DDP-YD/ ETCD (2026)166

Strasbourg, 30 October 2026

Study Session Report

Nordic Change Makers: Crafting a Hate-Free Future

Held by **No Hate Nordic** in co-operation with the **European Youth Centre of the Council of Europe**, 9–13 March 2026 at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg

This report gives an account of various aspects of the study session. It has been produced by and is the responsibility of the educational team of the study session. It does not represent the official point of view of the Council of Europe.

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Executive Summary

The study session *Nordic Change Makers: Crafting a Hate-Free Future* brought together 32 young people from across the Nordic countries and autonomous areas at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg from 9–13 March 2026. Organised by No Hate Nordic in co-operation with the Council of Europe, the session aimed to provide a safe space for participants to share experiences, develop skills and practical tools to counter hate speech and strengthen Nordic youth cooperation.

By sharing experiences and learning from one another, the participants developed new knowledge, practical tools and stronger cooperations for taking action against hate speech in their local communities. The exchange of personal experiences strengthened solidarity and highlighted common challenges across the Nordic region.

During the week, participants explored the issue of hate speech through human rights education, had discussions on legal frameworks, workshops on social media and political polarisation, role-playing exercises on civil courage and practical sessions on activism and advocacy. A key outcome of the session was the creation of a first draft of a Nordic inspirational and informational pack containing practical tools, workshop ideas, advocacy resources, and guidance for addressing hate speech.

The study session strengthened No Hate Nordic as a network and demonstrated the importance of creating accessible spaces where young people can learn, exchange experiences and work together to promote democracy, inclusion and human rights.

Introduction

Introduction to No Hate Nordic

Picture from the Nordic Youth Conference on Utøya 2024

No Hate Nordic is a Nordic Youth Network Against Hate Speech and was founded by young people from all parts of the Nordics to create a safe space to counter hate speech. No Hate Nordic is a youth network run by young volunteer steering group members aged 16-30 from five countries: Norway, Finland, Sweden, Iceland and Denmark (including the autonomous countries of Greenland, Faroe Islands (Kingdom of Denmark) and Åland (Republic of Finland) who were elected at the Nordic Youth

Conference Against Hate Speech which took place at Iceland January 2026. The steering group is supported by partner organisations in each of the Council of Europe Nordic member states and cooperate with other Nordic networks and organisations when recruiting participants and organising activities. The partner organisations that support the youth network have existed for many years and focus on organising workshops and trainings on topics such as freedom of expression and fighting hate speech, as well as working with minority rights and developing educational material.

The steering group has previously organised an international study visit for Finnish and Norwegian youth to Iceland in May 2024 and a five-day Nordic Youth Conference Against Hate Speech bringing together youth from all Nordic countries in September 2024 on Utøya, Norway, the place of the 22 July terrorist attack by a far-right extremist in 2011. Here, a steering group was elected and the network established. The steering group met in Helsinki, Finland November 2024 and in Stockholm, Sweden February 2025. During January 2026, the network held a winter camp in Reykjavik, Iceland and selected the current steering group.

The aim of the network is to create a safe space for young people of all backgrounds and abilities to learn how to counter hate speech and share experiences.

Background to the study session



The team and participants at the Council of Europe visit. Photo: Amanda Anvar

Hate speech is a significant issue that threatens youth participation and inclusion in the Nordic countries. There is a need to create safe spaces where young people can meet and have activities to learn how to counter hate speech and support youth participation in society and democratic life. At the study session, the participants developed knowledge and gathered tools and resources to counter hate speech, as well as strengthen the No Hate Nordic as a sustainable and strong youth network. The study session was a safe space for the participants to discuss and share experiences and opinions on hate speech. The aim of the study session was for the participants to feel more confident to take local action and to stand up for democracy, inclusion and equality as a youth ambassador against hate speech.

One of the outcomes of the study session was the creation of an inspirational and informational pack. The info pack includes, among other things, stories and easy tools

on how to counter hate speech. The resource will provide schools, organisations and other actors with a practical tool they can use to take action against hate speech.

Finally, we wanted to invite the participants to experience the power of human rights education. We wanted to give them the opportunity to connect and exchange experiences with other young people from across the Nordic countries and autonomous areas, because we know that fighting hate speech can feel difficult, scary and sometimes lonely.

Aims and objectives

Aim: To provide young people with a safe space to share experiences and develop the knowledge, tools and resources we need to counter hate speech and participate in society and strengthen the No Hate Nordic as a sustainable youth network.

Objectives:

- **Establish a sustainable Nordic youth network** with a shared info pack and strong social media presence to ensure long-term collaboration and visibility.

- **Train Nordic youth ambassadors** to combat hate speech through cultural exchange, human rights, legal understanding and challenge different opinions.

- Start **creating a digital info and inspirational pack with** practical tools. Like equip young people with practical tools, real stories about hate speech, creative tools to understand, and prevent hate speech, enabling informed action at community and societal levels.

- To **introduce human rights standards** related to hate speech by building on the Council of Europe's expertise, including its educational manuals, standards, and tools.

