Op:Code

Open Code for Hate-free Communication

Monitoring and reporting illegal hate speech

Shadow monitoring report - first edition -

ActiveWatch

digiQ

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MOVIMIENTO
CONTRA LA
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I. Context

Between 20th of January and 29th of February 2020, OpCode partners[1], in close cooperation with INACH, have conducted the first in a series of shadow monitoring and reporting exercises of illegal hate speech on social media platforms.

The goal of this joint activity is to verify the social media platforms' Code of Conduct compliance in various periods of time when IT companies are not scrutinized by the European Commissions' official Monitoring Exercises.

Within this shadow monitoring exercise the partners have used the same monitoring and reporting methodology that is being used by the European Commission.

II. Conclusions and recommendations

The overall responsiveness and removal rate are quite low and suggest disproportionate cross-national approaches regarding the hate speech phenomenon.

Facebook has proven to be the most responsive and efficient social platform, especially with reports submitted from Estonia, Romania and Slovakia.

Twitter and YouTube were the least responsive platforms in assessing hate speech reports.

Despite the high occurrence of antisemitic content in Polish social media, the response and removal rate of such content are dangerously low.
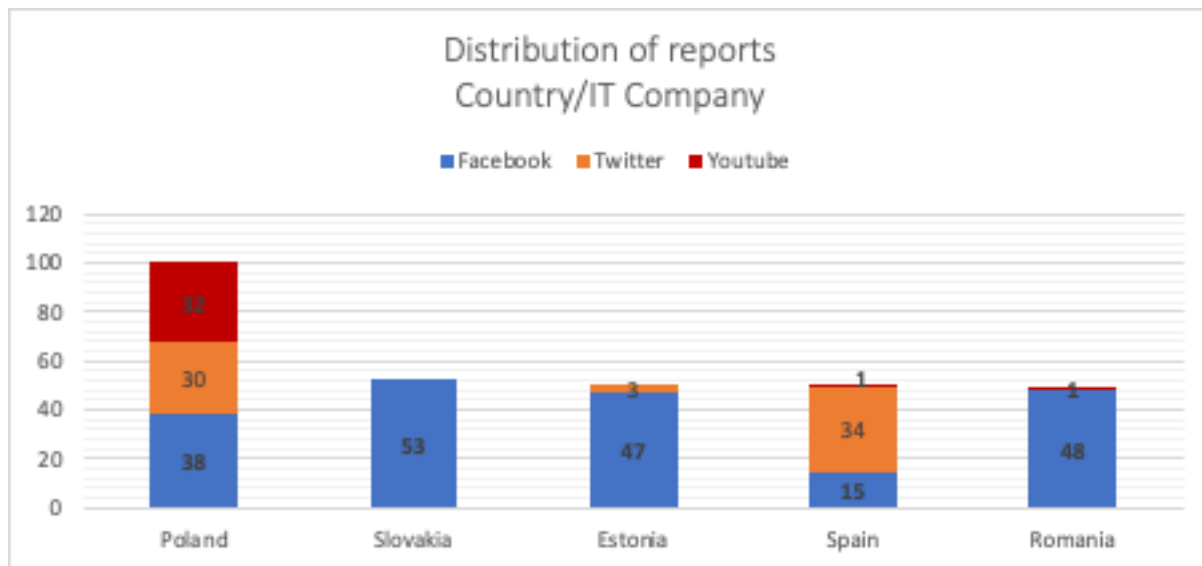
The high occurrence of xenophobic messages in Spanish social media is also alarming and yet not addressed by the IT companies.

