EUROPEAN CITIZENS' PANEL

On Tackling Hatred in Society

EUROPEAN
CITIZENS' PANEL
On Energy Efficiency

Contents

Executive summary

EUROPEAN CITIZENS' PANEL: HOW DOES IT WORK?

450.000.000 → RANDOM SELECTION → 150

SELECTION CRITERIA FOR A GROUP REFLECTING EU DIVERSITY

Country of residence
- Citizens from all 27 Member States
- Ensuring minimum representation from all countries

Education
- Primary or no education
- Secondary education
- Higher education

Age
- 3 age cohorts: 16–25 / 26–54 / 55+
- One third of participants from 16 to 25 years

Employment
- Employed (self-employed / manager / other white-collar professions / manual workers)
- Not employed

Territorial diversity
- Rural area or village
- Small / medium-sized town
- Large town or city

View on the EU
- Opinions on the EU similar to the Eurobarometer survey's results
- From 1 (very positive) to 6 (very negative)

Gender
- Male
- Female
- Other / Prefer not to say

EUROPEAN CITIZENS' PANEL
TACKLING HATRED IN SOCIETY

WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT HATE AND HOW CAN WE ENHANCE MUTUAL RESPECT IN OUR SOCIETIES?

CITIZENS' PANEL: THE SESSIONS

PLENARY

WORKING GROUPS

FACILITATORS AND MODERATORS
- Guided citizens through discussions in all 3 sessions
- Moderated discussions in small groups and plenaries

STEERING BOARD
- Composed of the European Commission, a Deliberation Team (professionals accompanying the design, methodology and deliberation) and teams in charge of practical organisation
- Designed, organised, oversaw and managed the Citizens' Panel

INTERPRETERS
- Covering all 24 official EU languages

KNOWLEDGE COMMITTEE
- Around 8 external experts and one Commission expert
- Shared knowledge and expertise
- Contributed to the drafting of an Information Kit and to fact-checking
- Helped to structure the deliberations and identify speakers

OBSERVERS
- Some researchers, journalists, and representatives of organised civil society observed the panels' work

SESSION 1 → SESSION 2 → SESSION 3 → RECOMMENDATIONS

HANDING OVER
- Citizens hand over their recommendations to the European Commission

FOLLOW-UP & FEEDBACK
- European Commission integrates the recommendations in its policy making

THE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. One Europe, One Definition: Criminalising Hate Speech

2. European Effective Response Protocol for Hate Crime Notifications

3. National Office for Combating Hate in Member States

4. Training for Tolerance (T4T)

5. Increasing Awareness About Hatred and Existing Measures and Remedies to Counter it With a Public Campaign

6. Ads Aid Against Hate

7. Creating an EU-wide Platform Combining Information, Resources, Measures and Support Systems Regarding Hatred

8. Establishing an independent Trust Committee

9. Reliability, Facts and Transparency: Verifying and Clarifying the Financing of Information

10. Europe Meets You: Participative Media for Citizens

11. Burst the Bubble: Promoting Diverse Perspectives on Social Media

12. Addressing anonymity online to tackle hatred

⑬ EU Safe
Surfing Card
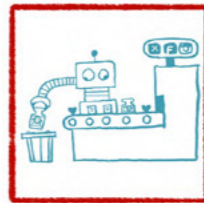
⑭ AI Moderation: Protecting
Social Media from Hate Speech

⑮ Spreading a Culture of
Debate in Schools Inspired
by Citizens' Panels

⑯ Reinforce the Social and
Emotional Skills of Children
and Youth to Prevent Hate

⑰ Education for Every
Generation for Every Nation on
Non-Violent Communication

⑱ Creating European Citizens' Panels
for Young People (Ages 16–25)
for Tackling Hatred

⑲ Developing Voluntary
Civic Services in Local
Communities for Adults

⑳ Helping to Return to the
Meaning of Life
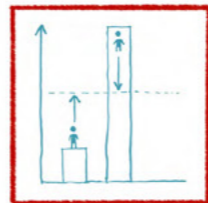
㉑ Looking for the People: Tackling
Social Inequality to Combat
Hatred in the EU

INTRODUCTION

1.   Introduction

The European Union has enshrined values such as respect for 'human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of person belonging to minorities' in its founding treaties ([1]). All forms of hatred and intolerance are incompatible with these fundamental rights and values. They undermine democracy and the cohesion of our societies. Yet Europe today is experiencing an alarming increase in hate speech and hate crime. Even though it is not easy to find exact figures about the magnitude of the phenomenon of hatred, it is most likely that it is largely underestimated. Recognising these challenges, the EU has already taken an active role in implementing policies to combat hatred in all its forms and seeks to increase its efforts to fight it.

On 6 December 2023, the European Commission and the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs adopted a Joint Communication called 'No place for hate: a Europe united against hatred ([2]). This Communication calls for the creation of an open, pan-European space for dialogue which brings together citizens from across the EU to discuss ways to move from hatred and division to the shared enjoyment of our European values of equality, respect for human rights, and dignity.

In the aftermath of this call, the European Commission took the initiative of organising a European Citizens' Panel on the topic of Tackling Hatred in Society during the first half of 2024. This panel brought together 150 randomly selected citizens from all 27 EU Member States during three deliberative sessions, taking place on 5-7 April, 26-28 April and 17-19 May, to answer the following question: "**What can we do about hate and how can we enhance mutual respect in our societies?**".

Hatred and its consequences are a complex topic. It can range from very subtle forms to much more explicit ones. Hate can remain an inner feeling but can also translate into violent actions (such as those prompted by violent extremist ideologies). It can manifest itself in many forms: from verbal abuse or insults to bullying, harassment, disinformation portraying minorities in an incorrect and unfavourable light, threats or calls for violence, all the way to physical violence, or even murder. Supported by information material, experts' inputs and discussions in plenaries and working groups, the citizens participating in this panel identified possible policy actions and relevant stakeholders/parties to be involved at different levels to tackle hatred in our societies. The European Citizens' Panel on Tackling Hatred in our Society eventually produced and adopted 21 recommendations, which are presented in full in the Annex of this report.

Following the panel's sessions, participating citizens were asked to fill out a feedback survey as part of the evaluation of the process. Parts of these survey results are outlined throughout this report.

The follow-up steps to these 21 recommendations will be further described in a Citizens' Report, an official document which will be adopted by the College of Commissioners, alongside future policy initiatives. A feedback event will also be organised to explain these steps to the panel's participants. In the meantime, this report aims at summarising the main features of this European Citizens' Panel and to shed light on its methodological framework, the way the debates were facilitated, the outputs of the three sessions, as well as the assessment of the process made by the citizens.

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[1]   https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/principles-and-values/founding-agreements_en

[2]   European Commission (2023), Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council – No place for hate: a Europe united against hatred, JOIN(2023) 51 (https://commission.europa.eu/document/c60c451c-ccd2-406a-be3a-ef65123f2bb6_en).

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

2. Methodological framework

2.1. Random selection and demographic composition of the panel

To ensure a fair, consistent and reliable approach, representing of the diversity of European society, participants of the European Citizens' Panel were recruited using random selection methods.

The recruitment was carried out by Harris Interactive and Sortition Foundation. Harris conducted the recruitment of participants using random digital dialling. 245 people agreed to take part in the panel from which 150 were randomly chosen to be part of the panel based on diverse criteria (as described below), while 50 of them constituted the first reserve list of citizens, in case of dropouts. Sortition Foundation worked at creating a second reserve list of participants, focusing on usually underrepresented citizens, notably youth and citizens living in low-income areas, using face-to-face recruitment method.

Table 1: Demographic composition of the panel – national origin

Country	Target Participants	Actual Participants		
		Session 1	Session 2	Session 3
Austria	4	5	5	5
Belgium	5	5	5	2
Bulgaria	4	2	2	2
Croatia	2	2	2	2
Cyprus	2	1	1	1
Czechia	5	3	3	3
Denmark	3	3	3	3
Estonia	2	2	2	2
Finland	3	3	3	3
France	15	15	14	15
Germany	19	19	19	19
Greece	5	5	4	4
Hungary	5	6	6	6
Ireland	3	3	3	2
Italy	15	15	15	15
Latvia	2	2	2	2
Lithuania	2	2	2	2
Luxembourg	2	2	2	2
Malta	2	2	2	2
Netherlands	6	7	7	7
Poland	10	9	9	9
Portugal	5	5	5	5
Romania	7	6	6	6
Slovakia	3	3	3	3
Slovenia	2	2	2	2
Spain	12	13	13	13
Sweden	5	5	5	5
Total	**150**	**147**	**145**	**145**

The table above provides an overview of the desired number of citizens

across EU Member States (country quotas) as well as the actual participants per session. The aim was for Member States to be represented in proportion to the size of their population, but balanced by a minimum of two citizens per country. In other words, high targets were set for countries with large populations such as Germany (19 citizens), while 2 citizens from Malta and Luxembourg were invited, applying the principle of degressive proportionality. Generally, attendance was good and broadly reflected the set targets.
For 22 out of the 27 Member States, the goals were met while the other Member States were very close to the targets. Overall, out of the 150 recruited citizens, 147 took part in at least one of the three sessions.

Figure 1: Results of the feedback survey for the question **"Have you ever participated in a citizens' participation process before?"** (n=75)
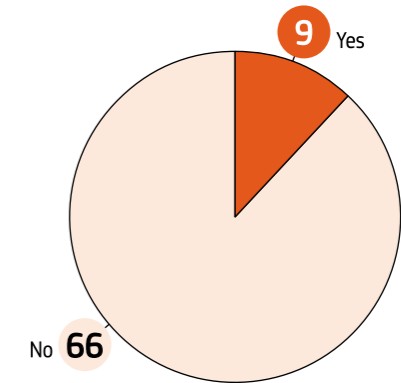
To ensure that the Panel would reflect as much as possible the diversity of the EU population, and to enable the representation of traditionally underrepresented groups, target quotas for participants were defined according to the following socio-demographic characteristics the actual shares of participants refer to the 147 citizens who attended at least one of the sessions).