Main topics, discussions and contents

During the week, participants had the opportunity to share their own experience of hate speech, both on a personal level and from the perspective of their respective countries. They discussed the legal framework on hate speech and took an in-depth look at the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) annual reports on each Nordic country. The study session featured interactive workshops, lectures and a role-play session.

The group also visited the Council of Europe and had a Q&A session with Stefan Manevski, Senior Project Officer at the Hate Speech, Hate Crime and Artificial Intelligence Unit, on the Council's ongoing work to address hate speech and protect human rights. By the end of the week, participants worked together to create an information pack with useful tools for confronting hate speech. The pack includes practical resources, campaign ideas, and guidance on legal frameworks.
Issues that were discussed during the week:

- How to define and address hate speech
- How to respond to hate speech online as well as in real life
- How do we create the info pack
- Practice civil courage and responding to hate speech through role-play
- How to create campaigns and take action in a workshop on activism

Description of the participants

The participants of the study session were 32 young people aged 16-30, living in the Nordic countries and autonomous areas (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Greenland, Åland or the Faroe Islands). The selection of the participants was based on age, country, previous experiences related to hate speech, involvement in No Hate Nordic as well as in other non-profit organisations and motivation to participate and contribute to the study session. Participants were able to clearly explain their reasons for wanting to take part. We aimed to achieve a balance in terms of age and background.

Link to the Council of Europe

The study session contributed to the work priorities of the Council of Europe's Youth Department by promoting human rights education, youth participation and inclusion. By focusing on countering hate speech, the session addressed a key priority area linked to democratic values, equality and combating discrimination. The study event had an intersectional approach and highlighted the issue of empowering and including minorities and marginalized groups, such as people with disabilities who may face difficulties and discrimination in many ways.

Furthermore, the use of non-formal education methods aligned with the Council of Europe's approach to learning, creating a participatory and inclusive environment. The session contributed to building young people's capacity to uphold human rights and respond to current challenges within the society by countering hate speech. The session also fostered intercultural dialogue and cooperation across the Nordic region, strengthening networks and encouraging continued youth engagement.

Results and Conclusions

Main findings and discussions



Photo: Amanda Anvar

The study session showed that young people across the Nordic region are motivated to counter hate speech but need practical tools, safe spaces for dialogue, and continued support to take action. Although experiences of hate speech vary between national contexts, particularly for minority groups, its impact is similar.

A key conclusion was that a human rights-based approach is essential. Cultural exchange and sharing personal experiences strengthened solidarity among participants. Many participants expressed that the study session helped them realise that they are not alone in facing or counteracting hate speech, an insight that was particularly distinctive for participants who came from smaller communities where discrimination and prejudice are more widespread. Participants also highlighted the role of social media in amplifying hate speech, the need for both individual and systemic responses, and ongoing challenges in balancing freedom of expression with protection from hate speech.

Recommendations and statements

The study session highlighted the need for continued, accessible support for young people working against hate speech. Participants emphasised the importance of emotional support when addressing difficult experiences, as well as the need for practical tools such as clear guidelines and info packs. They also stressed the importance of safe and respectful spaces for dialogue and the need to ensure accessibility in youth activities.

Suggestions and proposals for the Council of Europe

The participants appreciated learning more about the Council of Europe, its human rights standards and the work of the Youth Department. The session demonstrated the value of continuing to support youth-led initiatives that combine human rights education, intercultural dialogue and democratic participation. Continued opportunities for networking and engagement were seen as important for sustaining long-term impact.

The Council of Europe could further strengthen opportunities for young people to engage in practical and accessible human rights education on hate speech, discrimination, and inclusion. The session underlined the need for accessible support structures during youth activities, including emotional support when addressing sensitive topics. A key recommendation is to ensure the possibility of providing personal assistance or volunteers to support young participants with disabilities or additional support where needed, as this is not guaranteed across countries and is essential for equal participation.

Learning points for participants

Participants developed greater knowledge and understanding of human rights and democratic participation. They learned practical methods for identifying, addressing and responding to hate speech as well as rhetorical and communication skills to engage in difficult conversations. Participants also gained new perspectives through intercultural exchange and discussions with other young people from across the Nordic region. Many highlighted that they learned more about the Council of Europe, human rights and how activism and peaceful dialogue can be used as tools to counter hate speech.

Another important learning point was understanding that hate speech can take many forms and that legislation and responses differ between countries. Participants also emphasised the importance of solidarity and peer support when combating discrimination and hate speech.

Overall evaluation

The overall evaluation of the study session was positive. Participants described the session as meaningful, educational and engaging. They particularly appreciated the opportunity to exchange experiences, meet young people from other Nordic countries and gain practical tools for addressing hate speech. The evaluation identified important areas for improvement: participants expressed the need for more time for reflection, emotional processing and follow-up discussions due to the heavy nature of the topics discussed.

Despite challenges during the week, including illness within the preparatory team and emotionally demanding discussions, the study session was successfully implemented and achieved its main objectives.