IT companies should dedicate supplementary resources to monitor and reduce hate speech especially in countries that are dealing with socio-political contexts that fuel radicalization and extremism.
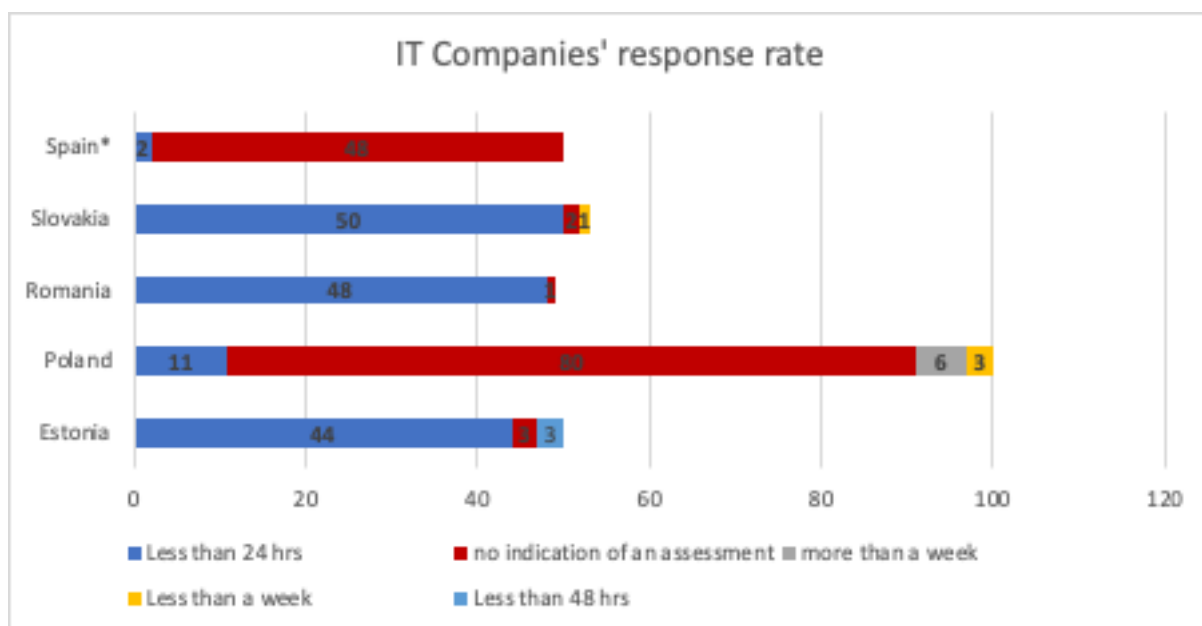
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1   *ActiveWatch (Romania, leading partner), DigiQ (Slovakia), Estonian Human Rights Centre (Estonia), Never Again Association (Poland) and Movimiento Contra la Intolerancia (Spain)*

III.   Monitoring Exercise and Results

During the first shadow monitoring exercise, all partners have submitted 302 reports of potential harmful and illegal content.

Distribution of reports Country/IT Company

■ Facebook   ■ Twitter   ■ Youtube

Country	Facebook	Twitter	Youtube
Poland	38	30	32
Slovakia	53		
Estonia	47		3
Spain	15	34	1
Romania	48		1

Almost 67% (201, absolute value) of the reports were submitted on Facebook.

IT Companies' response rate

Country	Less than 24 hrs	no indication of an assessment	more than a week	Less than a week	Less than 48 hrs
Spain*	2	48			
Slovakia	50	2		1	
Romania	48	1			
Poland	11	80	6	3	
Estonia	44	3			3

■ Less than 24 hrs   ■ no indication of an assessment   ■ more than a week
■ Less than a week   ■ Less than 48 hrs

Only 168 (representing 56% of the total reports) reports have received a clear feedback of removal or non-removal from the social media platforms. It is worth mentioning that 155 of the assessed reports were reviewed within a 24 hours time frame.

As for the removal rate, 81% (136) of the assessed content was removed by the social platforms.

Facebook has been the most efficient and responsive platform as 134 of the 136 removed pieces of content were eliminated by this platform. In contrast, Twitter and YouTube have shown little to no interest in assessing submitted reports on hate speech grounds.

The lowest performance in terms of responsiveness within social platforms were met in Poland, where 80 reports were not reviewed during the monitoring period, and in Spain.

Special note: <u>due to some operational and methodological issues it has been impossible to determine if the social platforms have assessed 48 reports submitted by MCI (Spain)</u>.

REMOVAL RATE WITHOUT ESCALATION				
	Yes (notified by the IT company)	**No (notified by the IT company)**	**Total reports**	**No indication of an assessment**
Estonia			50	3
Facebook	41	6		
Twitter				
Poland			100	80
Facebook	4	14		
Twitter		2		
Romania			49	1
Facebook	48			
Slovakia			53	2
Facebook	41	10		
Spain			50	48
YouTube	1			
Twitter	1			

IV.   Escalations within the monitoring exercise

During the monitoring exercise DigiQ (Slovakia) has escalated 8 cases that have initially been assessed by Facebook with non-removal decisions. After the escalation procedures, 6 of the 8 cases have been reviewed and removed by Facebook. Thus, the total number of removals triggered by the Slovakian partners has increased from 41 to 47.