Figure 2: Target numbers and actual Panel participants over five socio-demographic criteria
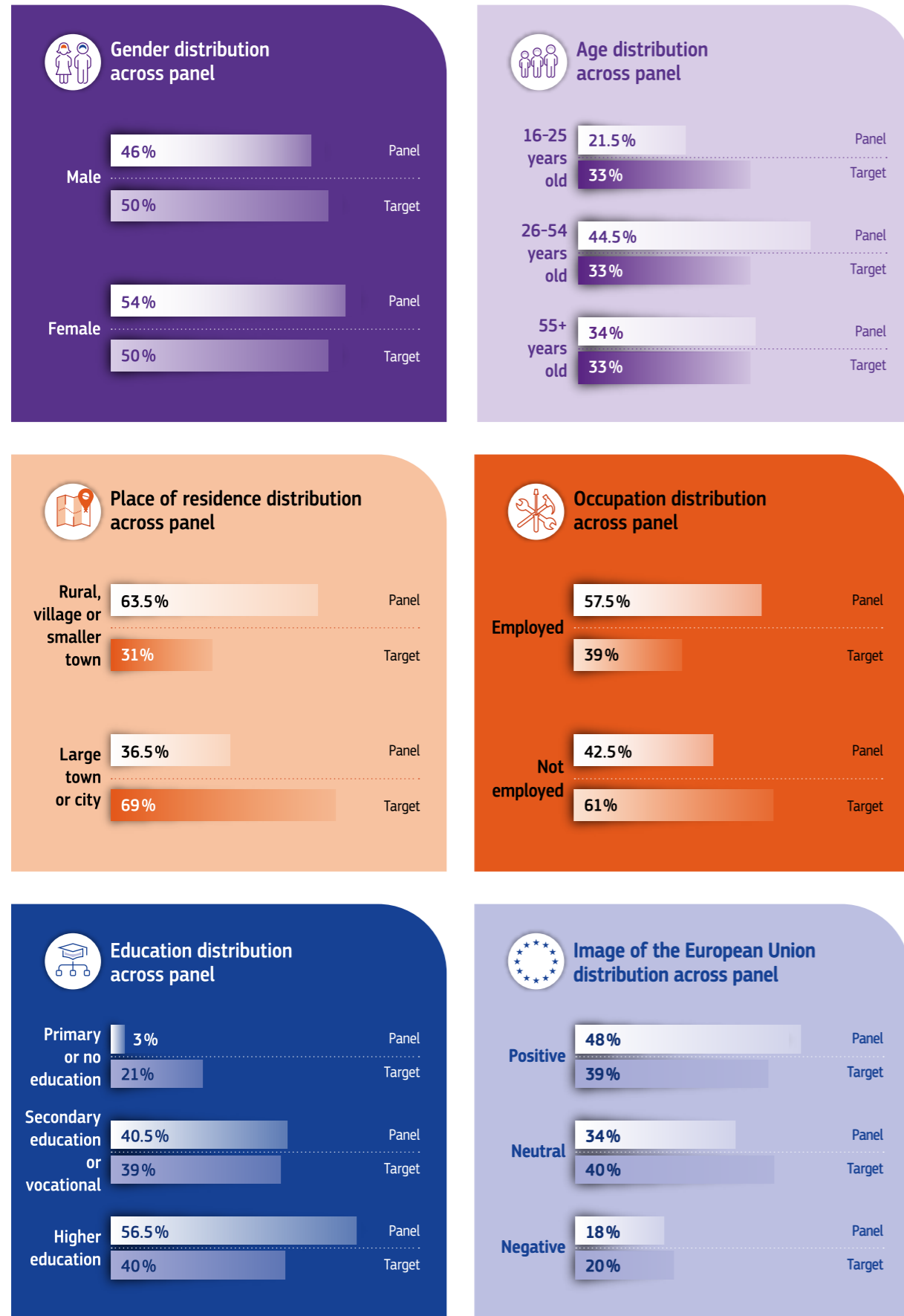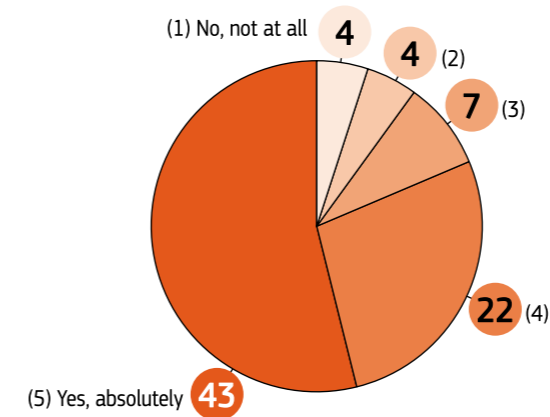
Gender distribution across panel

	Panel	Target
Male	46%	50%
Female	54%	50%

Age distribution across panel

	Panel	Target
16-25 years old	21.5%	33%
26-54 years old	44.5%	33%
55+ years old	34%	33%

Place of residence distribution across panel

	Panel	Target
Rural, village or smaller town	63.5%	31%
Large town or city	36.5%	69%

Occupation distribution across panel

	Panel	Target
Employed	57.5%	39%
Not employed	42.5%	61%

Education distribution across panel

	Panel	Target
Primary or no education	3%	21%
Secondary education or vocational	40.5%	39%
Higher education	56.5%	40%

Image of the European Union distribution across panel

	Panel	Target
Positive	48%	39%
Neutral	34%	40%
Negative	18%	20%

Figure 3: Results of the feedback survey for the question **"Do you think that the Citizens' Panel represented the diversity of the EU population well?"** (n=80)

- (1) No, not at all: 4
- (2): 4
- (3): 7
- (4): 22
- (5) Yes, absolutely: 43

2.2. The panel's journey

The European Citizens' Panel on Tackling Hatred in Society consisted of three sessions with different goals – each building on the work of the previous session with a view to producing by consensus a set of recommendations to submit to the European Commission.

In the first session (5-7 April 2024, on-site in Brussels), participants were introduced to the topic of hatred and were able to get to know each other and build a sense of community and trust. They received initial expert inputs and were then asked to collect different drivers and causes of hate to develop a common understanding of the problem. External speakers shared some testimonies about their experiences of hate, allowing to bridge life stories with wider reflections on how to tackle hatred in society.

Given the sensitive, emotional and potentially traumatic nature of the topic under discussion a person of trust, the Philosopher and Science Humanist Noga Arikha, was designated. Citizens were invited to address concerns to her if needed.

The second session (26-28 April 2024, online) focused on a deeper exploration of the issue. Its main goal was to encourage the exchange of ideas and perspectives among participants, identify areas of consensus and disagreement, and mapping out promising fields of action to start tackling hatred in our society. A group of citizens volunteering from all the working groups was randomly selected to develop before the third session a document summarising the view of the panels on the causes and drivers of hate, named the "problem definition".

The third and final session (17-19 May 2024, on-site in Brussels) was dedicated to shaping the recommendations based on the ideas and insights gained in the first two sessions and supported by further external inputs. The participating citizens eventually developed 21 recommendations to tackle hatred in society, which were handed over to the European Commission. They are presented in full in the Annex of this report.

2.3. Participatory methods

2.3.1 From plenary to working groups

The structure of each session was designed to encourage interactions among participants and to ensure that all voices could be heard. Building on a tried-and-tested methodology developed throughout previous European Citizens' Panels, the European Commission, supported by a team of experts from the field of deliberative democracy (hereafter "the deliberation team"), reaffirmed the importance of offering different formats of deliberation.

In plenary settings, citizens were able to hear experts' inputs, guests' testimonies, and could present to all participants the results of their working group discussions, in 24 languages. Sub-plenary settings provided participants with an opportunity to share their insights with a smaller group of 50 to 75 participants and to receive specific feedback from various experts. Working groups, usually gathering 12 participants, were composed in a way which allowed sufficient geographical diversity, with a mix of larger and smaller countries and a maximum of five different languages. Such smaller groups encouraged interactions and helped citizens to get to know each other better and build trust. Following a core principle of the European Citizens' Panels, all participants were able to speak in their mother tongue, facilitated by interpretation.

Figure 4: Results of the feedback survey for the questions "**In working group discussions I felt very respected**" (1) (n=79) and "**Overall, do you feel your voice mattered in your working group?**" (2) (n=79)
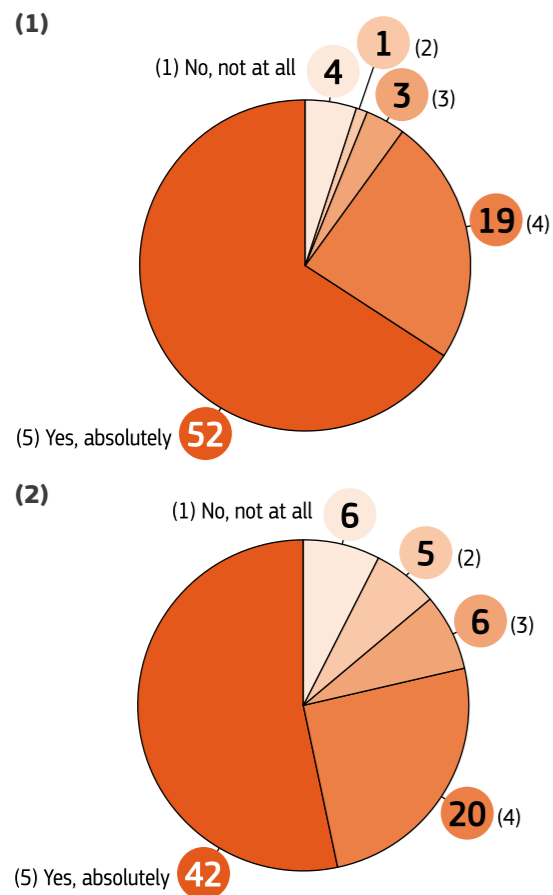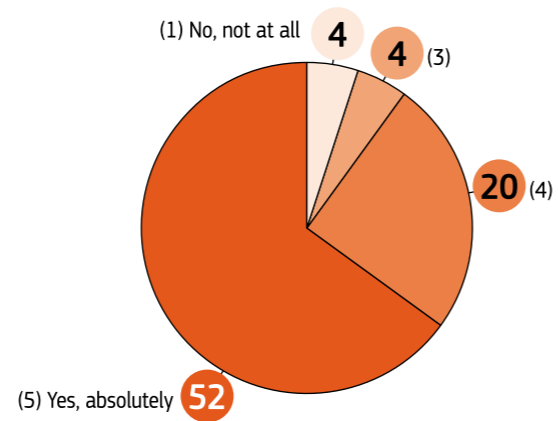
(1)

(1) No, not at all 4
1 (2)
3 (3)
19 (4)
(5) Yes, absolutely 52

(2)

(1) No, not at all 6
5 (2)
6 (3)
20 (4)
(5) Yes, absolutely 42

Figure 5: Results of the feedback survey for the question "**Overall, are you satisfied with your experience on the Citizens' Panel?**" (n=80)

(1) No, not at all 4
4 (3)
20 (4)
(5) Yes, absolutely 52

2.3.2 Moderation and facilitation

Three main moderators guided citizens through all sessions and steered the plenary discussions. They provided information on the general goal of the panel and the methodology of the sessions, along with organisational aspects. They also facilitated debates between speakers, ensured that knowledge was provided fairly and impartially during the discussions, and facilitated Q&A between experts and citizens. Furthermore, they brought together all results in the final plenaries of each session. The main moderators were:

- Constantin Schäfer (ifok)
- Camille Dobler (Missions Publiques)
- Yves Mathieu (Missions Publiques).