Contribution to the Youth Department of the Council of Europe

The study session strongly contributed to the mission and priorities of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe by promoting youth participation, human rights education and intercultural dialogue. Through non-formal education methods, participants strengthened their competences related to democracy, peacebuilding and combating hate speech. The session supported young people in becoming ambassadors for human rights and democratic values. It also strengthened Nordic cooperation and created opportunities for continued youth engagement. By focusing on hate speech,

discrimination and the importance of inclusion, the session addressed important challenges connected to democratic participation, equality and human rights protection.

Programme – inputs and discussions

The study session was structured to combine theoretical input, interactive discussions, and practical workshops. Each day typically began with introductory sessions or expert inputs, followed by smaller working groups and workshops where participants could explore specific themes in more depth. The afternoons were often dedicated to participatory activities, allowing attendees to share experiences, reflect collectively, and develop ideas for future initiatives. The study session programme was designed to help participants first understand what hate speech is and develop the skills to identify and define it. These skills are essential for working to tackle hate speech. We had to make some changes and remain flexible with the programme throughout the week in response to the group's dynamics and unforeseen challenges, such as parts of the prep team getting sick or having to go home early. The prep team's ability to adapt and find solutions was incredibly important.

Day 0: 8 March - Arrival of participants

We held an informal welcoming evening, where the participants who had arrived introduces themselves and got to know each other.

As it was May 8, International Women's Day, we took part in an activity inspired by a Danish tradition of giving flowers to the person you like. All participants got to sit in small groups and paint flowers while answering quick speed-dating questions to get to know each other.

Day 1: 9 March – Defining hate speech

Introduction:
The study session opened with registration and an official welcome by Stefano Dominioni, Executive Director of the EYC in Strasbourg, followed by an introduction to the aims, objectives and framework of the session. A social contract was established together with participants to create a safe and respectful space, alongside a check-in on hopes and fears. This set a clear foundation aligned with human rights education and participatory learning.

Defining hate speech and saying-it-worse-workshop:



Saying-it-worse-workshop. Photo: Amanda Anvar

The late morning session focused on defining hate speech with an introduction to the theme. Each participant got the opportunity to answer the questions:

- What do you associate with the word hate speech?
- Where does it occur?
- What does it look like?
- Why does it happen?
- Who experiences it?

Then the session moved on to the "saying-it-worse" workshop. The participants were divided into groups and the task was to rank 11 different examples of hate speech from bad to worst. The groups were then asked to share their thoughts as a whole group when ranking the examples. The examples were about different forms of online hate, vandalism, physical or psychological violence directed at a person or a group.

Participants explored different perspectives and interpretations which contributed to critical reflection, but was also perceived by some as challenging due to the sensitive nature of the topic.

Workshop: hate speech and personal experience:



Sharing experiences. Photo: Amanda Anvar

This session took a more reflective and personal approach. It began with a safe-space exercise, allowing participants to share personal experiences related to hate speech, discrimination or exclusion. Facilitators ensured a supportive environment before moving into analytical discussions on the nature, impact and forms of hate speech.

The session then explored strategies for responding to hate speech, both at the individual and community levels, including counter-speech, education and advocacy. Participants were engaged in sharing personal experiences of hate speech through creative methods. They were asked to work in groups to sketch a mind map with recurring themes/points in their personal stories about hate speech or discrimination. By identifying themes within different experiences of hate, the participants were then able to come up with suggestions or ideas for solutions to the problems, such as better accessibility in society or education. The participants were then asked to present the mind map to the whole group.

Participants shared powerful personal stories, which highlighted:

- The emotional and psychological impact of hate speech
- The normalization of certain forms of discrimination in different societies
- The difficulty of responding effectively in real-time situations

The emerging ideas and key conclusions included:

- The need for stronger support systems for victims of hate speech
- The importance of education in preventing discriminatory attitudes
- The value of storytelling as a tool for awareness and change

Some participants proposed initiatives such as:

- Peer-support networks
- Educational workshops in schools
- Online campaigns promoting inclusive narratives

There was a strong consensus on the importance of empathy, education and solidarity. Many participants stressed that addressing hate speech requires both systemic change and individual responsibility. However, several participants found the discussions

emotionally demanding, indicating a high need for emotional support and careful facilitation.

Group reflections:
The day concluded with group reflections, allowing participants to process experiences and provide feedback. Based on early reactions, the team later identified a need to strengthen group cohesion and emotional safety, which informed adjustments to the programme on following days (e.g. more icebreakers and social activities).

The last informal activity of the day was an arts and games night in the evening, supported social bonding for the group. Overall, the first day successfully introduced key themes and created a foundation for learning while also highlighting the importance of balancing heavy content with support and reflection.

Day 2: 10 March – Social bonding, social media and ECRI report

Ice breakers and social bonding:
The second day began with social bonding activities and icebreakers. Following reflections from the first day, the programme was adjusted to place greater emphasis on group-building and creating a sense of safety within the group. These activities helped participants get to know each other better, build trust, and create a more open atmosphere for the discussions that followed. According to the evaluation, these adjustments were meaningful and contributed positively to the group dynamic.

