



Getting Strategic About Hate Speech

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An Equinet Perspective

- ▶ Twenty five equality bodies in eighteen countries
- ▶ Ten of these equality bodies were multi-mandate bodies
- ▶ Thirteen of these equality bodies had an adjudicatory function
- ▶ Most accorded a high priority to the issue
 - Growth in scale and virulence
 - Causal factor for discrimination

Starting Points

- ▶ Equality bodies had to interpret their mandate to include hate speech
 - Prevent discrimination
 - Promote equality
 - Prohibition of harassment & sexual harassment
 - Positive duties
- ▶ European Commission Communication on Standards and ECRI GPR No.2 suggest equality body mandate should include hate speech

Challenges

- ▶ The growing scale and virulence of hate speech
- ▶ Limited mandate, competences and resources
- ▶ Political downplaying of, indifference to, or collusion with hate speech
- ▶ Limited caselaw
- ▶ The tipping point between freedom of expression and hate speech
- ▶ Backlash

Tools: Casework

- ▶ Deciding on and making recommendations in relation to cases of hate speech
- ▶ Support for complainants to bring cases to court
- ▶ Own initiative cases – use of media monitoring
- ▶ Referral of cases to the relevant authorities for criminal prosecution
- ▶ Low levels of casework and low levels of findings in favour of complainants

Tools: Knowledge Development

- ▶ Baseline survey work on scale of hate speech
- ▶ Research work on:
 - Forms of hate speech
 - Causal factors and motivations
 - Responses to hate speech
- ▶ Elections campaigns and research

Tools: Policy Advice

- ▶ Legislation governing hate speech
- ▶ Access to justice
- ▶ Improve response of criminal prosecution systems
- ▶ Standards for media and social media organisations
- ▶ By means of: annual reports, policy groups, national equality policy plans

Tools: Good Practice Support

- ▶ Cooperation agreements with and training for police and prosecuting authorities
- ▶ Training for employers and for judges
- ▶ Guidance for:
 - Media and social media organisations
 - Schools on curricula, materials & cultures
 - Political parties at election time
- ▶ Positive duties in equal treatment legislation

Tools: Communication

- ▶ Challenge incidents of hate speech publicly
- ▶ Provide information about rights with regard to hate speech incidents
- ▶ Raise the issue generally as a matter of public concern through media work
- ▶ Limited cultural action and alternative narrative work

Being Strategic

- ▶ Moving from reactive and project based approach to proactive and strategic approach
- ▶ Focus on causal factors
 - Economic phenomena
 - Cultural phenomena
- ▶ Broader mix of actions
- ▶ Engagement in alliance building
 - EU Code of Conduct and REC funding

Alternative Narratives

- ▶ Hate speech: a product and generator of a culture that prioritises values of security, conformity and maintenance of tradition
 - Oppositional to the values of dignity, participation, inclusion and justice
- ▶ Dangers in counter narratives and failure of facts and figures
- ▶ Need for alternative narratives to creatively engage values for equality and diversity