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23 June 2015

Ending cyberdiscrimination and online hate

Motion for a resolution

tabled by Ms Marit MAIJ and other members of the Assembly

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

Every day, countless individuals are targeted by online hate. Inflammatory and hateful statements are ubiquitous in comments forums following news items on migrants, Roma, Muslims, LGBT persons and persons with disabilities; women politicians are subjected to online harassment; racist groups proliferate on social networks.

The Internet both creates a sense of anonymity and facilitates encounters between people expressing similar views. The authors of online abuse thus feel vindicated, while their targets are exposed to discrimination and hatred.

Attacking people because of their innermost or inalienable characteristics denies their humanity. Hate speech is also prohibited by law. But prosecuting online hate is difficult: its authors may be hard to identify, international borders are often crossed, and individual victims do not always come forward to complain.

If the flow of online hate is not stopped, generations will grow up believing hate speech is just a part of life; very young children are already exposed to it every day. The Council of Europe is already engaged in combating this phenomenon, through legal instruments as well as initiatives such as the No Hate Speech movement and No Hate Parliamentary Alliance. Some media outlets and internet service providers are also taking action in this field.

It is time to take a concerted look at cyber discrimination and online hate and the efforts being made to counter them. The Parliamentary Assembly should identify good practices and develop concrete proposals to strengthen the work of the Council of Europe, member States and other key actors, in order to put an end to such abuse.

Signed (see overleaf)



*Signed*¹:

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1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialist Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left
NR: Representatives not belonging to a Political Group