Citizens worked in 12 working groups, each facilitated and assisted by two members from the deliberation team: one experienced facilitator and one assistant facilitator. The facilitators' role was to lead the discussions in the working groups, in their mother tongue or in English, and to enable a smooth workflow by:

- setting a friendly and mutually respectful atmosphere to promote a balanced contribution from all participants;
- ensuring that all citizens were informed about the overall process and guiding them in the group work;
- making sure that the objectives of the working group sessions were reached, i.e., facilitating the identification of disagreements and conflicts between citizens, promoting the emergence of debate and consensus among them;

- timekeeping, note-taking and consolidating deliberation outputs in multilingual and interlinked working documents;
- linking requests made by the citizens in the working groups to the support team or the experts, e.g., by collecting pending remarks or questions;
- participating in debriefing sessions with the deliberation team.

All facilitators and assistants followed common instructions provided in a facilitation guide and a roll-out document (one per session). They engaged in three dedicated briefing and training meetings prior to each session.

2.4.   Collective Results

Over three sessions the citizens developed 21 recommendations for tackling hatred in society preceded by a problem definition. These results are fully displayed in the Annex of this report. For a better reading flow, the recommendations are presented in 5 thematic blocks:

- The hate crime and hate speech response system;
- The role of media and politics;
- Digital and technology;
- Education;
- Citizens' participation and social inclusion.

Figure 6: Results of the feedback survey for the question "**Do you think that the Citizens' Panel included the perspectives of all panel members in its final recommendations?**" (n=79)

(1) No, not at all 5
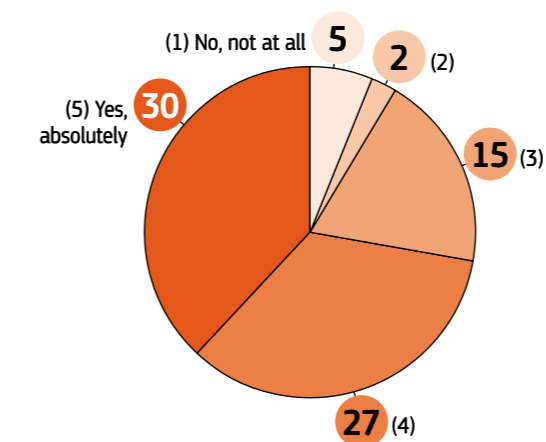2 (2)
15 (3)
27 (4)
(5) Yes, absolutely 30

Figure 7: Results of the feedback survey for the question "**Do you think that the recommendations of the Citizens' Panel will have an impact?**" (n=80)

(1) No, not at all 6
3 (2)
27 (3)
30 (4)
(5) Yes, absolutely 17
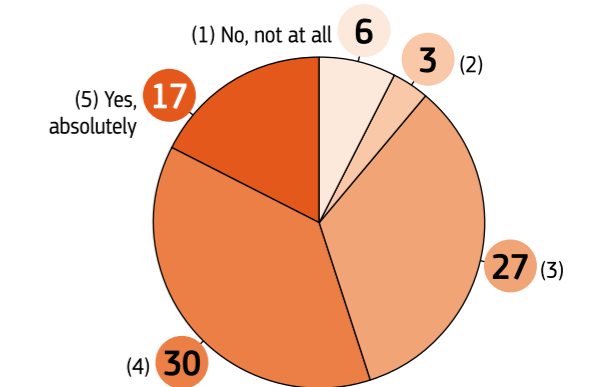
2.5. Governance and knowledge

2.5.1 Steering Committee

The Steering Committee designed, organised, and coordinated the European Citizens' Panel. It met once a week to decide on conceptual and organisational matters, including methodological, communication, logistical and budgetary aspects, while ensuring that the deliberative process would have an impact on policy-making. The Committee was composed of representatives of the European Commission and a consortium of contractors.

The consortium of contractors worked together to design and implement this new generation of European Citizens' Panels. In particular, it brought together experts to help to design and facilitate the deliberative process, pulling their know-how to conceptualise the panel's remit as well as overall participatory process and the methodology for each session and to set up the advisory Knowledge Committee.

2.5.2 Knowledge Committee

The involvement of a Knowledge Committee made up of experts coming from diverse fields (psychology, education, journalism, linguistics…) enhanced the integrity of the deliberative process by guaranteeing the quality, objectivity, diversity, and comprehensibility of the information provided to citizens. They also helped to look at the results and ensure that the transition from one session to the others would be structured in a way that would make the deliberations progress meaningfully and based on citizens' inputs.

Their responsibilities included drafting an information kit for participants, collaborating with the Steering Committee on factual policy inputs, identifying weak signals and blind spots in discussions, fact-checking, responding to citizens' questions and sharing their expertise on the topic of hatred during plenary and sub-plenary settings. The Knowledge Committee also recommended several external speakers to complement their knowledge and facilitated the inclusion of direct or indirect testimonies throughout the sessions.

The Knowledge Committee was composed of eight members selected by the Steering Committee, based on the following criteria: expertise covering a wide variety of knowledge fields relevant in the area of tackling hatred in society; ability to understand, acknowledge and communicate diverse views on the topic; and diversity in terms of gender, nationality, discipline, and professional affiliation. Additionally, one representative from the European Commission contributed to EU policy insights.

The members of the Knowledge Committee were:

- **Arun Mansukhani –** Clinical Psychologist
- **Daris Lewis Recio –** Legal and Policy Officer at Equinet
- **Federico Faloppa –** Professor of Sociolinguistics at the University of Reading
- **Jelena Jovanovic –** Anti-Racism and Diversity Intergroup Coordinator at the European Parliament
- **Manos Tsakiris –** Professor of Psychology at the University of London
- **Nesrine Slaoui –** Independent Journalist and Author
- **Robin Sclafani –** Director of CEJI – A Jewish contribution to an inclusive Europe
- **Tommaso Chiamparino –** Policy Officer at the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers.

2.5.3 Knowledge and Information Centre

A Knowledge and Information Centre (KIC) was set up to reply to questions and clarification requests formulated by citizens throughout their deliberations. The KIC included the members of the Knowledge Committee as well as experts from the European Commission for the third session, who were asked to provide responses on their respective policy areas. Throughout the three sessions of the European Citizens' Panel, the KIC provided written answers to over 50 questions raised by citizens and elaborated a written briefing for the third session. The KIC also made short interventions in the twelve working groups to clarify issues in the process of drafting recommendations.

2.5.4 Speakers

In addition to the members of the Knowledge Committee, several stakeholders and experts were invited to present different positions and experiences as regards to the forms and consequences of hate in our society, and answer citizens' questions. The Knowledge Committee made sure that the knowledge presented to citizens was balanced, relevant for citizens' needs and requests and sufficiently representative of the main positions of policymakers and stakeholders in the EU. This is the first time that a European Citizens' Panel welcomed representatives from the civil society to share testimonies on their experiences of hatred. All the speakers are listed in Table 2.

Table 2: List of speakers during the three sessions

	Names and affiliation	First session	Second session	Third session
European Commission	**Dubravka Šuica,** Vice-President for Democracy and Demography			YES
	Colin Scicluna, Head of Cabinet, Cabinet of Vice-President Dubravka Šuica			YES
	Anna Gallego Torres, Director-General, Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers	YES		YES
	Dana Spinant, Director-General, Directorate-General for Communication	YES		YES
	Irena Moozova, Deputy Director-General for International Dimension of Justice Policies, Rule of Law and Equality, Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers		YES	
	R**ichard Kuehnel,** Director for Representation and Communication in Member States, Directorate-General for Communication		YES	
	I**ngrid Bellander Todino,** Head of Unit Fundamental rights policy, Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers			YES
	Lutz Güllner, Head of Information Integrity and Countering FIMI, European External Action Service			YES
	Louisa Klingvall, Acting Head of Unit International Affairs and Data Flow, Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers			YES
	Gaëtane Ricard-Nihoul, Deputy Head of Unit Citizens' Dialogues, Directorate-General for Communication			YES
	Menno Cox, Head of Sector for the Global Aspects of Digital Services, Directorate General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology		YES	
	Daria Arlavi, Policy Officer, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture			YES
	Tommaso Chiamparino, Policy Officer, Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers			YES
	Harry Panagopulos, Legal Officer for Democracy, Union Citizenship and Free Movement, Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers			YES
	Martin Sacleux, Policy Officer, Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers			YES
External speakers	**David Martin Abanades,** Local Police Inspector, Spain		YES	
	Milena Angelova, Co-rapporteur on "No place 4 hate: European United against hatred", European Economic and Social Committee			YES
	Margarita S. Ilieva, International Human Right Law Expert, Council of Europe		YES	
	Kuany Kiir, Project Officer, Section of Global Citizenship and Peace Education, UNESCO		YES	
	Cristian Pîrvulescu, Rapporteur on "No place 4 hate: European United against hatred", European Economic and Social Committee		YES	
	Emanuela Pisano, EU Project Manager, Assembly of European Regions			YES
	Pasquale Quaranta, Journalist and Diversity Editor, GEDI Gruppo Editorale		YES	
	Valérie Rosoux, Research Director, FNRS, and Professor, UCLouvain		YES	
	Willem Wagenaar, Researcher, Anne Frank Foundation		YES	
	Juliana Wahlgren, Expert, European Anti-Poverty Network		YES	
Testimonies from civil society	**Kamil Goungor,** Policy and Movement Support Officer, European Network on Independent Living	YES		
	Sacha Guttman, Student, ULB, and Advocacy Officer, CEJI – A Jewish Contribution to an Inclusive Europe	YES		
	Mireille-Tsheusi Robert, President, Bamko asbl association	YES		
	Fabian Wichmann, Case Manager, EXIT Deutschland	YES		

2.6. Observers

A number of observers were allowed to follow the work of this European Citizens' Panel. The aim was to provide transparency and visibility for this innovative democratic format whilst preserving a safe space for participating citizens, which is crucial for a trustful debate environment. Observers were permitted to attend and witness the discussions in the plenary sessions and working groups. The maximum number of observers allowed for each working group was three.

