Parliamentary Assembly: Resolution and Recommendation on cyberdiscrimination and online hate

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On 25 January 2017 the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) adopted a Resolution and Recommendation on "Ending cyberdiscrimination and online hate". The Assembly, having regard to "Resolution 2069 (2015) on recognising and preventing neo-racism", urges member states to take further action for the protection of the online environment from unlawful speech.

Member states are called upon to ratify the Convention on Cybercrime (ETS No. 185) and to ensure that national legislation covers all forms of online incitement. The member states should provide assistance to law enforcement agencies and judicial bodies by providing training on the seriousness all forms of hate speech and also support the development of clear guidance on the recording of all reported incidents and investigation techniques. Member states should also support all activities aimed at raising awareness among citizens of the impact of hate speech, especially on children.

The Assembly recognised that hate speech is a "reflection of hate in our societies". It does not only concern racism and xenophobia, but can also take the form of "sexism, antisemitism, Islamophobia, misogyny, homophobia, and other forms of hate speech directed against specific groups or individuals". On the other hand, the Resolution calls for a balanced approach when regulating people's behaviour online so as to recognise the specificities of the online environment, such as the instant dissemination of content, the possibility of anonymity and the cross-border context of communication.

Particular attention was given to the role of Internet intermediaries with regard to preventing and combating hate speech. Member states are called upon to ensure that intermediaries act upon standards developed by the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights and that "clear and effective internal processes to deal with notifications regarding hate speech" are established.

Finally, the Recommendation asks the Committee of Ministers to review and update several policy documents addressing the problem of hate speech, online media and journalism.

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Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Resolution 2144 (2017) on Ending cyberdiscrimination and online hate, 25 January 2017

http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=23456&lang=en

Recommendation 2098 (2017) on Ending cyberdiscrimination and online hate, 25 January 2017

http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=23457&lang=en

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