Never Again Association (Poland) has also escalated 5 cases that have been reviewed by Facebook with non-removal decisions. By the end of the monitoring exercise, the Polish partner did not receive any indication of an assessment from the Facebook team and the content was still online.

V. Grounds of the reported illegal content

Country	Facebook	Twitter	Youtube	Grand Total
Estonia	47	3		**50**
Anti-refugee hatred	**18**			**18**
Hatred related to sexual orientation	**15**			**15**
Anti-Muslim hatred	4			4
Antisemitism (including Holocaust denial or revisionism)	3	1		4
Racism	3	1		4
Anti-Roma Racism	3			3
Gender related hatred		1		1
Hatred related to origin	1			1

In **Estonia**, the most frequent types of reported illegal content are targeting *refugees* and *members of sexual minorities*.

Country	Facebook	Twitter	Youtube	Grand Total
Poland	**38**	**30**	**32**	**100**
Antisemitism (including Holocaust denial or revisionism)	**14**	**27**	**11**	**51**
Hatred related to sexual orientation	**21**		**12**	**33**
Anti-Muslim hatred	3		7	10
Racism		2		2
Anti-Muslim hatred, Racism			1	1
Anti-Roma Racism		1		1
Xenophobia			1	1

In **Poland**, most of the hate content is *antisemitic* or *homophobic*.

Country	Facebook	Twitter	Youtube	Grand Total
Romania	**48**		**1**	**49**
Anti-Roma Racism	**37**		**1**	**38**
Gender related hatred	3			3
Anti-Muslim hatred	2			2
Anti-refugee hatred	2			2
Hatred related to origin	2			2
Antisemitism (including Holocaust denial or revisionism)	1			1
Hatred related to ethnicity	1			1

In **Romania**, the vast majority of hate messages is targeting the *Roma community*.

Country	Facebook	Twitter	Youtube	Grand Total
Slovakia	**53**			**53**
Anti-Roma Racism	**20**			**20**
Anti-refugee hatred	**10**			**10**
Anti-Muslim hatred	6			6
Gender related hatred	6			6
Other	6			6
Antisemitism (including Holocaust denial or revisionism)	5			5

In **Slovakia**, most of the hate speech is targeting the *Roma community* and *refugees.*

Country	Facebook	Twitter	Youtube	Grand Total
Spain	**15**	**34**	**1**	**50**
Xenophobia	**7**	**17**		**24**
Antisemitism (including Holocaust denial or revisionism)	1	4		5
Hatred related to sexual orientation	1	3		4
Gender related hatred	1	2		3
Glorification of Nazism or Fascism	3			3
Anti-Muslim hatred	1	1		2
Racism, Glorification of Nazism or Fascism		2		2
Xenophobia, Anti-Muslim hatred	1	1		2
Antigypsyism		1		1
Antisemitism (including Holocaust denial or revisionism), Hatred related to sexual orientation		1		1
Gender related hatred, Anti-Muslim hatred		1		1
Racism		1		1
Xenophobia, Glorification of Nazism or Fascism			1	1

In **Spain**, hate speech mostly occurs within *xenophobic* content.

VI.   Typology of illegal content

Country		Facebook	Twitter	Youtube
Estonia		**47**	**3**	
content calling for violent acts against certain groups/ individuals belonging or perceived to belong to such groups		**23**	**2**	
content calling for limiting the rights of, or otherwise discriminating against certain groups/individuals belonging or perceived to belong to such groups		**11**		
content calling for the murder / annihilation of certain groups/ individuals belonging or perceived to belong to such groups		8	1	
containing expressing insulting overgeneralising statements about certain groups/individuals belonging or perceived to belong to such groupsW		4		
condoning/glorifying, denying or grossly trivialising historical events relevant to certain groups		1		

In **Estonia**, most of the hate messages are calling for *violent acts* and *limiting the rights* of refugees or of sexual minorities.

