

# “Countering Hate Speech in Europe”

## Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange

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## Overview

In recent years, the normalization of hate speech throughout Europe has contributed to the radicalization of individuals and collectives against the Other, fueling hate crimes towards marginalized groups. From everyday discrimination and stigmatization to direct attacks on women, LGBTQI+, Roma, migrants, and minority faith communities on social media, the hate narrative gradually translated into violence, weakening the social cohesion between communities and further threatening democracy, equality and the rule of law across the continent.

What are the various forms hate speech is taking? What are the causes and consequences of hate speech at the individual and societal level? How is hate speech regulated in Europe? How does hate speech impact human rights and democracy? What can be done to fight against hate? Through Virtual Exchange, participants will put their own experiences, values, and challenges in the forefront as a primary source for learning and application about hate speech in Europe.

While engaging with expert content developed by [European Alternatives](#) with the support of the [Foundation Remembrance Responsibility Future \(EVZ\)](#) and the [Mott Foundation](#) and exchanging ideas with peers on the course themes and topics, this Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange will take participants on an interactive, action-oriented journey on Countering Hate Speech in Europe.

The course is of special interest for activists, students and passionate citizens from all over Europe and the Southern Mediterranean who want to get a deep insight into hate speech.

Based on a human rights perspective, the course explores these questions and the actions that can be undertaken to effectively counter hate and promote open societies.

An [Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange Badge](#) is given to participants who successfully complete the course.

Questions about the course can be sent to [chs@sharingperspectivesfoundation.com](mailto:chs@sharingperspectivesfoundation.com)

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## Outline

### Week 1: What is hate speech?

In the first week, you will learn about hate speech and how it is defined by various European human rights organizations such as the 'Council of Europe' or the 'European Commission against Racism'. You will also explore what the causes and consequences are of hate speech and how they are interconnected. Additionally, you will take a look at the various forms of hate speech and how hate speech is being packed for a wider public using mixed-media channels. Last but not least, you will get an understanding of how to assess cases of hate speech using a number of criteria.

### Week 2: Human rights - a framework for dealing with hate speech

Human rights are minimum standards agreed upon at the international level to ensure everyone a life of equality in dignity. Human rights also serve as a framework of negotiation. Hate speech instances are either human rights violation or contributing factors to human rights violations. In this week, we will explore what

human rights are, the principles and values underpinning them, how they are protected at European level and how they apply to the internet, and are evolving with us. Further, we will discuss how to apply a human rights perspective to cases of hate speech.

### Week 3: Hate speech regulations across Europe

Regulating hate speech is often, on one hand, seen as a controversial issue by the advocates of freedom of speech, whereas on the other hand, the regulation is also used as a censoring tool by advocates of authoritarianism. How can we draw the line between the limits of both? In week 3 we will explore the European legislation on regulating hate speech and how this is implemented in specific local contexts. This will enable participants to explore their own national legislations vis-a-vis hate speech and its implementation.

### Week 4: Hate speech - a piece in the bigger picture

What comes to your mind when you hear the term 'hate speech'? Racism, discrimination, freedom of expression, political debate, identity, hate crime ... these were the first that came to our mind. This week explores the place of hate speech in our current societies and how it intertwines with racism, discrimination, hate crime and narratives of various crimes. The effects of hate speech will be discussed further in terms of democratic health and human rights.

### Week 5: Take action against hate speech

Once you start looking critically at hate speech, a shocking discovery comes: it's everywhere! So, what now? In this week, we explore strategies and tactics to respond and propose alternatives to hate speech. These will be grounded in a human rights framework and we shall look at examples coming from various fields. Together we will be exploring the strong and weak points of each and preparing ourselves further to take action.

### Week 6: Planning an action day against hate

In the last week, we will put in practice some of the ideas discussed throughout the course and utilize the competencies participants acquired. The aim will be to plan an action day against hate, using cutting-edge collaborative methodologies.

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## Learning Outcomes

- **Knowledge about hate speech:** Participants will gain an understanding of what hate speech is (and what it is not); the various forms it can take; its causes and consequences; how it is regulated and what place it takes in our societies.
- **Knowledge about human rights:** Participants will learn how to use a human rights framework to deal with hate speech. This includes learning the ground-principles of human rights.
- **Peer-learning:** participants will have the opportunity not only to learn about the subject matter from experts but also engage in direct peer-learning by Virtual Exchange.

