Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Doc. 14040
21 April 2016

Protecting children from racism and hate speech

Motion for a resolution
tabled by Mr Petri HONKONEN and other members of the Assembly

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

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The increase of intolerance, racism and hate speech in today's Europe seriously affects children. Not only are children exposed to racist language and acts, they are increasingly victims of racism themselves. More and more first, second or third generation migrant children as well as adoptive and minority children report experiences of racism as part of their everyday life. According to a recent study in Finland, 60 % of minority youngsters aged 13-24 have experienced acts of insults, humiliation and name calling, mostly committed by adult strangers in the public sphere or online. Still only one fifth had reported it to the authorities.

Insults and online attacks can lead to self-censorship, limiting freedom of speech and thus further supporting the hateful discourse. By not systematically condemning racist language and acts in the public and private space, adults, parents, and politicians set an example for children that they must tolerate being shouted and spat at. Children have a right to be protected from such acts and it is the responsibility of adults to protect them. Education and child care play an important role in fostering tolerance and equality and are important tools in this regard.

International studies suggest that children subject to racism experience poor mental health, depression and anxiety. Such problems in childhood may lead to a less likelihood to engage in education and employment later in life.

The Parliamentary Assembly has persistently condemned all forms of racism and hate speech. In this context, the Assembly should examine the impact of racism and suggest recommendations for action in member States to protect children from racism and hate speech.

Signed (see overleaf)

Signed[1]*:*

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1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EC: European Conservatives Group
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialist Group