

1st shadow monitoring and reporting exercise on illegal hate speech content on social media platforms

- Report-

I. Context

Between 20th of January and 29th of February 2020, OpCode partners¹, in close cooperation with INACH, have conducted the first Shadow Monitoring and Reporting Exercise of illegal hate speech on social media platforms.

The goal of this joint activity is to verify social media platforms' Code of Conduct compliance in various periods of time when IT companies are not scrutinized by European Commissions' official Monitoring Exercises.

Within this shadow monitoring exercise partners have used the same monitoring and reporting methodology that is being used by European Commission.

II. Conclusions and recommendations

The overall responsiveness and removal rate are quite low and suggest disproportionate cross-national approaches on hate speech phenomena.

Facebook has proven to be the most responsive and efficient social platform, especially with reports submitted from Estonia, Romania and Slovakia.

Twitter and YouTube were the least responsive platforms in assessing hate speech reports.

Despite the high occurrence of antisemitic content in Polish social media, the response and removal rate of such content are dangerously low.

The high occurrence of xenophobic messages in Spanish social media is also alarming and yet not addressed by the IT companies.

IT companies should dedicate supplementary resources to monitor and reduce hate speech especially in countries that are dealing with socio-political contexts that fuel radicalization and extremism.

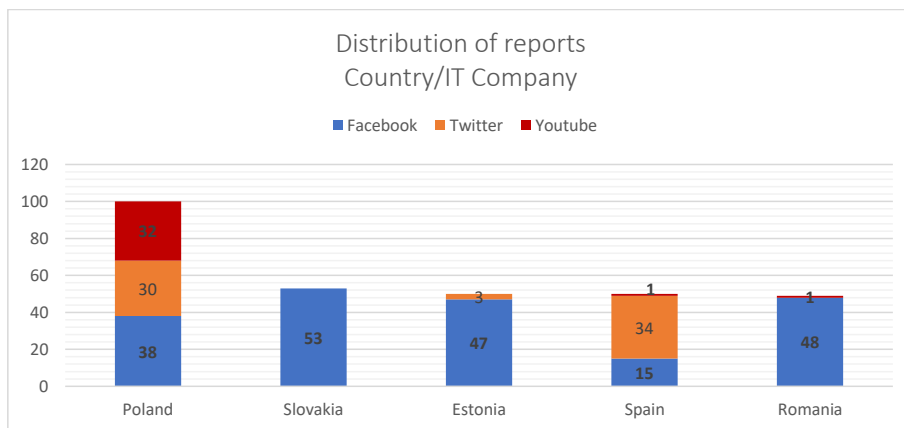
¹ ActiveWatch (Romania, leading partner), DigiQ (Slovakia), Estonian Human Rights Centre (Estonia), Never Again Association (Poland) and Movimiento Contra la Intolerancia (Spain)

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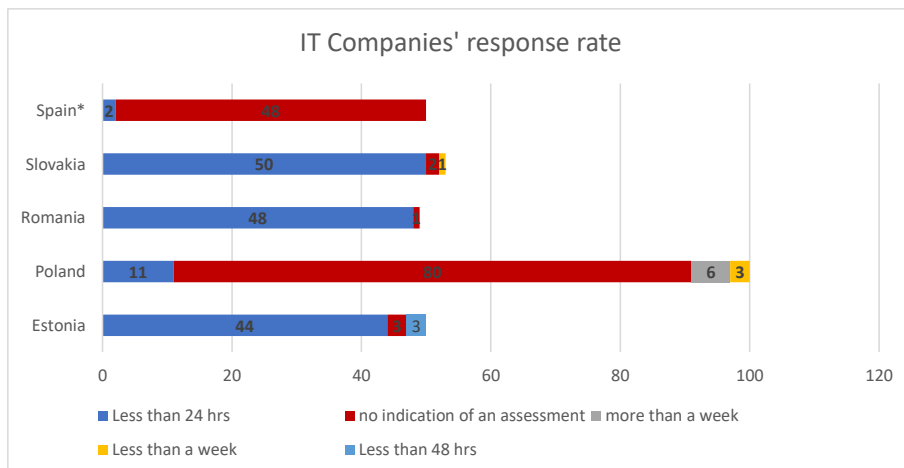
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I. Monitoring Exercise and Results

During the first shadow monitoring exercise, all partners have submitted 302 reports of potential harmful and illegal content.



