'slags' during Banbury court case

THE MP for Banbury has asked the Lord Chancellor whether it was acceptable for barristers in last week's Banbury grooming gang trial to describe victims of child...

OXFORDMAIL.CO.UK

Like · Comment · Share

39 people like this. Most Relevant

35 shares

Write a comment...

Press Enter to post.

Christopher Parkinson Chop them up very slowly and heal their wounds in salt, a Diet of pigs blood then rape them with a broken bottle
Like · Reply · 11 · 9 March at 22:50

1 Reply

Hugh Vanllerop The defense lawyers firstly should be warned, that they are committing an offence by calling them slags, then see were they go,!! also in light of the abusive defense lawyers in the Iraq Vs british soldiers case, they should be scrutinised financially and see were the cash comes from, for there defense costs, any of them that has had payments made from the likes of CAGE, should be held to account!
Like · Reply · 9 · 9 March at 22:50

2 Replies

View 24 more comments

National Front

Recognized as one of the most notorious and longest running racist parties in the world, the National Front (NF) has in recent years lost its influence in British politics[21]. Also, a look at the figures from its usage of the online domain shows that the party is not very active. For instance, it has only started to use Facebook since the beginning of this year. However, the number of its followers on Facebook -22,000- are very close to that of BRITAIN FIRST -23,000- which has been active on Facebook since 2013. Looking at its activity online, NF does not have such an active presence. For example, on Facebook, it only shares, on average 2 posts per day. Similarly to all the other extremist parties in this sample, NF engages in dissemination of antagonic messages against Muslims. Noteworthy is that NF has covered different high profile cases in which Muslims have been involved, namely Rotherham. The case makes reference to child sexual exploitation scandal involving 1,400 cases of grooming and sex trafficking. Allegedly, the Asian ethnicity of the gangs behind the

[21] http://www.hopenothate.org.uk/hate-groups/nf/

scandal was seen as the excuse for the authorities not to confront perpetrators (Faith Matters, 2015). The message conveyed by the picture below, which was posted with reference to Rotherham is that of a call for action.

NF also campaigns against the production, storage and selling of halal meat[22] as the picture below illustrates. Moreover, similarly to other parties, an analysis of the frequency of the works that NF used between 1st February to 31st of March suggests that the word 'muslim' is amongst the ten most frequently used words by the party or its supporters. However, unlike, parties like BNP, BRITAIN FIRST or EDL, NF does not solely focuses on the issues of Muslims.

[22] https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1551381005113581&id=1536911853227163

Also, NF's supporters do not engage much in liking, commenting on or sharing its pictures or posts. For instance, from the few sporadic comments (maximum of three per post noted during the monitoring period) one supporter shares anti-Muslims sentiment by commenting the following on the NF's post about the murder of Kriss Donald, murdered by a gang of five men of Pakistani origin (McCabe, 2015).

> ''The Muslim community should hang their heads in shame. No amount of apologies can rectify this atrocious act. An eye for an eye. RIP Kriss Donald. NS 14w''[23].

Clearly, judging by the level of activity, NF prefers Facebook over Twitter, where it has only 481 followers and two posts since 2010.

UKIP

UKIP is not a conventional far-right party; however, since 2010 its agenda appropriates some far-right parties themes. UKIP demands that Britain end mass and uncontrolled immigration (Goodwin and Evan, 2012). In terms of its presence on social arena, and compared to all the parties analysed, UKIP has by far the biggest number of followers, namely 344,000 on Facebook alone. Its supporters are highly responsive to its posts; proof of this are the average 7,000 likes per posts on their Facebook page (Rothwell, 2015).

Since UKIP's mission is to get Britain out of the EU and stop uncontrolled immigration its focus has been less on specific religious groups, like Muslims, and more on targeting the newly arrived communities. Recently, the Eastern-Europeans have figured high on UKIP's agenda. Additionally, unlike the other parties, UKIP's posts and that of its followers do not promote violence overtly. They do, however, disseminate derogatory comments which feed on the media depiction of migrants as criminals or as invading the country:

[23] http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/mum-murdered-kriss-donald-delighted-5487103

''On 1 January 2014 the floodgates will open for Bulgarian and Romanian citizens' (to come to Britain).

Moreover, migrants are portrayed as disturbing the normal ''British way of life'', posing threats to security and abusing social resources:

''We are not just talking about pressure on services from immigration but also, and I have to say it, the crime associated with Romanians'';

''Welcome to England Romanians and Bulgarians are job centre will be open from 2nd Jan and there will be plenty of people to rob on the tubes tonight''[24].

In a context where, immigration has become a politically active issue, such messages are concerning. They are stereotyping immigrants and manipulate the public, having a corrosive encroachment on the targeted groups, upon communities and ultimately upon social cohesion.

Along with the new comers, old ''suspect populations'' (Copsey et al., 2013:8), like Muslims, for instance, are also part of UKIP members' agenda. Below is a Facebook post of an UKIP party members which expresses hostility towards Muslims. Reference is made to Muslims not eating non-halal meat[iii]

Many of the messages disseminated by UKIP do not contravene the law; they do however spread a sentiment of opprobrium fostering the development of a climate characterised by stereotypes and false accusations.

2.3 Comparative elements of the parties' use of social media

This descriptive mapping activity has detailed how different online platforms (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube..) are used by the monitored political parties. The results from the sample of this study reinforce existing findings, namely that disparaging, hostile inflamatory language and visuals are frequently used to paint a denigratory picture of immigrants, ethnic minority or religious groups, and that Muslims are increasingly targeted (Copesy et al., 2013; Feldman and Littler, 2014).

Additionally, the data demonstrates that the issue of immigration has, in recent years, become a politically active topic. It features, after the economy, as the most salient and concerning issue for the British public (Esses et al., 2015). It has transmuted into the politics of nation, culture, ethnicity, and identity; marking a dangerous transformation within British society (Goodwin and Evans, 2012). The parties subjected to this mapping activity have taken advantage of this climate and put immigration high on their agenda. The groups monitored proved to be deeply sceptical about immigration and its effects on the British people/society. This is exempified by their online posts, which relate to immigrants, ethnic

[24] http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2013/feb/12/ukip-candidate-immigration-romanian-crime

and religious groups and their impact on British society. There is clear rejection of the benefits of a multicultural and multi-racial society and there is constant scaremongering and scapegoating of minority ethnic and religious groups.

Moreover, it is concerning to notice that four of the five parties monitored encourage violence against the identified ''suspect population''*;* which in the sample of this activity seems to be the Muslims, as well as other recent newcomers to the UK. Nonetheless, it should be noted that some of the parties analyzed are more extremist and deeply in favour of violence and conflict (e.g. EDL, BNP, BRITAIN FIRST); whereas others, like UKIP are more moderate (Goodwin and Evans, 2012). Caveats bear noting that tragic events like Lee Rigby's murder, the Rochdale child grooming case, along with a number of high profile international incidents (Charlie Hebdo attacks) act like a trigger event; they provoke outrage, leading to antagonism and stereotyping of certain groups (Feldman and Littler, 2014).

This activity has detailed how social media platforms are increasingly used as an arena where hate is disseminated. The platform most favoured by all parties seems to be Facebook (Bartlett and Norrie, 2015). In addition, the findings suggest that Facebook and Twitter are used as an open-ended platform where unchallenged hateful, hostile, and disturbing messages against certain religious or ethnic groups are spread at a speed of a click. The instant sharing of messages coupled with the laissez-faire attitude of the social media providers makes the issue of online hate speech a challenging problem, which is increasingly difficult to regulate.

