



Presidency of Malta
Council of Europe
May - November 2025

Présidence de Malte
Conseil de l'Europe
Mai - Novembre 2025



EUROPEAN CONVENTION
ON HUMAN RIGHTS
CONVENTION EUROPÉENNE
DES DROITS DE L'HOMME
1950 - 2025 **75**



Council of Europe Conference Preventing and Combating Hate Crime

19-20 June 2025, Strasbourg, France

Hate crime violates core human rights of its victims, threatens the safety, dignity, equality, and freedom of the targeted individuals and groups, and challenges communities' broader safety by fostering fear, division, and social instability. Hate crime undermines the essential principles and basis of democratic societies. In view of the recent increase of reported hate crime, there is a pressing need to take concerted and concrete action across Europe to address the root causes of hate crime and the prejudices which underlie it.

The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe has adopted a comprehensive Recommendation containing specific guidance to member states and other stakeholders to achieve this. The Committee of Ministers considers hate crime as a criminal offence committed with a hate element based on one or more actual or perceived personal characteristics or status.¹ In this context, this conference will provide an opportunity to exchange on best practices relating to key topics such as victim support, prevention, and enhancing the criminal justice system, to facilitate the implementation of this standard.

Hate crime can be a direct consequence of the escalation of hate speech.² History shows that the spread, normalisation and trivialisation of hate speech is a precursor to hate crime, hostility and

¹ Personal characteristics or status includes, but is not limited to, "race", colour, language, religion, nationality, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics. Since all human beings belong to the same species, the Committee of Ministers rejects, as does ECRI, theories based on the existence of different "races". However, in this document, the term "race" is used in order to ensure that those persons who are generally and erroneously perceived as "belonging to another race" are not excluded from the protection provided for by legislation and the implementation of policies to prevent and combat hate crime.

² See for detail on combating hate speech, the adoption by the Committee of Ministers in 2022 of Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)16 on [combating hate speech](#).



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tragedies in our societies. In addition, some forms of hate speech are criminalised and fall under the definition of hate crimes; therefore a tailored legal and policy response will be required. This event is taking place in parallel with the Council of Europe's No Hate Speech Week, which will provide a unique opportunity for participants to identify common problems and optimal strategies to combat hate crime including criminalised hate speech.

The conference is organised by the Steering Committee on Anti-discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI³), under the Presidency of Malta of the Committee of Ministers, and also takes place in parallel to the plenary meeting of the European Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC⁴). This opportunity will be used to organise joint sessions, providing opportunities for dialogue and exchange of best practices and lessons learnt among the wide range of representatives attending these parallel events during this week.

³ CDADI steers the Council of Europe's intergovernmental work to promote equality for all and build more inclusive societies that offer effective protection from discrimination and hate, ensure equal participation in political and public life for all without discrimination on any ground, and where diversity is respected <https://www.coe.int/en/web/committee-antidiscrimination-diversity-inclusion/home>

⁴ The CDPC is the intergovernmental steering committee of the Council of Europe responsible for setting standards and policies in the field of criminal law and procedure, criminology and penology. Further information is available at <https://www.coe.int/en/web/cdpc/home>



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Council of Europe Conference on Preventing and combating hate crime

Draft Programme

18 June 2025⁵

Foyer of the Committee of Ministers, Palais de l'Europe

17:00 **Award ceremony for ethical media reporting on Roma, Fair of promising practices and tools and Reception**

19 June 2025

Room 1, Palais de l'Europe

09:30 **Opening statements**

Introduction and moderation by Erik Adell Hellström, Chair of the Steering Committee on Anti-discrimination, inclusion and diversity (CDADI) of the Council of Europe

- **Bjørn Berge**
Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe
- **Alexander Tortell, on behalf of The Hon. Rebecca Buttigieg, Parliamentary Secretary for Equality and Reforms, Malta**
Head of Integration and Anti-Racism Unit, Human Rights Directorate, Office of the Prime Minister, Malta

10:00 **Plenary session Preventing and combating hate crime including criminalised hate speech**

Introduction and moderation by Erik Adell Hellström, Chair of CDADI

- **Jennifer Schweppe**
Professor of Law at the University of Limerick, co-Director of the European Centre for the Study of Hate, Ireland
- **Jo Goodey**
Head of Justice, Digital and Migration Unit, EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA)

⁵ Optional event for conference delegates already in Strasbourg.