Almost 67% (201, absolute value) of the reports were submitted on Facebook.



Only 168 (representing 56% of total reports) of reported contents have received a clear feedback of removal or non-removal from the social media platforms. It is worth mentioning that 155 of the assessed reports were reviewed within a 24 hours time frame.

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As for removal rate, 81% (136) of the assessed contents was removed by the social platforms.

Facebook has been the most efficient and responsive platform as 134 of the 136 removed contents were removed from this platform. In contrast, Twitter and YouTube have shown little to no interest in assessing submitted reports on hate speech grounds.

The lowest performance in terms of responsiveness within social platforms were met in Poland, where 80 reports were not reviewed during the monitoring period, and in Spain.

Special note: due to some operational and methodological issues it has been impossible to determine if the social platforms have assessed 48 reports submitted by MCI (Spain).

REMOVAL RATE WITHOUT ESCALATION				
	Yes (notified by the IT company)	No (notified by the IT company)	Total reports	No indication of an assessment
Estonia			50	3
Facebook	41	6		
Twitter				
Poland			100	80
Facebook	4	14		
Twitter		2		
Romania			49	1
Facebook	48			
Slovakia			53	2
Facebook	41	10		
Spain			50	48
YouTube	1			
Twitter	1			

II. Escalations within the monitoring exercise

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During the monitoring exercise DigiQ (Slovakia) has escalated 8 cases that initially have been assessed by Facebook with non-removal decisions. After the escalation procedures, 6 of the 8 cases have been reviewed and removed by Facebook. Thus, the total number of removals for Slovakian partners has increased from 41 to 47.

Never Again Association (Poland) has also escalated 5 cases that have been reviewed by Facebook with non-removal decisions. By the end of the monitoring exercise, the Polish partner did not receive any indication of an assessment from the Facebook team and the content was still online.

III. Grounds of the reported illegal content

Country	Facebook	Twitter	Youtube	Grand Total
Estonia	47	3		50
Anti-refugee hatred	18			18
Hatred related to sexual orientation	15			15
Anti-Muslim hatred	4			4
Antisemitism (including Holocaust denial or revisionism)	3	1		4
Racism	3	1		4
Antigypsyism	3			3
Gender related hatred		1		1
Hatred related to origin	1			1

In **Estonia**, the most frequent types of reported illegal content are targeting *refugees* and *members of sexual minorities*.

Country	Facebook	Twitter	Youtube	Grand Total
Poland	38	30	32	100
Antisemitism (including Holocaust denial or revisionism)	14	27	11	51
Hatred related to sexual orientation	21		12	33
Anti-Muslim hatred	3		7	10
Racism		2		2
Anti-Muslim hatred, Racism			1	1
Antigypsyism		1		1
Xenophobia			1	1

In **Poland**, most of the hate content is *antisemitic* or *homophobic*.

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Country	Facebook	Twitter	Youtube	Grand Total
Romania	48		1	49
Antigypsyism	37		1	38
Gender related hatred	3			3
Anti-Muslim hatred	2			2
Anti-refugee hatred	2			2
Hatred related to origin	2			2
Antisemitism (including Holocaust denial or revisionism)	1			1
Hatred related to ethnicity	1			1

In **Romania**, the vast majority of hate messages is targeting *Roma community*.

Country	Facebook	Twitter	Youtube	Grand Total
Slovakia	53			53
Antigypsyism	20			20
Anti-refugee hatred	10			10
Anti-Muslim hatred	6			6
Gender related hatred	6			6
Other	6			6
Antisemitism (including Holocaust denial or revisionism)	5			5

In **Slovakia**, most of the hate speech is targeting *Roma community* and *refugees*.