Moreover, the matter is further compounded by the subtlety of the kind of speech disseminated which, in the majority of cases, is not proscribed as illegal under the British law. Rather, a fair number of the messages spread by the above far-right parties and the comments that follow as response are symptoms of a deeper growth of identity politics, mixed with negativity towards economic and social change; of which racism and xenophobia are by-products. Clearly, a mixture of perplexing stories of terrorist attacks, gang raping of innocent children by ethnic minorities have created the perfect context for the parties in this sample to disseminate hatred and feed on people's anxieties and concerns over immigration and impact of multiculturalism. Gravely concerning is the potential diffusion of xenophobic and anti-Muslim prejudice into mainstream discourses.

2.4 Reflections from the interviews

This section briefly presents the interviewees' reflections on the groups monitored for the mapping activity. Overall, all the professionals interviewed have heard of the parties monitored and were able to comment on their online activity. It should be noted that none of these professionals' work entailed monitoring of any of the parties subjected to the mapping activity. Young people, on the other side, had limited knowledge about the parties, mainly hearing about them from the news or from school.

Overall, the reflections from the interviews with professionals and young people prove that there is increased normalization of hostile messages spread online. A number of young people, for instance, view hateful comments as either a joke or something to be amused of:

''I never got involved, but I get amused…''(UK-YP5);

''I get amused by many of them. It makes me laugh; I see them as jokes'' (UK-YP7).

Young people also perceive that the normalization of antagonism diminishes the likelihood of halting the diffusion of hate:

> 'I think it's mostly throw away words, people just say it like that in their everyday language, they cannot never stop people from spreading hate because they talk about it a lot (UK-YP14).

On the other side, professionals' views on the influence of social media and engagement in dissemination of hate speech of the groups monitored for this activity is in line with the findings from the monitoring activity itself. As such, professionals believed that the groups monitored generally take advantage of the political climate and other major events and use social media for scapegoating and scaremongering of particular groups for broader social, political and economic problems.

> ''...they take advantage. They look for scapegoats for the current problems of society, they target minorities, they have a racist attitude towards minorities, they do not like blacks, they do not like Asians, although the Jews are not their biggest enemy at the moment, migrants are their main focus'' (UK-P1).

Probably not surprising, since immigration has generally been a concern for British public, professionals believed that 'those in power abuse their right to define the way things are...' (Becker, 1967). Those at the top of ''the hierarchy of credibility'' feed members of the public -who are placing greater reliance on their statements- with distorted, exaggerated stories about migrants, especially newly-arrived, or other settled ethnic groups. Professionals made reference to Eastern Europeans, Muslims and Jews; with Jews being less of a focus at the moment. Some professionals believed that these parties are fostering a climate of hatred, where targeted discrimination, prejudice and violent attacks are promoted:

> ''If you see their websites, or if you see them on the street it's hate that they are promoting, it's against Muslims, migrants. When I was young it was against the Jews... there is no confusion about these things, it's what it gives them the power, it's targeting the minorities and taking out their concerns, their frustrations, channelling them into hate against a particular minority''(UK-P1).

It appears that such groups are building their influence and power upon hostile messages that have resonance with the public concerns about immigration and ''Islamization'' of Britain. Through their actions, some of these far-right groups are alluding to certain minorities being a problem leading to manipulation of the masses.

In the UK, mainstream media, frequently, promotes dehumanization of immigrants through depictions that highlight potential threats to society. Furthermore, through posts and news articles directly implicating ethnic or religious groups like Muslims, for instance, the media provide ready justification for the dehumanization and denigration of the groups in question (Esses et al., 2013).

What is more, as mentioned above, some far-rights groups have taken advantage of such climate and further encouraged the development of a crisis in mentality endangering a sense of social crisis (Clark, 2013; Esses et al., 2013). Frequently, political groups rely on the already existent tensions and through the diffusion of hostile messages they seek to amplify such tensions and reinforce the distresses of like-minded people. This can lead to concerning outcomes, such as, the fostering of an environment where hate is promoted (Awan, 2013) and embedded in normative discourses; leading to the blossom of an ''us'' and ''them'' culture; where rejection of others slowly becomes a norm. Other ethnic or religious groups are seen as either ''*enemies at the gate''* threatening to invade the country (e.g. Romanians and Bulgarians) or ''*enemies from within*" (e.g. Muslims, Jews) threatening to take the country over.

Moreover, in line with previous findings and our data, professionals also believed that social media offer a ''safe'' space for far-right parties and their supporters to overtly share enmity against particular groups:

> ''After the Rotherham case, there were a lot of posts in relation to that that spread hate against Muslims: 'It's very out there and open and I do not think they are trying to hide it'' (UK-P4).

On the other side, analysing the young people's view, it is interesting to note, that only a small number of the young people interviewed have heard or seen offensive comments disseminated by the political groups in the sample of this mapping activity. A number of things can be read from this. Firstly, the groups monitored in this sample may not target people as young as 14 years old. Only 11 young people interviewed said that they have heard of the parties monitored; 8 of them saying that they have seen offensive pictures or posts that had connection to one of the parties monitored. Generally, young people's familiarity with the parties comes from the news, rather than from social media. Those who have seen offensive comments on social media said things like:

> ''Yeah, I've seen lots of racist comments…many comments targeting minorities. I do not follow them, I've just seen their comments popping up on a side and clicked on it'' (UK- YP19).

> "I have seen comments and pictures, but I think not enough people know about them…I do not think they have any good press with them not among the young people that I know anyway''(UK-YP4).

Secondly, young people prefer other social media platforms like Instagram, which the parties monitored, do not use.

Thirdly, young people do not pay much attention to what is posted online:

> 'I do not really pay attention; all I do is talk to my friends.' (UK-YP8).

Analyzing this view further, young people seem to have a laissez-faire attitude towards what is going on the internet:

> ‘Usually, I scroll past them’ (UK-YP14);
>
> ‘I don’t particularly like them, especially if they are racist, I just scroll pass them cause a lot of people are horrible…’(UK-YP11)

Additionally, a number of young people said that they keep their accounts private, which is a preventive measure.

> ‘’I don’t see much because I tend to limit my profile and the people that follow me..’’(UK-YP18).

Another explanation could be that hate does not come only from far-right parties, but as we have seen from other individuals like journalists, bloggers, football fans.

Professionals, on the other side view the activity of the parties with greater concern. Some professionals, for instance, believed that the parties have a great impact on the public’s view towards certain ethnic and religious groups, due to the divisive nature of the messages they disseminate.

> ‘’..all these far parties are becoming like a propaganda machine for spreading hate. For me I think it is important that we have an organization that monitors them at an international level’’ (UK-P3)
>
> ‘’They do have a big influence, they have more followers than the deputy prime minister’’(UK-P4).

Other professionals, on the other side, believe that the far-right parties do not necessarily have a great influence over social media:

> ‘’I do not think they have any big influence on the media anymore, apart from UKIP and also their media campaign officer is an ex-Muslims so they really use that to show that they are not racist and that they have diverse people working for them’’ (UK-P7)
>
> ‘’They do prey on people's fear and concerns, I would be reluctant in identifying a lot of their mainstream campaign as being hate speech and I think if you took such broad definition of hate speech then trying to regulate that it becomes incredibly problematic form a freedom of expression point of view’’ *(UK-P8).*

On the same line of thought with the professionals who believed that the influence of far right groups is considerable, a number of the young people interviewed –who have seen hate speech disseminated by these groups- perceived that hate spills out of control. It crosses unexpected and unimaginable borders having the potential to trigger real life events.

''The internet gives people security; they feel powerful behind the screen and say all things that they want to say, they know nothing will happen, it is the internet (UK-YP7)

''No cause people can still see them, even if it is for ten minutes, so they should find a way to stop it'' (UK-YP15).

In what follows, this paper further explores the more general experience of online hate speech as reflected by the interviews conducted with professionals and young people.