Some internal observers also came from the organising partners and institutions (e.g., internal staff from the European Commission or other EU institutions and bodies). External observers comprised researchers (from universities or think tanks), civil society actors, and other stakeholders. With the consent of the citizens concerned, external observers could conduct interviews with them for research purposes only, if it did not impede the proceedings of the panel.

BROADENING THE ENGAGEMENT

3. Broadening the engagement

3.1. The Citizens' Engagement Platform

The Citizens' Engagement Platform is an online tool which allows the general public to have a say on the issue addressed by the members of the European Citizens' Panel. This tool was put in place to maximise the citizens' participation on the topic and feed both the Panel's work and the related future policies. This platform based on the open-source software Decidim invites citizens to submit their contributions in all 24 EU languages, offering ideas and solutions. Additionally, the platform fosters interactive discussions through a comment feature, allowing users to engage with each other's proposals, provide feedback, and collaboratively refine ideas.

The European Commission launched on 22 April 2024, the online debate on the topic of tackling hatred in society ([3]). During the sessions, the European Citizens' Panel had the opportunity to hear about the main contributions made on the platform. Contributors have shared their insights on various aspects such as awareness, education and empathy-building initiatives throughout the EU. Inspiring or reinforcing their work, the participation of a broader audience of EU citizens through the platform helped take into considerations other points of view into the discussions. All contributions made on the platform were fed into the deliberations of the Panel and taken into consideration in the preparation of future policies.

3.2. Communication strategy

The communication strategy for the European Citizens' Panel on Tackling Hatred in Society was designed to maximise awareness and engagement through a multifaceted approach, combining social media campaigns, influencer and journalist outreach, direct outreach at events and the development of a documentary.

The social media campaigns focused on driving traffic into the new Citizens' Engagement Platform (CEP), as well as raising awareness about the ongoing panel sessions. Additionally, 40 influencers and journalists were invited to create and share content, thereby broadening the campaign's reach and fostering greater public engagement with the panel's work. This approach helped to drive significant engagement and awareness about the panel across the European Union (approximately 22 million people reached through 272 pieces of content).

A central component of the strategy was the documentary, which aimed to provide a personal and engaging narrative of the European Citizens Panel's activities.

([3])   The Citizens' Engagement Platform can be consulted here
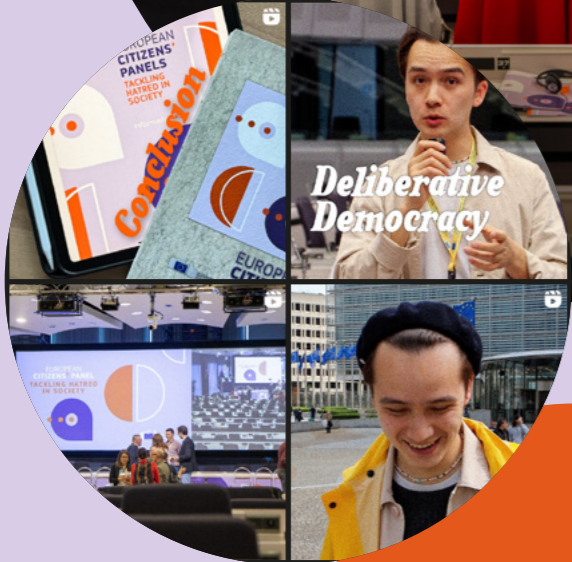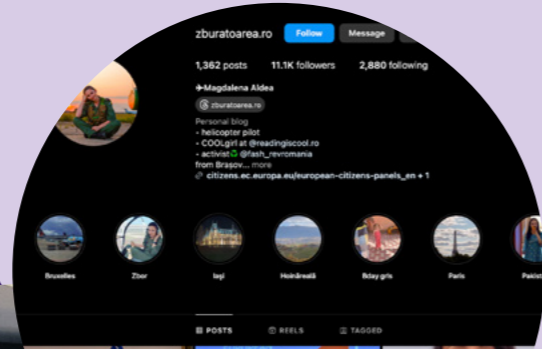
CITIZENS' RECOMMENDATIONS

4. Citizens' recommendations

4.1. Problem definition and recommendations

4.1.1 Problem definition

Over three weekends, we, the European Citizens' Panel on Tackling Hatred in Society composed of 150 randomly selected citizens from the 27 EU Member States, discussed how to deal with hatred in our society. We have diverse backgrounds, yet we share a common understanding of the problem. This Panel recognises that there are various causes and drivers which contribute to the rise and persistence of hatred in our society, whilst emphasizing the complex interplay of emotional, social, and economic aspects.

- **Conflicts and Historical Legacy:** Historical and current conflicts can lead to a legacy of hate across generations. In Europe's complex history, each instance of conflict, war, and geopolitical tension has contributed to this cycle. Without active efforts to address and heal these wounds, the hatred fostered by conflicts continues, threatening to perpetuate a cycle of animosity and division.

- **Economic and Social Crisis:** Rapid social and cultural changes act as significant catalysts for feelings of loss and disadvantage, leading to the escalation of hatred. This can be against a wide range of groups and citizens, who are blamed for the economic and social crisis. Socio-political-economic factors not only lead to inequality but can also be powerful engines for insecurity and fear.

- **Politics and Responsibility:** All politicians and public figures have a great responsibility in addressing and tackling hate but can fuel hate themselves through the inappropriate treatment of ethnic groups and the exploitation of nationalism, as well as divisions and populism for personal gain. Political and public figures both within the EU and from outside can use hate speech to fuel territorial ambitions and to delegitimize democracy. Divisions are deepened by prioritizing loud arguments over reasoned discourse and deliberation, amplifying extreme opinions and conspiracy theories.

- **Media, Misinformation, and Accountability:** The growing expression of 'us versus them' and hatred towards various groups is exacerbated by traditional media and social networks, often in the pursuit of profit. Traditional media can deliberately misinform and reproduce hateful narratives. In social networks, anonymity and manipulated algorithms play a crucial role in the propagation of hateful speech and discriminations. These networks serve as conduits for misinformation and for perpetuating stereotypes, particularly against women and youth who face significant harassment online. This is further enhanced by a lack of accountability for networks and users.

- **Herd Mentality, Prejudice, and Intolerance:** A fundamental aspect of human nature is the desire to belong to a social group or dynamic, to feel 'like everyone else'. This desire can sometimes be so strong that it leads to an expression of hatred and intolerance, an 'us versus them' sentiment towards 'the other'. This dynamic of mistrust and hatred especially affects vulnerable individuals and groups based on ethnicity, migration status, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, family status and socio-economic factors. The lack of education about different identities, cultures, tolerance, debating and communication, as well as the lack of reliable online information, can reinforce misunderstandings, perpetuate prejudice, and result in hatred.

These causes and drivers of hate affect all parts of our society. We, citizens of the 27 European Union Member States with our diverse backgrounds, believe that combating hatred in Europe and around the world is a priority. It is our shared responsibility to prevent and respond to hatred in all its forms on individual, societal and institutional levels based on our common EU values and fundamental rights: peace, freedom, and equality. Therefore, we recommend taking action on various fields to protect these fundamental rights, to prevent discrimination, hate and conflicts, to protect the most vulnerable, and ultimately to shape a respectful and fair EU for all.

4.2. 21 recommendations to tackle hatred in our society

The hate crime and hate speech response system
Recommendations 1 to 7

Recommendation 1
One Europe, One Definition: Criminalising Hate Speech

We recommend that the EU Commission establish a diverse working group to update and expand the common definition of "illegal hate speech" to better criminalise its dissemination. The current definition, adopted in 2008, focuses on racism and xenophobia but excludes other forms of hate, such as ableism and discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender, age, and more. This outdated term needs urgent revision to reflect the inclusive values of our modern society.

A new, comprehensive definition is crucial for making the spread of illegal hate speech a criminal offense prosecutable across all EU Member States. This adaptation will ensure that all forms of hate speech are uniformly recognised and penalised, reinforcing our commitment to a more inclusive and respectful society.

By including hate speech in the list of EU crimes, we can protect marginalised communities and uphold human dignity. This initiative distinguishes illegal hate speech from freedom of expression, ensuring that we strike the balance between fundamental rights and the need to combat discrimination and hate.

Justification

Promotes Social Cohesion: Updating the definition to include all forms of hate speech fosters a more inclusive society where everyone feels respected and valued. This promotes social cohesion and reduces the divisions caused by unchecked hate speech.

Enhances Legal Clarity: A unified definition across all EU member states eliminates inconsistencies and gaps in legal protections. This clarity ensures that perpetrators of hate speech are held accountable, regardless of where they are in the EU.

Protects Marginalized Communities: Expanding the definition to cover more forms of discrimination provides better protection for marginalised groups, reducing their exposure to harmful and derogatory language.

Strengthens Human Rights: By criminalising all forms of hate speech, the EU reinforces its commitment to human rights and dignity, aligning legal frameworks with contemporary values of equality and respect.

Balances Freedoms: This approach carefully distinguishes between hate speech and freedom of expression, ensuring that free speech is protected while preventing speech that incites violence, hatred, or discrimination.

Fosters Empathy and Understanding: Exposure to diverse perspectives and the criminalization of hate speech encourage empathy and understanding among citizens, contributing to a more harmonious and respectful society.

Implementing this recommendation will lead to a more just and cohesive Europe, where all individuals, regardless of their identity, can live without fear of hate and discrimination.

Recommendation 2
European Effective Response Protocol for Hate Crime Notifications

We recommend a clear and uniform procedure for reporting hate crimes across all EU member states. This legal procedure should be effectively implemented in organisations that interact with victims of hate crimes. We suggest revising all previously proposed and ineffective measures and developing a straightforward process to enable victims and witnesses to report all crimes, including crimes on online platforms, safely.

Firstly, the procedure should ensure safe reporting conditions for both victims and witnesses of hate crimes. Ensuring their safety can increase the number of reported crimes. This includes legal and psychological protection measures and, if necessary, physical protection from individuals seeking revenge. The procedure could also involve working with offenders, who may often be previous victims of hate.

Secondly, the procedure should involve all actors participating in the crime reporting chain to reduce the risk of secondary victimisation and exacerbation of trauma.

Lastly, the procedure should be supported by an appropriate online channel designed for safe crime reporting.