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- **Roberto Bortone** (online)
Vice-Chair elect of the of the Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues (ADI-ROM) of the Council of Europe, Italy
- **Renee Laiviera**
Commissioner of the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE), Malta

11:15 Coffee break

11:45 Workshop 1: Criminalised online hate speech, reporting, working with police and victim referral

Introduction and moderation by Robert Gajda, CDADI member on behalf of Albania

- **Elena Haig**
Legal and policy officer, Combating Hate Speech and Hate Crime, Directorate General for Justice and Consumers (DG JUST), European Commission
- **Ahmed Gaafar**
Director of RESpect! im Netz, Germany
- **Katharina Goede** (online)
Legal Counsel and Project Manager, HateAid, Germany

11:45 Workshop 2: Human Rights Standards and the Role of the Police

Room 6, Palais de l'Europe

- **Manuel Peinado Benítez**
Training Ambassador of the European LGBT Police Association (EGPA), Police officer, Spain
- **Saúl Castro**
Lawyer and consultant specialised in human rights, LGBTI, international criminal law and strategic litigation, Spain

13:00 Lunch



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Afternoon Sessions - Room 6, Palais de l'Europe

14:30 A presentation of CM/Recommendation (2024)4 on combating hate crime – definitions and scope

Introduction and moderation by Wolfram Bechtel, Secretary of CDADI

- **Stephanie Öner**
Former Chair of the Committee of Experts on Hate Crime of the Council of Europe (PC/ADI-CH), Austria
- **Marion Adam**
Former Vice-Chair of the of the Committee of Experts on Hate Crime of the Council of Europe (PC/ADI-CH) , France
- **Jens Vedsted-Hansen**
Bureau member, European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), Denmark
- **Joel Salmon**
Anti-Muslim Hatred and Antisemitism Policy Team Leader, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), United Kingdom

15:45 Coffee break

16:15 Specific guidance for police

Introduction and moderation by Ok Kyong Park-Bhasin, former member of the Committee of Experts on Hate Crime (PC/ADI-CH) of the Council of Europe, Norway

- **Galina Pleșca**
Member of the CDADI Working group on hate speech and hate crime, Republic of Moldova
- **Laurentiu Chipurici**
Police Commissioner in Chief, Bureau for the Investigation of Hate Crimes, Romania
- **Manuel Peinado Benítez**
Training Ambassador of the European LGBT Police Association (EGPA), Police officer, Spain
- **Andrea Čolak**
Legal Consultant, European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC), Serbia

17:30 – Close



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20 June 2025

09:30 Specific guidance for prosecutors

Introduction and moderation by Lorenzo Salazar, Vice-Chair of the European Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC) of the Council of Europe, Italy

- **Kalliopi Theologitou**
Member of the CDPC on behalf of Greece
- **María Elena Pertusa Rodríguez**
Prosecutor assigned to the Hate Crimes and Discrimination Unit, State Prosecutor's Office, Spain, (online)
- **D.F. (Disa) Jironet**
Public Prosecutor, Public Prosecutor's Office, Amsterdam district, National Expertise Centre on Discrimination, Netherlands
- **Alexandre François**
Substitut du procureur du Roi, Magistrat référent VIFS & discriminations, Belgium

10:45 Coffee break

11:15 Victim support, prevention and data collection in relation to hate crime

Introduction and moderation by: Jennifer Schweppe, University of Limerick, Ireland

- **Peter Rigby**
Police Officer, Strategic Adviser on community engagement and hate crime, United Kingdom
- **Pilar Muniesa Tomás**
Head of the Statistical System and Victim's Support, Spain
- **Tomasz Filipiak**
Associate Project Officer at OSCE (Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights), Poland

12:30 Conclusions and wrap up

- **Dominique Steiger-Leuba, Summary of proceedings**
Vice-Chair of CDADI
- **Erik Adell Hellström, Concluding remarks**
Chair of CDADI

13.00 – Close

(optional) 14.30 HACKATHON Outsmart Disinformation, Protect Free Speech

Hemicycle, Palais de l'Europe

[Programme](#)