**Committee:** Youth Delegate Forum (YDF)

**Issue:** Addressing the Impact of Online Racist Hate Speech and Cyberbullying on Victim’s Mental Health

**Student Officer:** Nikoleta Stoltidou

**Position:** Deputy President 

# PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear Delegates,

My name is Nikoleta Stoltidou and it is with great pleasure to welcome you to the 8th Deutsche Schule Thessaloniki Model United Nations. I am currently attending the 10th grade of the German School of Thessaloniki and I have the great honour of serving as one of the Deputy Presidents of this year’s DSTMUN Youth Delegate Forum.

Initially, I would like to congratulate you all for taking part in this conference! Having embarked on my MUN journey at DSTMUN’s Youth Delegate Forum myself, I fully understand how overwhelming the conference might seem at first. However I truly believe that after all the innovative ideas exchanged during lobbying and the fruitful debates taking place at this conference each and every one of you will have gained something valuable; whether that is strengthened public speaking skills, confidence or knowledge on the world’s most significant issues.

Moreover, during this year’s conference the Youth Delegate Forum is expected to put in its greatest effort to tackle two very dominant issues of the world we live in. This study guide will provide you with both useful as well as reliable information on the committee’s first topic which is “Addressing the Impact of Online Racist Hate Speech and Cyberbullying on Victim’s Mental Health”. Nonetheless you are highly encouraged to extend your research, so that you will eventually be able to come up with innovative solutions upon this topic according to your assigned countries’ policies.

Should any questions regarding the study guide or the topic come up, do not hesitate to contact me at [nicolestoltidou@gmail.com](mailto:nicolestoltidou@gmail.com)

Looking forward to meeting you all in November!

Best regards,

Nikoleta Stoltidou

# TOPIC INTRODUCTION

In modern times, where the internet and social media play a vital role in our lives, the harmful effects they can have become more apparent, especially the impact online racist hate speech and cyberbullying have on the victims’ mental well- being. Although incidents of online racist hate speech and cyberbullying are often overlooked or covered up in excuses, they indicate a significant and growing problem in our society.

Due to the rising popularity of social media applications, for instance Instagram, Facebook or X and the ability to “hide” behind a fake profile under another name, it has gotten much easier to insult someone in the virtual world. Considering that people can express themselves without having to confront any real-life consequences, a large number of social media users tend to post highly offensive comments towards individuals based on their race, religion etc.

However, the impact of online racist comments is not as widely acknowledged as that of real life incidents. This is regardless of the fact that both forms of racism are equally consequential. Such disrespectful behaviour does not only lead to normalizing racism and prejudice, which the world has been trying to tackle for decades, but also undermines the rights of minority groups. [[1]](#footnote-0)In addition to that, it is responsible for serious mental health issues among the victims. While involvement in online racism and cyberbullying is easier and more accessible than ever, [[2]](#footnote-1) this does not make it any easier to deal with online racist hate speech or cyberbullying.

Moreover, it is true that the majority of the worlds’ social media users are either teenagers or young adults. This issue in combination with all the developmental and social changes teenagers experience at that point of their life can only make them feel more uncertain about who they are and significantly affect who they eventually become. As David Woodger a senior lecturer of Social Therapeutic and Community Studies at the Goldsmiths University of London stated “Overall, young people appear to be experiencing social media as a place where racism thrives uncensored – with explicit racism, polarised debates and backlash as part of their experiences of encountering racial content on social media.”[[3]](#footnote-2) Therefore, it is even more urgent to take action now, as it would be truly unfair for the future generation to be negatively influenced, making it much harder for it to evolve and improve the world with its innovativeness.