Justification

This recommendation is important because it helps to avoid and/or minimise the secondary victimisation of victims. The procedure will enable a quick response and assistance for victims, as well as support and protection for witnesses. Such a procedure will also facilitate the actions of the services receiving the report. If the procedure proves effective, society will be encouraged to respond to and report crimes more frequently.

Recommendation 3
National Office for Combating Hate in Member States

We recommend establishing an independent Office for Combating Hate in each Member State. We need a strong institution with legal authority and effective communication, providing tangible assistance to people through an objective and independent system for reporting crimes.

Firstly, the Office will be responsible for providing legal and psychological support to every victim of hate crime in their Member State, working closely with NGOs and a citizens' committee. The Office will provide a platform to effectively report hate crimes safely for the victims.

Secondly, the Office will work closely with the EU High Level Group on Combating Hate Speech and Hate Crime, or similar, to fulfil its mission and ensure the implementation of Codes of Conduct for businesses, organizations, and politicians. This cooperation will help create an effective and supportive environment for victims. In addition, the Office could provide information and best practices to individuals seeking advice. Personnel of the Office should serve on a term basis.

Thirdly, the Office will disseminate EU tools, programs, mechanisms, and materials about hate, ensuring they reach educational institutions, administrative institutions, and the general public at national and regional levels. To ensure this, the Office will provide training for the services involved in the first response after reporting.

Lastly, the Office will gather data about hate crimes to develop effective responses to the future needs of the population.

Justification

Hate crime has increased in our polarised societies, worsening the well-being of people. To prevent, to react to hate crime, and to take care of the victims, it is necessary to have effective institutions and mechanisms in place. Moreover, at the beginning of every crime lies a thought or a word. To ensure education on respect and to raise awareness, it is necessary to establish a dedicated institution that prevents hate crimes and supports victims, especially since such an office simply does not exist yet but is much needed.

Recommendation 4
Training for Tolerance (T4T)

We recommend that the EU makes existing training courses on hate crime, hate speech and non-violent communication better known and promotes them to specific target groups. In principle, all social groups should be better educated and develop skills to tackle hate. However, we believe it is particularly important to provide better training for people working in the public sector (e.g. police or social workers). After all, these are often the first people that victims and affected people encounter when they have

experienced hate. It is particularly important that civil servants are able to deal sensitively with the issue and the individual. There should be a regular training offer for civil servants in EU member states, whereby both on-site and online training can take place. Content creators are another important target group, both as participants and ambassadors for the trainings. They have a major influence on younger target groups and act as multipliers. People who work in public positions in the EU should set a good example and carry out the training as well. To make training opportunities accessible to the wider population, trade unions or other organizations could be involved to promote the trainings. Advertisements could also be placed in community newspapers. Participants would receive a certificate for successfully completing the training, with which they can demonstrate their acquired competence in dealing with hate to the outside world.

Justification

The pyramid of hate begins with the stereotypes and clichés we have in our heads. These are promoted by hate speech. It is therefore important to get to the root of the problem. Trainings do not only have an impact on the people who take the training, but also on the people around them. Training courses are an important addition to formal educational programs (such as education at school or at university). The EU already offers many well-evaluated programs and training materials. However, these are difficult to find. To ensure that the programs developed are truly effective and sustainable, and that they reach the target group, they need to be better advertised. The focus on people in the public sector is also important, as there are still too many cases of those affected who have had negative experiences with government agencies.

Recommendation 5
Increasing Awareness About Hatred and Existing Measures and Remedies to Counter it With a Public Campaign

We recommend that the EU implements a public campaign on the danger, causes and measures against hatred (both online and offline) to raise awareness and educate about its prevalence and dangers. At the same time, it would inform about the different EU initiatives against hatred, and available support channels and measures for victims.

To make anti-hatred messages campaigns as effective as possible, we recommend to clearly define and specify the target groups, approach, channels, and content. It should:

- Target the campaign both at the wider public as well as specific and important groups (e.g., victims, perpetrators, children);

- Set-up messages tailored to these different groups and the context of different EU Members States using light-hearted and accessible approaches tailored to the context of each Member State.
- Emphasise the responsibility of all EU citizens to counter and work against hatred they encounter in their own lives, providing practicable tools and information on how they can do that;
- Use both traditional and unconventional communication channels offline and online to spread the anti-hatred messages to reach different sub-sections of society via more effective and user-friendly channels.
- Involve traditional and social media, as well as influencers and voices of victims, both in drafting and sharing these messages to ensure they are more effective and reach the right people.

Justification

Although we already have different frameworks addressing hatred at the EU level, not enough has been done to inform European citizens about these initiatives. Most EU citizens do not know what programs, initiatives and regulations exist at both EU and national level. Reports, news and debates on hate mostly focus on instances of hate and what is going wrong, which is important but paints a depressing and biased picture. Thus, there should also be positive reports on how hate is tackled, as well as practical suggestions for what people can do against it.

We recommend an awareness raising campaign, rather than hard law or code of conduct on what influencers and professional media channels are allowed to say, as this approach might be perceived as censorship and could create reactance and discontent among people with divergent views and the broader society. Focusing on outreach and awareness raising could enable citizens to grasp the significance of the topic and equip them to contribute to the implementation of solutions and counter hatred in their own lives.

Specifications:

Target groups: It is important to reach broad sections of society via this awareness campaign, to change public opinions and ensure that changes in opinion and behaviour are sustainable. That will also ensure that people who already hold values countering hatred keep on acting accordingly. At the same time, to ensure these campaigns are effective and impactful, it is important to tailor campaigns and messages to different target groups, such as victims, allies, children, parents, teachers and perpetrators. By explaining the reasons behind hateful emotions, we can help people who might engage in hateful speech or behaviour to understand both their motives and the impact of their actions. The campaigns should be in non-EU

languages, too, to reach people who don't speak the language of the state they reside

Channels: A wide set of channels should be used to educate the population on what is prohibited and damaging hateful speech and what behaviours are encouraged, as well as on different initiatives and measures that already exist in the EU. In addition to social media, TV channels and movie productions, the campaign should use a wide set of creative, unusual, and eye-catching offline means, including billboards, various newspapers, specialised publications on the topic (potentially free of charge), lorries, radio, metro/public transport screens, supermarket flyers, newspapers, shopping receipts (as by an Austrian campaign focused on violence against women) and similar measures. Specifically, a free movie on the subject could be broadcast for free across the EU. Another important approach is to involve influencers, such as actors, singers and people in the media in the awareness-raising campaigns to reach out to younger generations and other audiences using formats that are appropriate to them. Additionally, we encourage working with influencers who are victims themselves in drafting and spreading these messages.

Content: To ensure the campaigns are designed well, professionals from different sectors (advertisement, psychology, victim groups, etc.) and a diverse focus group consisting of the diverse target groups the campaign aims to reach (victims, influencers, younger people, etc.) should be involved in designing the content. Campaigns should be tailored to tackle different kinds of hate, such as against minorities, immigrants, people with disabilities, the LGBTQI+, Roma and Jews. They also need to be tailored to the situation in different EU countries and build on existing initiatives and measures. It should also focus on positive messages promoting an EU without hatred and informing about existing and effective measures and initiatives against hatred. There should also be more reports on the activities, debates and initiatives of EU institutions in national news.

Approach: This campaign should be catchy and humorous to really reach and change people (in contrast to how most citizens perceive most EU campaigns). It should also focus on engaging citizens more directly. For instance, the EU could initiate public competitions or prizes aiming to involve citizens' proposals on creative and effective campaigning approaches. Additionally, the campaign should encourage volunteering and civic engagement. Involving diverse stakeholders, such as people empowered to share their personal stories and big companies or media on a voluntary basis. For instance, managers could work with vulnerable societal groups and connect victims. The necessary human and financial resources to achieve these objectives need to

be secured. The campaigns could also focus on raising awareness in sports among athletes and audiences by involving clubs, media and politicians to address the issue of hate speech. We encourage the use of more creative, funny and catchy approaches, for instance, there could be a campaign with the logo 'pasta against hatred' with a QR code leading to information about the initiative on the pasta or other food packages (alternatively on toilet paper), depending on the most popular products in each Member State.

Recommendation 6
Ads Aid Against Hate

We recommend that the following communication strategy be considered to tackle hate:

- Short opt-in phone text messages on inclusivity for all citizens (e.g. receiving on a weekly/monthly basis);
- Bus stop posters promoting inclusivity;
- Large billboards for those who are tired of social media, for example use the EU election billboards for positive messaging on anti-hate speech;
- Google ads on tackling hate if you opt-in;
- Creating emojis and memes for anti-hate messaging;
- Positive notes added to existing official messages (such as governmental documents);
- Awareness videos played on TV, or in movie theatres before a film (make it positive reinforcement when possible);
- At sports events' (like the Olympics or the World Cup) opening acts to be used for spreading awareness, e.g. the Queen with Paddington bear at the London Olympics, which was wholesome/heartwarming content;
- Longer videos to be played at sport events with a "hook" of having the relevant player involved in the video (e.g. footballer at football matches);
- Campaigns with popular people/influencers (like Pommelien in Belgium) to raise awareness on topics of hate.

Justification

It will lead to a:

- Healthier and safer social media environment, a different kind of social media, a more interpersonal one.
- Healthier, more aware and happier society.
- Better Europe with less polarisation.
- A situation which avoids escalation and puts things into perspective.

Recommendation 7
Creating an EU-wide Platform Combining Information, Resources, Measures and Support Systems Regarding Hatred

We recommend creating an EU-run platform that is easy to navigate and free of charge, providing access to information materials, such as definitions, articles, videos, and other initiatives by organisations focused on countering hatred. The platform style and structure should be user-friendly. Accordingly, it could contain a section targeting youngsters with information on issues they might face in their daily lives and practical tips. The focus should be on the measures that successfully helped victims and practical advice for people across society on how they can effectively support victims, particularly in everyday situations where they might witness hateful behaviour. People should also be able to connect with and support others experiencing similar issues. Moreover, the platform could include the problem definition, recommendations and all relevant materials from the European Citizens' Panel on Tackling Hatred in Society.

To ensure effectiveness, artificial intelligence can help people interact with it more naturally and find relevant content, e.g. provide guidance and recommendations for victims and allies and refer them to the right channels and organisations for support. Moreover, the platform could contain certain options for users to provide specific feedback on what resources were helpful and how it could be improved further.