3. Experiences from the ground

As mentioned in the previous section, this research data have been informed by mapping activity and semi-structured qualitative interviews. Twenty nine interviews have been conducted. Eight of these interviews have been conducted with professionals whose work focuses on hate speech/hate crime online or offline. The rest of the interviews have been conducted with twenty one young people, active users of social media. The focus of the interviews with YP has been on their use of social media and their experience of online hate speech.

3.1 Access to the field, sample and sampling process

3.1.1 Professionals

The professionals interviewed for this research are working for the organizations that have been outlined in section 1.4 of this paper. The sample used for this research has been purposive/judgemental sample, where professionals dealing with hate speech/crime have been identified and contacted for an interview. Professionals have been approached directly over the phone or by email. The length of the interviews ranges from 22 minutes to 57 minutes. Insights about their work and that of their organization are detailed below:

- UK-P1 -the director of Government and international affairs of Community Security Trust –anti-Semitic organization.
- UK-P2 -the founder of the organization, Racist Attacks Monitoring Unit (RAMU), an organization fighting for people's rights, especially in cases of racist discrimination.
- UK-P3 -the Executive director for NICEM (Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities) which focuses on supporting socially excluded groups, like migrants, refugees. It was considered that an interview with a representative working outside London enriches the findings of this research.
- UK-P4 -academic researcher, whose work focuses on anti-Muslims incidents on how different actors use the social media to disseminate hate speech or target certain people.
- UK-P5 –deals with hate speech at the European level. It was considered that since this is a European project, his contribution will help contextualize the issues of hate speech in the UK at the European level.

- UK-P6 director of Joint Council for Welfare of Immigrants –works around policies for immigrants; the rational for interviewing her was dictated by the secondary research show that immigrants are a target of derogatory, offensive language.
- UK-P7 director for British Muslims for Secular Democracy
- UK-P8 Legal officer for Article 19 -human rights organization with global focus on freedom of information and freedom of expression. It was considered that his contribution will be invaluable to this project in terms of the debate between hate and free speech.

3.1.2 Young people

Young people have been identified through organizations running extracurricular youth activities. The age of the interviewees ranges from 14 to 24 years old. The majority of the young people interviewed were based in London; their ethnic origin, however, is very diverse, representative of a good part of the ethnic groups residing in London. Interviews with eight young people based in Liverpool have also been conducted. This is because it has been considered that –since, due to its diverse population, London is a very unique city compared to other cities in the UK- the research findings will be enriched by comparing experiences of online hate speech of young people living outside London. The findings, however, have not proven very different. On the whole, young people have a laissez-faire attitude towards hate speech and offensive comments disseminated online. A large number of young people, despite acknowledging that they do see offensive comments on their social media, have not been able to provide clear articulate and concrete answers to the interview questions. Rather, young people seem to have a superficial view on what is going on the internet, they see things, but they do not pay great attention; unless is targeting them or someone they know.

3.2 Analysis of the interviews with young people

3.2.1 Uses of and approaches to social media by young people

Generally, the young people interviewed are using social media to communicate with friends, for entertainment purposes and to keep up to date with what is going on. Young people access their social media accounts mainly from their phones and the majority of them check their accounts at least once a day. A number of young people, whose parents are stricter, only use their social media accounts during the weekend; they also reported keeping their accounts private and a list of friends limited to people they know.

> ‘’I use it, well first of all to entertain myself and second of all to socialise, to see what other people are posting, texting my friends, to see what is happening in their lives’ (UK-YP8).

> ‘’…I never got involved, but I get amused’’ (UK-YP7).

3.2.2 Channels, contexts and main actors of online hate speech according to the experiences of young people

Facebook and Instagram are the preferred online platforms used by the young people in this research sample. They use the online domain to speak to their friends, to see what their friends are up to; to get information or be active in different groups, for educational or informative purposes.

> ''I prefer Facebook, I use it to communicate with friends, to keep up to date with what they do'' (UK-YP6).

With regards to experiences of online hate speech, young people in this sample said that they do see offensive, discriminatory comments online; however, only a small number of them were able to elaborate on what they have seen and provide concrete and articulate answers and examples. Unfortunately, none of the young people interviewed have been direct victims of hate speech/crime.

> ''I cannot remember, but sometimes it starts from what people see in the news and it just goes on. They contradict each other, but nothing happens, it is on the internet. I never got involved, but I get amused'' (UK-YP7).

Overall, young people's experiences of hate speech is in line with the findings from previous research and also those identified through the mapping activity, namely that enmity appears to arise against religious groups and come from political contexts. Also, it appears that headlines of certain news articles are the starting point of offensive comments.

> ''Religion, the basis, I don't actually remember, bad comments against Muslims. There will be several posts and then randomly you will see posts and other people will comment on'' (UK-YP2).

> ''Just like about religious staff and political groups, yeah, I see that they are using offensive and hateful comments against political and religious groups. Sometimes when I see pictures, I just delete them from my Facebook, that's all'' (UK-YP11).

> ''I have seen things like pictures targeting the Jewish community. You see posts with headlines from the news and people comment on them. A lot of comments about black people and Muslims'' (UK-YP7)

Moreover, young people experiences of hate speech reinforce the view that religious groups like Muslims tend to be targeted the most. However, as mentioned in the literature review, Muslims are not the only ethnic or religious group targeted. Rather young people's experience of hate speech online makes reference to a wide range of ethnic groups ranging from Jews, Muslims, Black and Asian people. Generally, people disseminate hatred in a general context; with a large number of comments being triggered by news headlines mainly.

''I have seen things like pictures targeting the Jewish community. You see posts with headlines from the news and people comment on them. Lots of comments about black people and Muslims'' (UK-YP7).

''It is difficult to say, but it varies. I have seen pictures that had a derogatory message towards black people and many others, but I cannot remember'' (UK-YP6).

Another area where young people have seen hate speech is sport. It is important to note that this came from a young person that was identified through a football club.

''In sports, yeah, they do make comments, racist comments towards the player and people in the club..racism mainly..It was on Instagram, am I allowed to say? Words like 'nigger' and 'paki' were thrown in a lot'' (UK-YP14).

Additionally, a large number of young people said that the majority of the offensive comments that they see online take the form of sexist jokes. They are derogatory posts targeting mainly personal appearance of girls:

''Derogatory words towards girls, like you are whore, slut, very derogatory words like these'' (UK-YP1)

''usually just sexist jokes, if you go on Facebook you are likely to see jokes about women and men, … There is just a lot of stuff going on, you get all sorts of things lots of racists, people have a lot of passion about celebrities,…you name it you will find it'' (UK-YP4).

Noteworthy is the understanding that some young people have about hate speech and justification of it through the right to freedom of speech.

''Some people just want to share their opinion and there is nothing wrong with that, they are free to say what they want. It's their right…'' (UK-YP7)

''I do not think it is affected me, you know if the shoe fits you don't always get angry, everyone has the right to have an opinion'' (UK-YP4).

''…so you are behind the screen you feeling more powerful. It's just you feel liberated almost'' (UK-YP12).

3.3 Responses and reactions to online hate speech

As mentioned in the reflections of the mapping, overall, a large number of young people seem to have a laissez-faire attitude towards the hostile comments disseminated online. This can be interpreted as a normalization of what is going on online:

''I know not to get involved because it is not my problem'' (UK-YP1);

''No, I am not interested..''(UK-YP4).

''I never got involved, but I get amused'' (UK-YP7).

According to the way young people said that they have responded and reacted to any hostile offensive messages that they have seen online, responses have been grouped into three categories, namely ignore, delete/block and report.

Ignore. The majority of the young people interviewed said that they have not done anything about the offensive comments that they have seen online. Rather, their only reaction was to ignore what they have seen, in their own words ''flick the page'' and sometimes get amused (see above interview extract- UK-YP7):

> ''No, not reported anything, but I just tried not look at it, I just flicked the page'' (UK-YP12).