In conclusion, addressing the impact of online racist hate speech and cyberbullying on victims’ mental health is not only about making the use of the internet safer, but about ensuring that at least this form of racism is truly minimized, that no more minority groups can be hurt by it and finally, that those who have already suffered under it can get all the necessary help they need in order to feel better. Essentially, individuals would actually be able to embrace and take pride in their cultural heritage without the fear of being targeted by cyberbullying. After all, as the Secretary General of the United Nations stated “Hate speech is poison in the well of society,”. [[4]](#footnote-3)

# DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

## Hate Speech

In common language, “hate speech” refers to offensive discourse targeting a group or an individual based on inherent characteristics (such as race, religion or gender) and that may threaten social peace. [[5]](#footnote-4)

## Online Hate

Online Hate is posting and sharing hateful and prejudiced content against an individual, group or community. It can take the form of derogatory, demonising and dehumanising statements, threats, identity-based insults, pejorative terms and slurs.[[6]](#footnote-5)

## Racist Hate Speech

Racist Hate Speech is speech, writing, behaviour, text or commentary that attacks or uses discriminatory language towards a person based on their race.

## Mental Health

Mental health is the component of behavioral health that includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. Mental health is a state of well-being that enables us to cope with the stresses of life, realize our abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to our community.[[7]](#footnote-6)

## Bulletin Board System (BBS)

A computer system allowing users to exchange messages and information[[8]](#footnote-7)Aside from leaving short messages, callers can send larger files to the central computer, These might include shareware software, educational material, or other interesting documents. The central computer is able to store files, which other callers can download to their own computers.[[9]](#footnote-8)

## Cyber- racism

Cyber racism is most commonly defined as racism which occurs in the cyber world. This includes racism which occurs on the internet such as racist websites, images, blogs, videos and online comments as well as racist comments, images or language in text messages, e-mails or on social networking sites. [[10]](#footnote-9)

## (Online) Hoax

A hoax is a deliberate lie designed to seem truthful. Online hoaxes are fictional stories or images that are untrue or are alterations of the truth which are then spread throughout the internet, generally via social media platforms or emails. The internet and social media provide a perfect platform for hoaxes as they can be spread quickly, which is one reason why they are so harmful especially to children and young people.[[11]](#footnote-10)

## Online Safety

Online Safety is being aware of the nature of the possible threats that you could encounter whilst engaging in activity through the Internet. These could be security threats, protecting and managing your personal data, online reputation management, and avoiding harmful or illegal content.[[12]](#footnote-11)

# BACKGROUND INFORMATION

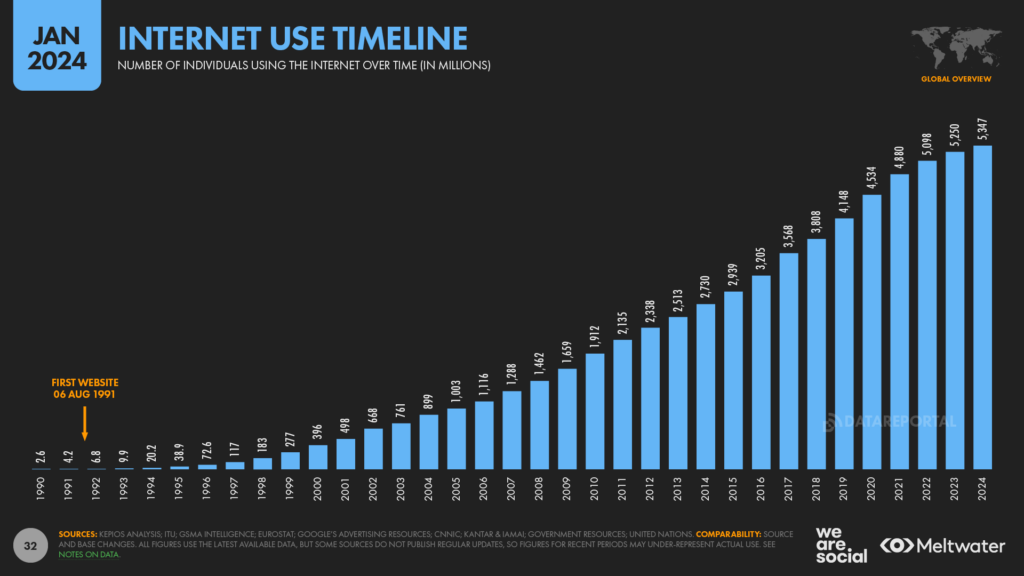
**First incidence of Hate Speech online** With the Internet being established as a globally interconnected network of computer networks in 1983, it did not take long until someone used it in order to spread hatred among a larger number of people. In March 1984 Georg P. Dietz, a well known publisher or racist and antisemitic literature, was apparently the first right-wing supremacist to launch his material into cyberspace on a public BBS.[[13]](#footnote-12) His ambition to launch a new bulletin board system (BBS) originated from his plan to spread antisemitic information in America and thereby racially offend people online. While his activities were widely condemned by organizations such as the Anti- Defamation League, he did not face any legal consequences, due to the then underdeveloped legal frameworks for countering hate speech and continued spreading hate until his death in 2007.

