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## **Declaration by the Committee of Ministers on the legacy of the No Hate Speech Movement youth campaign**

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 29 May 2019  
at the 1347<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

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The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe,

Recalling that the youth campaign “No Hate Speech Movement” was initiated in 2013, at the initiative of the Advisory Council on Youth, to draw public attention to and mobilise public opinion about the risks and threats posed by hate speech to human rights and democratic values, that is to say those values that form the basis for peace and co-operation in Europe;

Welcoming the positive response of member States, youth organisations and other partners to the decision of the Committee of Ministers in May 2015 to extend the campaign as part of the Action Plan on the fight against violent extremism and radicalisation leading to terrorism;

Saluting and thanking member States, observers and special partner countries for having set up or supported campaigns in 45 countries on three continents, evidence of the universal relevance of combating hate speech;

Taking note of the achievements and lessons learned from the campaign, as they appear in the addendum to the current declaration, as the first broad international initiative to tackle hate speech and to address it as a major human rights issue, including the key role of the campaign in:

- a) raising awareness of young people and of society as a whole of the extent and risk of hate speech;
- b) equipping thousands of educators, youth workers and youth leaders with the competences they need to empower young people, through human rights education, to recognise, report and react to hate speech;
- c) mobilising youth organisations and young people across Europe and beyond to take a stand and fight against hate speech online;
- d) organising activities in solidarity with specific targets of hate speech and drawing attention to underestimated or under-reported manifestations of hate speech;
- e) creating counter and alternative narratives to hate speech and creating positive forms of engagement and identity for young people across national, cultural, social, religious, ethnic or organisational boundaries;
- f) re-assessing the importance of media and information literacy in formal and non-formal education;
- g) understanding internet governance as an area for the exercise of citizenship and youth participation;

Welcoming the active role played by all of the youth policy instruments of the Council of Europe in the campaign, including the European Youth Centres in Strasbourg and Budapest, the European Youth Foundation, the intergovernmental co-operation and the partnership with the European Union;

Recognising and welcoming the intersectoral and inter-institutional co-operation in the Council of Europe, in particular with the Parliamentary Assembly, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, the Conference of INGOs and the Human Rights Commissioner, and the synergies created with related processes in the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), the Internet Governance Strategy and the promotion of Competences for Democratic Citizenship;

Taking note of the co-operation with other international organisations through the campaign, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the OSCE, the League of Arab States, the European Union, including its Fundamental Rights Agency, and the EEA Norway Grants Financial Mechanism Office;

Thanking the Advisory Council on Youth and the European Steering Committee for Youth for their visionary role in leading the campaign as an outstanding example of co-management;

Being nonetheless concerned about the persistence, in spite of the efforts made both on- and offline, of hate speech, often combined with the phenomena of fake news and cyber bullying, and their negative impact on the present and future of human rights, democracy and the rule of law and on the participation and wellbeing of young people;

Noting with concern the spread of disinformation and hate speech through media and online channels;

Considering the dramatic increase in hatred and online hate speech across the continent, which has reached unprecedented levels in recent years, based on various grounds;

Taking the view that the best response to the prejudices and fear often underlying such malevolent behaviour is to continue the efforts already made, indeed to expand them and target specific groups by means of co-ordinated action by public authorities, youth organisations and other civil society stakeholders and individual activists through effective remedies, as well as preventive and educational measures;

1. decides to follow up the campaign, underlining the role of ECRI and the special responsibility of the Council of Europe's youth, human rights, anti-discrimination, education and media structures;
2. agrees that this follow-up could involve, amongst others:
  - strengthening education for democratic citizenship and human rights education, notably in the programme of the European Youth Centres and European Youth Foundation;
  - updating and developing new projects on media and information literacy, especially through non-formal and informal education;
  - supporting the full involvement of young people in internet governance processes;
  - supporting European and national youth networks and activities stemming from the campaign;
  - ensuring that adequate and comprehensive policies are in place to support effective responses to hate speech;
  - ensuring that impact assessment of the tools of the campaign is included in the follow-up projects;
3. considers that the experience acquired by the Council of Europe in the fight against racism and intolerance should be used by European and international organisations which share this concern, in particular in relation to the UN Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development;
4. agrees to transmit the present Declaration to the Parliamentary Assembly, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, the Human Rights Commissioner and the Council of Europe's bodies competent in the fight against racism and intolerance, in internet governance and in human rights education.