Moreover, this website should also encourage, enable and empower people to think critically about these issues instead of being overly restrictive or presumptuous, which could scare people away. This might be particularly relevant for perpetrators or people more open to hateful speech and messages, to encourage critical thinking and knowledge gathering. Support and moderation should be provided to ensure freedom of expression, facilitate constructive debates, exercise content control, and prevent escalation.

Major social media companies could assist in the implementation of a function where users are referred to the platform to find support if they think certain posts might be hateful. There could be referral programs or reward systems that link to the website that should be creative and attractive to different subsections of the population.

Justification

The aim of this recommendation is to create a platform that does not replace similar ideas, but to create a database of useful resources. Hence, the platform should be interlinked with other, existing websites, resources on hatred and support channels for

victims of hatred and particularly vulnerable groups to make it as easy and helpful as possible. Another aim of the platform is to raise awareness and promote conscious engagement with relevant resources. While there are a multitude of different initiatives, resources, and campaigns, most people don't know where to find all that information and help. One central platform where people could access all this information could enable this. The website could also have an awareness campaign.

On the platform, person-to-person exchanges (e.g. via a chat function) could help people understand emotions, diverse experiences and obstacles in real-time from the comfort of their own homes. This could also allow victims to share their experiences and reach out to someone who can help them feel better, thus alleviating their burdens.

One challenge for this platform is that it might be difficult to implement it and ensure that the website structure is easy to understand, access, and navigate for citizens. Likewise, it will be challenging to make the website interesting enough for many EU citizens to visit it voluntarily. Moreover, while the panel is aware of the challenges of creating such a website in all the languages needed, we believe that this would be a worthwhile effort. If people can share personal stories of victims on the website this could make it more emotionally engaging and effective. Hatred is a phenomenon that has preceded the internet, although it might have been exacerbated by it, and it won't be easily overcome by a single platform. Yet the panel believes that the platform could be an effective way to increase awareness and knowledge about the prevalence of hatred, but also equip people to ameliorate and deal with the hatred they encounter both offline and online.

The role of media and politics
recommendations 8 to 10

Recommendation 8
Establishing an independent Trust Committee

We propose to set up an independent Trust Committee to establish a Code of Conduct for Members of the European Parliament and monitor hate speech and misinformation. The Trust Committee should be composed of multidisciplinary experts (for instance citizens, legal experts, psychologists, sociologists, NGOs and political experts) and supervised by citizens. To ensure wide representation, the citizens are randomly selected - with criteria enforced to enhance the representation of vulnerable groups in society. Once it is founded, the Committee will deliberate and decide upon a Code of Conduct, applicable to public officials and authorities. The Code of Conduct is adjustable. The Trust Committee uses the Code of Conduct to collect data, monitor implementation and develop further guidelines on identifying and tackling hate speech. The Trust Committee also has an official point of contact to other EU citizens, to report violations and hate speech by politicians. Members will rotate to ensure pluralism among the Committee. To maintain its integrity, the committee will enforce strict rules for joining the Trust Committee to prevent conflicts of interest of its members.

Justification

A Trust Committee, which monitors, tracks and develops the implementation of a code of conduct against hate speech, is necessary to protect individuals and communities from the harmful effects of hate speech, especially from public officials and authorities. By developing a comprehensive code of conduct based on the input from legal experts, psychologists, sociologists, citizens and others, this committee can set clear guidelines and expectations for behaviour. Such a trust committee is vital for regaining and fostering trust in institutions and representatives. By implementing and monitoring a Code of Conduct for trustful behaviour, greater transparency is assured. The Committee acts independently, transparently and is supervised by citizens, thereby increasing its legitimacy. To be effective, the committee must have a well-composed, multidisciplinary team, representing diverse perspectives and vulnerable groups.
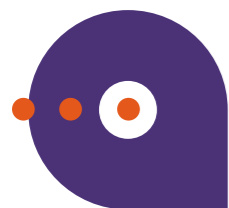
Recommendation 9
Reliability, Facts and Transparency: Verifying and Clarifying the Financing of Information

We recommend requiring the media to collaborate with independent fact-checking organisations, to be transparent about their funding sources, to encourage citizens to verify the information that they receive, and to limit the political influence of media audience, by:

- Establishing rigorous protocols for verification and certification of information for individuals, associations, and companies that have a commercial purpose and/or who use public funds (e.g. to disclose their legal status);

- Independent media for a better diversity of sources, publish the financing of certification studies and the beneficiaries of the dissemination of information;

- Launching campaigns to raise awareness among citizens on the importance of verifying information;

- Limiting the number of media outlets that one person or company can possess (radio, television, social platforms, newspapers, etc.);

A "Black Box" tool* must be easily accessible to the public and be obligatory for people or companies having a commercial purpose or financed by a third party; these people or companies will be sanctioned depending on their global turnover in case of voluntary dissemination of fake news/hate speech.

Justification

The spread of misinformation fuels divisions and hatred in our society. By guaranteeing that information is verified by independent bodies and by funding independent media, we can reduce misunderstandings and manipulation. Transparency on sources of funding for media benefitting from the dissemination of information strengthens public trust in the media. Furthermore, encouraging citizens to adopt a more curious and critical attitude towards the information they receive is essential for a more informed and resilient society in the face of misinformation. These approaches help to promote a more united society and ensure a plurality of voices in the media space.

"Black Box" versus Mediapart in France: transparency of sources, verification process, research methodology, contexts and limits, media ownership, and media funding.

Recommendation 10
Europe Meets You: Participative Media for Citizens

We recommend the enlargement of citizens' participation to legitimise media content and foster a shared culture of mutuality and respect that eradicates hate. Such participation will be based on three channels complementing each other, namely:

A participative media outlet where citizens contribute to editorial choices. This system will be based on existing networks and companies, both public and private, that will be incentivized to publish high-quality information through new funds. Local channels will be especially valued as the closest to citizens, as well as citizens panels at the local and national levels to understand their priorities in these domains;

A forum for debates in the form of a social media channel with an engaging and user-friendly app protected by transparency rules;

An online, collaborative repository that stores quality news and discussions to enable citizens to build a shared history for the education of youth and progress in key subjects for the future of the EU.

This system will convey EU values against hateful speech, previously defined in a common charter. A body with ombudsman functions and an ethical committee will filter content to ensure it is aligned with these values; the possibility of using AI is also to be considered. Finally, the implementation of this system will be monitored by a select committee of citizens who ensure that editorial choices are not imposed by economic or ideological interests.

Justification

This recommendation is important as it directly includes citizens, thus legitimizing EU institutions themselves through direct democracy. It will enable citizens to find information about whatever they want and without being influenced in a political manner, for example to agree with their national government. Special attention is devoted to younger people as this media system also considers means of communication that are closer to them than traditional TV channels. Similarly, children can be included through tailored content like educational courses or games, depending on their age. We believe this system to be important to fully eradicate disinformation and hate speech as it will be a media platform that does not carry hateful messages. As we know there is a risk of people not using this system, we will need to make sure to make it attractive and engaging by investing sufficient funds into the system.

Digital and technology
recommendations 11 to 14

Recommendation 11
Burst the Bubble: Promoting Diverse Perspectives on Social Media

To combat online radicalization, we recommend that social media platforms be mandated to diversify the content shown to users. Algorithms often create echo chambers, pushing biased content and leading users down narrow rabbit holes. By adjusting algorithms to present a broader range of viewpoints, we can prevent the dominance of any single perspective and promote a more balanced understanding of topics.

How? Our proposed solution ensures that when users view extremist content, the algorithm will subsequently display content from opposing viewpoints. This approach encourages users to see a more nuanced and comprehensive narrative, effectively bursting the content bubbles that currently isolate them.

This strategy not only reduces the risk of radicalization but also fosters critical thinking and empathy by exposing users to diverse opinions. Implementing this change will make social media a more informative and balanced space, contributing to a healthier online environment for all.

Justification

Enhanced Critical Thinking: Exposing users to diverse perspectives fosters critical thinking and encourages individuals to evaluate information more thoroughly, reducing susceptibility to radical ideologies.

Reduced Polarization: By breaking down echo chambers, this approach can diminish societal polarization, promoting dialogue and understanding between different groups.

Informed Public: A more balanced information diet ensures that the public is better informed about various issues, leading to more nuanced discussions and more thoughtful decision-making.

Improved Mental Health: Consuming a variety of content can reduce anxiety and stress associated with consuming repetitive and potentially inflammatory information.

Democratic Strengthening: A society that is exposed to a diversity of viewpoints is better equipped to engage in democratic processes, fostering a healthier and more resilient democracy.

Implementing this recommendation will make social media a platform for education and constructive discourse, ultimately leading to a more informed, cohesive, and empathetic society.

Recommendation 12
Addressing anonymity online to tackle hatred

We recommend that anonymity online is regulated so that perpetrators of hate speech are better tracked, investigated, and held accountable by the appropriate authorities.

We therefore recommend:

The EU and Member States to enforce the application of existing and future regulations and legislations;

- Setting up an identity authentication system at each Member State level, in which the minimum necessary information to identify someone is collected through a government-managed portal. This should be gradually harmonised at the EU Member State level;
- A requirement that the most important social media platforms better cooperate with European and national authorities in the application of existing and future legislations and the use of the identity authentication system;
- Raising awareness for online users of their responsibilities when posting content through a new European Charter of conduct, implemented across the most important social media platforms as well as through public entities, schools, and community groups.

Justification

This recommendation is important because there is a dramatic increase in hate speech, especially online. Regulating anonymity would make perpetrators of online hatred more easily identifiable and accountable.

That said, anonymity needs to be protected based on current understandings of freedom of speech, guaranteeing a free exchange of views and opinions online.

Recommendation 13
EU Safe Surfing Card

We recommend the introduction of an EU Safe Surfing Card for children from 8 years on. This card would also be available in an adapted version to older age groups. With this card, children will acquire the skills they need to navigate the internet independently and safely and to deal with hateful content online. In a training course conducted by civil society organisations at schools, children would learn in an age-appropriate manner, amongst other things:

- How can I recognize and respond to hate content?
- What do I have to watch out for to avoid (unknowingly) spreading hateful content myself?

- Who can I turn to if I become a victim of hate?
- Where are the boundaries of privacy?

The trainings should be fun and age appropriate. The trainers (civil society organisations, NGOs, etc) should be supported by appropriate and necessary funding from the EU and Member States. The trainers should also be provided with common standards on terminology. Once the children have completed the training, they will receive an EU Safe Surfing Card. At the national level, parents and teachers should be involved in the promotion and implementation of the card (considering its voluntary nature), while at the EU level, the promotion of the EU Safe Surfing Card should be mandatory in all Member States. In addition, it should be examined whether access to certain content on the Internet could be linked to the acquisition of a driving license. Children who have obtained a driving license should also have the opportunity to network online with other children from all over the EU.