> ''I ignore them. They are not targeting me, so it does not affect me'' (UK-YP6).

Delete/block. A small number of young people chose to clear their accounts from people sharing offensive comments by blocking or deleting them:

> ''Most of the time when someone is saying something bad I just block the person'' (UK-YP1).

Report. Some other young people have reported pages or profiles that they have not found appropriate. As it can be noticed, young people have reported those photos either because they felt somehow intimidated themselves or because they considered that the comments were targeting their friends:

> ''I have reported photos cause all my friends are African and Indian… I found it offensive because the photos were targeting such people and making them feel that they do not belong here when they have the right to be here'' (UK-YP16).

> ''Yeah, some of them were not correct, like being offensive towards people I just reported them…there was one on my Facebook, saying I cannot remember.. It was after the general elections and it was like UKIP..ohh, using offensive terms like paki and things like that'' (UK-YP20)

> ''I reported some photos and account that was following me on Instagram'' (UK-YP17).

These reflections on young people's experiences and reactions to online hate speech are particularly worrying. This is mainly because it appears that this 'laissez-faire' attitude that young people have can be translated into acceptance and normalization of hatred. It is considered that since hatred is seen as legitimate, young people starts to perceive it as a commendable attitude. Some young people as we have seen saying that they get amused by most of the comments that they see. Others even think that is part the ''guaranteed'' right to freedom of expression to disseminate whatever one wants on the internet:

''To be honest they are entitled to say whatever they want...it's freedom of speech; what they say to me I do not find it as offensive as others do…if I like something I follow regardless what comments or whatever comes with it''(UK-YP12).

Another reflection suggests that some young people perceive hate speech as a somehow inevitable part of the internet or the by-product of the feeling of 'security' that the internet gives to people:

''You know the boardline it is not acceptable, but it is social media, people do not know each other so you know people take it that much further because they feel secure, because it's the Internet and you know you could be anyone you wanna be on this''(UK-YP4**).**

Moreover, worryingly, is that this attitude towards online hate speech and cases of stereotyping, scapegoating, dehumanization and defamation that far-right groups sometimes promote turn into a spiral of silence towards hatred. Young people, who should be the primary defenders of human dignity choosing to ''flick the page'' and ''get amused'' rather than take any actions.

3.3.1 The concept of hate speech in the eyes of young people

One main focus of the interviews with young people has been on exploring the concept of hate speech in their eyes. Generally, the findings suggest that a large number of young people have no knowledge about the concept of hate speech. Some young people shared what they thought it may mean, others, however refused to share their view or clearly said that they do not know:

''I don't know what that is…''(UK-YP13);

''I don't know when someone makes a speech, hateful speech that may offend people''(UK-YP12).

Other young people who shared their knowledge of hate speech expressed a rather intuitive understanding of it. Hate speech is something related to the hate sentiment:

''It is when you hate someone'' (UK-YP6)

''Say that you don't like people and what you don't like about them, but in a horrible way'' (UK-YP14);

''Like speak out against…it's hard to explain, someone that you don't like, take that to an extreme level'' (UK-YP16);

''I think it's putting people down, knowing that what you are saying is going to affect somebody''(UK-YP4).

Overall, from young people's responses, there is clear need for awareness raising and education of young people with regards to what online hate speech is, how it manifests and also how it can impact on people and ultimately on society. This should, undoubtedly, be the first step forward towards a change in young people's attitude to what is going on online and a step closer to reaction focused on prevention and inhibition of online hate speech:

> ''I think it means targeting certain groups, being racist, discriminating against people because of whom they are or where they are coming from'' (UK-YP7)
> ''Anything that is said and upsets someone'' (UK-YP1).

3.4 Analysis of the interviews with professionals

This section of the paper focuses on interpretation of that data collected from the interviews with the professionals. The secondary research about manifestations of xenophobic and racist online hate speech in the UK context has informed the selection of interviewees. Professionals' views have been mapped and are discussed under various themes.

The media: solution or problem?

The majority of the professionals interviewed believed that the media has become the primary vehicle for the promotion of hate speech. There is however recognition amongst professionals that it is very difficult to identify a single point where hatred exists or where it stems from. Rather the issue is much more complex stemming from various areas, being disseminated and usually amplified at a global level. Undoubtedly, the discourse around hate speech is broader and not limited to the online domain, which explains the need for concerted work and multidisciplinary preventive actions.

> ''I think it is difficult to identify one point where hatred exist, I think given the prevalence of the Internet and ability that it gives to expose what previously would have been a rather private discourse…the prevalence of hate speech it concerning, but it is not only online. I think that having a focus on that, we need to appreciate that hate speech exists in discourse everywhere and that the online environment is essentially a reflection of what exists or has existed offline'' (UK-P8).

Interesting to acknowledge is that the solution to hate speech should come from the roots of the problem. As such, professionals suggested that for any preventive measures and remedies against hate speech, the media, responsible journalism should be the starting point:

> 'I think media responsibilities are key things' (UK-P6)

> ''The media do the biggest damage. There are certain papers, their idea is always to incite things. Media could take another angle and look at really what's happening''(UK-P2).

> ‘So ethical journalists that do not simply repeat hate speech, but challenge it, but it in context and analyse the underlying facts that drive it. Certainly, the politicians have a very important role in speaking out against hate speech rather than appealing it in a popular sense’ (UK-P8).

Hate crime, political climate and the economy

Looking at the role that political climate and the economy play in the dissemination of hate speech, professionals’ views were divided. Generally, however, the majority believed that the economy and the political climate have a close connection to hate speech. As expressed by them, in the extracts below, much of the hatred spread is the outcome of the blaming culture, where political scapegoating and scaremongering play a central role.

> ‘…the current bad state of the political climate is a consequence of the economy, failing economy, failing politics, reactions of politics to failing economy, to immigration…This is leading to a climate of intolerance in Europe and arising hate crime and the European agencies are becoming very, very concerned about hate crime and hate speech in Europe, who cares in theory the potential to destroy Europe so this is why this initiatives are targeting hate speech’ (UK-P1).

It should be noted that there seems to be a cycle of blame and that the target of hatred has tended to be the moving population, the new communities arriving to the UK:

> ‘’Economy, if a country is doing badly, you blame others, find scapegoats… Now they are blaming Eastern Europeans, but first were the Irish… They always find someone, other "blacks", generally, the new influx of people coming is seen as the problem’ (UK-P2).

Furthermore, as some of the pictures from the mapping activity illustrate, with respects to hate speech against migrants, professionals have identified that indigenous people feel that other minorities are ‘taking control over the UK’.

> ‘...it is also a reaction to the European Union, people believe that they are losing control, they are losing identity, they worry about their culture, indigenous culture…so all of those things are leading to a rise in hate speech and hate crime and hate crime follows hate speech one is inextricably linked to the other’ (UK-P1).

Normative discourses and hate speech

Normative discourses in politics and in the media feed and amplify much of the aforementioned concerns. The way the media portrays things was suggested by professionals as a predominant source of negativity towards certain ethnic groups and potentially hate speech.

> ‘’Media incite things, media does a lot of damage. Their headlines, they may say something completely different underneath, but the headline says something else. Look at the headlines, media incite, they add fuel. Every incidents, people read the headlines and not the whole story and miss the picture’’ (UK-P2).

''…there is increasing concern in Europe at the way in which the media deals with this issues, often it incites hatred.. irresponsible journalism, this is not to say that one wants to limit one's freedom of expressions, but irresponsible journalism which incites hatred, which targets a particular minority is feeding this and this is a major concern among policy makers in Europe and many NGOs'' (UK-P1).