Deep-dive into hate speech law and status report from each country:
In the afternoon, participants took part in a workshop, covering a deep-dive into hate speech legislation and reporting mechanisms across the Nordic countries and autonomous areas. Participants received an introduction to the ECRI (European Commission against Racism and Intolerance) reporting and worked with the latest reports from their respective countries, while participants from Greenland and the Faroe Islands analysed the report focusing on Denmark. Through this exercise, they explored similarities and differences in legal frameworks, reporting mechanisms and national responses to hate speech and discrimination. The session increased participants' understanding of how hate speech is addressed at both national and European levels and highlighted the importance of legal knowledge as a tool for combating discrimination.

During the reflection of the session, many participants expressed feelings of frustration and disappointment regarding the efforts of their own countries to address discrimination and hate speech. Several participants reflected on gaps identified in the ECRI reports, especially in discrimination against persons with disabilities. They also discussed the challenges of translating recommendations into practice. Some participants expressed an interest in contacting the national representatives and contact points involved in the ECRI monitoring process to raise concerns and contribute to future discussions.

Social media bonanza workshop:



Photo: Amanda Anvar

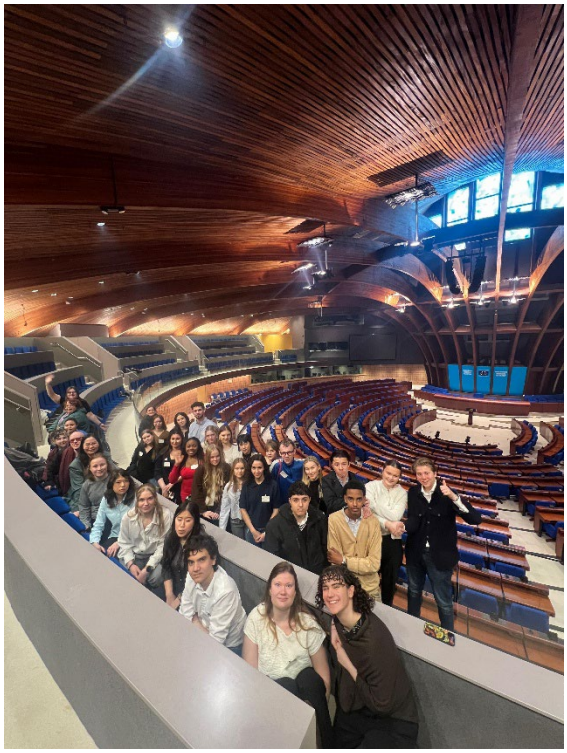
Participants took part in a session exploring the relationship between social media, political polarisation and hate speech. The session began with an interactive agree/disagree exercise where participants reflected on statements related to online behaviour, freedom of expression and hate speech. By sharing and listening to different viewpoints participants were encouraged to challenge assumptions, practice respectful dialogue and develop empathy for different perspectives.

The session continued with debates in smaller groups, allowing participants to discuss issues related to hate speech and freedom of expression.

The session contributed to participants' understanding of the role digital platforms can play in amplifying polarisation and hate speech. During evaluations, participants highlighted the value of discussing different perspectives and gaining a deeper understanding of how online environments influence public debate and democratic participation.

Group reflections and movie night:
Evaluations of the day showed that participants valued the balance between educational content and creative methods, as well as the increased focus on social interaction and group cohesion. The evening movie night provided an informal opportunity for further socialisation and strengthened connections between participants.

Day 3: 11 March – Visit to Council of Europe



The Council of Europe visit. Photo: Amanda Anvar

The day began with a joint walk to the Council of Europe. There, the participants received a briefing from Stefan Manevski, Senior Project Officer at the Hate Speech, Hate Crime and Artificial Intelligence Unit. The briefing focused on the Council of Europe's work to stop discrimination and hate speech and the work to protect human rights. The participants had the opportunity to ask questions, and several took the opportunity to raise issues from the previous session about the ECRI report. They have also joined the guided tour of the building, including visit to the Hemicycle, where the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe meets.

In the afternoon, the participants were able to discover Strasbourg themselves. Several participants chose to use their free time to visit the EU Parliament, where a hearing was taking place. Some participants chose to meet in town for to enjoy a dinner together.

Day 4: 12 March – Workshops with experts

Parallel workshop sessions with experts:



Civil courage workshop. Photo: Amanda Anvar

Sascha Svarrer from Talerskolen Røst – Get your rhetorical toolbox on how to combat hate speech. The session was about getting rhetorical skills and tools for example to write and to hold public speeches. According to the evaluation, the participants thought this session also was valuable to get to know each other more.

Sandra Häggström – Practice civil courage in everyday life, role playing session on non-violence civil courage. The session was designed as a role-play activity focusing on how to respond to hate speech and hateful comments in everyday situations. Many participants found the session valuable and practical as it provided concrete examples.