Later on in 1985 the Anti- Defamation League was the first to publish that white supremacist groups had been using a kind of computer technology called “Computerized Networks of Hate” not only to provide people with information on how to join their groups, but also to leak addresses and phone numbers of their so- called “enemies” or even “race-traitors”.

## The role of Social Media in Cyberbullying

Social media actively contributes to the issue of online racist hate speech and cyberbullying, as it is very easy to access. Due to the enormous number of users of social media it is indeed a highly effective way to bring attention to an issue or spread information on a topic. Moreover, many people worldwide take advantage of that and of the fact that there is anonymity on those platforms and become offensive online.

The first actual social media site, namely SixDegrees was launched in 1997 by Andrew Weinreich. Its name originated from the Six Degrees of Separation Theory, mainly that everyone is six social connections or less away from each other. The site used a so-called connection engine technology that ultimately allowed users to communicate and interact with each other at both a personal and a professional level. It divided users’ contacts into six degrees, ranging progressively from close acquaintances to complete strangers. Since then multiple other similar, yet updated applications, for instance Facebook, Instagram and X have emerged, leading to a significant rise in the popularity of social media. [[14]](#footnote-13)

 **Figure 1:** Digital 2024: 5 billion social media users - We Are Social UK  
This bar-diagram clearly shows the rapid increase in the social media users through the years, which demonstrates the rise in popularity of social media platforms and subconsciously the escalated rates of cyberbullying. [[15]](#footnote-14)

## **Escalation of online racist hate speech towards the Asian Community during the Covid- 19 Pandemic**

**Figure 2:** Number of Anti- Asian Hate Crime Incidents Around the Covid-19 Pandemic Time from year 2019 - 2022  
This chart is based on data collected during an integrated review by Science Direct on “Covid-19 Related Racism and Mental Health among Asian Americans”. It depicts the drastic increase in hate crimes against people of Asian origins during the Covid-19 pandemic, among which many were online hate crimes. [[16]](#footnote-15)

With increasing numbers of patients with COVID-19 globally, China and the World Health Organization (WHO) was blamed by several parties for the spread of this disease. Consequently, incidents of racism and hateful acts were reported around the world.[[17]](#footnote-16)During the Covid-19 pandemic a noticeable increase in anti- asian hate crimes was reported, many of which were posted online, making them incidents of online racist hate speech. On March 16, 2021, the President of the United States of America posted a tweet using the term “Chinese Virus”. This tweet quickly circulated online and became widely repeated. Various reports around that time highlighted the extended use of other Anti-Asian comments online, which directly blamed Chinese people for the virus in combination with the hashtags “#covid19” and “#chinesevirus”.[[18]](#footnote-17) Additionally, the rising verbal and physical attacks directed toward Asians showcased how area-level racist sentiment online has been associated with residential racial prejudice.[[19]](#footnote-18) Many victims have shared the incidents they had to go through, for instance an immigrant woman of Korean origin in her late twenties, who was assaulted on the street solely because of her race.: “I was walking in [the city where I live], and a White old woman was poking me in the face saying, ‘You are disgusting,’ and she was trying to hit me. I ran away crying. … At the time, I was with my boyfriend, but he also just came to the U.S., so we ran away together thinking that if we cause trouble, we could be deported.”[[20]](#footnote-19)

