

Op:Code

Open Code for Hate-free Communication



Co-Funded by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme of the European Union (2014 - 2020)

Gender based hate speech

Transnational report

Estonia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Spain



March 2021



digiQ



Methodology

Research objective



To document online sexist hate speech occurrence and intensity in order to identify the main characteristics of these hate narratives



Definition

Victim blaming and re-victimisation; “slut-shaming”; body-shaming; “revenge porn” (the sharing of explicit or sexual images without consent); brutal and sexualised threats of death, rape and violence; offensive comments on appearance, sexuality, sexual orientation or gender roles; but also false compliments or supposed jokes, using humour to humiliate and ridicule the target. (Council of Europe)



Documented channels/platforms

Social media accounts of female politicians, influencers, feminist organisations; social media accounts of female celebrities; vlogs and blogs, if the case.

Social media accounts and platforms (vlogs/blogs) of male politicians, influencers, conservative organisations that have a public “record” of sexist statements and/or a misogynistic agenda.



Documented topics

Most relevant events recorded between 2019 - 2021: social and political issues related to gender equality (Pro-Life vs Pro-Choice, gender representation in politics and public affairs, domestic violence, gender studies, politically correctness etc), lifestyle, media reports (news articles) of incidents that involved women etc

Conclusions



Sexism is deeply rooted in all documented countries, and the intensity of hateful narratives varies from casual trivialities to violent threats or even attacks against women



The political context is a catalyst for sexist discourse



Along with the cultural stereotypes on gender roles, an ideological confrontation between progressivism and conservatism is outlined



Women in politics or in high office are subject to ridicule and/or offensive comments



“You Asked for It” (victim blaming and shaming) narrative is extensive in Estonia, Slovakia, Poland and Romania



Feminism and feminist movements are framed as a societal threat in all participating countries in order to enhance conservative political agenda of various state actors

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SEXIST HATE SPEECH IN ESTONIA

by Liina Laanpere, Kelly Grossthal (Estonian Human Rights Centre)



Introduction

The Estonian legal framework for gender equality is enshrined in the [Gender Equality Act](#), adopted in 2004, which defines and prohibits gender-based discrimination in both the public and private sectors and obliges the authorities, educational institutions and employers to promote equality between women and men. In 2016, Estonia adopted the [Welfare Development Plan 2016–2023](#), which includes a gender equality sub-objective, targeting issues such as equal economic independence of women and men, the gender pay gap, balanced participation, and the negative impact of gender stereotypes.

Also in 2016, the fifth and most recent gender equality [monitoring](#) was commissioned by the Ministry of Social Affairs. The monitoring results showed that in a large part of Estonian families roles within the family and distribution of household chores adhere to rather traditional gender roles. Professional segmentation of men and women was also reflected in the monitoring results, as well as the perception that there are better opportunities in the labour market for men than there are for women.

In a [report](#) following her visit to Estonia in 2018, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights expressed the need to address persistent gender stereotypes and prejudices about the traditional roles of women and men in Estonia. Furthermore, the Commissioner stressed that violence against women remains a pervasive human rights violation in Estonia and recommended that authorities engage in public campaigns against gender based violence. The Commissioner further stressed the importance of ensuring that the law enforcement and judicial systems offer effective responses in these cases.

Sexist hate speech has not specifically been a topic of discussion in Estonia. Nevertheless, combating hate speech in general has been a divisive issue in the Estonian society as the previous government persistently argued that any stricter hate speech regulation would be an attack on freedom of expression. This narrative was often also picked up by the media. The current Estonian legislation does not provide an effective possibility for prosecuting hate speech – the Penal Code includes a provision for “incitement to hatred”, however, since the provision requires the existence of “danger to the life, health or property of a person”, it is not effective in practice. The new Minister of Justice has promised to put the criminalisation of hate speech back on the agenda.

Estonia’s previous ruling coalition included a far-right political party, the Conservative People's Party of Estonia (EKRE), whose leading members regularly attracted attention for their sexist statements, such as calling the Estonian president an “emotionally heated woman” and the Finnish prime minister a “sales girl”. However, in January 2021, this government collapsed following a corruption scandal, which resulted in a new coalition with Estonia’s first ever female prime minister, as well as six other female ministers.



Description of the phenomenon

In Estonia, the main social media platforms where sexist hate speech can be found are Facebook and Twitter. The comments outlined below were documented by monitoring the accounts of prominent female politicians, male politicians, other public figures, supporter groups of the Conservative People's Party of Estonia (EKRE), as well as EKRE's news platform Uued Uudised, and Facebook pages of mainstream newspapers. In addition, the authors performed keyword searches on Twitter and Facebook, using keywords such as "harassment", "rape", "slut", "abortion", "domestic violence", etc.

In general, the most prevalent sexist hate speech on the monitored social media platforms could be categorised into three dominant narratives:

The denial and/or trivialisation of sexual assault and harassment, including a testimony of sexual assault or harassment discredited in the public space and consequently on social media. Harassment is often portrayed as a joke, as a normal part of life - an activity that could be easily stopped if women really did not like it.

Another narrative portrays women who claim to have survived sexual assault as women who in reality lack men's attention and are not desirable enough. Also, research found use of misogynistic language that objectifies or degrades women, the objectification of women's bodies, and the glamorisation of sexual violence, thereby creating a society that disregards women's rights and safety.

Ahistamata jätmine on täpselt samasugune ahistamine

Translated from Estonian by Google

Not harassing is exactly the same harassment

Mehed, kui näete ilusat tüdrukut, siis teie esimene mõte ei tohiks olla, et paneks küll, vaid see et kas ta su pagaasnikusse ära mahub

Translated from Estonian by Google

Men, when you see a beautiful girl, your first thought shouldn't be to put it on, but to see if she can fit in your luggage.

Victim blaming. Mostly the posts and comments support the acceptance of gendered violence and the culture of blame attached to its victims. Social media narratives support the idea that rape and harassment victims are at least partly to blame for their own victimisation. In addition, scrutinising a victim's dress, mental state, motives, and history is prevalent.

For example, one topic, which has generated victim-blaming comments on social media, is the court case of the former director of the National Opera who has been charged with sexual harassment. These comments can mainly be found under newspaper articles on Facebook and include comments stating that the women involved were the guilty ones, also claiming they "wanted male attention", "should have just left" or have a "loose behaviour".

Well, I agree with you [redacted] women are guilty. I would like to tell these accusers to check your behavior and analyze where the mistake was made, where the reason was given that you can be with me....