Activism in action: Build-your-own-campaign-workshop:
This workshop focused on translating ideas into concrete action; inspiration was taken from the planning actions session idea in the book Bookmarks (page 44). It began with participants sharing examples of activism from their own contexts, ranging from grassroots campaigns to digital advocacy. Then, the participants got an introduction to frameworks for effective activism, including strategy-building, stakeholder mapping, and risk assessment.

The session moved into group work, where participants collaborated to design small-scale activism projects addressing issues relevant to their communities. These were later presented and discussed in plenary.

Key discussions and participant views, participants highlighted the importance of:

- Local context when designing activism strategies
- Sustainability and long-term impact rather than short-term visibility
- The challenges of burnout and safety in activism

There was also strong emphasis on digital activism, with discussions about both its potential and its limitations. Some participants raised concerns about “clicktivism” and the need to connect online engagement with real-world impact.

Emerging ideas and projects:

- Awareness campaigns targeting youth participation in democratic processes
- Community-based initiatives to counter discrimination
- Collaborative platforms for sharing activist resources across countries

Participants expressed interest in continuing collaboration beyond the session, potentially through informal networks or joint initiatives.

Day 5: 13 March – The final day

Create and develop a "Nordic Info Pack" workshop:



Creating the info pack. Photo: Amanda Anvar

The aim of the info pack session was to develop concrete content for a Nordic Info Pack that strengthens the network's work against hate speech through communication, education, advocacy and ethical storytelling.

The goal of the session was for the participants to understand the purpose of the Nordic info pack and how it can be used. To build on previous work and identify what has already been done. To develop practical guidelines for how the network should communicate about hate speech online. To create advocacy tools that use European Union and United Nations frameworks to influence politicians. And to design ready-to-use workshop ideas for local organisations and communities as well as to develop ethical methods for collecting and presenting personal stories safely. The participants contributed with producing concrete outputs (recommendations, tools, templates) that can be included directly in the info pack.

The participants were divided into four groups. The first group discussed how the network should talk about hate speech on social media platforms. They discussed the following questions:

- Which discourse/tone should we use as a network and when we're practicing online activism or having online campaigns? Why?
- How should we respond to hate speech online? "Do & Don't" list. What is important to think about when combating hate speech online?

- Which channels can we use to reach out? Why these channels? How can we use them?

The second group discussed workshop ideas that could be highlighted in the info pack and that the readers could use at home, in local organisations, schools, sports clubs etc. The task was to design examples of a 45–60-minute workshop to facilitate in the local community. Questions that were discussed were: What topics are relevant for different audiences? What topic are you dedicated to? How do we adopt the workshops for different target audiences?

The third group worked on creating tools to reach out to politicians. Evidence-based Advocacy: Using EU & UN frameworks/regulations to advocate for change to decision-makers. Questions that were discussed were:

- How can No Hate Nordic use international frameworks to strengthen political advocacy against hate speech?
- What EU instruments regulate hate speech?
- How can No Hate Nordic use international frameworks to strengthen political advocacy against hate speech?
- What UN conventions apply? (e.g. human rights treaties)
- What political commitments already exist in Nordic countries?
- Where are the gaps?
- Where are governments failing and what can we demand?

The fourth group discussed the importance of including personal stories in the info pack. The discussion was about how the network can collect personal stories and highlight minorities in an ethnical way. Questions that were discussed were:

- Why are personal stories important?
- How do we collect stories safely? How do we avoid tokenizing? How do we ensure informed consent? How do we protect people from backlash?
- What are the risks?
- How should the stories be presented? Decide formats:
  - Written testimonials?
  - Anonymous quotes?
  - Video stories?
  - Audio?
  - Social media campaigns?

One of the main outcomes of the session was the creation of a first draft of an information and inspiration pack. The material brought together examples, recommendations and practical methods discussed during the week. The pack was not finalized during the study session, but it provided a strong foundation for future development within No Hate Nordic. You can read the draft of the info pack in the appendices.

On the evening on the last day, a cultural evening was held with the aim of allowing participants to have a cultural exchange. While some participants shared stories from home, others chose to sing a song in their home language or read a poem. Everyone brought sweets from home to share with each other.

Follow up activities – to be continued...

No Hate Nordic intends to continue strengthening the network and involving more young people in future activities connected to the no hate speech movement. During April 2026, the steering group of the No Hate Nordic had a physical meeting in Copenhagen where the steering group planned and discussed further activities. The steering group worked on a draft of the info pack that the participants of the study session contributed to. Further on, No Hate Nordic will be co-organisers of a Nordic youth camp on Utöya, Norway in November 2026. In addition, No Hate Nordic is exploring ways for participants to be involved in the network outside steering group structures. The steering group will continue its work and plan future activities; thanks to the study session, the network has been strengthened with more young people who want to get involved. An application to hold another study session at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg during 2027 is submitted. The No Hate Nordic is looking forward to keep in touch with the Council of Europe and the European Youth Centre.

While the work against hate speech continues, the session laid an important foundation for future cooperation, learning and youth engagement across the Nordic region. We leave Strasbourg inspired by the knowledge, courage and dedication shown by the participants and hopeful about the positive impact every participant will create in the future.