Country	Facebook	Twitter	Youtube
Poland	**38**	**30**	**32**
using degrading, defamatory words/expressions to name certain social groups/individuals belonging or perceived to belong to such groups	**16**	**21**	**19**
content calling for limiting the rights of, or otherwise discriminating against certain groups/individuals belonging or perceived to belong to such groups	**21**		**6**
diffusing degrading, defamatory pictures/images relating to certain groups/individuals belonging or perceived to belong to such groups	1	6	
condoning/glorifying, denying or grossly trivialising historical events relevant to certain groups		3	1
containing expressing insulting over generalising statements about certain groups/individuals belonging or perceived to belong to such groups			4
content calling for the murder / annihilation of certain groups/ individuals belonging or perceived to belong to such groups			2

In **Poland**, most of the antisemitic content consists of *degrading and stereotypical expressions* against the Jewish community, while most of the homophobic messages claim *limitations of rights* for the members of LGBTQ community.

Country	Facebook	Twitter	Youtube
Romania	**48**		**1**
content calling for the murder / annihilation of certain groups/individuals belonging or perceived to belong to such groups	30		1
content calling for violent acts against certain groups/individuals belonging or perceived to belong to such groups	11		
using degrading, defamatory words/expressions to name certain social groups/individuals belonging or perceived to belong to such groups	5		
condoning/glorifying, denying or grossly trivialising historical events relevant to certain groups	1		
content calling for limiting the rights of, or otherwise discriminating against certain groups/individuals belonging or perceived to belong to such groups	1		

In **Romania**, most of the hate messages targeting the Roma community are *calling for murder/ annihilation* or *violent actions* against this group or its members.

Country	Facebook	Twitter	Youtube
Slovakia	**53**		
using degrading, defamatory words/expressions to name certain social groups/individuals belonging or perceived to belong to such groups	28		
content calling for the murder / annihilation of certain groups/ individuals belonging or perceived to belong to such groups	25		

In **Slovakia**, most of the hate messages targeting Roma community or refugees are using *degrading expressions* against its members or they are *calling for murder/annihilation* of these groups.

Country	Facebook	Twitter	Youtube
Spain	15	34	1
using degrading, defamatory words/expressions to name certain social groups/individuals belonging or perceived to belong to such groups	**9**	**30**	
condoning/glorifying, denying or grossly trivialising historical events relevant to certain groups	4	4	
content calling for the murder / annihilation of certain groups/individuals belonging or perceived to belong to such groups	2		
content calling for violent acts against certain groups/ individuals belonging or perceived to belong to such groups			1

In **Spain**, most of the xenophobic messages are using *degrading and defamatory expressions* against individuals or groups perceived as not being national.

VII. Country specific challenges

Estonia

The monitoring exercise did not offer big challenges and rather corresponded with earlier findings from other similar projects. In the case of Facebook, the removal rate continues to be very high, they also respond quickly and have much stricter rules on hate speech than the Estonian legislation. Other social media platforms have much lower interaction and removal rates.

Poland

The biggest challenge in Poland seems to be convincing the social media companies like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to react and to remove the reported illegal and hateful content. The vast majority of reported cases were not removed, nor assessed. If the companies begin to react properly, it will make a huge impact on limiting the spread of online hate speech.

Romania

During the monitoring exercise no particular challenges were met, as the response and removal rates were very high. It is worth mentioning that YouTube has not yet developed a communication system that would keep users up to date with the status of the reports they have submitted.

Slovakia

No special challenges were encountered during the monitoring period, as response and removal rates were very high, especially from Facebook. On other monitored social platforms such as Twitter, YouTube and Instagram there is a much lower interaction rate and therefore a lower recorded incidence of hate speech. The reason for the lower incidence of hate speech is also that Twitter is mostly used politicians, journalists and artists, while Instagram is mostly used to publish personal photos and images.

Spain

Certain difficulties were met in finding actual and clear illegal contents, under the provisions of articles 224 and 510 of criminal law. It might be due to the fact that hate speech has been on public debate for years. Currently there is a network of 52 Hate Crimes prosecutors around the country and criminal law is very strict in this concern. It is worth mentioning that online hate speech and intolerance perpetrators have adapted their narratives by using ambiguous semantics in order to avoid legal scrutiny.

ANNEXES - COUNTRY PROFILES

POLAND

1. Current socio-political challenges that could contribute to online and offline radicalization

Since 2016, a significant rise in popularity of radical far-right political parties and groups it has been recorded in Poland. The influence of these organizations can be seen in what happens on the streets (radical manifestations, violence, discrimination) and in the huge amount of hateful content online. Polish government doesn't put pressure on social media platforms when it comes to removing hateful and violent content. After the last parliamentary elections in Poland, 11 far-right politicians have made their way in the Polish Sejm (the lower chamber of the Polish parliament), which has contributed to hate speech spreading in the Polish parliament. Hate speech by politicians and journalists encourage physical violence and discrimination in real life.