Like · Reply · See original (Estonian) · 4 w



Complained by women who lacked the attention of men, mediocre women. Reminds me of how many years ago in the Harju cafe in Tallinn could have been sitting in a lonely table all evening, and as soon as a new male visitor came through the door, this woman shouted across the hall: " I AM A MEN HATER ". The comments are excessive - " No comment!"

Like · Reply · See original (Estonian) · 5 w



This woman could have just gone away, but I guess she liked it, although I don't think that this situation happened at all, there is some kind of comber going on.

Like · Reply · See original (Estonian) · 5 w



In addition, when issues related to domestic violence are discussed on social media, the comments often include victim-blaming, claiming that domestic violence is usually initiated by the victim's own behaviour.

Unfortunately, domestic violence is usually initiated by women themselves... With their own stupid mouth..., because she wants to show herself bigger and wiser than a man....
Girls have not been taught and raised to keep a family and proper sexual behavior....

Women in politics deal with sexism and hatred on social media while voicing their political opinions but also simply for being elected or nominated for political positions. Foul and personal attacks on social media often carry a message meant to intimidate or silence women in politics. Many attacks are sexist, objectifying, questioning female politicians' skills, knowledge and ability to perform in high positions. Another narrative cultivates the idea of so-called traditional gender role norms that female politicians do not follow. These posts state that women are not fit for power and women are better at raising children than holding high positions.

The new Estonian Prime Minister Kaja Kallas has been the target of many sexist comments on social media, particularly in EKRE supporter groups on Facebook. For example, the documented comments express views such as that politics is a man's job or that women lack the logical thinking needed for politics. These comments also call Kaja Kallas a whore, express that she should get raped by refugees (in response to her refugee-friendly statements).

On Kaja Kallas' own Facebook page there are also a few sexist comments about women's unsuitability for important political roles. It is noteworthy that the authors of such comments are both male and female.

Let them rape her some times then the thought will change...

Like · Share · See original (Estonian) · 3 w

13

Let the Estonian men rule,

Like · Reply · See original (Estonian) · 1 y

Ladies don't mind but tell me why the confidence goes away when the president is a woman, the prime minister is a woman and the foreign minister is a woman.

Carrying a state burden on a woman's shoulders is still hugely heavy and if you get tired and bored, make sure to pass it over. Maybe you've already asked yourself: " Why do I do this?" A woman is still an emotional creature and needs nothing else than these state numbers and things and it could be a threat to the country because when a person gets tired and doesn't want to report anymore , then emotional things and decisions can come.

Like · Reply · See original (Estonian) · 2 w

7

In addition to the main narratives, there are other topics which occasionally emerge whenever relevant articles are published in the media, such as abortion.

In November and December 2020, the topic of abortion received quite a lot of media attention because EKRE promised a large amount of funding to an anti-abortion movement. Some of the comments on Facebook included: slut-shaming women who have abortions, for example, claiming that women should have to pay for abortions themselves as this would “discipline women”; women who need abortions have “loose panties”; and needing an abortion “shows a certain lifestyle”.

[Redacted]
: No one is talking about banning but funding, you want to have an abortion then you pay not the country anymore. I think this kind of thing disciplines women to observe their behavior.

Like · Reply · See original (Estonian) · 10 w



[Redacted]
Well, we have a lot of those who have suffered with a loose panty.

Like · Reply · See original (Estonian) · 9 w

[Redacted]
In addition, I mean, if you need an abortion then does it show a certain lifestyle or not? These kind of women aren't worth to be named a mother if they should be sariaborters or what?

Like · Reply · See original (Estonian) · 9 w





Conclusions

Sexist speech and sexist hate speech are noticeable and easy to find on Estonian social media. Most of the sexist posts and comments on social media would potentially not be considered hate speech by law or community standards of social media platforms, yet they are serious violation of women's integrity and contribute to harassment-related social norms. Therefore, sexist social media content should potentially be tackled differently from online hate speech that is easy to distinguish and report. In addition, it should be stressed that sexist speech does not go unnoticed as many react, oppose and debate. Counter narratives and debates are especially visible on Estonian Twitter.

Recommendations

1

In general, there is a need to take a stand against sexist hate speech, denounce it when it happens and hold the authors accountable without victimising the victims.

2

Research the phenomenon of sexist hate speech and the different forms it takes in the context of Estonian social media, including the harm that it causes. There is a clear need to collect data and draft shadow reports to push for policy change.

3

There is a need for concrete steps to ensure more effective moderation in social media regarding sexist hate speech.

4

There is lack of awareness and unwillingness to address the issue that in turn contributes to a climate of impunity for abusers. Therefore, human rights education in the field and general advocacy work is very much needed.

SEXIST HATE SPEECH IN POLAND

by Jacek Dziegielewski, Anna Tatar and Rafal Pankowski (Never Again Association)



Introduction

Sexist hate speech constitutes an increasing problem and a great source of concern in Poland nowadays. While it is mainly prevalent on social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, it is interesting to note that sexist hate speech takes many different forms in internet discussions. These manifestations of hatred inherently lead to an escalation of aggression, violence and discrimination in real life. They tend to be “triggered” by certain events that take place at the national level, much like other kinds of hate speech – homophobic or anti-refugee.

When it comes to the legal framework, gender discrimination is still not sufficiently covered by Polish law. Article 32 of the Polish Constitution states that “no one should be discriminated against for any reason” and that “everyone is equal before the law”. Additionally, Article 257 of the Polish Penal Code states that inciting hatred on the grounds of national, ethnical, religious differences or lack of religious beliefs is forbidden. The article does not, however, protect people who are victims of hate crimes on other bases, such as gender, age, sexual orientation, or disability. This omission also has a huge negative impact for members of the LGBTQ+ community.

The only mention of gender in the Polish law can be found within the work law, which mentions in article 18 that employees should not be discriminated, specifically on the grounds of gender, age, ethnicity and religion, among several others.

Therefore, without a clear legal basis, pursuing gender-related hate crimes or hate speech becomes much harder and complicated.



Description of the phenomenon

A breaking point for the existing wave of sexist hate speech in Poland was the year 2020 and, specifically, October 22nd.

It was on this date that the Constitutional Tribunal issued a verdict exacerbating the Polish abortion law, making abortion illegal in case of severe disease of the fetus.

This ruling sparked a massive outrage, causing giant protests in nearly every Polish city (including smaller ones). The bigger protests gathered hundreds of thousands of protesters (in Warsaw, the number was a hundred thousand at the biggest demonstration), mainly young women who, as stated previously, were at this point “chosen” as victims of harassment.