Appendices

The final programme

Sunday, 8 March 2026

07:30 Breakfast opens
Arrival of participants
18:30 Dinner
20:00 Welcome evening

Monday, 9 March 2026

07:30 Breakfast opens
08:00 Registration
10:00 Opening and introductions to the Study Session with Stefano DOMINIONI, Executive Director, European Youth Centre Strasbourg.
Intro of aims & objectives of the Study Session and Social contract regarding safe space, check-in on expectations.
11:00 Break
11:30 Defining hate speech and "saying it worse"-workshop. Introduction and discussion about different perspectives.
13:00 Lunch
14:30 Sharing experiences and creative creating session
16:00 Break
16:30 Sharing experiences and creative creating session continues
18:00 Reflection of the day in groups
18:30 Dinner
19:30 Games and art night. Choose between board and social games and creating something artsy together or individually (Participation is voluntary).

Tuesday, 10 March 2026

07:30 Breakfast
09:30 Ice breakers
11:00 Break
11:30 Social activities and team building
13:00 Lunch
14:30 Deep dive in hate speech law, status report from each country
16:00 Break
16:30 Social media bonanza, political polarisation and make your own meme
18:00 Reflection of the day
18:30 Dinner
20:00 Movie evening (Participation in this activity is voluntary)

Wednesday, 11 March 2026

07:30 Breakfast
09:00 Meet in the lobby for a walk to meeting point for visit Council of Europe
10:00 Council of Europe work and hate speech with Menno ETTEMA and Stefan MANEVSKI from Hate Speech, Hate Crime and AI Unit of the Anti-discrimination Department of the Council of Europe. Visit of the Council of Europe with guided tour, group photo.
13:00 Lunch

14:30 Free time
16:00 Break
16:30 Free time
18:30 Self organised dinner in town
20:00 Free evening

Thursday, 12 March 2026

07:30 Breakfast
09:30 Parallel workshop sessions with experts - first round Sascha SVARRER from Talerskolen Røst - Get your rhetorical toolbox on how to combat hate speech and Sandra HÄGGSTRÖM - Practice civil courage in everyday life, role playing session on non-violence civil courage.
11:00 Break
11:30 Parallel workshop sessions with experts - second round
13:00 Lunch
14:30 Workshop on activism, build your own campaign
16:00 Break
16:30 Make an impact on the society locally, nationally and internationally?
18:00 Reflection of the day in groups
18:30 Dinner
20:00 Free time??

Friday, 13 of March

07:30 Breakfast
09:30 Create and develop a Nordic Info Pack with tools and creative methods to counter hate speech
11:00 Break
11:30 Nordic Info Pack session continues Make an impact on the society locally, nationally and internationally
13:00 Lunch
14:30 Evaluation of the study session
16:00 Break
18:00 Reflection and goodbye
18:30 Dinner
20:00 Culture evening – bring candies and snacks from your country to share

Saturday, 14 March 2026

07:30 Breakfast
Departure of participants

Preparatory team
Lykke Kristensen, Denmark
Sania Doh, Finland
Emma Knutsson, Sweden
Herman Dahl Gaustad, Norway

Course director
Nora Eklöv, Sweden, Unga Rörelsehindrade, No Hate Nordic

Lecturers
Sandra Häggström, Civic & Social Organization Professional
Sascha Svarrer, Talerskolen Røst

Council of Europe
Stefan Manevski, Hate Speech, Hate Crime and AI Unit
Menno Ettema, Hate Speech, Hate Crime and AI Unit
Stefano Dominioni, Executive Director, European Youth Centre Strasbourg
Sulkhan Chargeishvili, Educational Advisor, Youth Department
Katalin Ormos, Administrative Assistant, Youth Department

List of references

Books

Council of Europe (2016, rev 2020). *Bookmarks – A Manual for Combating Hate Speech Online through Human Rights Education*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.

Council of Europe (2017). *We can! – Taking Action against Hate Speech through Counter and Alternative Narratives.* Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.

Visibility

Council of Europe, website: https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/-/nordic-change-makers-empowering-youth-to-build-a-hate-free-future

CoE_youth Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/coe_youth/

Stop hatprat, call: https://stopphatprat.no/call-for-participants-nordic-change-makers-crafting-a-hate-free-future-2026/

No Hate Nordic Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/networkfornordicyouth/

Unga Rörelsehindrade, Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/ungarh/

The call was shared at the No Hate Speech Movement Norway website, their Instagram and the Instagram of No Hate Nordic. The parter organisations were asked to share it. During the study session, many participants posted content on their social media about the event as well as some partner organisations. The Council of Europe shared an article on their website and Instagram.

The Info Pack – first draft

INFO PACK

What is hate speech?

Hate speech Hate speech is expressions that promote or justify hate, violence or discrimination towards a group or individual based on characteristics such as "race", colour, language, religion, nationality, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity or sexual orientation.
Prejudice Prejudice is a preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience. It's a generalisation we make about something without really knowing anything about it beforehand.

What is hate speech?