## Demonstrations concerning Online Racist Hate Speech : Protests Against Racist Hate Speech In the United Kingdom (UK)

Not only one, but at least three protests addressing the Issue of Racist Hate Speech took place between March and August 2024 across the UK, in spite of the police- force’s huge mobilization. On the 17th of March 2024, the Stand Up to Racism Protest emerged on Downing Street and initiated the series of anti-racism demonstrations to take place leading up to the United Nations Anti-Racism Day on March 21. Thousands of people participated raising their voices and calling for actions against racist violence and extremism in all their forms. Placards stating the following phrases were also to be found being held up by protesters: “HATE SOLVES NOTHING”; “# STAND AGAINST HATE”; “Reject Racist PROPAGANDA”[[21]](#footnote-20) or “Reject Racism, Try Therapy”[[22]](#footnote-21)

**  
Figure 3:** Anti-Racism Riot held in the UK in August 2024**[[23]](#footnote-22)**

Comparable slogans and messages emerged at the rallies to follow over the next months in the UK. Those then lead to the United Nations (UN) urging the UK to tackle hate speech. While acknowledging that steps have been taken to address the issue, such as Scotland bringing in a hate crime strategy and Northern Ireland introducing an action plan to eliminate racism, it did suggest implementing further measures, one of which was to hold journalists and news agencies accountable for how they describe minority communities and when they publish content that incites hatred or fuels xenophobic attitudes.[[24]](#footnote-23)

## Summer 2020 - Black Lives Matter Protests

The phrase Black Lives Matter was first introduced in July 2013 on Facebook by activist Alicia Garza as a response to the shooting death of the teenager Trayvon Martin in 2012. In the summer of 2020 during the Black Lives Matter demonstrations following the murder of George Floyd protesters also spoke up about dramatic spikes in online hate speech across both fringe and mainstream social platforms and brought issues of social justice into the national spotlight. [[25]](#footnote-24)In 2020 10.330 protests took place across all 50 states of the USA and many more were held across another 92 countries, including Germany, where strikes were held across 30 cities, thus establishing the movement as a worldwide effort. [[26]](#footnote-25) [[27]](#footnote-26)Moreover the Black Lives Matter movement became very popular through various social media platforms and the use of the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter, which has been tweeted roughly 47.8 million times. [[28]](#footnote-27)Other than raising concern about the discrimination of Black people, it inspired multiple other similar initiatives aiming at protecting fundamental human rights of minority groups, such as the Indigenous Lives Matter movement in Australia, Justice for Adama Traoré drive in France. In conclusion, the Black Lives Matter movement raised awareness for systematic racism among a gigantic number of people, empowered people to voice their opinion on social justice and actively supported Black and other marginalized communities worldwide.

[[29]](#footnote-28) **Figure 4:** GW Today researchers found a 250% spike in online racist posts during the summer 2020 Black Lives Matter protests.

## Impact of Online Racist Hate Speech and Cyberbullying

### On the Society

The continuous existence of cyber racism affects the victims as individuals and the society as a whole, since lack of confronting this crucial issue only indicates the normalization of racial discrimination and prejudice, consequently making the victims’ lives notably more difficult both in the virtual and real world. As confirmed by a study led by Cardiff University’s HateLab, during which hate speech comments on Twitter and police recorded crime were collected and analyzed, there is an obvious association between online and offline hate. Furthermore, failing to confront this issue and ignoring it might also result in the youth not realizing the significance of the matter in question.

### Case Study by the Journal of Cyber Security: Survey on teenagers’ opinion on hate speech’s societal consequences [[30]](#footnote-29)

When asked about the societal consequences of hate speech, young people highlighted the fact that it can threaten freedom of expression:   
"freedom of expression is abolished. If you are targeted by hate speech, you will start not voicing your beliefs. A society that does not express opinions and ideas will not progress".

### On the Victims’ Mental Health

Alongside the impact of cyber racism and online racist hate speech on society, it is even more important to address their impact on the mental health of each victim. Much like in cases of physical injury, a person’s wellbeing can be deeply affected by emotional pain.

This pain can be expressed in various ways, such as feelings of insecurity, low self esteem and a fear of expressing oneself due to potential criticism. Additionally, the emotional pain can lead to a profound sense of not belonging, perceiving both the virtual and real world as hostile. Lastly they might feel as if their human dignity has been violated, consequently viewing themselves as inappropriate in accordance with the socio- cultural norms.