Country	Facebook	Twitter	Youtube	Grand Total
Spain	15	34	1	50
Xenophobia	7	17		24
Antisemitism (including Holocaust denial or revisionism)	1	4		5
Hatred related to sexual orientation	1	3		4
Gender related hatred	1	2		3
Glorification of Nazism or Fascism	3			3
Anti-Muslim hatred	1	1		2
Racism, Glorification of Nazism or Fascism		2		2
Xenophobia, Anti-Muslim hatred	1	1		2
Antigypsyism		1		1
Antisemitism (including Holocaust denial or revisionism), Hatred related to sexual orientation		1		1
Gender related hatred, Anti-Muslim hatred		1		1
Racism		1		1
Xenophobia, Glorification of Nazism or Fascism			1	1

In **Spain**, hate speech mostly occurs within *xenophobic* content.

IV. Typology of illegal content

Typlogy of reported illegal content	Social platform		
	Facebook	Twitter	Youtube
Estonia	47	3	
content calling for violent acts against certain groups/individuals belonging or perceived to belong to such groups	23	2	
content calling for limiting the rights of, or otherwise discriminating against certain groups/individuals belonging or perceived to belong to such groups	11		
content calling for the murder / annihilation of certain groups/individuals belonging or perceived to belong to such groups	8	1	
containing expressing insulting overgeneralising statements about certain groups/individuals belonging or perceived to belong to such groups	4		
condoning/glorifying, denying or grossly trivialising historical events relevant to certain groups	1		

In **Estonia**, most of the hate messages are calling for *violent acts* and *limiting of the rights* of refugees or of sexual minorities.

Typlogy of reported illegal content	Social platform		
	Facebook	Twitter	Youtube
Poland	38	30	32
using degrading, defamatory words/expressions to name certain social groups/individuals belonging or perceived to belong to such groups	16	21	19
content calling for limiting the rights of, or otherwise discriminating against certain groups/individuals belonging or perceived to belong to such groups	21		6

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diffusing degrading, defamatory pictures/images relating to certain groups/individuals belonging or perceived to belong to such groups	1	6	
condoning/glorifying, denying or grossly trivialising historical events relevant to certain groups		3	1
containing expressing insulting over generalising statements about certain groups/individuals belonging or perceived to belong to such groups			4
content calling for the murder / annihilation of certain groups/individuals belonging or perceived to belong to such groups			2

In **Poland**, most of the antisemitic content consists in *degrading and stereotypical expressions* against the Jewish community, while most of the homophobic messages claim *limitations of rights* for the members of LGBTQ community.

Typology of reported illegal content	Social platform		
	Facebook	Twitter	Youtube
Romania	48		1
content calling for the murder / annihilation of certain groups/individuals belonging or perceived to belong to such groups	30		1
content calling for violent acts against certain groups/individuals belonging or perceived to belong to such groups	11		
using degrading, defamatory words/expressions to name certain social groups/individuals belonging or perceived to belong to such groups	5		
condoning/glorifying, denying or grossly trivialising historical events relevant to certain groups	1		
content calling for limiting the rights of, or otherwise discriminating against certain groups/individuals belonging or perceived to belong to such groups	1		

In **Romania**, most of the hate messages targeting Roma community are *calling for murder/annihilation or violent actions* against this group or its members.

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Typlogy of reported illegal content	Social platform		
	Facebook	Twitter	Youtube
Slovakia	53		
using degrading, defamatory words/expressions to name certain social groups/individuals belonging or perceived to belong to such groups	28		
content calling for the murder / annihilation of certain groups/individuals belonging or perceived to belong to such groups	25		

In **Slovakia**, most of the hate messages targeting Roma community or refugees are using *degrading expressions* against its members or they are *calling for murder/annihilation* of these groups.

Typlogy of reported illegal content	Social platform		
	Facebook	Twitter	Youtube
Spain	15	34	1
using degrading, defamatory words/expressions to name certain social groups/individuals belonging or perceived to belong to such groups	9	30	
condoning/glorifying, denying or grossly trivialising historical events relevant to certain groups	4	4	
content calling for the murder / annihilation of certain groups/individuals belonging or perceived to belong to such groups	2		
content calling for violent acts against certain groups/individuals belonging or perceived to belong to such groups			1

In **Spain**, most of the xenophobic messages are using *degrading and defamatory expressions* against individuals or groups perceived as not being national.