Far-right pundits and personas took to the internet and attacked the protesters in a vulgar and aggressive manner. Those verbal attacks started in October and continue to this day, as the protests aren't completely over as of February 2021 (the sentence of the Tribunal has only been published on January 28th).

Those attacks were especially vicious and sexist in that they did not critique the stance of the protesting women, but rather pertained to their appearance and gender.

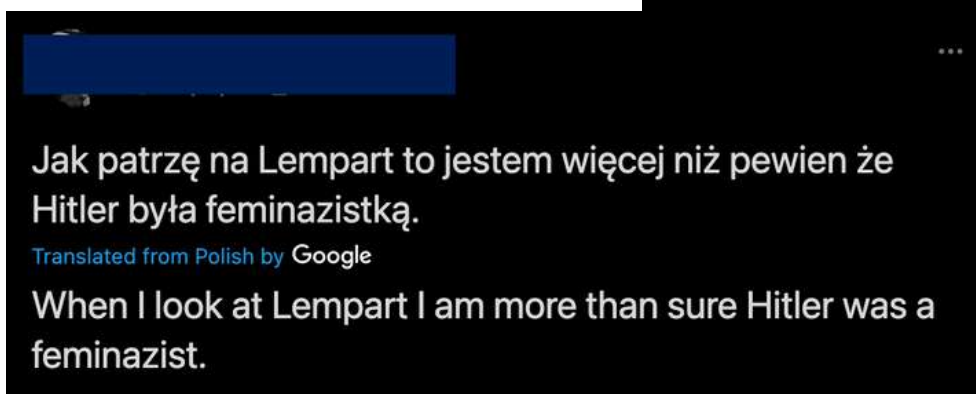
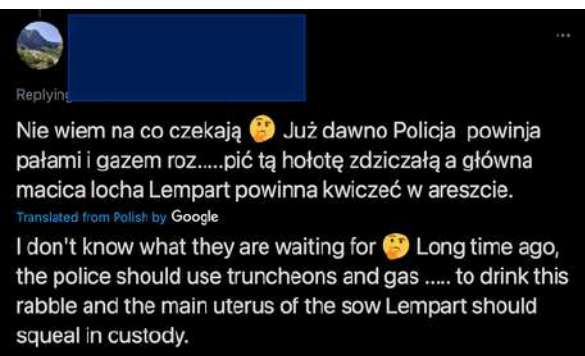
Examples of more notable incidents could be tweets by a very popular far-right journalist (working for public media for a long time, until recently) Rafał Ziemkiewicz, who called protesting women “a vulgar slut type”, among many other tweets on this subject. He also said in TV Republika (right wing private TV station) that he wonders if “feminists are not agents whose job is to compromise women. They are furious, vulgar and have nothing to do with normal behaviour”.

The protests were largely organized by the Polish Women Strike, led by Marta Lempart. She alone was a victim of severe hatred and threats. On Twitter, she was called “a pig”, “behaving like she never had an orgasm”; one person wrote that “looking at Lempart I am more than sure that Hitler was a feminazi”.

Ziemkiewicz on demonstrating women: "the type of hens is dominant" *****



October 25, 2020



Another victim of hatred, which later materialized as a threat, was Klaudia Jachira, a deputy to Sejm (lower chamber of Polish Parliament) elected from the opposition's list. YouTuber Aleksander Jabłonowski (real name Wojciech Olszański) said in one of his video materials published on YouTube that Jachira is "perfect to be raped".



Nevertheless, it is crucial to note that not only prominent women in the women's rights movement were targeted by hate speech, as women who were simply taking part in or supporting the protests also became targets. It is a somewhat different topic, because the previous examples were pertaining to hate speech targeted towards public figures. While such people should expect criticism, hate speech far exceeds the limits of what can even be called "criticism".

In the cases in which the targets of hate were women in general however, we are dealing with an extreme form of misogyny, probably deeply rooted, that is often triggered by events such as strikes and protests.



Readers discretion advised.

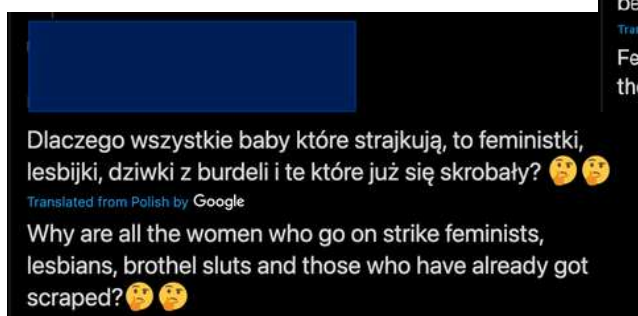
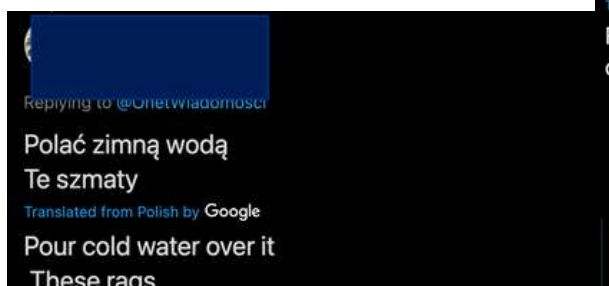
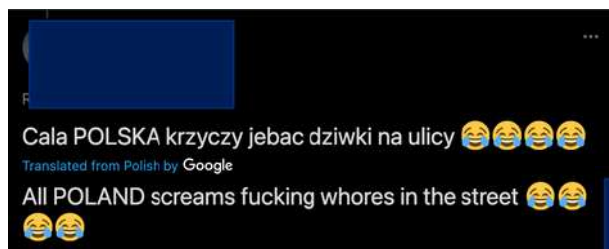
The following section includes explicit and violent language.

The October protests sparked the resurfacing of this misogyny, which for a while replaced previous hatred towards the LGBTQ+ community or refugees. Examples of such more generalized hate speech online are: "The police should long ago treat them with gas and nightstick", "[we should] pour cold water on these sluts", "Whole Poland shouts: fuck whores on the streets", "why are all women that take part in the protest feminists, lesbians, whores from brothels and those who already had abortions?"[, "whores, sowers of plague and death, lesbians, feminists and faggots – pestilence"[, "Sluts, whores, fucked up feminists, faggots and left wing trash has crawled on the streets", "they're not ladies – just regular feminists and sluts. Let's say the truth and not offend normal women", "those who protest are prostitutes, feminists that even blind man would not touch, faggots and deviants", "feminists are not women, they are sluts without culture".



