

**5 May 2024**

*English only*

## **Reaffirming our Commitment to a Europe Free from Discrimination and Hate**

On Europe Day, marked on 5 May by the Council of Europe, we celebrate the signing of the Treaty of London, the Council's founding Statute that embodied the collective will in post-war Europe to build a pan-European organisation grounded in the core values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

Although the current system of rights and protections has been in place for 75 years, it should not be taken for granted, all of us must ensure it remains strong and respected. The Advisory Council on Youth recognises that the increasing trends of intolerance, exclusion and discrimination towards minorities, remain a rife obstacle, corroding the foundational values of equality and solidarity. Moreover, the ongoing war in the Middle East and the rise of extremist rhetoric in many European countries have led to an unprecedented upsurge in antisemitic and anti-Muslim incidents.

The growth of these tendencies, along with hate speech, greatly affects many young people across Europe. In response, the Advisory Council on Youth reaffirms its commitment to fostering safe and inclusive spaces, free of discrimination and social marginalisation, for youth in all parts of Europe. Discrimination leads to the exclusion of individuals and prevents young people from actively participating in our societies. The Advisory Council calls upon all member States, therefore, to reaffirm their commitment to the core values of the Council of Europe, to counter all forms of discrimination, including antisemitism and anti-Muslim hatred, and to uphold democratic values, and promote social inclusion.

We urge them to uphold the 1953 European Convention on Human Rights that they all signed, ratified and agreed to abide by. Article 9 guarantees that “everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion...” while Article 14 that “the enjoyment of...rights and freedoms...shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion...”. Together, these two articles make clear that member States must adopt and implement different strategies to effectively combat the rise of antisemitism and anti-Muslim hatred to allow all people to live in a Europe free from discrimination and hate speech.

As Advisory Council members and young people in Europe, we are open to partnering with the member States and the Committee of Ministers to combat discrimination, hate, and bigotry. This commitment extends particularly through projects and campaigns such as the “No Hate Speech Movement” and “Democracy here | Democracy now”, as well as providing youth perspectives on how hate speech and discrimination affect young people specifically to relevant Council of Europe committees and bodies, including but not limited to the Steering Committee on Anti-discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI).

*The statements of the Advisory Council are published for the purpose of informing the public about the activities of the statutory bodies of the Council of Europe youth sector. The statements reflect the opinions and positions of the Advisory Council and its members. The views expressed therein do not necessarily reflect the views of the Council of Europe.*