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V. Country specific challenges

Estonia

The monitoring exercise did not offer big challenges and rather corresponded with our earlier findings from other similar projects. In the case of Facebook, the removal rate continues to be very high, they also respond quickly and have much stricter rules on hate speech than the Estonian legislation. Other social media platforms have much lower interaction and removal rate.

Poland

The biggest challenge in Poland seems to be convincing the social media companies like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to react and remove reported illegal and hateful contents. The vast majority of reported cases were not removed, nor did we receive any notification about the assessment of those cases. If the companies begin to react properly, it will make a huge impact on limiting the spreading of hate speech online.

Romania

During the monitoring exercise no particular challenges were met, as the response and removal rate were very high. It is worth mentioning that YouTube has not yet developed a communication system that would notify users when they report various contents.

Slovakia

No special challenges were met during the monitoring, because the response and removal rates were very high, especially for Facebook responses. On other monitored social platforms such as Twitter, Youtube and Instagram there is a much lower interaction rate and therefore a lower recorded incidence of hate speech. The reason for the lower incidence of hate speech is also that Twitter is mostly used by people as politicians, journalists and artists while Instagram is mostly used to publish personal photos and images.

Spain

We meet certain difficulties in finding actual and clear illegal contents based on the premises on the articles 22,4 and 510 of criminal law. It might be due to the fact that hate speech has been on public debate for years, there is a network of 52 Hate Crimes prosecutors around the country and criminal law is very strict on that. It might happen that those who wants to spread intolerance has learnt to avoid law using deliberating ambiguous drafting.

Komentár od [1]: +valengonmar@gmail.com
Assigned to Valentin Gonzalez

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ANNEXES - COUNTRY PROFILES

POLAND

1. Current socio-political challenges that could contribute to online and offline radicalization

In Poland, since 2016 it has been recorded a significant rising in popularity of radical far-right political parties and groups. The influence of these organisations can be seen in the things that happen on the streets (radical manifestations, violence, discrimination) and in huge amount of hateful content online. Polish government doesn't put pressure on internet social media platforms when it comes to removing hateful and violent content. After the last parliamentary elections in Poland 11 far-right politicians in polish Sejm (the lower chamber of Polish parliament), and that have contributed to hate speech spreading in Polish parliament. Hate speech by politicians and journalists encourage physical violence and discrimination in real life.

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2. Current radical or extremist movements that engage in online or offline radicalization

The most dangerous movement in Poland nowadays is Konfederacja (Confederation) - because they managed to introduce 11 deputies to Polish parliament. Konfederacja was created by members of several extreme political movements, such as Młodzież Wszechpolska (The All-Polish Youth), KORWIN (named after its leader, Janusz Korwin-Mikke) and ONR (Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny, National-Radical Camp). The mentioned groups have united for the purpose of European and Polish parliamentary elections. All groups are known for actions and demonstrations that incite hate such as "The Independence March", hosted annually on 11.11 in Warsaw. In Poland there are also many smaller radical and neofascist organisations.

3. Existing legal and institutional framework that address online and offline radicalization/extremism

The 13th article of Polish Constitution forbids the existence of political parties and other organizations that are based on totalitarian ideology, such as Nazism and fascism. Polish penal code contains two articles on similar matters. Article 256 penalizes propagation of fascism or other totalitarian system, as well as incitement to hate on the basis of nationality, race, religion and ethnicity. It does not, however, list hatred based on gender, age or sexual orientation as forbidden. Article 257 of Polish penal code states it is illegal to insult a person or a group of people because of their nationality, race, ethnicity and religion. It is worth noting that all of the mentioned articles are used extremely rarely.