Finally, the emotions online hate speech triggers often lead to hurting the victims both mentally and physically. This is primarily because, that emotional diseases,eg.: depression and other mental health issues often develop to a degree, that the victims attempt suicide or hurt themselves.

# MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

## Germany

**“**A troubled history is alive in Germany — both in a resurgence of far-right ideology and in new changes to the laws designed to combat that extremism”[[31]](#footnote-30), states Frontline magazine in June, 2021. Racism has been a persistent issue throughout Germany’s history, resulting in a number of hate crimes. Consequently, the German Government has taken exceptionally strict measures to prohibit online hate speech, by implementing a variety of strict legislations such as the Network Enforcement Act Amended to Better Fight Online Hate Speech.[[32]](#footnote-31) In addition to that, Germany has taken a lot of other anti- racism initiatives, some of which are being implemented at schools, for instance “Schule ohne Rassismus - Schule mit Courage” School without Racism- School with Courage. [[33]](#footnote-32)

## Japan

There has been a noticeable rise in online racism in Japan through the past few years, especially targeting Korean as well as other minorities living in Japan. This increase includes demonstrations against certain minorities as well as hateful comments on various social media platforms. While the causes of these incidents are attributed to various factors, some of the crucial backgrounds are the complete lack of Anti-Discrimination Law, poor understanding of the general public about the history and culture of minority communities and their human rights issues, the lack of appropriate understanding by the Japanese government of the international human rights standards, and the lack of willingness of the State to actively implement them.[[34]](#footnote-33)

## People’s Republic of China

For years now there has been severe discrimination against black and African people in China, including online racist hate comments, similar to the ones in the USA. On top of that a Human Rights Watch’s analysis of hundreds of videos and posts since late 2021 found that the major Chinese social media platforms like including Bilibili, Douyin, Kuaishou, Weibo, and Xiaohongshu do not routinely address racist content despite their responsibility to respect human rights under the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. A few attempts by the People’s Republic of China have been made in order to regulate the issue of racist discrimination, for instance in Article 250 of the Criminal Code, which states the following: Where a publication carries an article designated to discriminate or humiliate an ethnic group, if the circumstances are flagrant and the consequences are serious, the persons who are directly responsible for the offence shall be sentenced to fixed-term imprisonment of not more than three years, criminal detention or public surveillance. [[35]](#footnote-34)

## United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK)

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland has been playing a truly significant role in tackling the issue at hand.

With the implementation of the Online Safety Act on the 17th of October 2023, which applies to services enabling posting content online and interacting with other users and search services, the UK ensures the protections of the services’ users. In the process of doing that criminal offences covering racially or religiously aggravated public order offences among other illegal activities online came into effect on 31st of January 2024.

Despite of the action taken in the UK to regulate the matter at hand, in a survey of over 800 Black and racially minoritised young people from across the UK more than half said that the predominance of online racism made them feel less safe offline, with 42% (about 1 in 2) saying it harmed their mental health.[[36]](#footnote-35)

Moreover, movements such as Black Lives Matter UK and other initiatives, such as non governmental organizations, for instance StopHate UK, have contributed in raising awareness nationwide and addressing the racial discrimination both online and offline.

## United States of America (USA)

Many USA citizens have been directly influenced by the increase in online racist hate speech, which escalated during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Given the diverse racial and ethnic composition of the USA's population, incidents of online racist hate speech have become increasingly common. Furthermore, black youths, in particular, experienced increases in online racial discrimination, which were not fully explained by their time spent online or by general cybervictimization experiences. Additionally, this online racial discrimination was found to predict poorer same-day and next-day mental health among Black youths.[[37]](#footnote-36) In regards to any legislations on hate speech, under current First Amendment jurisprudence, hate speech can only be criminalized when it directly incites imminent criminal activity or consists of specific threats of violence targeted against a person or group.[[38]](#footnote-37)

## Crisis Text Line

Crisis Text Line is a Non Governmental Organization aiming at the promotion of mental wellbeing. It offers free and high- quality text based mental support 24/7. Through its services it contributes in combating various mental health illnesses, such as depression, anxiety, food and other disorders etc. It mainly consists of volunteers and provides help both in English and in Spanish. It is anonymous and easily accessible, which makes it especially friendly and useful towards online racism victims of all ages, even teenagers. Moreover it became even more impactful during the Covid-19 pandemic, when racist online hate speech was significantly increased.

