



# **Quarterly Report on Cyber Hate (August, September and October 2016)**

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**Project Research - Report -  
Remove: Countering Cyber Hate  
Phenomena**

**INACH**

## 1.Executive Foreword

This publication was written within the framework of the ***Research – Report – Remove: Countering Cyber Hate Phenomena*** project of the International Network Against Cyber Hate (INACH); funded by the European Commission Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers. The duration of the project is 2016-2017, and its aim is to study, document and report on online hate speech in a comparative and comprehensive way; and to establish structures for a transnational complaints system for instances of cyber hate.

Hate speech is intentional or unintentional public discriminatory and/or defamatory statements; intentional incitement to hatred and/or violence and/or segregation based on a person's or a group's real or perceived race, ethnicity, language, nationality, skin colour, religious beliefs or lack thereof, gender, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, political beliefs, social status, property, birth, age, mental health, disability, disease.

This report was completed with the participation of the different members of the Network and partners in the project, namely the Zivilcourage und Anti-Rassismus-Arbeit (ZARA) from **Austria**, the Movimiento contra la Intolerancia (MCI) from **Spain**, jugendschutz.net from **Germany**, the Ligue Internationale Contre le Racisme et l'Antisémitisme (Licra) from **France**, the Inter-Federal Centre For Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism from **Belgium** (now called Unia), and the Magenta Foundation from the **Netherlands**; who provided most of the data this report is based upon.

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## I. Introduction

As a fundamental part of the Research - Report - Remove: Countering Cyber Hate Phenomena project, INACH collects data from all project members from multiple countries (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Spain) on a monthly basis. We collect and merge these pieces of data in order to synthesise a comprehensive and extensive picture of cyber hate in Europe in the 21st century. In this report, the data collected between May and July 2016 will be explored and discussed. Furthermore, INACH also - with the help of the project partners and its members - collects information on drivers, trends and tools that lie behind online hate speech.

As it will be denoted later on with the data collection regarding hate types, antisemitism, racism, anti-Muslim hate and anti-refugee hate were the highest on the list. Regarding the possible justification and explanation as to why those hate types were so high within those three months, the exploration of those drivers, trends and tools that were reported by each of the members will be observed in the first place to enable a better understanding of the phenomena.

## II. Drivers, trends and tools

### 1. Drivers

Regarding the new **drivers**, Licra mentioned the case that took place on the 7<sup>th</sup> of August, in the city of Aubervilliers, where a man from the Chinese community had been killed. The Mayor of the city had denounced the crime as being racially motivated. In this city with a large Chinese community, many people had been assaulted because of the stereotype that people from the Chinese community are known to carry a lot of cash on them, which is what happened with the man killed in Aubervilliers. The Chinese community decided to organize demonstrations and media coverage to denounce this event. They asked anti-racist NGOs for support in their fight against anti-Asian racism. Moreover, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of September, the French authorities foiled a terrorist attack in Paris, as a car transporting 6 gas bottles had been found near Notre-Dame de Paris. Three days later, three women were arrested. They had also planned to attack a train station in Paris. The attacks had been directed from ISIS's territories. Further, with the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 9/11, old conspiracy theories reappeared. In addition, the context of the presidential elections of April and May 2017 were still drivers like for the previous months. French candidates from all the political parties were increasingly present in the media sphere. There was a polarized political debate regarding the ideas of the far-right about issues such as immigration, integration, "laïcité" and Islam. This debate reinforced the rise of extremist and radical political statements, especially on Twitter. Likewise, the Béziers case was yet another driver in October. The very controversial Mayor of Béziers, Robert Ménard, launched a municipal communication campaign based on the dissemination of posters. The message on those posters was clear; "The state is imposing them on

us. That's it, they are coming! The migrants in our town!". The posters that featured a darkened image of middle-eastern and African men beneath a cathedral, were put up all over the town. Ménard, who shared the poster on his Facebook page alongside with the words "We are informing the population", called for a referendum to ask residents whether they approved of the plans to receive refugees in the town. There was also the Zemmour case which sparked more online hate. On a public TV channel, the controversial and already sentenced polemicist said "giving a non-French first name to children means you are not detached from Islam. It means continuing giving an Islamic identity to France". Furthermore, regarding the refugee crisis, the situation in Calais became increasingly alarming, and France's legal justice department approved the dismantlement of the "Jungle" of Calais. Lastly, the impact of the Front National's decisions were noted. In Hayange, Northern France, the Front National's mayor, Fabien Engelmann, decided to launch expulsion procedures against the NGO "Le Secours Populaire". This famous NGO was created in 1945 to help poor families, and was very closely linked to the communist political party. The mayor decided to expel them because they were helping refugees, but the NGO refused to leave their office. Electricity, phone and heating were then cut off.