4. Online trends and behavior (eg: Internet access, demographics, most popular [social] media)

In Poland there is a widespread access to the Internet and most people use social media. The most popular platform is Facebook and YouTube, followed by Instagram and Twitter. Twitter is used mainly by politicians and journalists. All of these platforms are facing problems like the rising amount of hateful content. It includes comments (homophobic, Islamophobic, racist, sexist, inciting to violence), posts written by public figures that also include severe hate speech, pictures and graphics (including memes) that also carry hateful ideology. Those platforms (especially Facebook) mostly fail at removing hateful content.

ROMANIA

1. Current socio-political challenges that could contribute to online and offline extremism

Romania is one of the former communist countries and one of the youngest EU members that still struggles to overlap the socio-economic gap with western European countries. In 2019, Romania was ranked on the 63rd place in the Global Democracy Index issued by The Economist

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Intelligence Unit², within a larger group of countries that could be characterized as flawed democracies. Despite Romania has registered significant progresses in the late 20 years, the tormented political life along with the economic disparities and social challenges that came after EU accession (such as massive economic migration within EU borders) potentially could contribute to extremism upraise in the near future. No extremist or radical political parties are currently in power or even in the Romanian Parliament. Historically, the most popular extremist party has been Greater Romania Party that has been active in the Romanian Parliament until 2008. Along the time, various political parties with extremist agenda were established but none of them managed to become mainstream. In terms of populist and nationalistic agenda, the most visible political party is PSD (Social Democratic Party) that has significantly contributed to the deterioration of the democratic life between 2016 and 2019, when Romania has been assimilated to an illiberal regime along with Hungary. During 2019 European and Presidential elections the Romanians gave a strong signal against the populist-nationalistic agenda and voted massively for pro-European political parties. Currently, Romania is preparing for general elections and there are no indications that populist narratives will be promoted by mainstream political parties.

2. Extremist movements that engage in online or offline extremism

There are no official records on the activity of extremist movements in Romania, but there are indications on the existence of civic and religious groups that promote a conservative agenda in Romania. The most active is Coalition for Family, a conservative network of religious organisations that have triggered in 2018 a national referendum that would limit LGBTQ marriages³. The New Right Movement is another far-right political party that promotes an ultra-nationalistic agenda and it is mostly visible with specific public actions against LGBTQ community and migrants⁴.

3. Existing legal and institutional framework that address online and offline extremism

Romania has several legal provisions both in the criminal and civil code that address extremist manifestation, but with limited enforcing institutions or national jurisprudence. Extremism is criminalized within Law 535/2004 (updated in 2019) on combating and redressing terrorist acts. Other provisions are comprised in Governmental Ordinance 31/2002 that ban xenophobic, racist and Nazis organizations and symbols. The 31/2002 Ordinance has been updated in 2015 by Law 217/2015 that clearly ban extremist nationalistic movements. Moreover, hate speech and hate crimes are provisioned in the National Criminal Code under article 369 and hate motivated crimes are considered to be aggravating conditions in

² Full report [here](#)

³ The referendum did not meet the legal threshold and was not validated by the Romanian Constitutional Court.

⁴ Since 2000 The New Right Movement never succeeded to run for local or national elections. Moreover, their activities are not visible in mainstream media.

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establishing the criminal offence. In terms of institutional framework, the Romanian Intelligence Service and the General Directorate for Investigating Organized Crime and Terrorism are the most qualified institutions to monitor and investigate extremist organizations or movements. As for online extremism that is mostly reflected in illegal hate speech, despite the existent legal provisions, Romanian authorities pay little to no attention to this phenomenon.

4. Online trends and behaviour (eg: Internet access, demographics, most popular [social] media)

Romania is a fast-developing country in adopting Internet technologies, with more than 80% of the households connected to broadband, but with significant gaps between urban and rural areas. According to Speedtest Global Index, in December 2019 Romania was the 4th country in the world in broadband Internet speed and the 41st in mobile internet speed. Despite this expanding infrastructure and the affordability of devices and services, in 2019 Romania was on the 27th place within European Digital Economy and Society Index⁵.