Professionals suggested that the media help fostering and promoting the blaming culture. Immigrants tend to be the main theme of such discourses. Generalization and exaggeration of the stories covered leads to misrepresentation, amplification of negative discourses and political scaremongering of immigrants.

''Again, it's seeking to explain the economic climate by blaming somebody else. It's the blaming culture, so the Islamist will say it's Jewish bankers who control the world or they say that government are acting at the will of the Israelites on the one hand or they will say it is the fault of the immigrants for taking the jobs of the indigenous people or taking up the money within the social services, this is how they targeting, it's scapegoat politics'' (UK-P1).

''I think in the UK, we see migrants being completely vilified and a lack a tendency to distinguish between different types of migrants, asylum seekers and the level of misrepresentation and the level of complete distance''(UK-P8).

It should however be acknowledged that hate speech, as mentioned above, stems from many sources and also that there is no single target. Generally however, in the UK, the immigrants seem to be the moving target:

''The UK is different for example from Central European states where a primary target are Roma descents, you do not get that her primarily, because we did not really have any Roma descents , we have gypsy travellers, but they are not necessarily Roma descents…for us it's migrants and it's Muslims, it's the Jews'' (UK-P1).

Same old prejudices

Unanimously, professionals have shared the view that generally, in the UK, there is extensive and good legislation that is applied when it comes to hate motivated incidents/crime. Professionals shared an acknowledgment that there has been at least a change in discourse, in the way people are talking about ethnic minorities. There is a much more subtle discourse, opposed to a rough and blatant one.

''It's became much more subtle, it used to be very blatant and crude, I am not saying that you do not find blatant and crude now, but it tends not to come from the same directions. In terms of crude racism, it has also changed and that's because of legislation, Britain has quite good legislation' (UK-P1).

The views shared by professionals are concerning. The diverse sources of hate speech in the UK call for multidisciplinary actions. In what follows, this paper puts forward suggestions of

recommendations against hate speech. These have been collected from both professionals and young people.

4. Concluding remarks and recommendations

4.1 Recommendations for preventing, redressing and inhibiting hate speech

The report does not attempt to provide a comprehensive account of the issues of hate speech. The findings and the recommendation suggested are compiled from the insights provided by both professionals and young people interviewed. Both findings and the recommendations suggested are representative of the research sample.

The considerations underlined by professionals and young people have been analysed, coded and then categorised into themes. They are outlined in the table below and then discussed in details. The order in which the recommendations are presented and discussed is not hierarchical; however it starts with the themes that have been put forward most frequently.

Recommendation	**By whom**	**For whom**
1. Education should be the leading protective factor in the fight against online hate speech	Young people	Schools representatives
2. Internet awareness and counter speech	Professionals Young people	All the organizations working on preventing hate speech. Involve young people –as the defender of human dignity
3. Clear definition and boundaries	Young people Professionals	Policy and law makers
4. Responsibilization and transparency	Young people Professionals	Social media providers Social media users

5. Laws: cross transnational consistency and proactive preventive actions	Professionals	Policy makers at an international level All stakeholders dealing with hate speech/crime
6. Monitoring: introduction of watchdog	NGO Young person	Social media providers Policy makers Law enforcers

- ***Education -the leading protective factor against online hate speech***

A large number of professionals and young people interviewed suggested that education should be the starting point of any actions against online hate speech. There is an acknowledgement amongst professionals that there are tools available to counter hate speech; however there is no education, nor awareness of the existence of such tools:

> ''There are monitoring groups around; websites have reporting tools available; we just need more education. We need to inform people of the existence of these tools'' (UK-P2).

Also, in terms of education, there is a need for coordination between social networks and laws available in other jurisdictions.

> ''We need to educate the internet providers, the social networks about the world and others peoples' laws'' (UK-P1).

Another proposal is to educate and expose people; on one side flag up those who disseminate hate, in a ''name and shame'' fashion.

> ''I think you can do it in two ways: try to educate, make people aware of what hate speech is and secondly there is what I call flagging up potential people who are creating online hate speech and give them a warning, if you like expose them'' (UK-P4).

On the other side, there is a need to expose young people to the consequences of hatred; to what it really means and feels to have been a victim of online hate speech/crime:

> ''I think a lot of people need to be made aware that it is happening that it is wrong and that it is affecting people'' (UK-YP16)

''Exposing…show the effects it can have on people and the fact that it can lead to very serious cases of where people commit suicide…''(UK-YP18)

''I do not think there is much to do to prevent, but maybe showing them you can do this, but this is what happens, look at the family, at the individual'' (UK-YP4)

''Talk about how it affects them and how they feel about it'' (UK-YP13)

Such recommendations are very important, as in the UK, reactions to online hate speech are reactive; usually an investigation is open only when the police receive a complaint by a concrete victim. Moreover, cases tend to be investigated in isolation. Additionally, there is huge underreporting because people do not trust the police (Littler and Feldman, 2015). For instance, TellMama, says that out of the 1,432 cases of abuses recorded, only 70 cases received a response from the police. Arguably, online hate speech, in the form of offensive, abusive messages is difficult to prosecute. This is because, the evidence can no longer be found or because the thresholds for prosecution are too high (BBC5, 2013). Such situation calls for a review of laws and reaction to hate speech. In this sense, rrecommendations like the above that call for a shift in the way we react to hatred and also introduction on non-legal measures more education focused are the first steps towards this shift for more proactive, preventive, rather than reactive measures.

''I do not think that locking up every teenager is going to make a change, so best to look at more practical ways of educating…and more compatible with freedom of expression'' (UK-P8).

''We are not given enough information as young people, we are told don't do this, don't do that, but we are not really told why. And when we are told it is already too late. I think so many people use internet so being taught how to use it from a younger age'' (UK-YP4)

- ***Internet awareness and counter speech***

Another popular recommendation amongst the professionals and young people interviewed is internet awareness and encouragement of counter speech. Positive literature and exposure to good things that are happening online should be the responsibility of all media users and even that of politicians and journalists:

''We also need to develop counter speech. Somebody says dirty Jews or dirty Asian and worse. We do not necessarily need to go to the police and ask for actions, you can go online and counter it'' (UK-P1).

''I think people have to put the positive stuff out there, people need to know the facts, there are myths and there are facts. We need to put that together and differentiate'' (UK-P2).

''I think getting into the idea of prevention, the idea of counter speech'' (UK-P8).

> ‘We need more counter narrative, and to see more of the things that are done, the responses to it. I mean you would never see a newspaper writing that they have got a story wrong. That responsibility just does not exist’’ (UK-P6).
>
> ‘’Probably through online activities, advertising on social media, adverts, to raise awareness, we need to get everyone together’’ (UK-YP8)

- ***Definition and clear boundaries between free speech and hate speech***

Professionals have also highlighted the fact that the confusion around the extent of online hate speech calls for more research to establish clear lines of the issue. Professionals have also suggested a mapping exercise to identify who the main perpetrators are. In this sense, professionals recognized the how invaluable research like this is as it combines both mapping activity and also qualitative interviews:

> ‘’I don’t think that there is any research that reflects the extent of the problem, that is why we need more and more research about these issues. We need a mapping exercise, identify who is doing what and what good practice we can develop and also how we could coordinate and share these good practices and move forward. That’s why for me research like yours it is very important’’ (UK-P3)

Young people also suggested that there is a need for more specific and clear boundaries with respect to guidelines to the right to freedom of speech. This particular young person, as it can be noted below, believes that young people will be crossing boundaries anyway. In addition a very valid point is made in the two interview extracts below with respects to the subjectivity of what is offensive and differences in perception. Such comments raise the issue of whether hate speech should be based on the subjective feelings of the person targeted:

> ‘’I know they say that you have the right to freedom of speech, but people take it to the next level, they are bound to abuse it anyway, unless they have some sort of guidelines of what is allowed and what is not; either way, people will cross the line...and it is how people take it, maybe one may be offensive to me, but not to you’’ (UK-YP12)
>
> ‘’Well, yes, there is a very thin line, because it also dependents on how the person gets it, how deeply one is affected by it, how they perceive it. I think people need to be more open minded and more understandable, because in London we are such a diverse groups of people, so we need to understand each other, we need to find a way of communicating without discriminating against each other’’ (UK-YP8)

- ***Responsibilization and transparency***

A fourth recommendation coming from both professionals and young people is that there is a need for greater responsibilization. The interview extracts below suggest that media providers need to be responsible for their users’ activities and monitor them. Along with media taking more responsibility, professionals suggested that politicians should be actively involved in the fight against hate speech:

''I think media responsibilities are key things. The media need to be monitoring their users' activity; their complaints mechanisms need to be far easier to access, so when you are reading to be able to see how you can report it. The responses need to improve; the media need to take responsibility'' (UK-P7).