Readers discretion advised.

The following section includes explicit and violent language.



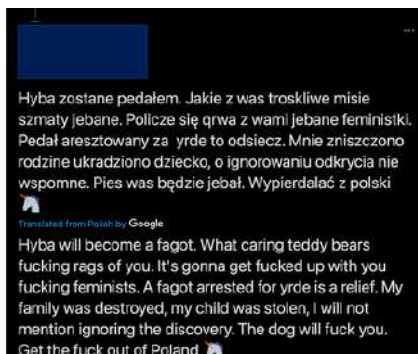
Some tweets (not removed by Twitter) contained direct threats, like the one with a photo of a man wielding several firearms with the caption “I will deal with you fucking feminists. (...) Get the fuck out of Poland”.

There are even comments like the one on Facebook stating: “It’s a shame that the concentration camps were 80 years ago. It would be good to make soap of Mrs Lempart and a rag for the floor of her hair”.



Readers discretion advised.

The following section includes explicit and violent language.



Hate speech also made its way into the public government-funded media. In the Polish Radio, Jan Pietrzak, a comedian and journalist known for his controversial and right-wing views, as well as for being a vocal supporter of the ruling conservative party Law and Justice (PiS, Prawo i Sprawiedliwość), expressed the opinion that we can see “madness observed in the behavior of hysteric groups of emotional women”.

Also, catholic priests used hate speech towards women. A well-known and much discussed example is father Tadeusz Rydzyk, a redeptorist closely connected to the current ruling party. He stated in February 2021 that the protests are “satanic orgies”.

When it comes to legal measures, there were several cases over the last years when sexist hate speech towards women made its way to the court. In October 2017 Roman Sklepowicz, a lawyer known for his aggressive far-right views and frequent offensive speech, said about women marching in a demonstration “who fucks this?”. The case ended in court and it took more than 3 years to finalize. On January 29th 2021 his case was finalized and the judge acquitted Sklepowicz. The substantiation was that his words were immoral and unethical, but not illegal.

It is a common outcome of similar court cases in Poland. On the other hand, Marcin Rola, host of YouTube television wRealu24, was found guilty in similar case. In 2018, he called protesting women “amoebas and quarter-brains, idiots, feminazis”. He was sentenced for three months in probation, social works and a fine.

A separate matter, not directly connected with online hate speech, is real-life violence. It is clear that widespread online hatred influences people’s behavior in real life. In this case, protesters in many cities were viciously attacked by groups of mostly young men, who used physical violence, beat young and older women to the extent that many of the victims needed medical treatment.



CONCLUSION

Recommendations

1

When combating sexist hate speech, both online and offline, the most important part is to convince social platforms to react properly – to remove hateful comments, suspend accounts that frequently spread hate speech, and also provide a clear way of communicating with users reporting such content. As most of the reports are not assessed without given reason, and many of the assessed content is not removed due to, supposedly, “not violating the terms of service” – while the terms of service are clearly violated (and so is the country law in many cases such as threats of violence. It is an overall trend that affects Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. The tweets mentioned in this text were all reported to Twitter, but we received no response and neither of them was removed – all are still publicly visible and accessible.

2

Another recommendation is to update the Penal Code to include protection of more marginalized groups that are prone to discrimination and attacks – discrimination based on gender, age, sexual orientation should definitely be penalized. However, even the existing rules are very rarely used, for example the article protecting victims of racist or religiously motivated violence. So we have to pressure authorities to pursue perpetrators of hate speech and hate crimes and start from making a good use of the tools we already have.

SEXIST HATE SPEECH IN ROMANIA

by Ionut Codreanu, David Manolache (ActiveWatch)



Introduction

Romania ratified the Istanbul Convention in 2016 and since then there have been several legislative measures to prevent and combat gender-based violence. In 2018, the framework Law on equal opportunities for women and men introduced the updated definition of gender-based violence.

At the institutional level, the main bodies responsible for ensuring equal and non-discriminatory treatment for women are the National Agency for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (ANES, established in 2002) and the National Council for Combating Discrimination (CNCD, established in 2001).

Despite the institutional and legislative framework dedicated to reducing violence against women, little significant progress has been made in recent years. In 2019, the UN report “Global study on homicides. Crimes against women and girls” reported that 30% of women in Romania were physically or sexually abused at least once. The same report showed that in that year 20,000 women were hit and another 44 were killed in domestic conflicts. In 2020, in the COVID-19 pandemic context, studies showed, compared to the previous year, an increase of almost 20% in aggressions against women that were reported to the police.

Romania is also one of the European countries with the highest incidence of human trafficking. Some statistics estimated in 2019 that almost 70% of women and girls who are victims of international trafficking and pimping networks come from Romania.

FEBRUARY 2021

Beyond the statistics, women in Romania face daily the prejudices and stereotypes generated by a local masculinized and sometimes traditionalist culture. Despite the efforts of non-governmental organizations to promote a feminist agenda, at the level of public policy, but also of public discourse, women are underrepresented. In fact, in the 2020 parliamentary elections, only 17% of members of parliament were women. The current government cabinet has only one female member.

In this social and political environment dominated by inequality, sexism and the discourse of hatred on the basis of gender are gradually expanding.



Description of the phenomenon

Gender-based hate speech varies in intensity from the use of degrading and stereotypical language to the encouragement of extreme forms of violence against women. Stereotypical sexism can be identified mainly in topics related to feminist movements or certain women in Romanian politics. Instead, the violence of speech reaches alarming levels when public figures are presented who have been victims of some form of physical or sexual abuse. In such cases, the abuse is justified or claimed as a form of sanction because the victim has not been careful enough or does not meet certain standards of morality. The phenomenon has been identified both in the case of the adult population, but also in the case of some influencers who address mainly young audiences.



Readers discretion advised.

The following section includes explicit and violent language.

In the summer of 2020, the public opinion was outraged by one of Alexandru Balan's vlogs, a YouTuber with a community of over 850,000 subscribers. In that vlog, Balan was promoting a very graphic rape-calling of young women for their perceived loose appearances. The subject came to the public's attention only when the Filia Center, an organization that advocates for women's rights, filed an official complaint for incitement to hatred and rape. At the end of the investigation and after admitting guilt, the Romanian vlogger was criminally fined with about 5,500 euros.

