



LINE TO TAKE

[Introduction and the problem of racism, xenophobia and discrimination in Europe today]

- Ladies and Gentlemen
- Thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak in this workshop on hate speech and discrimination
- Indeed, promoting human rights and equality in the EU's external policies is very important.
- But of course, we also need to look closely what goes on within the EU and ensure that we live up to the very highest standard of fundamental rights protection in our internal policies.
- As seen from events around the world over the last few months, there is a strong expectation in Europe that concrete actions are taken to urgently stop Racism xenophobia and discrimination.
- Ensuring that hate speech and discrimination is effectively tackled, is an integral part of fostering a society where **pluralism tolerance and non-discrimination prevails**. This is part of the values enshrined in art 2 of the **Treaty of the European Union**.
- This is a priority file and the Commission president **Ursula von den Leyen** was crystal clear on her commitment to relentlessly fight racism and discrimination in her speech in the European Parliament Plenary 19 June.

[Ensuring transposition and effective implementation on the ground of relevant EU law]

- Ensuring the **correct transposition and implementation of the relevant EU legislation** including the **Racial Equality Directive** and the **Employment Equality Directive** as well as the **Framework Decision on Racism and Xenophobia** which requires member states to criminalise incitement to violence and hatred basis of **race, colour, descent, religion or belief, or national or ethnic origin**; is of utmost importance.
- The Commission will not hesitate to **go to Court** to ensure that all Member-states correctly transpose these legal frameworks into national law.
- Still, you can have perfect laws, but if they are not correctly applied by the police, prosecution services or authorities they will not help the victim.
- We need to put in place structure to support the enforcement of the laws.
- The Commission has worked closely with the relevant Member States authorities and civil society in the **High Level group on Non-discrimination, Equality and Diversity** and the **High Level Group on combating racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance** to ensure effective application in **the whole enforcement chain, including national law enforcement supervisory authorities and the judiciary.**

[Code of Conduct on hate speech]

- Engaging with the private sector has also been important. The online world has given people unprecedented possibilities to engage and express their views. Unfortunately, the online world has also become an environment where hate speech and abuse has been allowed to fester. Hate speech affects many different groups including minorities. The fear of being met with hate speech means that many persons hesitate to engage online which has a chilling effect on freedom of expression on groups of our society.

- We had to turn to the big online platforms and IT companies to ask them to join us in fighting online hate speech.
- Through **the Code of Conduct on tackling illegal hate speech adopted in 2016**, the Commission has worked with IT companies to ensure that illegal hate speech that users and civil society organisation report is expeditiously assessed and, where necessary, removed.
- To ensure that the IT companies live up to their commitments we have work with civil society partners all over Europe that during certain monitoring periods have sent notices about illegal hate speech to the platforms and reported on the outcome of the notification.
- Over time, the Code has achieved fast progress on removing online hate speech. We have seen removal rates go up from only 28% in our first monitoring in 2016 to stabilise at around 70% since 2017.
- We are also happy to see that more and more companies have decided to work with us under the code. The original group consisting of **Facebook, Microsoft, Twitter and YouTube** has now been joined by **Instagram, Snapchat, Dailymotion** and **Jeuxvideo.com**
- The Commission is constantly reviewing the situation and is currently examining whether further measures, including regulatory measures are needed.
- The future **Digital Services Act** will look at the platforms liability and set out a comprehensive approach towards all forms of illegal content online. While still at an early stage, possible options that will be assessed could include **obligations to put in place notice and action systems** as well as **reporting and transparency obligations** that would require platforms to provide information on how they deal with illegal hate speech on their platforms.

[Mainstreaming into all EU policies]

- We **cannot operate in silos** - A comprehensive approach requires that we **mainstream the objective of tackling racism and xenophobia** as well as discrimination in all policy fields
- By way of example **Artificial intelligence systems** based on biased data can lead to discriminating outcomes. The recently adopted White Paper on Artificial Intelligence underlines the need to address discrimination challenges related to the use of AI in our future regulatory systems.

[Racism and xenophobia affecting specific groups]

- The Commission has also taken concrete action to address **the racism, antisemitism, xenophobia and discrimination faced by specific groups and communities.**
- Following the Colloquium on Fundamental Rights in 2015, we decided to appoint two **coordinators on combating Antisemitism and Antimuslim hatred** that have been very active in liaising with communities and strengthening the collaboration with international organisations, Member States' authorities and NGOs.

[Future steps]

- The Commission will step up its actions further. In June, the College of Commissioners held a structured debate 'Against Racism and For More Diversity and Equality in the European Union'. During the debate, the College explored various potential avenues for action, including an **Action plan to address racial discrimination and afro-phobia** with concrete actions to be announced in autumn.
- Thank you for listening – I wish you a fruitful meeting!

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