''Certainly, the politicians have a very important role in speaking out against hate speech rather than appealing it in a popular sense'' (UK-P8).

Professionals also mentioned as an issue media's lack of transparency with regards to investigations of any incidents reported:

'There is this issue that you cannot speak to a real life human being, you can only report it online to the abuse centre and then someone unknown will take actions'' (UK-P7).

''Part of the problem is lack of transparency with the number of complaints these organizations are getting and how they are dealing with them….So yeah I think one concrete recommendation to take away is the need for platforms like Facebook and Twitter to be more transparent about not only the way they deal with complaints, but also to produce statistics as to the cases that they are getting more complaints about, so that these questions get an answer. I think it is valuable information'' (UK-P8).

- ***Laws: consistency and preventive actions***

Another recommendation which comes as a solution to the laissez-faire attitude of the social media platform like Twitter, which in its statement makes it clear that it has a reactive rather than proactive policy -''*we cannot stop people from saying offensive, hurtful things on the Internet or on Twitter. But we can take action when it is reported to us that breaks our rules or is illegal*'' – is to have more preventive actions (Mercer, 2014). Following recommendation from interviewees a way forward could be:

''All the law must be adopted in unanimity, so it means all the members state to accept and introduce it'' (UK-P3).

''…there are extra mechanisms for reporting online hate speech, but I think a lot of these are reactive policies, so if you see it and report it they will tackle it, I do not think they proactively look for it, which of course there are clear problems as there are thousands of users, but we need some proactive action'' (UK-P4).

- ***Watchdog***

Yet, another recommendation was that of monitoring users' activity and introduction of a watchdog software:

''…there should be a watchdog, I think. You know it is interesting there is a grammar police and I do not know how and who set this up, but if you write something incorrect in terms of grammar, the grammar police pops up and tells you immediately what mistakes you made…something like this should exist on hate

speech…the hate speech police pops up and draws attention to it and draws attention to the laws that won't allow you to do it'' (UK-P6)

''I feel there should be more surveillance, I think if a specific word is typed in they should be able to fallow up because there is computer software for it... there should more responsibility to the user. I think they should come up with closing more accounts. People know what the rights and wrongs are and I think that it is unfair for the companies to have to do something about it when this is not what they created it for, but at the same time some kind of regulations. They need to make a step up, just to make sure that they have done everything they can'' (UK-YP4)

4.2 Concluding remarks

Words are powerful weapons, which used within a biased framework can further marginalize and demean groups which have already been rendered vulnerable. The findings from this study are consistent with what other research has already suggested, namely that social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter are frequently cluttered with users' messages that infringe human dignity. The diffusion of hate speech is a dynamic phenomenon which flourishes online and which requires a variety of multiagency joint actions to develop and implement effective responses.

The confusion over what hate speech is often leads to counter-productive interpretations and repressive remedies. Censorship of contentious views which miss the complexity of the issues can leave the causal roots of the enmity (of which hate speech is symptomatic) largely unaddressed. This concluding section summarises the main recommendations identified by this research in a way that will inform future policies. Education and awareness-raising are very important factors in making the public aware of the fact that not all messages disseminated online are acceptable and justified by freedom of expression. As we have seen, the majority of the professionals, as some of the young people interviewed, have suggested that education should be the starting and leading point in addressing hate speech. We also need to be exposing people, especially young people, to a greater recognition of the consequences of hate speech. Also, there is a need for more awareness that hate speech is an offence and that dissemination of offensive, racist or xenophobic messages has consequences both for those targeted by the message and also, crucially, for those disseminating such messages. Recommendations like the introduction of a watchdog, which will identify hostile messages and warn people of the laws that they are breaking by disseminating hate speech is a good recommendation. It aims at educating and social media users and getting them to take greater responsibility for their actions online.

It should be recognized that the challenge in addressing the issue of hate speech is compounded by the subtlety and rhetoric of the hostile messages disseminated online. Frequently, antagonistic messages are hidden behind the right to freedom of speech. This situation, coupled with the broad and contested definition of hate speech, makes it impossible to regulate the online domain. It also leads to normalization and the acceptance of hostility and enmity as an issue that people ''have their right to express...it's freedom of

expression'' or it is something that we can turn a blind eye to: ''flick the page, it does not target me, it doesn't bother me''.

Moreover, conflicting cross jurisdictional laws (e.g. the US vs Europe's view on limits of freedom of expression) are presenting a key challenge when addressing the issues of online hate speech. This implies that there is a need for an agreed, uniform definition of hate speech and also consistency in the laws that protect individuals from hatred (Article 19, 2012). A number of publications also call for regulation of online hate speech (James, 2010; Elsa, 2014). Clear limits and boundaries need to be established and social media users be made aware of their existence. Equally important is that internet users should be educated and included in the fights against hate speech.

To conclude, there is a need for more clarity over what online/offline hate speech is. Additionally, we need more open discussion about racism, with clear boundaries between hate speech and free speech. There is an extremely pertinent question left unaddressed by this paper, namely should the limits to free speech be based on the subjective feelings of the person targeted? If yes, then regulating hate speech is extremely challenging. What is more, as the data suggests the complexity of hate speech (broad definition, intervention and responsibility for it – social media provider vs. social media users -, the ever changing and evolving online domain which is also a space for diffusion of hated...) calls for joint actions and multi-agency approaches. At the core of these actions, social media users (once educated about consequences of hate speech) should be given more responsibility and held more responsible for their actions. Finally, whilst recognizing that the online domain is not isolated from the realm of legal provisions, developing and enforcing legal responses to online hate speech is extremely challenging. It is for this reason that it there is a need for concerted work, where both legal and non-legal measures are considered and implemented at a cross jurisdictional level.