Justification

We think the idea is effective because younger children in particular would be proud to have an EU Safe Surfing Card (similar to a bicycle license). The card also makes it easier for parents, who often do not have the necessary skills to prepare their children to use the Internet safely. They can also attach various conditions to obtaining the card (e.g. access to a specific online game). Last but not least, the introduction of the EU Safe Surfing Card ensures a low-threshold intercultural exchange between children in Europe, which in turn promotes tolerance and empathy.

Recommendation 14
AI Moderation: Protecting Social Media from Hate Speech

We recommend the development of an AI tool to detect illegal hate speech on social media platforms, ensuring compliance with EU standards. This tool will function as follows:

Detection and Flagging:
- Detects hate speech based on the EU definition of illegal hate speech;
- Flags posts as potential hate speech and informs the creator;
- Flagged posts are reviewed by a human moderator within 24 hours;
- Posts falling under free speech are released;
- Posts containing illegal hate speech are forwarded to authorities for prosecution and subsequently deleted.

Pre-Posting Detection:
- Detects hate speech before content goes live;
- Notifies creators if their posts appear to contain illegal hate speech;
- Provides an opportunity for creators to revise or post anyway;
- If posted, the content remains flagged until reviewed by a human, with a warning about the legality and consequences of posting hate speech.
- Mandatory implementation of this tool across social media in the EU will enhance online safety, protect marginalized communities, and ensure compliance with hate speech regulations, fostering a more respectful digital environment.

Justification

Enhanced Protection: This AI tool provides robust protection for marginalized groups by detecting and mitigating hate speech before it can cause harm. By swiftly identifying and removing illegal content, we create a safer online environment.

Efficiency and Accuracy: The combination of AI detection and human review ensures high accuracy in identifying hate speech while respecting free speech. The 24-hour review process balances speed and thoroughness, minimizing the spread of harmful content.

Accountability: By notifying content creators about potential hate speech and the legal implications, the tool promotes accountability and awareness. Users are educated about what constitutes illegal hate speech, encouraging more thoughtful and respectful communication.

Preventative Measures: Pre-posting detection allows users to revise potentially harmful content before it goes live. This proactive approach helps prevent the spread of hate speech, reducing the need for punitive actions and fostering a culture of respect.

Legal Compliance: Ensuring that social media platforms adhere to EU hate speech laws creates a uniform standard across the digital space. This harmonisation simplifies enforcement and strengthens the legal framework against online hate speech.

Positive Social Change: Implementing this tool promotes a more inclusive and respectful society. By reducing the prevalence of hate speech, we encourage diverse voices and perspectives, enhancing social cohesion and mutual understanding.

Overall, this AI tool represents a significant step toward a safer, more respectful online environment, aligning digital interactions with the values of inclusivity and dignity.

Education
recommendations 15 to 17

Recommendation 15
Spreading a Culture of Debate in Schools Inspired by Citizens' Panels

We recommend the organisation of mini-debates at school, like a "mini citizens' panel", during school time. The most effective way to engage children in debating (not creating "civic class") is to set the initiative in a safe environment, with the support of the educative community: such as supervisors, assistants, and teachers. For instance, organizing a debate on meals in the canteen, paying attention to the habits of different religions, is a way of creating discussions based on concrete subjects that affect children daily and of benefiting from the expertise of people in the school, such as canteen staff and chefs. People coming from different backgrounds that are not strictly connected to the educational sector (i.e. police) could also be involved in the process of explaining their work to the children. Regarding the topics covered by these debates, we should directly consult children about the topics on which they want to deepen their understandings. Children can discuss any subject as long as it is adapted to their level and appropriate. To share this experience and culture of debate across the European Union, twinning among schools could be effective. For example, during exchanges, school delegates who have taken part in a debate could travel and share their experience and points of view with other school delegates from European countries. The "results" of these debates could feed into the citizens' platform for children.

Pre-Posting Detection:

- Detects hate speech before content goes live;
- Notifies creators if their posts appear to contain illegal hate speech;
- Provides an opportunity for creators to revise or post anyway;
- If posted, the content remains flagged until reviewed by a human, with a warning about the legality and consequences of posting hate speech.
- Mandatory implementation of this tool across social media in the EU will enhance online safety, protect marginalized communities, and ensure compliance with hate speech regulations, fostering a more respectful digital environment.

Justification

Enhanced Protection: This AI tool provides robust protection for marginalized groups by detecting and mitigating hate speech before it can cause harm. By swiftly identifying and removing illegal content, we create a safer online environment.

Efficiency and Accuracy: The combination of AI detection and human review ensures high accuracy in identifying hate speech while respecting free speech. The 24-hour review process balances speed and thoroughness, minimizing the spread of harmful content.

Accountability: By notifying content creators about potential hate speech and the legal implications, the tool promotes accountability and awareness. Users are educated about what constitutes illegal hate speech, encouraging more thoughtful and respectful communication.

Preventative Measures: Pre-posting detection allows users to revise potentially harmful content before it goes live. This proactive approach helps prevent the spread of hate speech, reducing the need for punitive actions and fostering a culture of respect.

Legal Compliance: Ensuring that social media platforms adhere to EU hate speech laws creates a uniform standard across the digital space. This harmonisation simplifies enforcement and strengthens the legal framework against online hate speech.

Positive Social Change: Implementing this tool promotes a more inclusive and respectful society. By reducing the prevalence of hate speech, we encourage diverse voices and perspectives, enhancing social cohesion and mutual understanding.

Overall, this AI tool represents a significant step toward a safer, more respectful online environment, aligning digital interactions with the values of inclusivity and dignity.

Education
recommendations 15 to 17

Recommendation 15
Spreading a Culture of Debate in Schools Inspired by Citizens' Panels

We recommend the organisation of mini-debates at school, like a "mini citizens' panel", during school time. The most effective way to engage children in debating (not creating "civic class") is to set the initiative in a safe environment, with the support of the educative community: such as supervisors, assistants, and teachers. For instance, organizing a debate on meals in the canteen, paying attention to the habits of different religions, is a way of creating discussions based on concrete subjects that affect children daily and of benefiting from the expertise of people in the school, such as canteen staff and chefs. People coming from different backgrounds that are not strictly connected to the educational sector (i.e. police) could also be involved in the process of explaining their work to the children. Regarding the topics covered by these debates, we should directly consult children about the topics on which they want to deepen their understandings. Children can discuss any subject as long as it is adapted to their level and appropriate. To share this experience and culture of debate across the European Union, twinning among schools could be effective. For example, during exchanges, school delegates who have taken part in a debate could travel and share their experience and points of view with other school delegates from European countries. The "results" of these debates could feed into the citizens' platform for children.

Justification

Young people are more open-minded and capable of accepting different viewpoints, which is a crucial aspect of combating hate. Therefore, children must be made aware of civic culture and civic engagement at school (from 6 to 16). These "panels" organized at school should be a training tool for children. The culture of participation and the skills developed during these debates can be useful throughout their lives. The twinning programs among schools could be effective because it doesn't change completely the educational programs of Member States, but it implements a common initiative aiming to increase critical thinking and understanding among European children.

Recommendation 16
Reinforce the Social and Emotional Skills of Children and Youth to Prevent Hate

We request to deploy short-term and mid-term measures to reinforce children´s emotional and social skills. To do this, we recommend improving the learning environment in schools and offering activities such as theatre, arts, nonviolent communication, and civic education in and around schools to teach critical thinking, empathy, and emotional skills. In the short term, we demand to have more and better research studies on the impact of the activities we propose to prevent hatred. In the short-term and mid-term, we request to refocus the priority of programs like ERASMUS+, CERV, or programs funded by structural EU funds to support those activities preventing hatred in and around schools. The European Commission should be proactive in flagging those priorities and communicating them widely (e.g. by making recommendations to the member states and calls for projects) and cooperate with UNESCO and the Council of Europe to synchronize with their corresponding programs. Schools, teachers, and local actors could then use those funds to deploy the activities. To increase social inclusion, activities should be free of charge for everyone. After a period of about 5 years, we demand to have a proper evaluation of this, to refocus and decide if the measures were impactful. This could lead to increasing the capacity of the EU in hatred-prevention in schools.

Justification

The current educational system doesn't take the questions of emotional and social skills seriously enough. Schools are also a place where hatred is being experienced. Kids are not well prepared to become adults who are aware of their emotions. Schools are the place were all children go and can learn how to live together. Creating a good learning atmosphere is the best way to prevent hatred. Getting to know oneself and others allows better critical and self-critical thinking and more tolerance. Activities like theatre, dance, non-violent communication are good ways to acquire these skills.

Recommendation 17
Education for Every Generation for Every Nation on Non-Violent Communication

We recommend that: In the short-term, to create non-violent communication guidelines (inspired by documents such as "From Hate Speech to Non-Violent Communication" handbook) tailored to educational materials for youth and adults:

- In the mid-term, for Member States to prepare non-violent communication courses complementary to unemployment benefits for adults;
- In the mid-term, for Member States to prepare educational materials for employees;
- In the short-term, for the EU to create videos on the 3 concepts (TOLERANCE - KINDNESS – FORGIVENESS) in media content;
- In the mid-term, for schools to offer non-violent communication educational possibilities for parents (e.g. in schools);
- In the mid-term and long-term, for the EU to adopt implicit texts adaptation (e.g., trainings and exams): non-violent communication should be embedded as default within our language;
- In the long-term, for Member States to make the methodology of non-violent communication a part of prisoners' reintegration processes.

Justification

Communication is one of the most important ways of getting understood in life, but one does not get to be taught it. If we teach this skill, there will be much less conflict and disputes among people. Awareness of one's own feelings, introspection and compassion towards others. There would be much less hate in Europe if this is implemented. We are at the top of hate now, we should see a decrease after this. Better communication leads to better collaboration, which would lead to a more united Europe.

Citizens' participation and social inclusion
recommendations 18 to 21

Recommendation 18
Creating European Citizens' Panels for Young People (Ages 16-25) for Tackling Hatred

The European Citizens' panels for young people should apply a random selection process, as the current European citizens' panels, because it leads to the representation of diverse groups. The panels should cover topics that are related to challenges and opportunities faced by young people (i.e. bullying, tolerance, respect, stereotypes, and social inclusion). These panels should use young people as experts to deepen understanding of crucial issues and raise their voices at the EU level. For instance,

young people involved in anti-discrimination or migrant integration associations could act as "experts" and "resources" for the Youth Panel. These Panels should be promoted in the citizen engagement platform (which needs to be rethought, made more interactive, "cooler" and better promoted).