Facebook is the most popular platform in Romania, with more than 10 million users and with a market share of more than 87%⁶. Social media are mostly accessed for entertainment purposes, although youth tend to use social media as an information source as well. Mainstream media, especially television, is still credited as primary information source for more than 80% of Romanians. It is worth mentioning that television is starting to decline in viewership – in the last 5 years more than one million Romanians have changed television programs for other media.

SLOVAKIA

1. Current socio-political challenges that could contribute to online and offline radicalisation

Poverty, unemployment, poor housing conditions, alcoholism and other social problems contribute to the boom of radicalism. 16% of Slovak citizens are exposed to social exclusion and poverty. Social unrest is exploited by various populist parties. In addition, the extremist political party Ľudová strana naše Slovensko (ĽSNS - People's Party Our Slovakia) currently has representatives both in the national and European Parliaments. While, until recently, other political parties have distanced themselves from this party, some parties are currently cooperating with it and thereby legitimizing it.

⁵ Full report [here](#)

⁶ [Social Media Stats 2019 - 2020](#)

2. Current radical or extremist movements that engage in online or offline radicalisation

Extremist and racist groups experienced a boom in Slovakia especially in the 1990s. At that time the Internet was not widespread, racist ideology and neo-Nazi propaganda were spread through skinz. Approximately 10 such magazines are published now. The most dominant ones were Blood & Honour Division Slovakia and Slovakia Hammer Skins, which are branches of international neo-Nazi organisations. Later, the Slovak National Front established in Trnava (advocating the adoption of anti-communist and non-seizure laws, the death penalty and the law to combat homosexuality), which was divided into a political People's Party and a socially oriented Slovak community. In 2005, members of the Slovak Community registered the political party Slovak Togetherness - National Party, a year later the Supreme Court dissolved it, its activities were in conflict with the Constitution of the Slovak Republic. The leader of the party was Marian Kotleba, who currently serves as the chairman of the political party People's Party Our Slovakia. In 2019 his party got into the Slovak parliament with more than 8%, in the presidential election in 2019 he occupied the fourth place with more than 10%. In 2019, a petition was filed to dissolve the party based on spread of racism and extremism both offline and online, however the court dismissed the action.

Right-wing extremists present as their main themes the criticism of the Slovak government and the membership of the Slovak Republic in Euro-Atlantic structures. The number of right-wing extremists (especially Skinheads and neo-Nazis) has been stable since 2004 - around 900 active persons and around 3000 supporters and sympathizers with a risk of growth.

3. Existing legal and institutional framework that address online and offline radicalisation/extremism

The Slovak legal system recognizes only offenses of extremism, criminal acts of extremism, extremist groups and extremist material. Radicalisation is not defined in the Penal Code.

The concept of hate crimes is also not defined in the Slovak Criminal Code. However, the Criminal Code lays down a special motive that includes all crimes motivated by hatred towards any social group. A specific motive is to commit a crime with the intention of publicly inciting violence or hatred against a group of persons or an individual because of their membership of a race, nation, nationality, color, ethnic group, gender, religion or belief. The illegal conduct of right-wing extremists and their supporters can, in principle, include, in particular, the following offenses under the Criminal Code: an offense committed on a specific motive (with the intention of publicly inciting violence or hatred against a group or individual for their race, a nation, nationality, skin color, ethnic group, gender of origin or religion if it is a pretext for threatening for previous reasons), a crime committed with a specific motive (national, ethnic or racial hatred or hatred due to skin color), support and promotion of movements to suppress citizens' rights and freedoms, production of extremist materials, dissemination of extremist materials, possession of extremist materials, defamation of a nation, race and belief, incitement to national, racial and ethnic hatred.