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ANNEXES:

Annex 1- Mapping data collection table

Name	Web	National / regional / local level?	Scope(issues covered)	Reports produced (and year)
Britain First	https://www.britainfirst.org/	National	Mission statement: 'Britain First is a patriotic political party and street defence organisation that opposes and fights the many injustices that are routinely inflicted on the British people. We want our people to come first, before foreigners, asylum seekers or migrants and we are overtly proud of this stance. Britain First has a proven track record of opposing Islamic militants and hate preachers and this fight back will continue' (BF website- accessed on 06/06/2015). BF relies on social media, especially Facebook to communicate its perturbing anti-Muslim message (Faith Matters, 2014)	*BAN HALAL SLAUGHTER*. Britain First newspaper (Issue 1) Available at http://www.britainfirst.net/newspaper-march-april-2015.pdf Last accessed on 06/06/2015 at 17:17 *Crack Down on Islamic Extremism Before it's too late (2015) Britain* First Newspaper: Issue 2. Available at http://www.britainfirst.net/may-june2015.pdf
British National Party	http://www.bnp.org.uk/	National	Mission (taken from BNP Facebook page[25]): 'The BNP is a patriotic, democratic alternative to the rotten old Establishment parties that have wrecked our great country. Millions of our people are unemployed, yet the politicians continue to allow foreign workers to	*Racism Cuts both ways* http://www.bnp.org.uk/PDF/racism_cuts_both_ways.pdf (accessed on 06/06/2015) *British National Party| Parlamentary Elections Manifesto 2015*

[25] https://www.facebook.com/OfficialBritishNationalParty/info?tab=page_info

			flood into Britain, taking our jobs or claiming benefits, costing us billions of pounds - We will put British people first in their own country - We demand British jobs go to British workers - We say NO to an EU superstate, and YES to keeping Britain free, - We will stop paying foreign aid and give that money to pensioners'. Hope not Hate describes BNP as 'a party which rejects integration, equality and basic human and civil rights for "non-indigenous" or "civic British" and claims to put the interests of "the British people", by which it means white Britons, first. Recently, BNP is opposing 'Islamification' of the UK by campaigning against the foundation of mosques and calls for boycotting stores that sell halal meat'[26].	https://www.bnp.org.uk/sites/default/files/bnp_manifesto-2015.pdf (accessed on 06/06/2015)
English Defence League	http://www.englishdefenceleague.org/	National	Mission statement: 'The English Defence League (EDL) is a human rights organisation that was founded in the wake of the shocking actions of a small group of Muslim extremists who, at a homecoming parade in Luton, openly mocked the sacrifices of our service personnel without any fear of censure. Although these actions were certainly those of a minority, we believe that they reflect other forms of religiously-inspired intolerance and barbarity that are thriving amongst certain sections of the Muslim population in Britain: including, but not limited to, the denigration and oppression of women, the molestation of young children, the committing of so-called honour killings,	Rotherham Backgrounder (www.englishdefenceleague.org/?page_id=15- accessed on 23/05/2015) BBC Demonstration (2014) Dudley Demonstration (2015)

[26] http://www.hopenothate.org.uk/hate-groups/bnp/ -accessed on 06/06/2015

			homophobia, anti-Semitism, and continued support for those responsible for terrorist atrocities'. ([27]) EDL is firmly opposing through street protest movements 'the creeping Islamisation of our country' (Goodwin and Evans, 2012:13).	
National Front	http://www.nationalfront.co.uk/	National	'The National Front (NF) was founded in 1967 and represents one of the most notorious and longest running racist organizations in the world. By mid 70s, it has become Britian's fourth political party. In 1979 General Election put forward 303 candidates, but gained a disastrous average vote of little over 0.5%. NF finally split into three warring factions in 1980, eventually leading to Tyndall -best known NF leader- and his followers forming the rival British National Party (BNP) in 1982. Despite coming close to extinction throughout 1980s and 1990s NF has proved itself as a survivor. It currently has approximately 400 members who embrace a fanaticism for racism, ultra-nationalism and outright nazism. Members are encouraged to agitate in local communities by the use of protests, localised leaflets and sales of the NF bi-monthly newspaper -possibly the most illiterate publication in the history of the far-right[28]'	The White Nationalist (weekly e-magazine) (http://www.nationalfront.org/twn.pdf- accessed on 06/06/2015) North West NF join NWI Demonstration in BLACKBURN (http://www.britishnationalfront.net/blackburn2.html -accessed on 06/06/2015) NWNF hold flash demos in OLDHAM AND ROCHDALE while EDL degenerates get kettled in at ROTHERHAM (Sept 2014) ((http://www.britishnationalfront.net/oldroch1.html -accessed on 06/06/2015)
UKIP	http://www.ukip.org/#	National	Formed to oppose European integration, UKIP is NOT considered a far-right party and it is not treated as being a far-right party for this activity; however it has	*UK cannot afford Bulgarian and Romanian immigrants* (2012) http://www.ukipmeps.org/news_642_UK-

[27] https://www.facebook.com/pages/EDL-English-Defence-League/238696516197018?sk=info&tab=page_info -accessed on 06/06/2015
[28] (http://www.hopenothate.org.uk/hate-groups/nf/ -accessed on 06/06/2015)

			been included because it since 2001, UKIP has developed a set of radical right-wing policies. By 2010 UKIP openly proposed its Eurosceptic and xenophobic agenda. Akin to other active radical right parties in the UK, UKIP demands that Britain end mass and 'uncontrolled immigration' (Goodwin and Evans, 2012).	cannot-afford-Bulgarian-and-Romanian-immigrants.html *Mass immigration engineered to create irreversible `multicultural society`* (2012) http://www.ukipmeps.org/news_595_Mass-immigration-engineered-to-create-irreversible-%60multicultural-society%60.html *UK will be a magnet for Bosnia-Herzegovina unemployed* (2013) http://www.ukipmeps.org/articles_677_UK-will-be-a-magnet-for-Bosnia-Herzegovina-unemployed.html *Batten: We already have enough criminals from Kosovo… (2013)* (http://www.ukipmeps.org/articles_652_Batten-We-already-have-enough-criminals-from-Kosovo---.html -last accessed on 29/05/2015).

Annex 2- Mapping activity table

Name of POM	Social Media Platform	Date when joined	Numbers of followers as of March 2015 (provide the exact date)	Gender distribution of most active fans (FB)	Number of posts in the last year (Mar14 – Feb-15 YouTube Total number if videos. When was the last video uploaded?	Average number of posts per day (FB, Twitter, Instagram	Most frequently used words and level of engagement (FB) Top words (Twitter, Instagram) *!The words are in order by most frequently used, starting with Facebook and then Twitter*	Does it link to the official POM webpage? Does it link to other social media of the POM? If yes, which?	Any further information?
Britain First	Facebook	Oct-13	2.3k	Unknown (U/K)	No data	14	Muslims, animals, people, meat, Britain, halal, eating, Christianity, fascist food #islamophobia, #1, #capitalismrequires, #gaza's, #stunned, #france, #mh370, #israel, #islamic, #halal	It links to BF website	
	Twitter	Jan-12	1,5K	U/K	0	23 tweets		Links with Facebook, Twitter and Youtube profiles	
	Google	U/K	42						
	Youtube	15-Jan	1,9 K		44	0		Links to Google+	

British National Party	Facebook	Feb-09	178k	U/K	1,500	6	BNP, British, people, Britain, Party, joined, labour, years, today, police #labour, #ukip, #conservatives, #pegida, #bnp, #nhs, #rotherham, #lgbt, #ast_arsenal, #bbc.	Links to BNP website	
	Twitter	11-Apr	4.7K	U/K	3.0K	15		Links to BNP website	
	Google	U/K	102		u/k	u/k		Links with YouTube profile and BNP website	
	Youtube	September 2006	6.7K		541	u/k		Links to Facebook and Google+	
English Defence League	Facebook	Dec-11	173k	Unknown	2000	9.9	Muslims, Islam, EDL, people, police, English, country, year, schools, British; #justiceforthe1400, #islamophobia, #1, #atlanta, #france, 3mh370, #&@, #idf, #israel, #gaza.		
	Twitter	Jul-11	2.3K	Unknown	1	14		Links to EDL Website	
	Google	u/k	359						
	Youtube	13 March 2014	880 subscribers		78			Links to Twitter, Facebook and Google	
National Front	Facebook	Jan-15	2.2k	Unknown	0	2	Conservative, party, NF, year, police, councillor, child, today, muslim, national	Links to NF website	
	Twitter	Jan-10	481	Unknown	0	0		No links	
	Google	N/A							
	Youtube	N/A							
UKIP	Facebook	May-11	344k	Unknown	700	4.9	UKIP, MEP, Nigel, Farage, leader,	Links to the official website	