- **Cross-cultural competence:** Participants will build confidence in speaking honestly and respectfully on controversial and complex issues in a cross-cultural environment. Equally, they learn how to listen receptively and value contrasting perspectives.
  - **Interpersonal development:** you will develop bonds of trust, understanding, and support for your fellow peers through a process of getting to know each other's views and experiences as individuals.
  - **Digital competence:** you will gain experience in virtual communication and technical skills.
  - **Inspiration and activation:** you will learn about concrete examples of how to respond or propose alternatives to hate speech as well as broader strategies and tactics available in interaction with other participants, you will learn how to develop and implement a human rights-based action day against hate speech.
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## Learning and Assignments

Throughout the course, participants are expected to complete assignments and activities:

- **Course videos - reviewing weekly videos (and online materials):** Participants are expected to prepare by watching the weekly course videos, which are designed to provide you with food for thought for the online meetings. Participants also need to fill out a short form with comments and thoughts on a weekly basis. Occasionally, you may be required to read specific resources online or complete simple assignments linked to the topic of the week.
  - **Online Sessions - active participation in, and preparation for, the weekly online group sessions:** All course participants are required to join the weekly 2-hours online group meetings. These are held at the same time each week for the whole course duration. The online sessions take place in small, diverse groups in terms of nationality and background and led by a trained facilitator. All participants are expected to have watched and reflected on the videos prior to the online sessions, so that they are ready to contribute.
  - **Individual reflection:** after the weekly online sessions, participants are encouraged to reflect on the issues, perspectives and feelings that were discussed by answering a specific question in a short online form/diary. This will allow participants to create a record of their development regarding their understanding of the subject matter and the virtual exchange process.
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## Assessment

- **Assessment** is based on the participation in, and completion of, the above assignments.
- **Grading:** Pass/Fail grading system is used. To pass the course, participants must attend a minimum of 5 out of 6 weekly online sessions, including completing the individual reflections, and complete at least 60% of the weekly assignments (answering questions on the videos, and specific assignments as notified)
- **Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange Badge:** upon successful completion of this course based on the above criteria, participants will be awarded an [Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange badge](#) indicating their achievements.

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## Requirements for participation

The course is open to anyone between the age of 18-30 and is a resident in one of the [Erasmus+ programme countries or Southern Mediterranean countries](#).

In addition, eligible applicants need to fulfil the following criteria:

- Interested in learning about hate speech, open to intercultural exchange with a group of peers, and ready to take action against hate in their communities
- Are proficient in English (reading, listening, writing and talking)
- Have access to a computer with a webcam and microphone to participate in the online sessions
- Availability for the same 2-hours throughout the whole duration of this 6-week course, to participate in the online sessions.
- Have 1-2 hours to invest in various assignments that support you explore the weekly topic

As there are limited spaces, please note that we reserve the right to select participants based on their motivation and availability for the course.

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## How to apply

Apply for this course by filling out the following form [this online form](#) before **Sunday, October 21th**. All applicants will be notified of the selection results within one week after closing the application.

Please note that all the personal information and data collected will be only shared with the Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange Project only for the purpose of the course registration and administration. You can view the [privacy statement here](#).

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## About Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange

Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange is part of the Erasmus+ programme, providing an accessible, ground-breaking way for young people to engage in intercultural learning. Working with Youth Organisations and Universities, the project is open to any young person aged 18-30 residing in Europe and the Southern Mediterranean.

Through a range of activities, Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange aims to expand the reach and scope of the Erasmus+ programme through Virtual Exchanges, which are technology-enabled people-to-people dialogues sustained over a period of time.

Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange offers a safe online community to participate in facilitated discussions, increasing intercultural awareness and building 21st Century skills through Virtual Exchange. The project encourages and promotes intercultural dialogue, employability, and citizenship, strengthening the youth dimension of the EU neighbourhood policy.

This flagship project is established under a contract with the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, financed by the European Union's budget, and it is implemented by a consortium composed of

Search for Common Ground, Anna Lindh Foundation, UNIMED, Sharing Perspectives Foundation, Soliya, UNICollaboration, Kiron Open Higher Education, and Migration Matters.

Funded by the Erasmus+ Programme



[www.europa.eu/youth/erasmusvirtual](http://www.europa.eu/youth/erasmusvirtual)