Hate speech doesn't need to happen while speaking; it can happen anywhere. **Memes, social media posts, songs, pictures, gestures, messages and spoken words can all be hate speech.**

Hate speech is dangerous because it can **normalise discrimination and even encourage violence**. Historically, it has played a role in serious events like the Holocaust, where propaganda and hateful language helped justify persecution and violence against Jewish people and other groups.

Example of hate speech:

This is shown in the story of a student who was openly lesbian and experienced daily verbal abuse:
"Almost daily, I would hear the boys in my class throw around the word 'bög' towards anything."

She also describes a direct insult:
"A boy in my class kicked a trash can and shouted: 'Jävla bög soptunna!' "
Even symbols of inclusion were targeted:
"It [big pride flag] got torn down and burned twice during my time at the school."

How do you fight your own prejudice?

When something is unknown, that uncertainty can sometimes turn into fear, and that fear can turn into hate.

Did you know that it usually takes under 10 seconds from when we meet someone for the first time till we make up an opinion about them that sets the foundation for how we see them as a person. 10 seconds! You barely have time to blink twice before someone apparently knows everything about you.

Examples of prejudice are that young people are irresponsible, that people with disabilities can't be independent or that men are naturally better leaders than women.

So where does prejudice come from? **Prejudice is actually a natural part of us.** Our ancestors used prejudice to determine if something was dangerous or not. If they saw a bear, they used their prejudice to understand that it might be best to stay away from it to survive. However, we usually don´t find ourselves in a life-and-death situation. That basically means that **our prejudice is unnecessary in most situations**. Not only that, but **prejudice can also be really dangerous**. Much more dangerous than the bear they were originally afraid of.

Even so, we are not born with hate. Hate is taught to us, often by role models in our childhood or things we pick up on later in life.

But why is prejudice so bad?
You can have positive stereotypes about someone, but these stereotypes are just that, stereotypes. **We put a whole community into a box, so everyone who doesn't fit into that box might feel left out or unseen**. **Prejudice also creates discrimination,** where some groups or communities get fewer opportunities than others. Sexism, racism, ableism and homophobia all come from prejudice. This **fear and hate can also turn to violence** and strong tensions between the groups. **It is important to acknowledge our own prejudices to spot them**.

What to do when you encounter Hate Speech?

There are many strategies to address hate speech. It is always beneficial to assess the situation and consider what would be the most fruitful way to intervene, address, and counter hate speech in each scenario. In this section, we will introduce some possible techniques and methods.

When you encounter hate speech, you should **consider the motives** behind it. This will help you sense what the most efficient way to address it is. It is worth considering if the motive is to spread hateful views, to attack someone, or to generate views and engagement. Often, the motive can be a combination of many things.

On online platforms, it is always useful to **report any hate speech you see**. This will help the monitoring get rid of anything that goes against community guidelines and helps getting hatful content taken down.

If you encounter hate speech at an event, at school, or at work, for example, it is also a good idea to **let someone who is in charge know**. This might be an event organiser, an assigned safeguarding person, a teacher, or a manager, for example. Many of these people are trained to address hate speech and should know how to intervene in it.

Depending on the Nordic country you live in, there also exists different kinds of legislation that can classify hate speech as a crime. It is worth **checking the hate speech laws in your country**. Depending on the country you live in and the hate speech you are witnessing or encountering, it might also be worth **reporting it to the police**.

If you want to, you can also **reach out to designated hate speech monitoring organisations** for more information and guidance. This can also help bring instances to their attention.

Often, it is also beneficial to **respond to and counter the hate speech you see**. Addressing hate speech is very important and often the most effective way to intervene in it directly.

There can be exceptions to this. For example, if there is **any threat to your or others' safety or well-being,** it might be worth ignoring the hate speech and **getting out of the situation** instead. When encountering hate speech online, it is also worth noting that any engagement with a post online will increase its visibility. Sometimes it might be best to just report the post and **not engage with it further**.

When you decide to address hate speech, you see, there are many ways to do so.

Hate speech often stems from misinformation. When you encounter hate speech which is supported by claims that are based on misinformation, it is a good idea to **debunk the misinformation in your response**. It is also a good idea to **provide sources**, as this makes your argument even more credible. This is a good way to take the power away from the people spreading hate speech that is based on made-up facts.

Another way you can combat hate speech is by **presenting an alternative narrative**. You can do this, for example, by asking the perpetrator to envision themselves in the position of the oppressed, or by providing another comparable scenario. By this, you can try to re-humanise the victims that the perpetrator is trying to dehumanise.

You can also **portray genuine shock, surprise, or grief** when you encounter hate speech. By doing this, you can signal to the perpetrator and others that what was said was hurtful and not something that should be normalised.

Another strategy you can use is **asking the perpetrator questions**. You can, for example, question why they are saying this, what makes them think this way, and why they think it is okay for them to say things like this.

It can also be beneficial to **name the claim the perpetrator is making or point out what is happening**. This will make it very clear that what the perpetrator is doing is hate speech, which should never be accepted.

If the perpetrator is using a hateful or degrading word or trying to claim a word to serve their agenda, you can either **push back on the word that is being used or change its value**. You can do that by pointing out that a certain word should not be used or that the way it is used is not what it actually means.