4. Online trends and behaviour (Internet access, demographics, most popular)

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Monthly, 2 500 000 Slovaks use Facebook, 970 000 Slovaks visit Instagram, 3 000 000 Slovaks use Youtube and only 350 000 Slovaks tweet . The average user of social networks in Slovakia is a man up to 24 years of age, with a higher education who lives in a household with income over EUR 1,100 and in a city with more than 100,000 inhabitants. 52% of the population uses social networks for private communication, presentation of opinions or making new contacts. For a further 35% these portals are for entertainment and approximately the same number of people (34%) use them to follow news and news or information about services and goods. According to the statistics as of 2015, perpetrators of crimes of extremism were aged 18-25 in half of the cases. The most common way of committing acts was to publicly show support for various movements suppressing fundamental rights and freedoms by supporting and promoting these movements, or by defamation of race, nation and belief.

SPAIN

1. Current socio-political challenges that could contribute to online and offline radicalisation

After the financial crisis Spain has been the object of a polarization process in different variables of the political spectrum. From the extreme left and from national populism in some regions, but basically Cataluña. As a consequence of this, extreme right has gained 52 seats in the Parliament in the last general elections (15.08%). Which contributes to increasing the tension and a refeeding process in which moderates lose ground. "We against them" narrative is used as an argument and depending on what part of the political spectrum those "we" and "them" change. For the right wing They are migrants, feminists, and Catalan separatist", for Catalan secessionists "them" are Spain as a whole in a context in which the idea is that they are paying with their taxes "lazy" people.

2. Current radical or extremist movements that engage in online or offline radicalisation

Extreme Right's main political party is Vox. Even though they operate within the limits of constitutional and legal systems their speech is focus in xenophobic and nationalistic populism. Regarding illegal speech which is regulated under 510 of criminal law which is very strict, and "illicit association" as well regulated in the criminal law, the landscape is plenty of examples. On the ultra-right neo Nazi area there are two important fields both for recruitment and to spread their narratives for radicalized people -mainly youngster as their main target group. Football games and RAC (Rock Against Communism) music in concerts are extremely popular and viral on YouTube, generating also consistent online hate speech.

3. Existing legal and institutional framework that address online and offline radicalisation/extremism

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Criminal Law includes several articles on hate speech since 1995. 2015 parliament updated the article 510 going beyond recommendation of the framework decision on racism and xenophobic. Actually, it covers many categories of hate speech such as gender, sexual orientation, social statutes, ideologic, national origin, disabilities, etc. Holocaust Denial is also included since 1995. But it has been updated to make it technically compatible with some requirements regarding the limits of freedom of expression that the Constitutional Court issued in 2007. Institutional framework includes At Executive Power: Interior Ministry Office on Hate Crimes; at Judicial Power: network of 52 Specialized Prosecutors on Hate Crimes (one per province), among others institutions.

4. Online trends and behaviour (eg: Internet access, demographics, most popular [social] media)

92% of the Spanish population is on the internet. Up to 28 million are in social media from a population of 49,9 million. 8 profiles are the average. 81% participate actively in them. Most used are: YouTube (89%), WhatsApp (87%), Instagram (54%) and Twitter (49%). Time spent online is 5h and 18 minutes; 1h and 39 minutes to social media.

ESTONIA

1. Please provide information on current socio-political challenges that could contribute to online and offline radicalisation

Estonia held [the general election](#) on March 3, 2019. Centre Party, Conservative People's Party of Estonia (EKRE) and Isamaa coalition entered office even as the Reform Party had won the most seats. Coalition member EKRE almost tripled its seats and received nearly 18 percent of the vote and got to the government for the first time. The far-right, nationalistic, anti-EU, anti-immigration, anti-LGBT and populist party has changed the Estonian public discourse significantly and made hate against minorities mainstream. EKRE politicians have made, among other things, public misogynistic, anti-Semitic, Russophobic, homophobic and racist comments. They also claim that a shadowy "deep state" secretly runs the country and they openly attack public servants for that reason. In addition, the party has taken aim at their critics in the media and they have their own successful news portal that continuously produces fake or questionable news and also news and opinion pieces that incite hatred against parts of the population. The party has also attacked NGO's that work in the field of human rights and courts. The inclusion of EKRE in government has raised fears about radicalisation of social media discourse and self-censorship of the media. For example, there have been [two cases](#) of resignations by journalists who claim they were pressured by their editor-in-chief to moderate their coverage about EKRE.