"I saw a girl today. I don't think it was 11th grade. I saw all of them. Honestly, I liked it. But that deserves to be violated. I mean, like ... with your feet in your mouth. Spit in her mouth, tell her who your dad is. To kick her, to slap her, to hold her head against the walls. Put his foot on his face like that. I have some weirder fetishes. I mean, you could see he liked the snake. These must not be forgiven. "

Caption source: scena9.ro

But this scandal generated a wave of reactions in society, reactions that ranged from condemning this type of speech to solidarity with Alexandru Balan. This solidarity was also manifested through direct threatening messages against activists who filed a complaint with the authorities.



Readers discretion advised.

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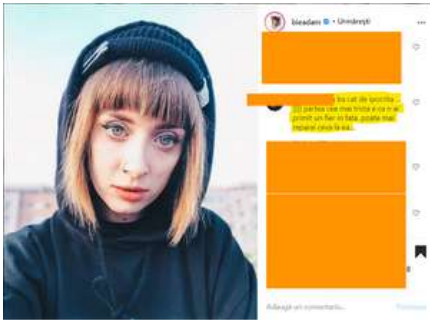
Chill, after seeing this video I committed two rapes and no one caught me.



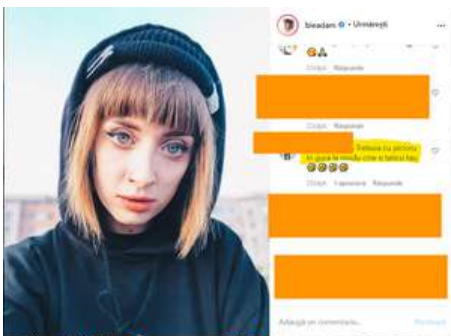
(...) all women are hores and they deserve to be arsoned alive. (...) I would extract your crazy ideas from your head with an axe.

Caption source: scena9.ro

In fact, sexist discourse and misogyny can also be identified in situations where influencers are women, who are often the target of offensive comments and sexual allusions, and even incitement to physical violence.



You're such a hypocrite. The worst part is that you didn't get hit with a rod in the face. Maybe that would've fix your face.



[He should've] kick you with his foot in your face; like who's your dady.

Hate speech becomes even more virulent for girls and women in the social area, especially when they are presented in the media after being assaulted by their partners. If in the case of YouTube or Instagram the audience that promotes sexism is predominantly young and consists of men, in the case of celebrity subjects who have been victims of violence, the audience is more demographically heterogeneous. Thus, narratives such as "you asked for it" are also promoted by women, a situation that indicates the existence of reversed misogyny among users in Romania.

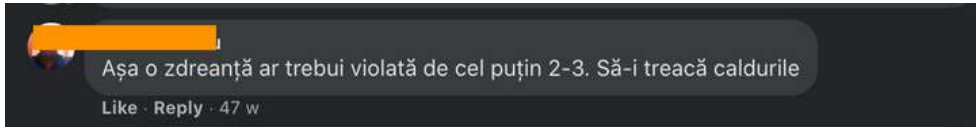


Readers discretion advised.

The following section includes explicit and violent language.



Sluts, no wonder she got beaten, she's just another finicky hore. The hell with them; they all deserve to be raped, sold and killed.

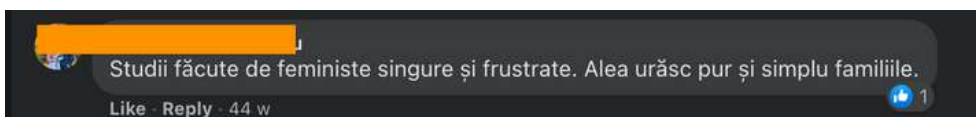


Such a tramp should be raped two or three times a day. Until her heat will pass.

Feminist movements and organizations are also targets of stereotypical and offensive discourse. Hostile messages range from traditionalist and conspiratorial theses, according to which feminist movements are a threat to families, to degrading and defamatory labeling.

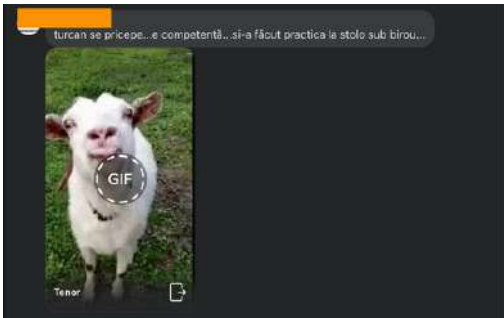


Look at her green dyed hair and her pierced snout. 99% she's a feminizda [derogatory name for feminists that partially refers to female genitalia]



Random studies produced by lonely and frustrated feminists. They simply hate families.

Despite a very low presence in the public sphere, women in politics are often targets of misogyny. Hateful messages ridicule their ability to hold public office and sometimes lead to the idea that they have built their careers using sexuality.

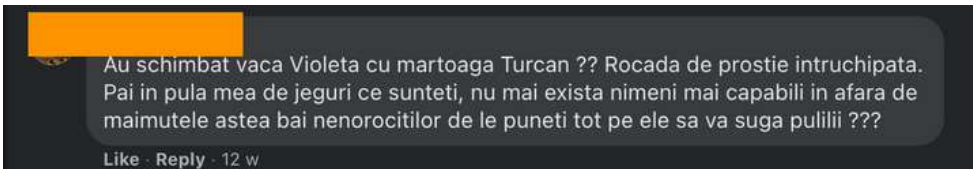


Turcan [current Minister of Labor] she knows the drill, she's a competent ever since she did her internship under Stolo's desk [reference to an intimate relationship with a male politician].



Readers discretion advised.

The following section includes explicit and violent language.



So they switched from cow Violeta [former Minister of Labour] to Turcan the hack. [...] was nobody else to chose for other than these two monkeys [offensive language]



Recommendations

1

The Best Practice Guideline in Influencer Marketing, adopted in 2020, should include special provisions on ethical standards for influencers, brands and marketing agencies. Artificial outreach by hateful and discriminatory conduct should be firmly discouraged.

2

Media outlets that promote controversial stories on celebrities that were subject to various forms of abuse should moderate users' interactions in order to avoid hateful conduct.

3

Political parties and governmental agencies should be more active in countering gender based hate speech and gender based hate speech.

SEXIST HATE SPEECH IN SLOVAKIA

by Martin Susol (DigiQ)



Introduction

In Slovakia, gender-based violence and gender stereotypes are deeply rooted in the social and cultural structures, norms and values that govern society and is often supported by a culture of denial and silence.

The Constitution of the Slovak Republic in Art. 12 enshrines the general principle of equality and the prohibition of discrimination on any ground. The Anti-Discrimination Act also prohibits discrimination and obliges all to respect the principle of equal treatment in employment, education, health care, social security and the provision of goods and services.

