



EUROPEAN UNION

Permanent Delegation to the United Nations Office  
and other international organisations in Geneva

## **UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

### **Forum on Minority Issues 2020**

**19 - 20 November 2020**

#### **EU Intervention**

Madame chairperson,

The EU welcomes today's discussion. Given the worrying increase of expressions of hate against persons belonging to minorities our meeting is timely indeed.

Preventing and countering the spread of hate speech online is an emerging challenge. Fast removal or disabling of access to such content online is often essential in order to limit wider dissemination and harm. However effective and appropriate safeguards should be put in place to ensure that they act in a diligent and proportionate manner in full respect for human rights and that the unintended removal of legal content is prevented.

The EU's priority is to avoid that efforts to protect the public from internet-based threats would unduly limit the full enjoyment of freedom of expression, including by undemocratic authorities using fight against hate speech, manipulations of information and other forms of disinformation as a pretext to introduce overly restrictive legislation and improper monitoring practices.

The EU appreciates the October 2019 report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the freedom of opinion and expression, which identifies standards for handling hate speech.

Dedicated institutional attention to the issues of persons belonging to minorities in the context of hate speech is essential to prevent atrocities and reinforce unity and stability. The European Commission works with law enforcement and judicial authorities to provide guidance, best practices and training, including through targeted funding on compliance.

The Fundamental Rights Agency focuses its work on monitoring hate crime trends and assisting Member States in improving data collection.

Studies show that antigypsyism is one of the most commonly reported ground of hate speech.

The European Commission put forward in October 2020 a new ten-year framework for the inclusion and participation of Roma, Europe's largest ethnic minority, with minimum targets to be achieved by 2030

Furthermore, the European Commission agreed in 2016 with various social media platform upholders a "Code of conduct on countering illegal hate speech online" to help users notifying hate speech in these social platforms. According to regular monitoring activities carried out by the Commission, the Code has achieved fast progress in review and removal of content. The EU is also funding a large number of projects on online hate speech and runs different campaigns on the issue.

Member States should support civil society in monitoring and reporting hate crimes and hate speech against Roma and assist victims in reporting hate crimes and hate speech.

I thank you.