Youth Campaign for human rights online

Seminar on Antisemitic Hate Speech

9-11 May 2017
European Youth Centre Strasbourg, France

Draft Presentation
Call for Participants
Background information

While the impact of new information technologies on all aspects of modern societies and human life has been very positive, new vulnerabilities of our societies have emerged through the growth of the Internet and social media. The Council of Europe’s No Hate Speech Movement campaign was set up to mobilise young people in awareness-raising and acting on the issues related to hate speech and human rights online. From 2013 to 2015 member states set up National Campaigns and took part in the European campaign to gain a better understanding of the issues young people are concerned with and ways forward to counter this challenge to human rights and democracy.

In May 2015, in the framework of the Action Plan on the fight against violent extremism and radicalisation leading to terrorism, the Committee of Ministers decided to continue the No Hate Speech Movement campaign until 2017. This campaign remains driven by the need to counter online hate speech in all its forms, including those that most affect young people, such as cyberbullying and cyberhate, racism and other forms of discrimination. The campaign is based upon human rights education, youth participation and media literacy.

One of the thematic focus of the campaign in 2016 - 2017 is Antisemitic Hate Speech. The national campaigns, their activists and educators have observed growing number of expressions of antisemitic hate speech emerging together with rise of hate speech targeting other cultural and religious minority groups.

Present day antisemitism expressions by politicians and in mainstream online media are often less obvious and blatantly targeting Jewish communities as a whole. However populist movements continue to invoke century’s old myths and conspiracy theories about Jewish influence on world affairs when criticising established institutions, media companies and charities that work in the area of non-discrimination and promotion of Human Rights.

Antisemitic hate speech is also often invoked in relation to the war in Syria and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. While a government’s policy and conduct vis a-via other countries or communities should be subject to critical review and criticism. An entire religious community in Europe cannot be seen as a synonym and held to account for the actions of a foreign government. Such an approach also does not reflect the diversity within and between the Jewish communities take into account the diversity of opinions held by Jewish people across Europe¹.

The internet has provided new platforms for antisemitic hate speech to evolve and spread, commenting on present day challenges with quick fix solutions that single out minority groups as the problem to be dealt with. Such rhetoric’s build on pre-existing stereotypes about such minority groups, be it Jewish, Roma, Gay, disabled or any other group that is deemed inferior. The spread of such rhetoric’s online allow for stereotypes to spread to new regions. Antisemitic hate speech might not have a long tradition in some communities in Europe but with the internet dangerous stereotypes are allowed to spread if gone unchecked.

The seminar forms a strategic moment to strengthening the cooperation between the campaign partners EUJS, CEJI, ENAR, LICRA and MDI², its members, the national campaigns and the Youth Department of the Council of Europe with the aim to strengthen

¹ See also the findings of European Commission against Racism and Intolerance in its 2015 annual report at: https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/activities/Annual_Reports/Annual%20report%202015.pdf
² For more information see EUJS: www.eujs.org; CEJI: www.ceji.org; ENAR: www.enar-eu.org; LICRA: www.licra.org; MDI: www.media-diversity.org
the response to antisemitic hate speech online though human rights education and the
dissemination of effective human rights narratives within the framework of the No Hate
Speech Movement.

The Seminar

The seminar aims to share experiences and manifestations of antisemitism in Europe today,
and identify ways of effectively addressing it, notable through the No Hate Speech
Movement.

The seminar is organised in order to:
1. Promote a shared understanding of antisemitism and its expression in online hate
   speech
2. Share strategies and approaches to counter antisemitic hate speech
3. Devise projects and initiatives to address antisemitic hate speech through the No
   Hate Speech Movement
4. Support coalition building and common actions between youth, human rights and
   media organisations to combat antisemitic hate speech
5. Bring antisemitism to the mainstream of human rights education with young people in
   the Council of Europe and its member states
6. Identify measures for member states and other stakeholders in effectively acting
   against antisemitic hate speech online

The seminars should provide for:
- A set of conclusions and recommendations for relevant stakeholders
- Visibility to existing tools that aim to raise awareness or take action on (antisemitic)
  hate speech
- Plan of actions that will be taken by participants and their organisations to address
  antisemitic hate speech in the campaign throughout 2017

The programme and methodology

The three day programme will aims to provide a space for participants to learn about the
topic of the seminar, to share from their practices and experience, to identify challenges and
opportunities and work towards a common approach and actions within the campaign to
counter antisemitic hate speech. The programme will therefore include plenary presentations
and several working group sessions.

Profile of Participants

The seminar will invite up to 40 participants who are involved in:
- either the No hate Speech Movement at European and/or national level;
- or an organisation working with youth that are concerned with human rights, or
  antisemitism, or human rights education or media and diversity;
- or are combatting antisemitism or hate speech online as an expert or online activists
  such as bloggers, vloggers etc.;
- and that can work in French of English language

Application procedure and deadlines

The Youth Department is now opening the call for participants for this seminar. All
interested candidates must apply online, completing the application form in English or French through this link:
http://youthapplications.coe.int/Application-forms

The application must be submitted by 23 March 2017, at noon, Central European Time.

**Practical and financial conditions**

**Venue and accommodation**
The seminar will take place at the European Youth Centre Strasbourg, France. Accommodation and meals will be provided by the Council of Europe.

**Travel expenses**
Travel expenses to and from the seminar will be reimbursed according to the rules of the Council of Europe.

**Working languages**
The working languages will be English and French.

**Visas**
Visa costs will be reimbursed by the Council of Europe. The Council of Europe will issue an invitation letter that should facilitate the delivery of visas to attend the seminar.

**Further information**
For further information about the seminar, please contact youth.nohatespeech@coe.int