The prohibition of discrimination enshrined in Art. 4 is also in accordance with the international obligations of the Slovak Republic resulting from its binding by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights or the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, as amended.

According to the latest Eurobarometer results, it is clear that the public's attitude towards violence is very benevolent. For more than 20 years, since violence against women gradually began to be thematized in Slovakia, a large part of the public thinks that women experiencing violence exaggerate or make it up. There is also a low awareness of the services that are available to women in various places in Slovakia.

In recent years, there have been some improvements in the field of gender equality, which have moved the level of gender equality closer to that in the EU countries. The changes were contributed by experts who had the opportunity to work at the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs of the Slovak Family and representatives of non-governmental organizations who participated in the previous changes in improving the situation in the field of gender equality.

Non-governmental organizations operating in Slovakia have significantly contributed to the improvement of gender equality issues, among them being Aktívne ženy (Active Women), Možnosť voľby (Pro Choice), Aliancia žien Slovenska (Alliance of Women in Slovakia), Aspekt – Zájmové združenie žien (Aspekt – Association of Women), Centrum rodových štúdií (Gender Studies of Bratislava), Fenestra, Národné centrum pre rovnosť príležitostí (National Centre for Equal Opportunities), Združenie žien Slovenska (Association of Women in Slovakia) and others.

Yet, consistent efforts must be invested to improve the social climate and women's perception.

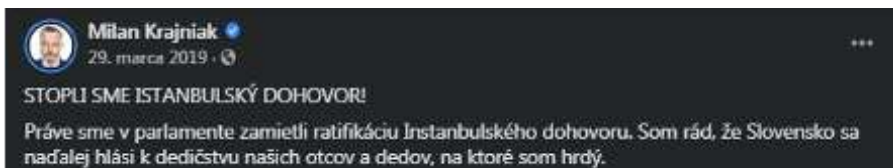


Description of the phenomenon

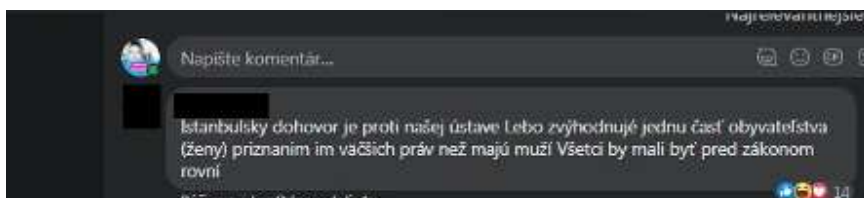
The highest incidence of hate speech in connection with gender-based violence in Slovakia has increased in the last two years during the period when the parliament negotiated the ratification of the so-called Istanbul Convention, i.e. Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. Misleading information was spread by some conservative media and dailies. Both populist parliamentary and non-parliamentary parties have used this situation to spread lies, half-truths and misinformation aimed at raising fears about the convention, preventing it from being approved and gaining cheap political points for frightened and poorly oriented voters. The Istanbul Convention in Slovakia has not been ratified due to a lack of political will.



Istanbul ideological evil. It's not about a right, it's about ideology.



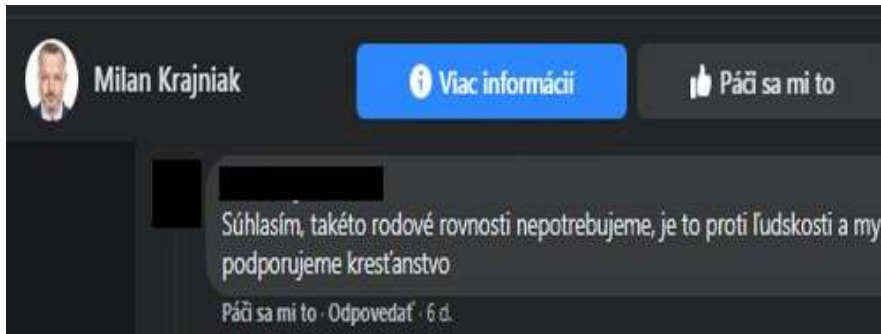
We have stopped the Istanbul convention! We have just rejected the ratification of Istanbul convention in parliament. I am glad that Slovakia continues to recall the heritage of our fathers and grandfathers, which I am so proud of.



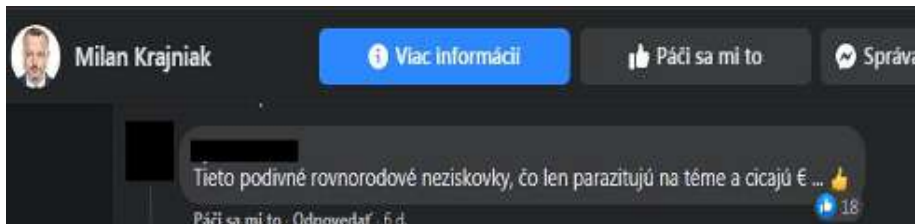
Istanbul convention is against our constitution as it gives preferential treatment only to one part of the population (women), giving them more rights than there are for me. Everyone should be equal in the eyes of the law.

In 2020, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic stopped subsidies for organizations that have been dealing with the issue of gender equality for a long time and assigned subsidies to organizations that are characterized by a conservative worldview and the fight for the traditional family and against "gender" propaganda.

Milan Krajniak, head of the Ministry of Labour, have contributed to the negative perception of the issue of gender equality by his messages on social media triggered hate speech against organizations that deal with the issue of gender equality. At some point he even endorsed and promoted an online survey that expressed high resistance on funding NGOs working on gender equality issues.

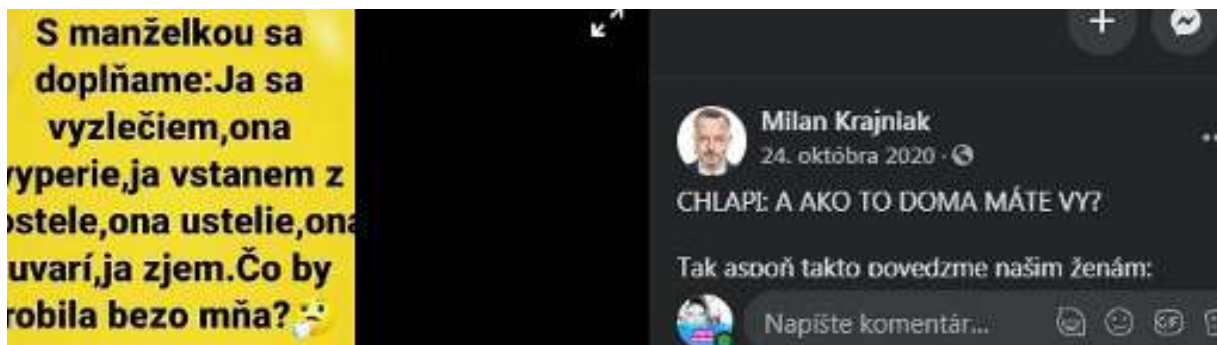


I agree, we don't need this gender equality, it is against human nature and we support Christianity.