MCI did not note any significant changes, but pointed out that the issue of revisionism of the historical period of Al Andalus re-emerged from time to time. According to most of the historians, that was a period of relative tolerance in which Muslims, Christians and Jews coexisted together. But when criminalizing the Muslim world, one of the argument used was that it was all a lie as Al Andalus was not a time of tolerance and that present day Islam is a religion of hatred.

Unia found out that in early August, after newspapers informed the public about the death of a 15 year old Flemish boy during his holiday in Morocco, a wave of racist and hateful comments appeared in the press and on social media platforms. In one week, Unia received more than 100 complaints about those events alone. The Flemish Defense League (Vlaamse Verdedigingsliga – VVL), has questioned the "Flemishness" of the boy on its Facebook page by asking; "does a Flemish look like that nowadays?". As a consequence of the massive media attention, the Facebook page has been deleted. An enormous number of citizens filed ordinary complaints to the police. The Office of the Public Prosecutor decided to follow-up on the issue. The total extent of this event appears mainly in the autumn statistics as many complaints were still under scrutiny and had not been closed at the time.

ZARA found that the ongoing presidential election campaign (the run-off election repeated in autumn, between a far-right politician and a green party politician), could be considered as driver. In continuation with the negative mood towards Turks in Austria (who, especially after the attempted coup in Turkey, face the general suspicion to be radical supporters of the Turkish president Erdogan), the alleged and, in Austria, forbidden dual citizenship of Austrians of Turkish origin led to racist discussions online. Another driver was the burkini ban in France which reinforced demands in Austria to also prohibit religious, mainly Muslim, clothing in public spaces.

## 2.Trends

Regarding the new **trends**, jugendschutz.net found that the attacks against the Amadeu Antonio Foundation, a German NGO combating hate speech, intensified during summer. Photos from the premises of AAS showed "protest actions" of the Identitarian Movement (members in Stasi-uniforms) which spread on Facebook. Moreover, often being the main target, Anetta Kahana was defamed because of her former work as informant for Stasi. She was also attacked with antisemitic remarks due to her Jewish background. AAS is labelled as a "censorship authority" although it is not a complaints office but rather aims at awareness raising. Furthermore, the Foundation was falsely accused of being under the control of the Minister of Justice, Heiko Maas, who often spoke out publicly against hate speech. The Identitarian Movement and the right-wing populist party AfD took part in the campaign against AAS. Regarding other matters, jugendschutz.net detected a new group named "Wölfe Nordland" (Wolves in the North) on right-wing pages, who performed pagan rituals and sports in the woods. The US-based "Wolves of Vinland" were named as a role model for this new trend called "neo-tribalism" in the right-wing youth magazine "Blaue Narzisse". The small groups celebrated their community, aimed for the continued existence of the "northern race" and, by doing so, rejected the multiculturalism and pluralism of the modern world. Furthermore, before the anniversary of the German unification (on the 3rd of October) there were several online calls for protests in Dresden by right-wing populists such as PEGIDA. During the events, many protesters were swearing at people taking part in the festivities and even shouting racist insults. Present politicians were called "a pack of liars", "betrayers of the nation" or "Jewish pigs". Videos of the riots were disseminated quickly via Internet and were commented on affirmatively. Lastly, since September there were protests against refugees in the Eastern German city of Bautzen. However most of the protesters were not concerned citizens but neo-Nazis. After violent confrontations between refugees and protesters, right-wing activists tried to capitalise on the events and instigate hatred against refugees.

Licra denoted a lot of anti-Asian racism online especially on Twitter, as well as anti-migrant discrimination connected to anti-Muslim hate and anti-Arab racism connected to anti-Muslim hate with for new target group the proportion of supposed Muslim students in schools.

MDI denoted that the refugee crisis was just as major of a problem in the Netherlands as it was in other EU countries. Particularly in October, as an AZC (asylum seekers centre) was even set on fire. Moreover, Moroccan people are still being discriminated against, by being seen as criminals, living on social security, scammers, thieves, violent and so on. Their religion, Islam, is also an issue for some people, as it is seen as one that oppresses women and that is becoming radicalized.

