



8 July 2021

Online workshop to create human rights-based narratives to counter anti-Muslim hate speech

27-28 September

“[WE CAN for human rights speech](#)” is a project being implemented by consortium of partners¹ who have created online tools to help activists to:

- [Analyse hate speech to find the appropriate response](#)
- [Develop human right-based narratives](#)
- [Plan how to effectively communicate their counter or alternative narrative campaigns](#)

The project team is organising an online workshop to help activists to develop mini-campaigns using human rights narratives to counter anti-Muslim hate speech and rhetoric. The workshop will be held on 27-28 September

Background

The Council of Europe’s [European Commission against Racism and Intolerance](#) (ECRI) is currently updating its [General Policy Recommendation No. 5 on Combating intolerance and discrimination against Muslims](#). In its [submission to the thematic report of the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion and Belief on Anti-Muslim hatred/Islamophobia](#)² (23 November 2020) ECRI underlined that “The recent waves of migration from mostly Muslim-populated countries into Europe, as well as the strengthening of xenophobic, anti-immigrant right-wing populist parties and movements has also posed new challenges. These trends have led to a significant upsurge of both rhetoric and violent and non-violent acts, which have become more mainstream. Anti-Muslim hatred and prejudice are now often prevalent in society, across institutional, social, political and economic life. It has also been clear to ECRI, through the findings in its country monitoring across member States, that new forms of intolerance and discrimination against Muslims have occurred.” The ECRI submission to the UN also included a [“Compilation of ECRI country monitoring findings and recommendations on anti-Muslim hatred/Islamophobia”](#).

According to the [European Union’s submission](#) (17 December 2020) to the UN report, it was considered that, “Particular attention should be paid to the way intolerance and racism proliferate online and how social media are misused to propagate hateful messages. Muslims and migrants are among the most exposed groups to hate speech online. The results of the monitoring exercises on the implementation of the EU Code of conduct on countering hate

¹ “WE CAN for human rights speech” is funded by the European Union’s Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020) and the Council of Europe. This document represents the views of the author only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission and the Council of Europe do not accept any responsibility for the use that may be made of the information it contains. The project is being implemented by a consortium led by the [Council of Europe No Hate Speech and Cooperation Unit](#), and includes: [Active Watch](#), [APICE](#), a [Jewish Contribution to an Inclusive Europe \(CEJI\)](#), and [Neue Deutsche Medienmacher e.V. \(NdM\)](#).

² [OHCHR Report on Countering Islamophobia/Anti-Muslim Hatred to Eliminate Discrimination and Intolerance Based on Religion or Belief](#)

speech online show that anti-Muslim hatred, jointly with xenophobic hatred against refugees and migrants, features regularly on top of the list of the most widespread grounds of intolerance within the EU. The phenomenon of hate speech and intolerance is moving from social or traditional media into episodes of violence in real life. The diffusion of violent right-wing extremism is showing how there can be a continuum between violent extremism and hate speech and hateful narratives. It is crucial that the work on combating anti-Muslim hatred in the EU is conducted in a human right framework and with due respect of principles of the rule of law.”

The [ECRI GPR No 15 to Combat hate speech](#) recommends “discouraging and preventing hate speech through demonstrating the danger that it poses and through counter-speech, i.e., the reaffirmation of the values that its use threatens and challenges to the assumptions on which this use relies.”

The “WE CAN for human rights speech” workshop aims to do this through helping activists develop positive messages to push back against anti-Muslim rhetoric by walking them through each step of creating a campaign, from crafting a human rights-based message to creating the visuals with the help of a professional designer needed to communicate such messages.

Learning objectives and outcomes

This workshop will allow you to

- Develop insight in types of anti-Muslim hate speech that can be addressed using counter and alternative narratives.
- Gain knowledge on how human rights-based narratives can be constructed as an effective response to tackle such hate speech
- Craft your own human rights-based narrative and messages.
- Turn your ideas into appealing visuals for online campaigns with the help of graphic designers
- Prepare a campaign in detail and run it following the workshop

Participation

30 representatives of national and European human rights and anti-discrimination organisations and networks, No Hate Speech Network members, and activists.

Programme

The workshop takes a participatory and learning by doing approach. Using practical online tools developed by the project to analyse instances of hate speech, constructing human rights-based narratives and messages and practical online campaigns. Campaign activists and graphic designers will support you in the process.

We will look a bit closer at the challenge we need to address: anti-Muslim hate speech online, looking at the risks it poses to the human rights and dignity of Muslims, and our own personal experiences with the problem and approaches to address it.

We will then turn our focus to the values we stand for, namely human rights, discussing which human rights can work best at countering hate and discriminatory speech and how we can create our own human-rights based messages in response or as an alternative.

Finally, we will look at putting all this into practice, and we will start working on a campaign plan and work with graphic designers to help create the online messages using images, photos, cartoons, drawings etc.

A detailed programme will be sent to confirmed participants before the workshop starts.

After the workshop

The workshop doesn't end with the last day of training: following the workshop, you and your team members will have roughly one week to complete your campaign plan and move to the implementation phase. October-November will be dedicated to sharing your campaign materials online, so altogether we can altogether make an effort to replace anti-Muslim hate speech with human rights-based narratives in some of the corners of the internet!

Throughout October and November, we will keep in touch to support you where needed, to share your posts and to hear from you on how your campaign materials perform.

Registration

Sounds interesting? Apply now! [Applications for registration](#) are open until 19 September.

Please note that registration does not mean automatic enrolment – we will send an email confirmation to selected participants after the registration closes.

For more information please contact anti-discrimination@coe.int