Those strange NGOs of gender equality, they are just parasites of the subject and suck the money...

In October 2020, Krajniak has been highly criticized by the feminist organizations and representatives of gender equality NGOs, due to a controversial and sexist comment.



Guys, how do you have it organized at home? So at least let's say to our women: „ With my wife we complement each other: I get undressed, she washes the clothes, I wake up, she makes the bed, she cooks, I eat. What would she do without me?“

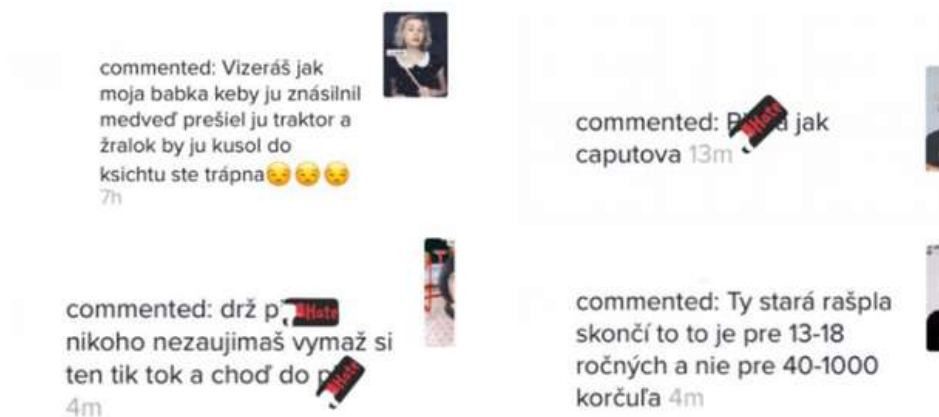
Gender stereotypes are strongly rooted in society, especially in the countryside and in rural areas of the country. Given that most political parties represented in the parliament are also conservatively oriented, parties with liberal elements are represented by a minority and some of them outside parliament. Gender-based hate speech has also been reflected on social networks, among politicians, influencers and women who have experienced some kind of success.

A teacher from Eastern Slovakia active both on Instagram and TikTok with her number of followers growing recorded a high number of hate messages.

WARNING

Readers discretion advised.

The following section includes explicit and violent language.



You look like my grandmother as if she was raped, a tractor would roll over her and a shark would kiss her in her face. You're embarrassing.



Bitch just like Čaputová

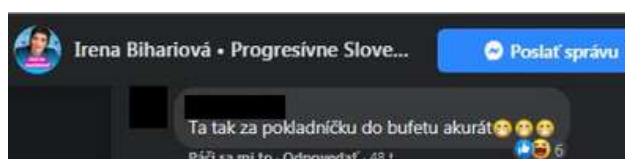
You old slut, go away, this is for 13-18 years old people, not for 40-1000

Recently a popular Slovak journalist Ms Kovačic Hanzelová needed to limit the reach of her Facebook profile due to high amount of hate, a lot of it targeting her.



After 10 years, I changed my settings. I originally wanted to cancel this profile, but in the end some of you convinced me not to, so I decided to change who can comment on my posts. (...) Often people want the Roma to die, they write aggressive messages, many people write disgusting things about myself, and I just said to myself that it was enough. (...) I'm not paid to manage hatred from anonymous people, I won't devote time or energy to it.

A significant number of hateful and sexist comments occurred the politician Irena Bihariová announced that she became a leader of the liberal movement.



Maybe as a cashier in a bar, at most



Beauty for the zoo, the nature played an ugly game with you



Recommendations

1

It is necessary to ensure that all forms of gender-based violence against women in all areas of life, which constitute a violation of women's physical, sexual and mental integrity, are outlawed and that legal sanctions commensurate with the seriousness of attacks and civil remedies are introduced without delay.

2

Social platforms should propose a clear system for reporting contributions, but also transparent conditions for removing hateful illegal content that is unambiguous and comprehensible.

3

States should consider the inclusion of gender equality in curricula at all levels of education, all types and types of schools, public and private, from early childhood to adulthood, and in human rights programs.

4

Competent authorities should take into account that NGOs involved in mitigating hate speech often do not have the staff or financial capacity to address this issue without their support. There is also a need for national states to allocate funding and capacity to monitor hate speech in connection with gender-based violence.

5

Development of awareness campaigns that should target women and men from all walks of life; to people in educational institutions, in health and social services, in law enforcement agencies and other professions, and to institutions involved in the prevention or protection against violence; including those at the local level; they should also be targeted at representatives of religious and traditional communities; and to perpetrators of any form of gender-based violence in order to prevent its recurrence.

SEXIST HATE SPEECH IN SPAIN

by Valentín González, Sonia Conde (Movimiento contra la Intolerancia)



Introduction

The collective and public awareness on gender issues began strongly in Spain in the 1990s. A series of successive murders that shocked the public opinion led to the beginning of consensus and the need to articulate policies on gender. Specifically, the case of Ana Orantes, a woman burned alive by her husband, after returning from giving testimony on a television program.

The commotion generated by this event led to the demands of the feminist movement being heard and a social debate on the matter was fostered. All of this led to the approval of the comprehensive law against sexist violence in 2004, which included legislative changes in criminal matters, as well as protocols for assistance to victims of sexist violence, as well as aspects related to sexist hate speech, along with proposals in the field of the judiciary and prosecutors. Since then, the social debate has been achieving very broad consensus on gender equality policies and the prevention of misogyny.

Recently, the legal framework has been revised by the reform of article 22.4 of the Penal Code that extends to gender, motivation by gender, as an aggravating circumstance in the application of a penalty. Additionally, it has been adopted a State pact against gender violence that provisions budgetary resources for all levels of the administration to help victims and fight against gender hate speech.

FEBRUARY 2021

Along with the institutional and legal reforms the popular culture has contributed to raising awareness on sexist violence.
awareness in society.

Despite all this progress, sexism and misogyny are persistent, as cultural stereotypes are deeply embedded within the society.