### 3. Tools

Regarding new **tools**, jugendschutz.net recorded fake news about refugees being transported via night flights to Cologne and/or Germany in order to "infiltrate" the country were posted all over social media. Even after right-wing activists at the airport could not validate the theory, rumours were still being spread.

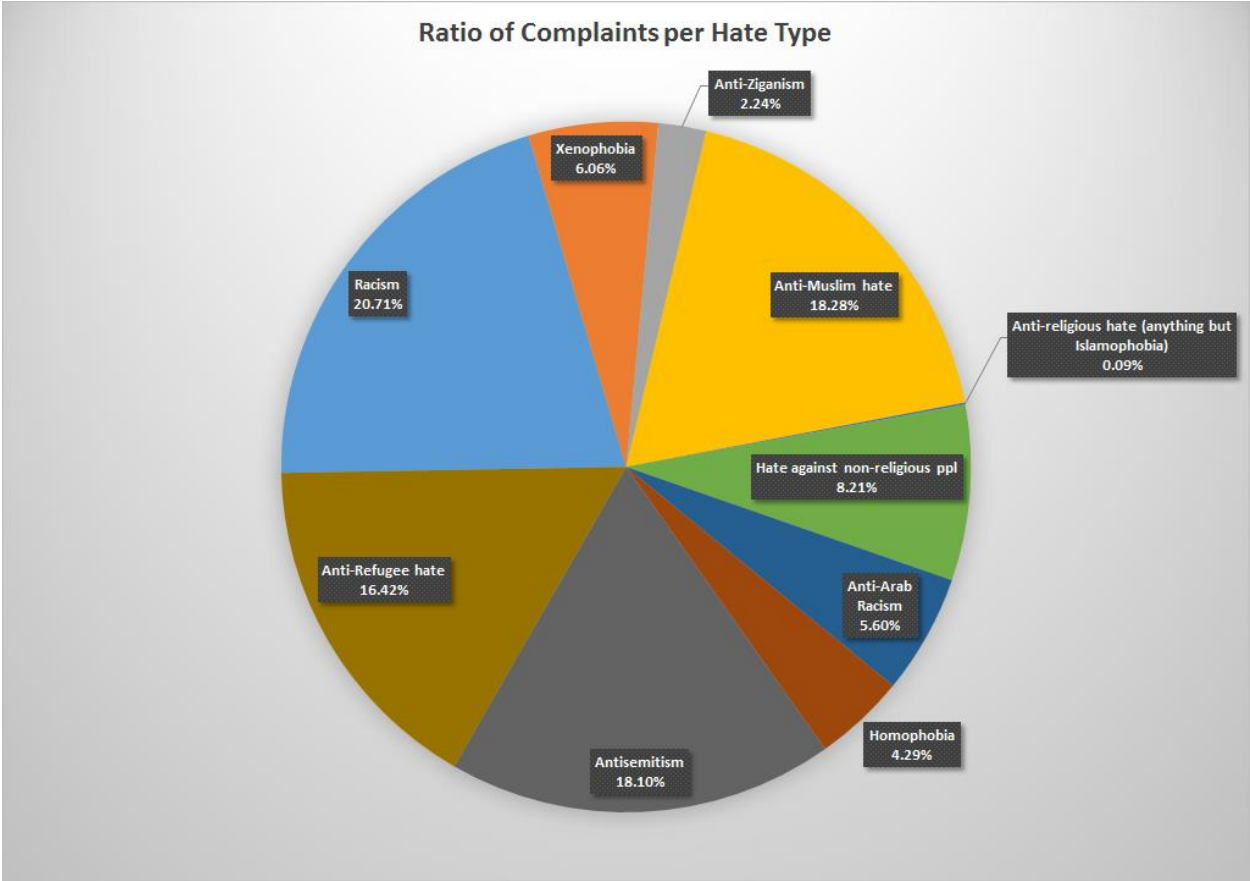
Licra found the following tools. The hashtag anti-Asian #J'airiencontreleschinois (#IhavenothingagainstChinese) emerged. With this hashtag, Twitter users promoted anti-Asian prejudices. It was one of the most popular trend on the Twitter on 5<sup>th</sup> of September. However, some users decided to use the same hashtag to produce counter-speech and denounce the anti-Asian racism ("@JoFaitLeMalin #IhaveNothingAgainstTheChinese however my dog doesn't like them, these bastards"). The title of an online article of the mainstream newspaper "Le Monde" has also been criticized for using the racist and very offensive word "noich'" (the French equivalent of "Chink"). The Chinese community decided to launch its own hashtag #SecuritePourTous (#SecurityForAll) as well as a public demonstration in Aubervilliers. However, the hashtag has also been used by people opposed to these actions ("Karima BELKRIM #SecurityForAll a Chink demonstration anti-Muslim: not for me! #Republic"). Moreover, popularity of the racist and very offensive term "bougne", contraction of the term "bougnoule" (in English, "wog") increased, especially on Twitter. Furthermore, regarding anti-Muslim hate and anti-Arab hate, Robert Ménard, Mayor of the city of Béziers, declared in a TV interview and on the social networks that the theory of the "great replacement" developed by Renaud Camus was confirmed ("the colonisation of France by Muslim immigrants from the Middle East and North Africa, which threatened to "mutate" the country and its culture permanently") by the "proportion of Muslim children" in classrooms ("Robert Ménard #StartOfSchool: the most obvious proof of the #GreatReplacement is ongoing. Just take a look at the old pictures of classroom..."). Other far-right Twitter accounts disseminated photos of the list of names and first names of children in those classrooms, underlining all the names that sounded Arabic. Eric Zemmour, a French journalist already sentenced for incitement to racial hatred and discrimination, has declared: "when you give a first name not French to your children, it means you are not detached from Islam, you want to continue an Islamic tradition in France and it means France will be transformed into a more and more Muslim country". Fake stories are also gaining popularity such as the one about "the Swedish girls raped by Muslim refugees/migrants" ("Swedish girls raped by refugees during a party – Muslim migrants continue to daily sexually attack women and children in Germany and in Sweden..."). Further, on Amazon, people were selling a T-shirt of Pikachu dressed like Hitler. The item was removed 6 days after Licra had sent a request. Besides, hate speech against refugees grew on social networks. A lot of pictures, posts and comments presented refugees as game for hunting. For example, there was a picture of a fake advertisement poster of a famous French sport brand for cartridge. An article posted on Facebook titled "France: the government calls people to host refugees" had the following comment; "Perfect for improving our shooting", "Totally agree we