2. Current radical or extremist movements that engage in online or offline radicalization

The most dangerous movement in Poland nowadays is Konfederacja (Confederation) - because they managed to win 11 deputy seats in the Polish parliament. Konfederacja was created by members of several extreme political movements, such as Młodzież Wszechpolska (The All-Polish Youth), KORWIN (named after its leader, Janusz Korwin-Mikke) and ONR (Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny, National-Radical Camp). The mentioned groups have united for the purpose of European and Polish parliamentary elections. All groups are known for actions and demonstrations that incite to hatred such as "The Independence March", hosted annually on 11.11 in Warsaw. In Poland there are also many smaller radical and neofascist organisations.

3. Existing legal and institutional framework that address online and offline radicalization/ extremism

The 13th article of Polish Constitution forbids the existence of political parties and other organizations that are based on totalitarian ideology, such as Nazism and fascism. Polish penal code contains two articles on similar matters. Article 256 penalizes propagation of fascism or other totalitarian systems, as well as incitement to hate on the basis of nationality, race, religion and ethnicity. It does not, however, list hatred based on gender, age or sexual orientation as forbidden. Article 257 of Polish penal code states it is illegal to insult a person or a group of people because of their nationality, race, ethnicity and religion. It is worth noting that all of the mentioned articles are used extremely rarely.

4. Online trends and behavior (e.g.: Internet access, demographics, most popular [social] media)

In Poland there is widespread access to the Internet and most people use social media. The most popular platform are Facebook and YouTube, followed by Instagram and Twitter. Twitter is used mainly by politicians and journalists. All of these platforms are facing problems like

the rising amount of hateful content. It includes comments (homophobic, Islamophobic, racist, sexist, inciting to violence), posts written by public figures that also include severe hate speech, pictures and graphics (including memes) that also carry hateful ideology. Those platforms (especially Facebook) mostly fail at removing hateful content.

ROMANIA

1. Current socio-political challenges that could contribute to online and offline extremism

Romania is one of the former communist countries and one of the newest EU members that still struggles to overcome the socio-economic gap with western European countries. In 2019, Romania ranked 63rd in the Global Democracy Index issued by The Economist Intelligence Unit[2], within a larger group of countries that could be characterized as flawed democracies. Despite that, Romania has registered significant progresses in the late 20 years. The tormented political life along with the economic disparities and social challenges that came after the accession to the EU (such as massive economic migration within EU borders) could potentially contribute to an upraise in extremism in the near future. No extremist or radical political parties are currently in power or even in the Romanian Parliament. Historically, the most popular extremist party has been Greater Romania Party that has been active in the Romanian Parliament until 2008. Over the years, various political parties with extremist agendas were established but none of them managed to become mainstream. In terms of populist and nationalist agendas, the most visible political party is the PSD (Social Democratic Party) that has significantly contributed to the deterioration of democratic life between 2016 and 2019, when Romania has been included in the "club" of countries showing illiberal tendencies, alongside Hungary. During the 2019 European and Presidential elections the Romanians gave a strong signal against the populist-nationalist agenda and voted massively for pro-European political parties. Currently, Romania is preparing for general elections and there are no indications that populist narratives will be promoted by mainstream political parties.

2. Extremist movements that engage in online or offline extremism

There are no official records on the activity of extremist movements in Romania, but there are indications on the existence of civic and religious groups that promote a conservative agenda in Romania. The most active is the Coalition for Family, a conservative network of religious organizations that have in 2018 triggered a national referendum that would have consolidated the ban of LGBTQ marriages[3]. The New Right Movement is another far-right political party that promotes an ultra-nationalist agenda and is mostly visible with specific public actions against the LGBTQ community and migrants[4].

2   Full report [here](#)

3   The referendum did not meet the legal threshold and was not validated by the Romanian Constitutional Court.

4   Since 2000 The New Right Movement never succeeded to run for local or national elections. Moreover, their activities are not visible in mainstream media.