Sometimes it might be beneficial to connect your argument to real-life examples. In these cases, you can change the narrative by **using yourself, a friend, or someone else and provide an example** of why what the perpetrator is saying is not true.

You can also **relate the hate speech you are witnessing to the broader social fabric** and name how it will impact that on a broader scale. You can play with the idea of what society would look like if everyone said things like this.

Sometimes you can **take the argument the perpetrator is making to its extreme and then puncture it**. By doing this, you are proving how ridiculous the claim that is being made is and how horrible of an impact it could have.

You can also **use empathy as a strategy**. You can show empathy both towards the victim and the perpetrator, and through this show that you understand, but that there are more beneficial ways to handle situations rather than committing hate speech.

When someone is saying hateful things, you can **interrupt** them and counter their narrative. You can also **change the subject** into something less contagious to create a safer and calmer environment.

If hate speech is clearly coming from a position of privilege, you can confront them on that. By **making the perpetrator reflect on their own position**, you can give them perspective on why their experience might shape the way they see certain things.

There are only some of the strategies you can use, and you can find many others if you are interested. We have linked many useful sources about hate speech at the end of this document, so if you are curious to learn more, check those out.

It is important to **think about the consequences of your words before you speak up**. It is worth considering if your words will do more harm than good, to yourself and to the community you are attempting to defend. If you do not know a lot about the subject, it might be worth focusing on educating yourself and uplifting the voices of experts.

When you counter hate speech, it is also very important that you do not end up violently attacking the original perpetrator. **You should never harass, bully, or say hateful things against someone, even if they are doing so**. It is not beneficial to end up repeating hate speech against other people, and this kind of response will only increase the cycle of violence you are trying to work against

When encountering hate speech which is directed toward one person or a small group, it is important to **make sure the victim is safe and okay**. You can ask them how they feel, what they need, and also tell them that what was said to them was not okay and that the perpetrator is in the wrong.

If you can do so in a safe manner, **documenting the hate speech can also be beneficial**. If you have any evidence of hate speech, it is important to follow how the victim wishes to proceed.

Preventing hate speech
The best way to prevent hate speech is to **be proactive**. This means **staying educated** on a variety of topics, **calling out hateful views**, and **practising critical thinking skills** in yourself and the people around you.

When you encounter **prejudiced views or misinformation**, it is important to **address them**, even if they are not, at that moment, linked to hate speech. This will prevent hateful views that are based on false information from forming in the first place.

You can also engage with and **support organisations that work with hate speech** to enhance their contributions. This will allow experts to do their work and also give more attention to those who are working towards a hate-free future, and divert focus away from hateful narratives.

It is also important to **stay open-minded, educated, and critical of our own views**. Empathy and compassion will get you far. You can also fight hate speech by being a good example, choosing kindness, and being respectful of others. One of the most powerful things you can do to prevent and fight hate is to **spread love**.

What is No Hate Nordic?



No Hate Nordic Steering group 2026 (Photo by Amanda Anvar)

What is No Hate Nordic?
No Hate Nordic is a **youth-led network against hate speech**. It operates across all the **Nordic countries**: Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and Iceland, including Greenland, the Faroe Islands, and Åland.

The network is led by a **steering group** consisting of youth from all the Nordic countries. It also has **partner organisations** in each Nordic country, which promote peace, human rights, and social justice within youth communities.

What does No Hate Nordic do?
The core aim of the network is to **fight against increasing hate speech across the Nordic region** by giving young people and educators the necessary tools, knowledge, and support. The network seeks to create a sustainable, youth-led network promoting **cross-border collaboration, raising awareness, and empowering youth to take practical action against hate speech**.

A primary goal is to strengthen Nordic youth collaboration by connecting young people from diverse and minority backgrounds, ensuring diverse voices are included in discussions. This means providing **a platform for peer-to-peer learning and exchanging best practices to address hate speech at local and regional levels**. The network wants to educate youth, gather their insights on hate speech, and empower them to tackle it at local, national, and Nordic levels.

The long-term goal is to work towards a cultural shift, decreasing hate speech in the Nordic countries.

No Hate Nordic **organises a variety of events, such as anti-hate camps and study sessions**, to spread awareness about hate speech and educate youth about how to work against hate speech in their communities.

Further reading

Council of Europe
Manual for facilitators
Bookmarks
Compass
Manuals and handbooks
Free resources for 11-18 year olds in English
Manual on hate speech

European Union
Learning materials for 15-year-olds and older
Get involved!

United Nations
30 articles on the 30 Articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
Resources for civil society
Tools to address hate speech

Amnesty
Staying Resilient While Trying to Save The World
Activist education

Toolkits
The hate speech toolkit
Youth activist toolkit

Legal action
How to report a breach of your rights
The european court of human rights

Miscellaneous
Human Rights Resilience Program - tools and training for activists
Activist handbook
How to facilitate a workshop
Campaign Bootcamp
Nonviolent speech

Personal stories
Alma

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