Description of the phenomenon

More recently, the fragile consensus on fighting sexism has been partially compromised with the emergence of the right-wing populism in Spain. Vox Party is the most prominent voice that is constantly campaigning against the so-called "gender ideology". Their efforts in redefining concepts reaches its maximum expression in the denial of gender violence by indexing it as "intra-family violence", which is a more concealed form of gender motivated violence.

According to this position, feminism would be an imposition that discriminates against men, seeks to destroy the family and represents a "hidden" agenda close to conspiracy theories (global control, destruction of humankind etc).

This thesis is expressed in different degrees of hostility, but it works as a well-constructed narrative whose objective is to neutralize the social consensus on gender politics.



The author of the post criticizes a statement made by Cristina Finch, a well-known feminist, very mediatic, that upon learning that the lethality of the Covid is higher in men than in women, she affirms: "something good should be there" The post closes stating that feminists are human leftovers and criminals



Comment 1: "Feminism is hate against man, there is no good feminism"

Comment 2: "They are fascists of feminism"

Comment 3. "No, this is the feminism, there is no good feminism"



"This pandemic came to Spain in 2004 (reference to the year when Integral law against Gender Violence was passed in parliament). It has more than 160 thousand infected men per year" And its consequences lead many parents to suicide. For when the vaccine! Gender laws force thousands of men to commit suicide.

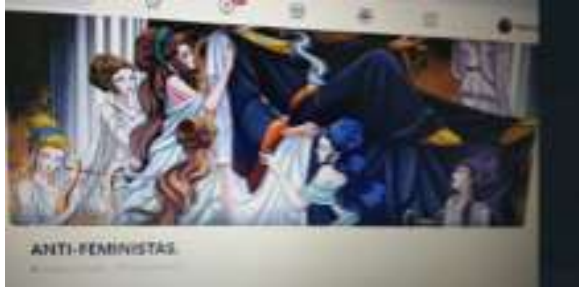
In relation to the criminalization of feminism, the word "feminazi" has become popular. In this regard, dozens of groups, with thousands of followers, use various declinations of the "feminazi" and are public on Facebook.

The main narratives that occur in these pages range from men as victims, denial of gender violence, comparison between abortion and mass murder, an excess of sexualized images of women, to a more implicit than explicit positioning against gender equality.



Facebook antifeminist group: A cartoon is shown of an actress who had an abortion in order to be awarded an Oscar, as the antithesis of what the correct role of the mother woman represents, who feels fulfilled in her motherhood.





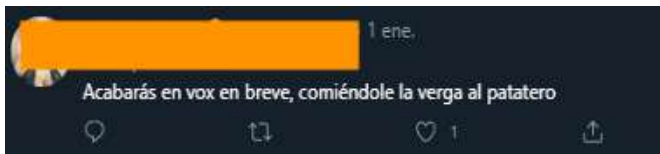
Sexualized women in position, suggesting an inferior and worshipful attitude to a man

A quick examination of the profiles of the main female political leaders reveals a high pattern of machist messages, not necessarily posted by men. The messages of this type are numerous and vary from sexualised speech to derogatory speech.

WARNING

Readers discretion advised.

The following section includes explicit and violent language.



You will end up in Vox shortly eating the furrier's cock

Dominant patterns:

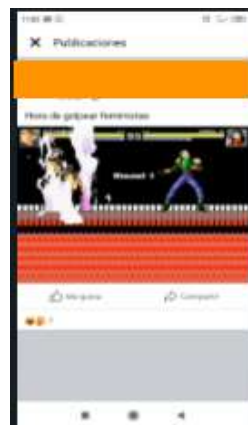
- Veiled allusions that women have obtained their positions in exchange for sexual favours, or that they would be willing to do so to get promoted.
- Abuse of expressions such as *deranged bitch*, *ugly* or other derogatory allusions to the physical appearance.
- Emphasis on the role of "supermarket cashier" that the Minister of Equality held years before she came into office
- Allusions to functions such as sweeping and cleaning, historically attributed to women.

Another relevant pattern in misogynistic messages is centered on organized groups of men who try to delegitimize feminism, and for this they resort to more or less sexist narratives and allusions. Some of them are more or less linked or orbiting around populist extreme right-wing political parties that combat what they call "gender ideology."

Others are groups of men who consider themselves affected or "discriminated against" by certain laws that they understand to support women to their detriment, such as groups that claim "Shared Custody" in cases of divorced couples.



"How can I burn a feminist who makes false accusations"?



Announcement to download a game that involves killing feminists

One of the relevant issues of the last year has been the promotion of the March 8, 2020 demonstrations by the government. At that time, the health spokesmen of the executive affirmed that there was no risk of contagion. Two days later the total confinement began. In this regard, there have been legitimate criticisms for having allowed the crowds on that day, but also there was a lot of sexist hate speech that overpassed the controversy.



Blame the "feminazis" for the death of 30 thousand people by covid-19

More recently, the growing conflict between two conceptions of feminism, regarding transsexual people, became more visible.

In synthesis, there are two conceptions, women as biological reality or the condition of women as free choice. The debate is generating internal and external clashes and fuels the misogynistic hate speech. Certain LGBTQA+ groups have devised the concept TERF (Transsexual Exclusionary Radical Feminist) to refer to those women who conceive gender as a biological reality, without implying that they are against the change of sex.

Lucía Etxebarria denounces the harassment she suffers on social networks

Source: larazon.es

"In the last 4 months I have received thousands of messages with accusations of harassment or hate crime, with insults such as p ***, sow, pig," says the writer on her Instagram account



The identity feminism is poorly represented and perceived within the society, as it is mostly assimilated to a fight against male gender. In this sense, an analysis of the patterns of sexist discourse is based more on the fight against this type of feminism, than against the feminism of equality.

In Spain and other Spanish-speaking countries, campaigns with an inclusive language that do not forget feminine endings or exclude them are very frequent. They are quite effective and a priority in terms of communication.

This has to be done with due measure since sometimes it becomes an object of derision for constructing an artificial form of speech imposed by elites, which can be counterproductive.

For years, campaigns have been carried out in schools; advertising industry has been regulated to prevent the spread of sexist stereotypes, and some companies do the opposite, showing men doing housework.

Recommendations

1

In general terms, a narrative in favour of equality between men and women must prevail. The construction of this narrative requires diagnosing the keys to the macho discourse to avoid its neutralization and delegitimization.

2

it is recommended to make use of all the available legal apparatus and its institutional support network with the prosecutors specialized in both hate crimes and sexist violence.