3. **Existing legal and institutional framework that address online and offline extremism**

   Romania has several legal provisions both in the criminal and civil code that address extremist manifestation, but has limited success in enforcing them. Extremism is criminalized by Law 535/2004 (updated in 2019) on combating and redressing terrorist acts. Other provisions are comprised in Governmental Ordinance 31/2002 that ban xenophobic, racist and Nazist organizations and symbols. The Governmental Ordinance 31/2002 has been updated in 2015 by Law 217/2015 to clearly ban extremist nationalistic movements. Moreover, incitement to hatred is punishable by the Criminal Code under article 369 and hate crimes are considered to be aggravating conditions in establishing a criminal offence. In terms of institutional framework, the Romanian Intelligence Service and the General Directorate for Investigating Organized Crime and Terrorism are the most qualified institutions to monitor and investigate extremist organizations or movements. As for online extremism that is mostly reflected in illegal hate speech, despite the existent legal provisions, Romanian authorities pay little to no attention to this phenomenon.

4. **Online trends and behavior (e.g.: Internet access, demographics, most popular [social] media)**

   Romania is a fast-developing country in adopting Internet technologies, with more that 80% of the households connected to broadband internet, but with significant gaps between urban and rural areas. According to Speedtest Global Index, in December 2019 Romania was the 4th country in the world in broadband Internet speed and the 41st in mobile internet speed. Despite this expanding infrastructure and the affordability of devices and services, in 2019 Romania was on the 27th   place within the European Digital Economy and Society Index[5].

   Facebook is the most popular platform in Romania, with more than 10 million users and with a market share of more than 87% . Social media are mostly accessed for entertainment purposes, although youth tend to use social media as an information source as well. Mainstream media, especially television, is still credited as the primary information source for more than 80% of the Romanians. It is worth mentioning that television is starting to decline in viewership – in the last 5 years more than one million Romanians have changed television programs for other media.

SLOVAKIA

1. **Current socio-political challenges that could contribute to online and offline radicalization**

   Poverty, unemployment, poor housing conditions, alcoholism and other social problems contribute to the boom of radicalism. 16% of Slovak citizens are exposed to social exclusion and poverty. Social unrest is exploited by various populist parties. In addition, the extremist political party Ľudová strana naše Slovensko (ĽSNS - People's Party Our Slovakia) currently has representatives both in the national and the European Parliaments. While, until recently, other political parties have distanced themselves from this party, some parties are currently cooperating with it and thereby legitimizing it.

5   *Full report [here](#)*

2. Current radical or extremist movements that engage in online or offline radicalization

Extremist and racist groups experienced a boom in Slovakia especially in the 1990s. At that time the Internet was not widespread, racist ideology and neo-Nazi propaganda were spread through skinhead movements. Approximately 10 such magazines are published now. The most dominant ones were Blood & Honour Division Slovakia and Slovakia Hammer Skins, which are branches of international neo-nazi organisations. Later, the Slovak National Front established in Trnava (advocating the adoption of anti-communist and non-seizure laws, the death penalty and the law to combat homosexuality), which was divided into a political People's Party and the socially oriented Slovak Community. In 2005, members of the Slovak Community registered the political party Slovak Togetherness - National Party, a year later the Supreme Court dissolved it, as its activities were in conflict with the Constitution of the Slovak Republic. The leader of the party was Marian Kotleba, who currently serves as the chairman of the political party People's Party Our Slovakia. In 2019 his party got into the Slovak parliament with more than 8%, in the presidential election in 2019 he occupied the fourth place with more than 10%. In 2019, a petition was filed to dissolve the party based on spread of racism and extremism both offline and online, however the court dismissed the action.

The main themes presented by right-wing extremists are the criticism of the Slovak government and the membership of the Slovak Republic in Euro-Atlantic structures. The number of right-wing extremists (especially skinheads and neo-Nazis) has been stable since 2004 - around 900 active persons and around 3000 supporters and sympathizers with a risk of growth.

3. Existing legal and institutional framework that address online and offline radicalization/extremism

The Slovak legal system recognizes only offenses of extremism, criminal acts of extremism, extremist groups and extremist material. Radicalisation is not defined in the Penal Code.

The concept of hate crimes is also not defined in the Slovak Criminal Code. However, the Criminal Code lays down a special motive that includes all crimes motivated by hatred towards any social group. A specific motive is to commit a crime with the intention of publicly inciting violence or hatred against a group of people or an individual because of their membership to a race, nation, nationality, color, ethnic group, gender, religion or belief. The illegal conduct of right-wing extremists and their supporters can, in principle, include the following offenses under the Criminal Code: an offense committed on a specific motive (with the intention of publicly inciting violence or hatred against a group or individual for their race, a nation, nationality, skin color, ethnic group, gender, origin or religion if it is a pretext for threatening for previous reasons), a crime committed with a specific motive (national, ethnic or racial hatred or hatred due to skin color), support and promotion of movements to suppress citizens' rights and freedoms, production of extremist materials, dissemination of extremist materials, possession of extremist materials, defamation of a nation, race and belief, incitement to national, racial and ethnic hatred.