	Twitter	11-Aug	1.9K	Unknown	6.4K	32 tweets	parties, people, today, votes, labour; #farageonfriday, #teamnigel, #peoplesarmy, #bbcqt, #eushowdown, #ukipspring, #ukip, ibcdebate, #votemarkreckless, #phonefarage	Links to the official website	
	Google	13-Jul	24K		0	0		Links to the official website, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube account	
	Youtube	11-Jul	8.5K subscribers		216 Videos			Links to the official website, Facebook, Twitter and Google + account	

Annex 3. Organizations dealing with the issues of hate speech/crime

Name	Web	National/regional/local level?	Scope (issues covered)	Reports produced (and year)
TellMAMA	http://tellmamauk.org/about-us/	National	Tell MAMA (Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks) is a secure and reliable service that allows people from across England to report any form of Anti-Muslim abuse.	The Innocence of Muslims (http://tellmamauk.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/innocenceofmuslim.pdf) From Radical-right Islamophobia to 'Cumulative Extremism'- A paper on shifting focus of hatred Victim of Anti-Muslim Hate (2013) Facebook Report: Rotherham: hate and the far-right online Tell MAMA Consultation Response MOPAC Hate Crime Reduction Strategy Consultation
Community Security Trust	https://cst.org.uk/	National	The Community Security Trust (CST) is a British charity established in 1994 to ensure the safety and security of the Jewish community in the UK. Its inception follows a history of threats to the Jewish community in Britain, from the 1930s, and to further attacks by Islamists hostile to Israel and by extension to its British supporters.	Combating Antisemitism on social media and online Antisemitic incidents Reports (2008; 2009; 2010; 2011; 2012; 2013; 2014).
Hope not Hate	http://www.hopenothate.org.uk	National (London)	The HOPE not hate campaign was founded in 2004 to provide a positive antidote to the politics of	'Britain First –Army of the Right' http://www.hopenothate.org.uk/britain-first/

			hate. The British National Party (BNP) was winning substantial votes and local councillors in our northern towns and traditional anti-racism and anti-fascism was failing.	'Counter-Jihad Report' http://www.hopenothate.org.uk/counter-jihad/ Matthew, G. and Evans, J. (2012'From Voting to Violence? Far right extremism in modern Britain', Hope Not Hate (2012). http://www.channel4.com/media/c4-news/images/voting-to-violence%20(7).pdf Last accessed on 06/06/2015 at 09:51
UKREN	http://ukren.org/	National and European	The UK Race and Europe Network (UKREN) is a network of local and national organisations across Great Britain and Northern Ireland that work to combat race discrimination within a European context.	EU report on the implementation of Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law (2014) Discrimination and hate crime against Jews in EU Member States: experiences and perceptions of antisemitism (2013) Racism, discrimination, intolerance and extremism: learning from experiences in Greece and Hungary (2013) Country reports on measures to combat discrimination 2010: UK (2011) Fourth Report on the United Kingdom (2010)

Lambeth Hate Crime	https://lambethhcc.wordpress.com/other-hate-crimes/	Local	Working to prevent disability, faith, gender-identity (transphobia), race or sexual orientation (homophobia and biphobia) hate crime; to increase reporting and victim access to support; to improve operational response to hate crime.	
Joint Council for Welfare of Immigrants	http://www.jcwi.org.uk/	National	JCWI is an independent national charity established in 1967. Since its inception it has promoted justice and fairness in immigration, nationality and asylum law and policy. It provides direct legal advice and assistance to those who are affected by the unfairness of the UK's immigration control. JCWI also actively lobbies and campaigns for changes in law and practice.	Control of Rights - the rights of workers & asylum seekers under managed migration (2004) Lydia Morris - See more at: http://www.jcwi.org.uk/publications/control-rights-rights-workers-asylum-seekers-under-managed-migration-2004-lydia-morris#sthash.iDTID5c7.dpuf
Faith Matters	http://faith-matters.org/	National and International	Faith Matters is a not for profit organisation founded in 2005 which works to reduce extremism and interfaith and intra-faith tensions and we develop platforms for discourse and interaction between Muslim, Sikh, Christian, Jewish and Hindu communities across the globe.	A study of the EDL: The Faith Hate Report- What draws people of Faith to Right Wing Organisations & What Effects Does the EDL Have on Interfaith Relations? (2012) http://faith-matters.org/resources/publicationsreports/faith-hate-report-edl An Overview of Anti-Muslim 'Cultural Racism' (Feldman, 2012) http://faith-matters.org/resources/publicationsreports/islamophobia-series

FAIR (Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism)	http://www.fairuk.org/intro.htm	National	FAIR aims to work towards establishing a Safe, Just and Tolerant Britain in which Islamophobia and racism have no place.	Islamophobia as a form of racism (2000)
The Monitoring Group	http://www.tmg-uk.org/	National	Leading anti-racist charity that promotes civil rights; aims to promote good race relations.	Conferences on: Hidden stories of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry (2014) Corruption, Spying, Racism and Accountability: UK Policing in the 21st Century (2015)
Islam is peace	http://www.islamispeace.org.uk/	National	The Islam is Peace Campaign aims to address the negative perceptions and stereotypes of Islam and British Muslims. We intend to do this through media engagement to reach out to the wider community across the United Kingdom. We hope to start this process through a multi-pronged approach. Achieved through education of the general public of the misconceptions about Islam, to disseminate accurate information about Islam and British Muslims and to help create a more tolerant and informed atmosphere.	Emerick, (2001) '*The complete Idiots guide to Islam'* Available at http://www.islamispeace.org.uk/, (Last accessed on 06/06/2015)

Annex 4. Detailed sample - Young people

Participant code	M/F	Age	Residence	Origin	Level of studies	Occupation
UK-YP1	F	16	West London	Sir Lanka	High School	Studying
UK-YP2	M	21	West London	Morocco	College	Job Seeker
UK-YP3	M	16	London	Sir Lanka	High School	Studying
UK-YP4	F	19	London	Caribbean	College	Studying
UK-YP5	M	14	London	Sir Lanka	High School	Studying
UK-YP6	M	17	London	Caribbean	College	Studying
UK-YP7	M	22	London			Job Seeker
UK-YP8	F	23	London	Latvia	Master	Studying
UK-YP9	M	23	London	Romania	High School	Working
UK-YP10	F	22	London		College	Working
UK-YP11	M	24	London	Turkey	High School	Studying
UK-YP12	M	23	London	Ghana	College	Working
UK-YP13	M	16	London		Bachelor	Studying
UK-YP14	F	16	Liverpool	British	High School	Studying
UK-YP15	F	16	Liverpool	British	High School	Studying
UK-YP16	M	16	Liverpool	British	High School	Studying
UK-YP17	M	16	Liverpool	British	High School	Studying
UK-YP18	M	16	Liverpool	Black- British	High School	Studying
UK-YP19	M	16	Liverpool	British	High School	Studying
UK-YP20	M	16	Liverpool	British	High School	Studying
UK-YP21	M	16	Liverpool	British	High School	Studying

Annex 5. Detailed sample: Professionals

Participant code	M/F	Organisation	Position in the organisation
UK-P-1	M	CST (Community Security Trust)	Director, Government & International Affairs
UK-P-2	M	Racist Attacks Monitoring Unit (RAMU)	Co-ordinator
UK-P-3	M	NICEM (Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities)	Executive Director
UK-P-4	M	UKREN (UK Race and Europe Network)	Project Co-ordinator
UK-P-5	M		Academic researcher
UK-P-6	F	British Muslims for Secular Democracy	Director
UK-P-7	F	Joint Council for Welfare of Immigrants	Director of Legal Policy Department