will play with them lol... Fucking government.", "I am waiting for the game". Front National supporters were directly using this kind of argument for promoting their political party.

### III. Data Collection and Analysis

#### 1. Hate Type Analysis

Now that a background information about drivers, trends and tools was outlined, it is possible to move on to the data collection and analysis part of this report, with a better understanding of the general atmosphere in Europe. During the monthly data collection INACH put particular focus on 10 different hate types, due to their prevalence and pervasiveness on the internet. These hate types are the following: racism, xenophobia, anti-Ziganism (hate against the Roma community), anti-Muslim hate (ie. Islamophobia), anti-religious hate (everything but Islamophobia), hate against non-religious people, anti-Arab racism, homophobia, antisemitism and finally anti-refugee hate.



These hate types fluctuate immensely from month to month. Some hate types are very prevalent in some countries, while they are scarce in others. Also, the differences between INACH's project

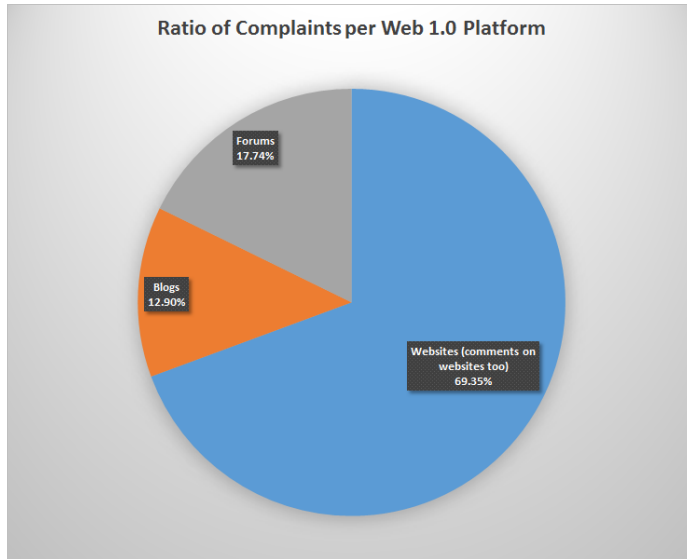


partners adds to this variegation. Licra, in France, mainly focuses on antisemitism, for instance, therefore they always deliver a high number of cyber hate cases against the French Jewry. Other partners focus more on anti-Muslim hate or other types of racism, so their numbers tend to be higher in different hate types. The last factor affecting the numbers is the difference in size and funding amongst the project partners. Jugendschutz.net is a major organization in Germany with a lot more manpower and resources than, for instance, ZARA in Austria or MCI in Spain. Hence, the number of cases we receive from Germany tend to be a lot higher than from other countries where our project partners reside. However, altogether, the numbers received from all partners give a fairly extensive and wide insight into cyber hate in Europe.