4. **Online trends and behavior (e.g. Internet access, demographics, most popular)**

Each month, 2 500 000 Slovaks use Facebook, 970 000 Slovaks visit Instagram, 3 000 000 Slovaks use Youtube and only 350 000 Slovaks tweet . The average user of social networks in Slovakia is male, up to 24 years of age, with a higher education who lives in a household with income over EUR 1,100 and in a city with more than 100,000 inhabitants. 52% of the population uses social networks for private communication, presentation of opinions or making new contacts. For a further 35% these portals are for entertainment and approximately the same number of people (34%) use them to follow news and news or information about services and goods.

According to the statistics as of 2015, half of the perpetrators of crimes of extremism were aged 18-25. The most common way of committing offences was to publicly show support for various movements suppressing fundamental rights and freedoms, promoting these movements, or by defamation of race, nation and belief.

SPAIN

1. **Current socio-political challenges that could contribute to online and offline radicalization**

After the financial crisis, Spain has been the object of a polarization process in different variables of the political spectrum. From the extreme left and from national populism in some regions, but basically Cataluña. As a consequence of this, the extreme right has gained 52 seats in the Parliament in the last general elections (15.08%). This contributes to increasing the tension and creates a feedback loop in which people with moderate views lose ground. The "we against them" narrative is used as an argument by actors from all parts of the political spectrum. For the right wing "them" are the migrants, the feminists, and the Catalan separatists", for Catalan secessionists "them" is Spain as a whole in a context in which the idea is that they are paying with their taxes the other "lazy" people.

2. **Current radical or extremist movements that engage in online or offline radicalization**

The extreme right's main political party is Vox. Even though they operate within the limits of the constitutional and the legal systems their speech is focused on xenophobic and nationalist populism rhetoric. The ultra-right neo Nazis area there are very active in both recruitment and spreading their narratives to radicalized people -mainly youngster, which are their main target group. Football games and RAC (Rock Against Communism) music concerts are extremely popular and viral on YouTube, and are also generating consistent online hate speech.

3. **Existing legal and institutional framework that address online and offline radicalization/ extremism**

Since 1995, Spanish Criminal Law includes several articles on hate speech. In 2015, the parliament updated Article 510 in a manner that goes beyond the recommendations of the framework decision on combating racism and xenophobia. It covers many categories of hate speech such as those targeting people based on their gender, sexual orientation, social

status, ideology, national origin, disability, etc. Holocaust Denial has also been criminalized since 1995, but the provisions have been updated to make it technically compatible with some requirements regarding the limits of freedom of expression that the Constitutional Court issued in 2007. Some of the institutions that are enforcing the provisions are the Interior Ministry Office on Hate Crimes and a network of 52 Specialized Prosecutors on Hate Crimes (one per each province).

4. **Online trends and behavior (e.g.: Internet access, demographics, most popular [social] media)**

92% of the Spanish population uses the internet. Up to 28 million of the 49.9 million people living in Spain are active on social media. The most used platforms are: YouTube (89%), WhatsApp (87%), Instagram (54%) and Twitter (49%). The average daily time spent online is 5h and 18 minutes, out of which 1h and 39 minutes on social media.

ESTONIA

1. **Current socio-political challenges that could contribute to online and offline radicalization**

Estonia held the general election on March 3, 2019. Centre Party, Conservative People's Party of Estonia (EKRE) and Isamaa coalition entered office even though the Reform Party had won the most seats. Coalition member EKRE almost tripled its seats and received nearly 18 percent of the vote and got into the government for the first time. The far-right, nationalistic, anti-EU, anti-immigration, anti-LGBT and populist party has changed the Estonian public discourse significantly and made hate against minorities mainstream. EKRE politicians have made, among other things, public misogynistic, anti-Semitic, Russophobe, homophobic and racist comments. They also claim that a shadowy "deep state" secretly runs the country and they openly attack public servants for that reason. In addition, the party has taken aim at their critics in the media and they have their own successful news portal that continuously produces fake or questionable news and also news and opinion pieces that incite to hatred against parts of the population. The party has also attacked NGOs that work in the field of human rights. The inclusion of EKRE in the government has raised fears about the radicalization of social media discourse and self-censorship of the media. For example, there have been two cases of resignations by journalists who claim they were pressured by their editor-in-chief to moderate their coverage about EKRE.

