

Council of Europe Conference on preventing and combating hate crime

19-20 June 2025, Strasbourg, France

Hate crime violates core human rights of its victims and threatens the safety of individuals and the groups that are targeted by it. It undermines the principles of equality and human dignity, and destroys social stability and peace, thereby threatening the very basis of democratic societies. There is a pressing need to take concerted action across the Council of 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. According to the Committee of Ministers, hate crime is a criminal offence committed with a hate element based on one or more actual or perceived personal characteristics or status.¹ This event will provide an opportunity to exchange on 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 and trivialisation of hate speech is a precursor to hate crime and tragedies in our societies. In addition, some forms of hate speech are criminalised and fall under the definition of hate crimes; a tailored legal and policy response will be required. The organisation of this event 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.

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](#).

This event takes place in parallel to the plenary meeting of the European Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC³) and also features the participation of members of the Steering Committee on Anti-discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI⁴). The conference programmes uses this opportunity to organise joint sessions, providing opportunities for dialogue and exchange of practice between wide range of representatives attending these parallel events during this week.

³ 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>

⁴ 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>

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Programme

19 June 2025

Room 1, Palais de l'Europe

09.30 Opening statements

10.00 **Plenary session** Preventing and combating hate crime including criminalised hate speech (part 1)

11.15 *Coffee*

11.45 **Workshop 1*** Preventing and combating criminalised online hate speech

11.45 **Workshop 2** TBC

13.00 *Lunch*

Room 6, Palais de l'Europe

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

15.45 *Coffee break*

16:15 Specific guidance for police

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09:30 Specific guidance for prosecutors

10.45 *Coffee break*

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

12:30 Conclusions and wrap up