2. Please provide information on current radical or extremist movements that engage in online or offline radicalisation

There is very little existing research on the subject matter. The Estonian Internal Security Police has stated in its [annual reviews](#) that in general, extremist ideologies have no popular

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base in Estonia. Based on the information available from public sources, two movements could be considered holding at least partly radical views.

The Soldiers of Odin originates from Finland but has its branch in Estonia. It is an anti-immigrant [organization](#) founded in 2015 in Finland by a violent neo-Nazi named Mike Ranta. The group has called for volunteers who are willing "to step out for the defence of our own people in the face of strangers." [Facebook has banned](#) the movement's pages several times. The number of members in Estonia is unknown, the group has stated that they have [5000 members](#) and 120 men who are ready to patrol the streets. The movement is known for their "intimidation effect", taking part in anti-immigration and anti-LGBT protests. Last year they sent out a [warning message](#) to a bar that had hoisted a rainbow flag and they were also present at an [LGBT movie screening](#) to publicly insult organisers and visitors.

Blue Awakening - youth wing of EKRE was founded in 2012 by Ruuben Kaalep (now MP) who has a [long history](#) of close association with far-right, white supremacist and neo-Nazi groups and figures. BA is known by radical nationalistic statements and also [torch processions](#). During these gatherings the leaders give speeches highlighting the unique nature of Estonians and a call for a new national awakening. The group has also called for ethnic profiling of those with access to state secrets. Last year BA organised [firearm trainings](#) for its members and photos from the practice at a firing range with Kaalep appeared on several group members accounts. In 2017 Blue Awakening was [thrown out](#) of European Young Conservatives.

3. Please provide information on the existing legal and institutional framework that address online and offline radicalisation/extremism

The Estonian Penal Code includes a provision on prohibiting incitement of hatred. This prohibition [does not work in practice](#) due to the wording of the provision, according to which only such incitement of hatred is punishable, which poses an immediate danger to life, health or property of a person. In [2017](#) and [2018](#) the provision found no use. Defamation was decriminalized in 2002.

Violent extremism and radicalisation at policy level is dealt with under the internal security policy, which is the area of responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior and the Internal Security Service in particular. The government has set the policies for combating terrorism in the [framework document](#) on combat against terrorism approved in November 2013. In this document, it is drawn out, that Estonia is paying particular attention in order to prevent the activities of movements and people who spread racial, cultural, religious or affiliation hate in Estonia. It is stated that earliest signs of radicalism must be prevented, because – as shown by international experience – the growth of radicalism into extremism and then into terrorism is probable and therefore also an undisputed threat to the security of the state. At the same time there is no specific governmental programme to specifically address the issue of prevention of radicalization and violent extremism but there have been some projects by law enforcement authorities and youth organisations. For example, in cooperation with the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences, Estonian Police and Border Guard is raising the

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capacity of the first line practitioners regarding early detection of radicalization, as a part of the project the Police issued [a manual](#) for local authorities “Early detection of radicalization and networking”.

In addition, it is possible to report on-line hate speech or (potential) signs of radical/extremist content in the Estonian context to [web-constables](#) on Facebook. Web-constables are police officers working on the Internet. They respond to notifications and letters submitted by people via the Internet, mainly Facebook, where they have their user profile. Some issues are solved by consultation only, but some of the notifications are forwarded for information or proceedings to relevant police stations.

Please provide information about online behaviour in your country (eg: Internet access, demographics, most popular [social] media)

There are no significant digital divides in the country and [the 2019 Inclusive Internet Index report](#) ranks Estonia 20 out of 100 countries in terms of the affordability of prices for connections. According to [Statistics Estonia](#) as of 2019, 90 percent of Estonian households have an internet connection at home, and it is used daily or almost daily by 98 percent of people between the ages of 16-44. The share of daily or near daily users among people between the ages of 65-74 increased from 71 to 75 percent compared to last year.

The [most popular](#) website in Estonia is Google, followed by YouTube and Facebook. Instagram is on 7th and Twitter 24th place.