## Hate Aid

Hate Aid is a non- profit, non governmental organization in Germany that dedicates all its profits in their mission rather than distributing them. The organization was founded on the 18th of December 2018 by two other german non governmental organizations, mainly Campact and Fearless Democracy and two individuals named Anna-Lena von Hodenberg and Josephine Ballon. HateAid has played a significant role in promoting human rights in digital space and countering the social and political impact of digital violence through multiple acts. It has supported 1.877 individuals across 7.688 incidents, financed 326 criminal charges, 143 warning letters and 49 civil lawsuits. [[39]](#footnote-38) In conclusion the contribution of Hate Aid has directly affected this issue and supported many victims of cyberhate.

## #Hate Trackers

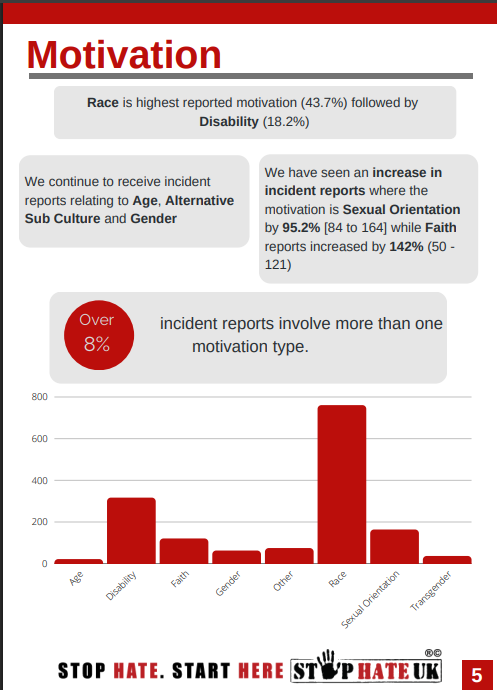
The #Hate Trackers project initially commenced in 2023 using funding by the UN and seeks to combat online hate speech by equipping youths, youth organizations and citizens’ committees with the necessary competences to recognize and act against such human rights violations.[[40]](#footnote-39) This initiative currently operates in various European countries and continues to expand. It consists of both youth volunteers and activists specialized in counteracting hate speech both offline and online by an application and website and further local action with the involvement of trained youth groups and activists. It mainly focuses on reaching the youth and informing students about online hate speech and its effects on the victims’ mental health and responding to incidents of cyberbullying. This thereby increases the likelihood that the future generations will be able to mitigate online racism and cyberbullying.

## Mind

Mind is a mental health charity operating in England and Wales since 1946 and its goal is to support people with mental health issues and to raise awareness regarding mental health problems as well as their origins. The organization originally consisted of three former organizations that merged under the name National Association for Mental Health (NAHM). Then, in 1971 it launched a campaign and not long after that, in 1972 it changed its name to Mind. Mind works in three different ways, through national Mind, local Mind and finally Mind shops. According to the organization’s official website Mind put a tremendous effort in regulating the issue of hate speech and discrimination. Some of the ways this was accomplished were by having their mental health information accessed 25,3 million times. In addition to that, 34,912 people campaigned to improve services and push for justice. These are only a few of the ways the organization contributed to the global resolvement efforts of this topic. [[41]](#footnote-40)

## Stop Hate UK

Stop Hate UK is a non governmental Organization established in 1995, based in the UK with projects focused on Anti- Hate and Anti- Discrimination principles. It is currently the UK's sole free 24 hour anti- Hate Crime helpline service, which first launched in 2006 with the purpose of reporting racist incidents and crimes 24 hours a day. [[42]](#footnote-41)Ever since its reporting services have expanded and thereby helped many victims of any kind of discrimination.

  
**Figure 5:** In the year 2023-2024 the Organization reported that the majority of reports of hate crime were based on the race of the victims, mainly 43,7%. [[43]](#footnote-42)  
This is an abstract of STOP HATE UK’s annual report that highlights the main causes of online and not hate crimes.