The collected numbers in the third quarter of 2016 (from August to October) show that anti-Muslim hate lost its first place among the hate types by falling to 18.28 per cent from 22.32 per cent in the previous quarter. Thus, the ratio of anti-Muslim instances of cyber hate collected by INACH fell below one-fifth of all cases. General racism took the first place from anti-Muslim hate in the 3rd quarter of 2016, by rising to 20.71 per cent from 20.02 per cent (due to our methodology, antisemitism, anti-Arab racism, anti-Ziganism and anti-refugee hate are all excluded from these numbers). As it can be seen, the number of racist incidents did not rise significantly, the change was caused by a minor - 4 per cent - fall in anti-Muslim instances of online hate speech. There was also a change in the third place. Antisemitism has seen a rise in the three months discussed in this report, rising from 17.1 per cent to 18.1 per cent and taking the third place from anti-refugee hate (any kind of cyber hate that attacks people solely based on the fact that they are refugees or migrants) that has fallen from 18.94 per cent to 16.42 per cent, taking the fourth place overall. So the switch can be linked to a 1 per cent rise in antisemitic cases and a roughly 2.5 per cent fall in anti-refugee hate speech, both minor fluctuations in the data. These hate types are followed by hate against non-religious people that has seen a sharp rise between the 2nd and third quarters of 2016 from 4.83 per cent to 8.21 per cent, a whopping 100 per cent increase (this is based mainly on data received from Germany). After these hate types, xenophobia is the next one with a minor 2 per cent fall from 8.15 per cent to 6.06 per cent. All other hate types stayed below 6 per cent with anti-Arab racism seeing a major rise from 2.99 per cent to 5.6 per cent.

## **2. The Prevalence of Cyber Hate on Different Platforms**

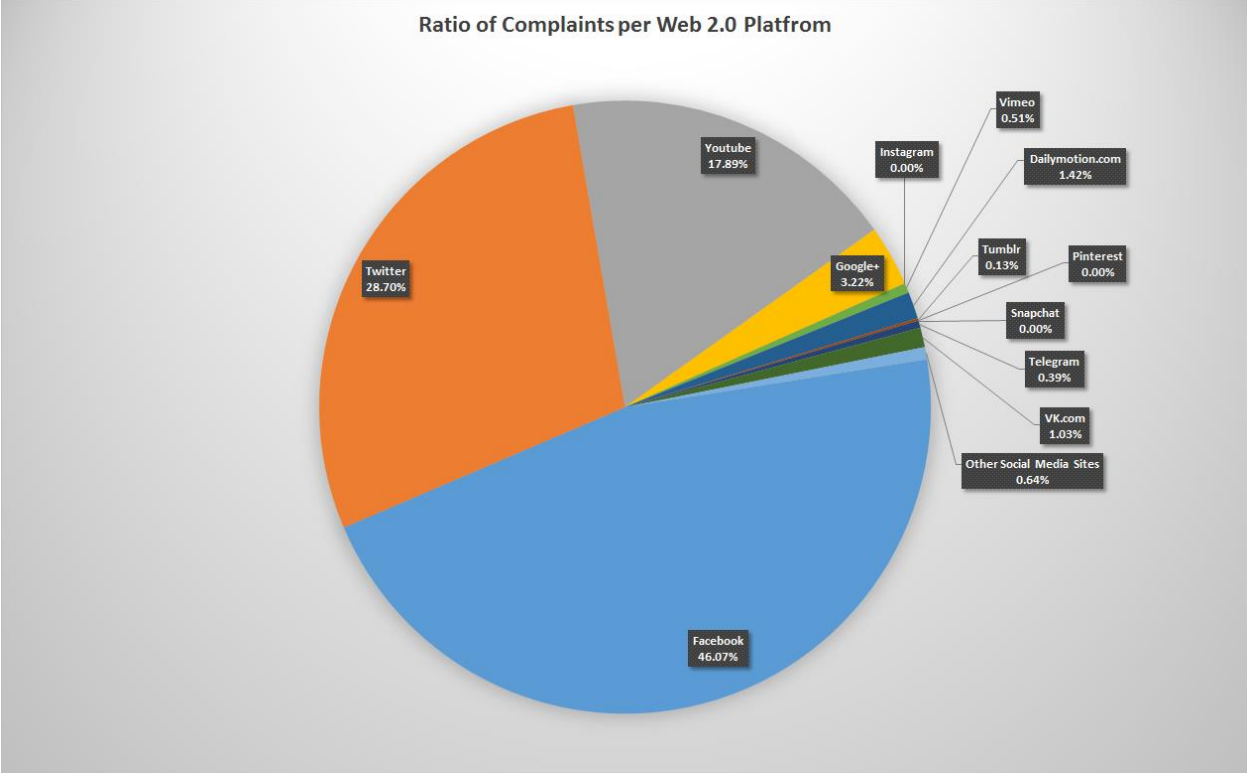
When it comes to platforms where cyber hate is flourishing, maybe it is not surprising that social media trumps Web 1.0 platforms by a magnitude. However, there are still websites, blogs and forums on the internet that spew hate or provide a platform for people to post hateful messages.



