

Elements for a presentation by the Council of Europe Head of Office
OSCE/ODIHR HDIM 2017
No Hate Speech Movement Youth Campaign

The Council of Europe No Hate Speech Movement Youth Campaign mobilises young people to promote respect for human rights online by raising awareness of the consequences of hate speech on individuals and society and advocating policy responses, especially in the fields of education, media and Internet governance. The campaign has been part of the Council of Europe Action Plan on the fight against violent extremism and radicalisation leading to terrorism since 2015.

The campaign is being implemented in 44 countries and involves stakeholders from civil society, public authorities and online activists. National campaigns associate young people and youth organisations as activists and agents of the campaign. They are responsible for reaching out to young people, as well as to public and private stakeholders.

The campaign's methodological approach is based on human rights education and uses its manual "Bookmarks", which has been translated into 16 languages with more on the way. Both the approach and the manual have been widely acknowledged as essential tools. The campaign does not directly advocate a ban on hate speech but rather focuses on prevention and education as necessary measures to curb hate speech and limit its consequences.

On 20 March 2017, the manual "We CAN! Taking action on hate speech through counter and alternative narratives" was launched in Strasbourg. It complements "Bookmarks" by providing communication and educational approaches, as well as tools for young people and other human rights activists to develop their own counter and alternative narratives to hate speech. In addition to raising awareness, the campaign invites young people to take action with counter narratives, in other words, to occupy the online space with positive and alternative messages to intolerance and hatred.

The vast majority of the national campaigns will continue in 2018, while the closure of the European campaign. This demonstrates that the campaign continues to successfully mobilise a variety of actors, and that youth organisations and partners remain committed to taking action for human rights online. The Council of Europe has been successful in raising awareness of the issue – and welcomes a similar approach by other stakeholders because hate speech – both online and offline – is ever present. The end of the campaign must not mean the end of this work.

The Council of Europe will continue to support efforts to combat hate speech, notably by linking its work through the youth campaign more closely to that of its monitoring mechanisms and within a broader anti-discrimination policy.

We call on member States and European partners, including the OSCE, to maintain and build on the momentum generated by the national campaigns.