

# BLOCK SEXISM. SHARE THE LOVE.

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share the LOVE

## HATE AT A GLANCE



Sexist hate speech is rampant in Europe and women and girls are disproportionately targeted. Sexist hate speech takes place online and offline and in all forms of social interaction: at school, in the family, in social circles, in the public space, at work, via different social media and online platforms. Although it has taken a new dimension through the internet, the root causes of sexist hate speech preceded the digital communication and are fundamentally linked to the persistent unequal power relation between women and men. Sexist hate speech is a form of violence against women and girls that perpetuates and exacerbates gender inequality. Knowledge and policy action at all levels need to be shared and implemented to combat sexist hate speech!

The harmful impact of sexism can be worse for some women and men due to their ethnicity, age, disability, social origin, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation or other factors. The concept of multiple discrimination recognises that discrimination can occur based on more than one perceived characteristic. For example, a person who is discriminated based on his/her ethnicity may be also discriminated based on gender, sexual orientation, age, and so on. Although sexism affects mostly women, it can also affect men, boys and any person that does not confirm to stereotypical gender roles.

## HATE IN NUMBERS

**Patriarchal norms, gender stereotypes, and a disregard for gender equality demands are pervasive across the Western Balkans.**

Some groups of women, such as young women, politicians, journalists or public figures, are targets of sexism. Since 2015, [safejournalist.net](http://safejournalist.net) has documented verbal and physical attacks in general against women journalists:

### ATTACKS ON WOMEN JOURNALISTS



Approximately **21%** of news, opinions, and analyses published in online media between November and December of 2016 contained discriminatory contents and hate speech, a finding that was revealed in a [pilot project](#) to monitor reporting by online media in **Albania**. The importance of the survey, which was the first and most comprehensive so far, revealed that women were targets of discrimination and hate speech in **73%** of cases. Gender was the main cause or motivation of discrimination and/or hate speech in **41%** of cases, followed by topics based on ethnicity and/or race in **22%**, political beliefs in **17%**, and sexual orientation or gender identity in **11%** of monitored items.

In **Serbia**, [research](#) indicates that **76%** of women in business are not taken as seriously as men.



### Council of Europe standards

The **Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence** (Istanbul Convention, CETS No. 210, 2011), also requests parties to criminalise forms of violence that relate to sexist hate speech, notably stalking and sexual harassment (Articles 34 and 40).

The **Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on preventing and combating sexism** contains the first ever internationally agreed definition on sexism<sup>1</sup>. It comprises a comprehensive catalogue of measures both to prevent and to condemn sexism, and it calls for specific action in such areas as: language and communications; internet and social media; media, advertising and other communication methods; workplace; public sector; justice sector; education institutions; culture and sport; private sphere. Countries are encouraged to pass legislation that condemns sexism and criminalises sexist hate speech.



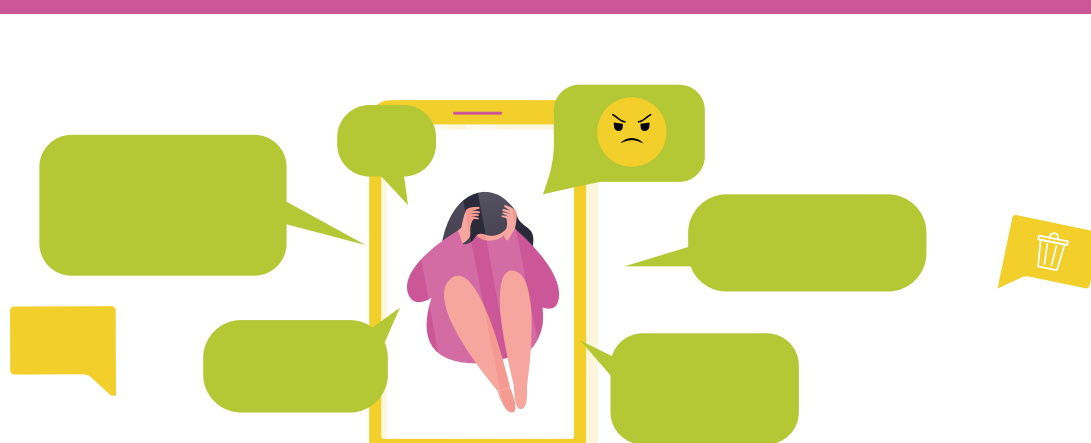
The **European Commission against Racism and Intolerance General Policy Recommendation No. 15 on combating hate speech** (2015) includes for the first time the grounds of sex and gender in the definition of hate speech. The recommendation stresses “the gravity of hate speech targeting women both on account of their sex, gender and/or gender identity and when this is coupled with one or more of their other characteristics.”

The **Council of Europe’s Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023** explicitly includes tackling sexism as a form of hate speech under its strategic objective 1 – combating gender stereotypes and sexism.

The **Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child for 2016-2021** includes two priority areas related to sexist hate speech: “A life free from violence for all children” (with a particular mention of violence against girls) and the “Protection of children in the digital environment”.

<sup>1</sup>Sexism is any expression (act, word, image, gesture) based on the idea that some persons, most often women, are inferior because of their sex.

## GOOD PRACTICES



In online media, women are primary targets of bias and harassment. At the same time, a growing number of women across the region are also using the internet to actively combat sexism.

◆ In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, [zeneBiH](#) (Women of BiH) – an online campaign for Women’s History Month, is teaching internet users about **notable Bosnian women**, such as scientists, writers and filmmakers. To this end, a book including illustrated biographies of more than 50 Bosnian women, has been produced by Bosnian female artists and designers. In addition, several human rights websites such as [Diskriminacija.ba](#), which focuses on issues of discrimination, and [Mreža za izgradnju mira](#), the online portal of a peace-building network, have been showcasing examples of how women who are primary targets of bias and online harassment in the Balkans are using social media to fight back.

◆ In **Serbia**, feminist organisation [Autonomni ženski centar](#) (Autonomous Women’s Centre) launched an **awareness-raising campaign about violence in young people’s relationships**. To this end, the group’s [Mogu da neću – Ljubav nije nasilje](#) campaign (which translates roughly as “I can refuse – love is not violence”) uses an online application called [Aj’ Odchataj](#) (Chat Off) where young Serbians can share their experiences of violent behaviour in their relationships. More than 240 young people – mostly women – have anonymously contributed their own examples of abusive discussions to the project’s [online gallery](#).

\*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.