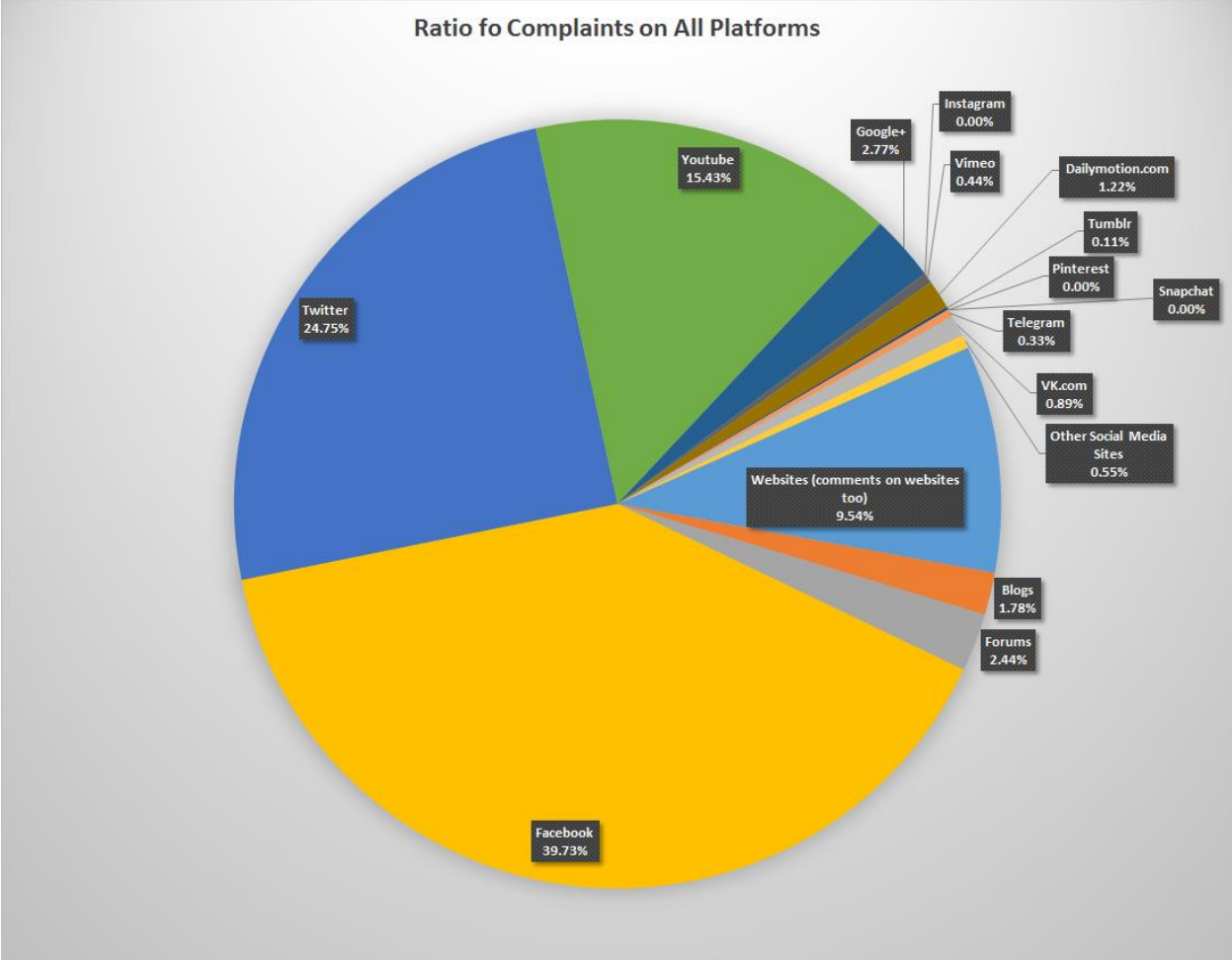
Websites are the most widely used platforms among Web 1.0 platforms to spread cyber hate, either by producing it or by providing a platform for people to post vile, violent and hateful comments. During the third quarter of 2016, 69.35 per cent of recorded cases of online hate (that appeared outside of social media) were posted on websites, a minor fall from 72.73 per cent. However, websites still reign supreme as far as online hate speech goes on web 1.0 platforms. There has been a change, however, between blogs and forums. Cases on blogs fell from 19.01 per cent to 12.9 per

