

Resolution 2069 (2015)¹

Recognising and preventing neo-racism

Parliamentary Assembly

1. A disturbing rise in racism, xenophobia and intolerance has been apparent for some years now in Europe. Those affected include migrants and asylum seekers, Jews, Muslims and Roma, and the reason is a supposed incompatibility between groups of different origins on cultural and religious grounds. In addition to the conventional definition of racism, there is also a “race-less racism” which is equally damaging because it tends to justify discrimination against certain groups and individuals.
2. Europe must not underestimate the dangers of racism, nor must it forget the lessons of history. Historical memory must help us understand that stigmatising prejudice, social exclusion, deprivation of rights, humiliation and segregation are never harmless.
3. The Parliamentary Assembly therefore urges national authorities and civil society to be extremely vigilant. Preventing and combating racism, intolerance and xenophobia should be a priority for the member States of the Council of Europe.
4. The Assembly is also concerned about the growing dissemination of hate speech, especially in the political sphere and on the Internet, and at the emergence of overtly anti-migrant political parties and populist movements in a number of member States. Politicians should be aware of the effect of their words on public opinion and should refrain from using any forms of discriminatory, insulting or aggressive language about groups or categories of people. They should also base their statements about immigration and asylum, and about intercultural relations, on objective facts.
5. Racism is a complex phenomenon. It is linked to multiple factors and the battle against it must be fought on multiple fronts. In addition to legal instruments designed to prohibit and punish all expressions of racism, including hate speech, intolerance must be fought using cultural and social instruments. Education and information must play a crucial part in training citizens to respect ethnic, cultural and religious diversity.
6. In the light of these considerations, the Assembly calls on the member States of the Council of Europe:
 - 6.1. regarding civil society and dialogue between communities, to:
 - 6.1.1. promote the role of civil society, in particular organisations representing groups which are victims of racism or targets of hate speech, as counterparts of the public authorities with the aim of co-operating in the implementation of policies to counter discrimination, hostility and prejudice;
 - 6.1.2. encourage exchanges between groups which are victims of racism or targets of hate speech, in particular in the form of joint projects developed with the aim of consolidating social ties and promoting inter-community solidarity and the fight against discrimination;
 - 6.2. regarding the legal framework for combating racism and intolerance, and its implementation, to:
 - 6.2.1. ensure that the legal framework on hate speech and hate crime includes the broadest possible range of grounds of discrimination, including “race”, colour, ethnicity, language, religion, disability, migrant status, sex, sexual orientation and gender identity;

1. *Assembly debate* on 26 June 2015 (27th Sitting) (see [Doc. 13809](#), report of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination, rapporteur: Ms Milena Santerini). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 26 June 2015 (27th Sitting).



- 6.2.2. if they have not already done so, sign and/or ratify Protocol No. 12 to the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 177) and the Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime concerning the criminalisation of acts of a racist and xenophobic nature committed through computer systems (ETS No. 189);
- 6.3. regarding racist statements and hate speech, to:
- 6.3.1. introduce into the rules of procedure of national parliaments, of the organs of local and regional authorities and of political parties regulations banning racist remarks and hate speech and providing for adequate penalties where those rules are breached;
- 6.3.2. encourage Internet service providers and social networks to follow up on complaints and to adopt guidelines to prevent the propagation of racist remarks and hate speech, containing clear criteria to determine which content should be deleted and to reinforce co-operation between these parties and the law-enforcement authorities so that the authors of racist remarks and hate speech can be identified and prosecuted;
- 6.3.3. encourage citizens to report racist statements and hate speech to public bodies and non-governmental organisations involved in the fight against racism and discrimination;
- 6.3.4. promote the activity of online moderators and mediators who endeavour to identify offensive content and engage in a dialogue with perpetrators for preventive purposes;
- 6.3.5. encourage the media to use wording that is factually correct, by providing them with appropriate data and statistics;
- 6.3.6. promote research into the prevalence of hate speech, its causes and the impact of campaigns against it;
- 6.4. regarding education and training, to:
- 6.4.1. train teachers in intercultural education, providing them with tools for understanding the current evolution of racism in its various forms, such as anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, xenophobia and anti-Gypsyism;
- 6.4.2. reform citizenship education curricula on the basis of an intercultural approach, in conformity with the guidelines contained in the Council of Europe White paper on intercultural dialogue "Living together as equals in dignity";
- 6.4.3. encourage exchanges and periods of living and studying abroad;
- 6.4.4. promote the remembrance of historical instances of racism and intolerance, in particular through the teaching of history and of the dynamics which allow discrimination to develop into institutionalised violence;
- 6.4.5. promote training and awareness-raising activities for adults in the fields of democratic citizenship and human rights, based on an intercultural approach, by means of campaigns and educational initiatives;
- 6.5. regarding political communication, to:
- 6.5.1. improve communication concerning migration and asylum issues so as to give citizens and non-citizens, including groups which are victims of discrimination and hate speech, accurate and impartial information on migration and asylum flows and on the applicable legislation;
- 6.5.2. establish parliamentary networks against racism in national parliaments to ensure that politicians react to instances of racism and intolerance;
- 6.6. regarding criminal justice, to:
- 6.6.1. ensure that discriminatory acts and statements and hate crimes are more systematically reported, by devising incentives which will strengthen confidence in the authorities and especially the police;
- 6.6.2. promote restorative justice, in particular in the form of mediation between the perpetrators and the victims of hate speech and other racist acts, on the basis of free choice by the persons concerned;
- 6.6.3. promote the educational aspect of criminal penalties, ensuring that persons convicted of racist acts or statements are given access to awareness-raising and training activities and to appropriate information.