2. **Current radical or extremist movements that engage in online or offline radicalization**

There is very little existing research on the topic. The Estonian Internal Security Police has stated in its annual reviews that in general, extremist ideologies have no popular base in Estonia. Based on the information available from public sources, two movements could be considered holding at least partly radical views.

The Soldiers of Odin originates from Finland but has its branch in Estonia. It is an anti-immigrant organization ffounded in 2015 in Finland by a violent neo-Nazi named Mike Ranta. The group has called for volunteers who are willing "to step out for the defense of our own

people in the face of strangers." [Facebook has banned](#) the movement's pages several times. The number of members in Estonia is unknown, the group has stated that they have [5000 members](#) and 120 men who are ready to patrol the streets. The movement is known for their "intimidation effect", taking part in anti-immigration and anti-LGBT protests. Last year they sent out a [warning message](#) to a bar that had hoisted a rainbow flag and they were also present at an [LGBT movie screening](#) to publicly insult organizers and visitors.

Blue Awakening (BA) - youth wing of EKRE was founded in 2012 by Ruuben Kaalep (now MP) who has a [long history](#) of close association with far-right, white supremacist and neo-Nazi groups and figures. BA is known for radical nationalist statements and also for [torch processions](#). During these gatherings the leaders give speeches highlighting the unique nature of Estonians and a call for a new national awakening. The group has also called for ethnic profiling of those with access to state secrets. Last year BA organized [firearm trainings](#) for its members and photos from the practice at a firing range with Kaalep appeared on several group members accounts. In 2017 Blue Awakening was [thrown out](#) of European Young Conservatives.

3. **Existing legal and institutional framework that address online and offline radicalization/ extremism**

The Estonian Penal Code includes a provision on prohibiting incitement of hatred. This prohibition [does not work in practice](#) due to the wording of the provision, according to which only such incitement of hatred is punishable, which poses an immediate danger to life, health or property of a person. In [2017](#) and [2018](#) the provision found no use. Defamation was decriminalized in 2002.

Violent extremism and radicalization at policy level is dealt with under the internal security policy, which is the area of responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior and the Internal Security Service in particular. The government has set the policies for combating terrorism in the [framework document](#) on combat against terrorism approved in November 2013. In this document it is drawn out that Estonia is paying particular attention in order to prevent the activities of movements and people who spread racial, cultural, religious or affiliation hatred in Estonia. It is stated that earliest signs of radicalism must be prevented, because – as shown by international experience – the growth of radicalism into extremism and then into terrorism is probable and therefore also an undisputed threat to the security of the state. At the same time, there is no specific governmental program to specifically address the issue of prevention of radicalization and violent extremism but there have been some projects by law enforcement authorities and youth organizations. For example, in cooperation with the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences, the Estonian Police and Border Guard are raising the capacity of first line practitioners to detect early signs of radicalization. As a part of the project, the Police issued [a manual](#) for local authorities called "Early detection of radicalization and networking".

In addition, it is possible to report on-line hate speech or (potential) signs of radical/extremist content in the Estonian context to [web-constables](#) on Facebook. Web-constables are police

officers working on the Internet. They respond to notifications and letters submitted by people via the Internet, mainly Facebook, where they have their user profile. Some issues are solved by consultation only, but some of the notifications are forwarded for information or proceedings to relevant police stations.

4. **Online trends and behavior (e.g.: Internet access, demographics, most popular [social] media)**

There are no significant digital divides in the country and the 2019 Inclusive Internet Index report ranks Estonia 20 out of 100 countries in terms of the affordability of prices for connections. According to Statistics Estonia, as of 2019, 90 percent of Estonian households have an internet connection at home, and it is used daily or almost daily by 98 percent of people between the ages of 16-44. The share of daily or near daily users among people between e ages of 65-74 increased from 71 to 75 percent compared to last year.

The most popular website in Estonia is Google, followed by YouTube and Facebook. Instagram is on the 7th and Twitter on the 24th place.