# BLOCS EXPECTED

## BLOCK A

The first Block consists of countries viewing this issue primarily as a social issue and adopting a multi-layered approach to combat this issue by combining legal enforcement, platform regulation, education and mental health support. Examples of countries that belong to this block are the majority of EU members, such as Germany, Sweden, France, the Netherlands and Spain, alongside the USA, Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, Colombia etc.

## BLOCK B

The second Block consists of countries willing to take stricter and more drastic measures, as they view this topic more as a security and public order issue. This Block’s approach mainly involves state and law enforcement as well as criminal penalties. This Block includes countries such as but not limited to the Republic of Korea, India, Türkiye, Lebanon and Kenya.

# TIMELINE OF EVENTS

| **Date** | **Description of event** |
| --- | --- |
| 2005 | The cyberbullying research centre was launched by Dr. Sameer Hinduja and Dr. Justin W. Patchin with the purpose of providing information relevant to cyberbullying eg.: causes, consequences etc. [[44]](#footnote-43) |
| October 17th 2006 | Megan Meier, a 13 years old girl from Missouri, committed suicide after confronting an online hoax, which later turned out to be a grown- up woman cyberbullying the teenage girl. [[45]](#footnote-44) |
| 2018 | Racist Reports in Instagram and Snapchat due to the racist use of GIFs. The platforms responded by temporarily removing the Giphy feature. [[46]](#footnote-45) |
| June 18th 2019 | Initiation of the UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech[[47]](#footnote-46) |
| 2020 | Covid-19 Pandemic leads to Anti- Asian online hate speech. This was due to misinformation and racist statements spreading online and directly affected the mental well-being of many individuals of Asian origins. [[48]](#footnote-47) |
| July 21st 2021 | The annual Day for Countering Hate Speech was established by the UN. |
| May 20th 2016 | The recommendation CM/REC (2022) 16 on combating hate speech was adopted at the 133nd session of the European Committee of Ministers providing guidance for a comprehensive of both legal and not legal measures to address the root causes of the issue. [[49]](#footnote-48) |
| November 16th 2022 | The European (EU) Digital Services Act (DSA) was initiated. It aims at ensuring safety, protecting fundamental rights and creating a friendly online environment. [[50]](#footnote-49) |
| January 20th 2025 | The revised EU Code of Conduct on Countering illegal hate speech online + (Code of Conduct +) was integrated into the regulatory framework of the DSA.[[51]](#footnote-50) |

# RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

## UN General Assembly Resolution 76/227 (24th December 2021) - Countering disinformation for the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms

This resolution aimes to mitigate the negative impact online disinformation, which often entails discrimination, has on the human rights and fundamental freedoms of vulnerable groups. Furthermore it is suggested that multiple parties contribute in combating this issue, such as the global community, business enterprises, online platforms, the Secretary General etc. This highlights the significance of this issue and how urgent its resolvement is. As expected, a variety of non governmental organizations, for instance Amnesty International stood by this resolution and promoted a human- rights based approach on combating the matter at hand.

## UN General Assembly Resolution 75/ 309 (21st July 2021) - Promoting Interreligious and intercultural dialogue and tolerance in countering hate speech

The Resolution passed on the 21st of July 2021 highlights global concerts about hate speech in all its forms. Meanwhile, it also proclaims the 18th of June as the International Day for Countering Hate Speech. The resolution at hand is also strongly connected to the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech. Moreover it calls for both Member States as well as international organizations to engage themselves in the process of countering hate speech by supporting interreligious and intercultural dialogues or by increasing public knowledge concerning the matter. Among other organizations, Unesco has played a vital role in promoting education and media literacy to assist individuals in resisting and confronting hate speech.

## UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech ( 18th June 2019)

The UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech,launched in 2019, consists of 13 UN commitments, aiming at tackling hate speech. Among others, it includes monitoring and analyzing hate speech, addressing root causes, drivers and actors of hate speech, engaging with new and traditional media and developing guidance for external communications. Moreover it is directly linked to peace operations in regions such as Mali with the purpose of monitoring hate speech trends, running community awareness campaigns and protecting human rights.

# PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

## European Union (EU) Digital Services Act (DSA)

The DSA is a regulation adopted by the EU in 2022 and addresses illegal content, transparent advertising and disinformation. It applies in online intermediaries and platforms such as marketplaces, social networks, content-sharing platforms, app stores and traveling and accommodation platforms. It actively contributed to the mitigation of systematic risks, for instance manipulation or disinformation. Additionally, it will regulate Artificial Intelligence (AI) by 2026.

## eSafety Commissioner - Australia

The eSafety Commissioner is a governmental organization, which the Australian government initially established in 2015 as the Children's eSafety Commissioner. The main priority of this organization is supporting individuals and promoting online safety. This is being accomplished by providing information, helping managing online safety risks and tackling harmful online material. eSafety was the world's first dedicated government organisation established to keep citizens safe online. Moreover, Australia's Online Safety Act 2021 is new legislation that makes Australia’s existing laws for online safety more expansive and much stronger.

## “Hate Crimes in Cyberspace” by Danniel Keats Citron

Danniel Keaton Citron’s book titled “Hate Crimes in Cyberspace” , published in 2014, offers a detailed view of the aggressive use of online platforms and the serious emotional, professional and financial harm[[52]](#footnote-51) it causes the victims. Moreover, Danniel Kaeton Citron offers a more legal perspective on the matter, as she is a research professor of law. Her book contains suggestions on how the matter should be regulated and highlights the extent in which it affects our lives.

# POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

## Directly informing the Youth

An effective way to combat this issue would be to directly inform the youth about the impact of online racist hate and cyberbullying, how to avoid it and how to seek help if they come across this in the future. This could be efficiently done by enhancing the school curriculum with age appropriate specialized programs run by specialists and by enabling access to a school psychologist. By directly informing the youth it could be ensured that incidents of cyber racism and cyberbullying would be minimized in the future. Additionally, it is crucial since teenagers are extremely active in multiple social media platforms at the moment and are constantly being influenced by the material they consume online.

## Support Relevant Non Governmental Organizations

Supporting existing NGOs already successfully addressing this topic should also be considered, as it would be a more drastic action and possibly more sufficient due to the specialists running such organizations. The organizations to be supported would be carefully selected with the help of various criteria such as organizational skills and involvement in combating the matter at hand. Moreover, in order to ensure the credibility and neutrality of the NGOs, their past actions should be thoroughly examined. Lastly they could be supported through various means, such as but definitely not limited to funding of advertising at an either local, national or even international level.

## Creation of an International Website - Line

The creation of an International Website or Line under global communication and collaboration aiming at assisting victims of online racist hate speech in expressing themselves and reporting the crime would be a highly impactful way to tackle the matter at hand due to manyfold reasons. The website or line would be run by psychiatrists or psychologists specialized in online racist hate speech, since multiple reliable studies have verified that oftentimes people feel more comfortable or are more likely to open up to an unknown person than to a friend. Although similar organizations already exist, many are not equipped with specialists, which may result in giving wrong advice or do not have the necessary resources or personnel to address the gigantic number of cyber racism incidents. In conclusion, an international line would be able to counter this issue much more effectively.

## Implementation of stricter punishments for those accountable for the hate speech and cyberbullying

Alongside preventing incidents of hate speech from happening in the first place it is vital to address online racist hate crimes by taking stricter measures that affect the responsible parties. Regardless of if they have led to someone being harmed physically or mentally, it is important that they face the consequences. These firmer legislations enforced by each countries’ judicial system could entail financial sanctions, imprisonment, mandatory community service. Actions like these would be highly influential, as they would not only discipline those accountable, but would also discourage others from cyberbullying.

## Continuous research on the matter

Research is a fundamental part of solving such a dominant problem in today' s society. An issue of great influence such as the one at hand should be carefully examined in order to be tackled, Therefore ongoing research could be a great way to further understand the issue and find the core aspects of it. This research could either be driven by a Non Governmental Organization (NGO)for instance the Cyberbullying Research Center, by a governmental organ such as the UKs’ Equality and Human Rights’ Commission or an organ of the UN. Regardless of this, a deeper understanding of this issue and a broader view of it could have a significant impact on our perspective and later on lead to innovative and successful solutions.

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