Justification

Young people are often disinterested in politics and vote at decreasing levels. Their political representatives (whether at the national or European level) are elected by older people. To familiarize themselves with political debate, to be aware of what the European Union does, and to take an interest in it, participating in a European citizen panel like ours could be an interesting tool to foster more permanent engagement. The European level is crucial because, in many member states, the vision of the European Union is reduced to "Brussels decides." Brussels is perceived as "the big boss who imposes many rules." Experimenting with a citizen panel could allow young people to feel closer to Europe and other young Europeans. As young people are among the main victims of hate, therefore, it is crucial to focus on them.

Recommendation 19
Developing Voluntary Civic Services in Local Communities for Adults

The time to take part in these volunteering activities has to be provided, for instance by having paid leaves from work reserved specifically for civic engagement. At the same time, we have to take into consideration self-employed workers. Economic benefits could be great motivators to increase civic engagement among different categories (e.g. tax reduction). Finally, the importance of local initiatives should be promoted at the EU level: the EU could incentivize and support these local initiatives around Europe, providing experience and financial support. The duration of this voluntary service would be shorter than an Erasmus for employees or the self-employed (one week, for example).

Justification

To combat hate, the local level is very important, and local communities are a valuable support for social cohesion. Volunteering in associations that promote integration, for example, should be accessible to all ages. The European Union could support these initiatives to combat hate at the local level and allow for exchanges of experiences between different local actors.

Recommendation 20
Helping to Return to the Meaning of Life

We recommend that the EU encourages the creation of community spaces to support marginalised people. This assistance may be channelled in different directions depending on one's needs. We recommend that people are given the opportunity to find work, as a form of personal autonomy and stability, while at the same time providing specific support for those groups that have more difficulty accessing the labour market, for example, people with disabilities, refugees, homeless people, the abused, etc. Specific help in these cases could consist of preparing for job applications, interviews, the ability to take care of one's hygiene and obtain appropriate clothes for work.

There could be public funding for this kind of community-led initiatives while leveraging solidarity networks and volunteer initiatives that are already existing in the community, so that the financial investment can be sustainable for public budgets. There should be a commitment for the centres' long-term financing conditions to be maintained.

These solidarity and support initiatives should encompass together two needs: on the one hand, providing specialised assistance to specific groups that may have special needs and, on the other hand, remaining open to diverse marginalised groups without creating priority scales or preferences that may contribute to further hate and discrimination.

Specific and immediate assistance can be found in these centres according to personal cases, with the support of properly trained volunteers and/or professionals who can direct people to places where they can receive specific assistance. Assistance may be provided not only to people from marginalised groups but to anyone in personal circumstances or life situations for which support may be needed.

There may also be workshops, activities, cross-cultural exchanges, events and celebrations at these community centres that help create a sense of community and overcome barriers of discrimination. Those spaces should be humanised, i.e. making people feel welcome and at ease.

There should be a mutual commitment between the centre, which will provide help, and the recipient, who has to achieve agreed results within a certain timeframe. Special cases might need longer time to resolve, assessed on a case-by-case basis by experts.

Justification

It is important because people would get a lot of relief by going to these community centres. They would be novel, offer hope and inspire. It would improve mental health, help people with problems at home, it could provide a roof for all people in a weak position that can be helped by this solution, enjoy their fundamental right to lead a dignified life and help people find meaning. It is important because people can influence each other, build relationships, and understand each other's problems. People would not feel stigmatised or labelled. We need to become human beings again

(not only accelerating technology in detriment to humanisation). People need opportunities, and this recommendation could create job opportunities.

The recommendation could foster a more inclusive, just, egalitarian, meaningful and empathetic society, where everyone can participate equally in society, and where we don't normalise issues such as poverty and homelessness because they create hatred.

This recommendation could help society at grassroot level. In terms of impact, we have to provide global responses to global issues. Impact would be seen on the small-scale before building up.

There are risks if social workers are not equipped to do the work and if the idea is not designed well. Other risks could be financial, linguistic or related to integration.

Recommendation 21
Looking for the People: Tackling Social Inequality to Combat Hatred in the EU

Social inequality, as outlined in the problem definition, represents one of the key drivers/causes of hatred in our society. Despite its importance, EU institutions and member states have not adequately addressed this problem, underscoring the need for comprehensive EU-funded research to identify and tackle the linkages between social inequality and hatred.

Understanding these linkages is essential for developing effective policies and interventions. Without solid empirical evidence, based on qualitative and quantitative data, efforts to address social inequality may be misdirected or ineffective. Involving social organizations in data collection ensures that the data reflects the realities of those most affected by inequality, providing a more accurate and relevant foundation for research with a bottom-up approach. Continuous publication of these findings will inform and refine ongoing efforts. The results of the studies may be incorporated in awareness-raising campaigns.

Justification

Developing guidelines and campaigns based on thorough research allows for targeted actions that address the specific ways in which social inequality fosters hatred. This strategic approach can significantly reduce social tensions and promote social cohesion, as well as enable systemic change.

Collecting data on the impact of positive measures and continuously publishing findings fosters transparency and accountability. This process not only informs policymakers and stakeholders but also builds public trust and encourages collaborative efforts to address social inequality.

Establishing standards for verified, trustworthy data and a harmonized methodology, including both personal voices and quantitative and qualitative data, ensures the reliability and comprehensiveness of the research.

Addressing social inequality through comprehensive research and data collection is crucial for mitigating hatred and fostering a more cohesive society within the EU. This approach provides the necessary insights and tools to develop effective policies and interventions, ultimately contributing to a more equitable and harmonious social landscape.

4.2.1 Assessment of the recommendations

On the last day of the panel, participating citizens were asked to provide their assessment of each of the 21 recommendations. Here is an overview of the results of this vote, with recommendations sorted according to their level of support.

RANK	N° of the recommendation	Title of recommendation	Level of support (average note from 1 to 6)	Approval rate (share of vote)
1	4	Training For Tolerance (T4T)	5.23	97.7 %
2	15	Spreading A Culture Of Debate In Schools Inspired By Citizens' Panels	5.20	89.9 %
3	1	One Europe, One Definition: Criminalising Hate Speech	5.09	91.2 %
4	2	European Effective-Response Protocol For Hate Crime Notifications	5.04	90.6 %
5	18	Creating European Citizens' Panels For Young People (Ages 16-25) For Tackling Hatred	5.01	89.2 %
6	16	Reinforce The Social And Emotional Skills Of Children And Youth To Prevent Hate	5.00	90.2 %
7	3	National Office For Combating Hate In Member States	5.00	87.1 %
8	5	Increasing Awareness About Hatred And Existing Measures And Remedies To Counter It With A Public Campaign	4.88	89.5 %
9	17	Education For Every Generation, For Every Nation On Non-Violent Communication	4.85	88.0 %
10	9	Reliability, Facts And Transparency: Verifying And Clarifying The Financing Of Information	4.83	80.0 %
11	19	Developing Voluntary Civic Services In Local Communities For Adults	4.77	85.5 %
12	11	Burst The Bubble: Promoting Diverse Perspectives On Social Media	4.74	82.4 %
13	20	Helping To Return To The Meaning Of Life	4.72	85.6 %
14	6	Ads Aid Against Hate	4.68	81.8 %
15	14	AI Moderation: Protecting Social Media From Hate Speech	4.66	79.6 %
16	21	Looking For The People: Tackling Social Inequality To Combat Hatred In The EU	4.59	81.0 %
17	8	Establishing An Independent Trust Committee	4.57	80.4 %
18	13	EU Safe Surfing Card	4.50	76.2 %
19	12	Addressing Anonymity Online To Tackle Hatred	4.48	74.5 %
20	7	Creating An EU-Wide Platform Combining Information, Resources, Measures And Support Systems Regarding Hatred	4.45	78.2 %
21	10	Europe Meets You: Participative Media For Citizens	4.18	68.3 %

4.2.2 Overview of the sessions

The agenda and summary of each session can be found here.

4.2.3 Consortium of contractors

The contractors worked together to design and implement this new generation of European Citizens' Panels.

- Harris Interactive and Sortition Foundation: Recruitment of citizens.
- VO Europe: Communication, assistance and all organisational aspects of the three sessions.
- Communication team - Been There Done That, WaterBear and Scope: Communication strategy, including the creation, translation and dissemination of diverse contents on social media and the production of a documentary.

4.2.4 Deliberation team (ifok and Missions Publiques)

The deliberation team partners pooled their know-how to conceptualise the overall participatory process and the methodology for each session, together with DG COMM it also conducted the main moderation and the group work facilitation, and oversaw the reporting on the results.
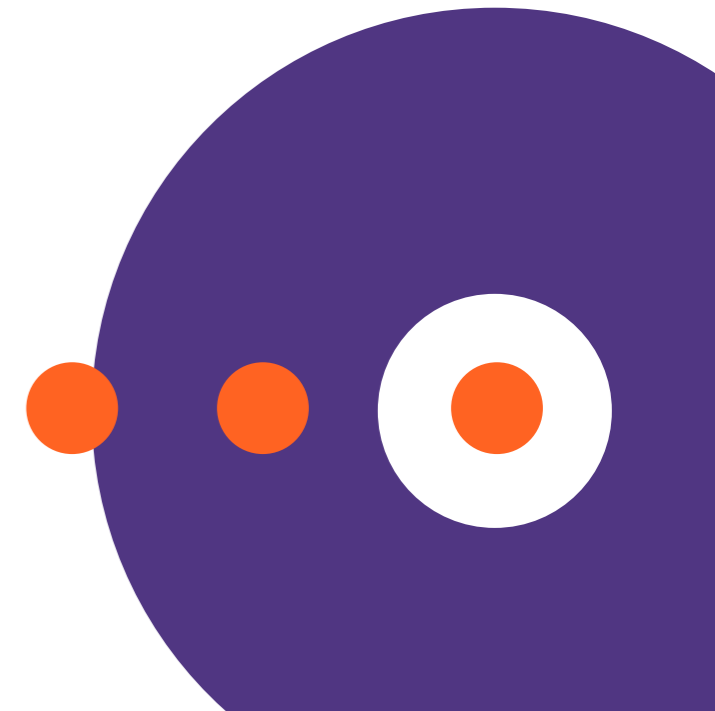
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