cent and forums have seen a sharp rise from 8.26 per cent to 17.74 per cent, taking the second place among traditional platforms.

When examining social media sites, the three giants discussed in our previous quarterly report, still rule the online sphere of cyber hate. Facebook has seen a minor rise from 43.01 per cent to 46.06 per cent. Twitter kept its second place by rising from 23.25 per cent to 28.7 per cent, and finally YouTube stayed third in spite of seeing a minor fall from 21.26 per cent to 17.89 per cent. The three giants are still followed by Google+, but its meagre 5.99 per cent share from all cases has shrunk even further to 3.22 per cent; just like all other monitored social media platforms that, after a minor decrease, are all between 0 and 2 per cent instead of 0 and 5 per cent.



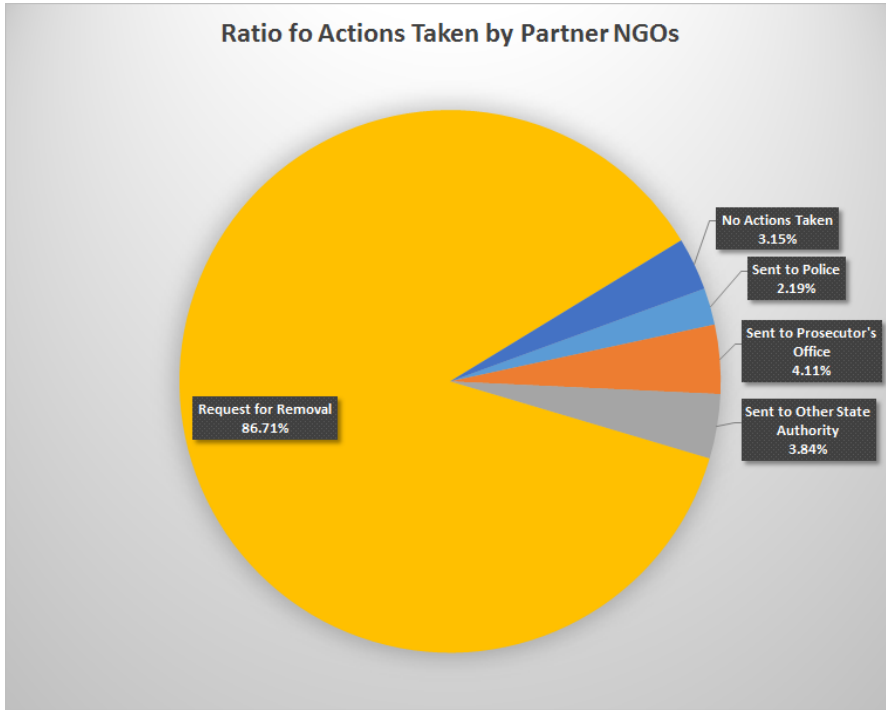
If the numbers of Web 1.0 and 2.0 platforms are merged, it becomes crystal clear that social media sites are still the pivotal platforms when it comes to the spreading of cyber hate. These platforms provide a cheap or even free tool for people and extremist groups to deliver their message to a gigantic audience. Hence, the dominance of the three aforementioned giants remains intact in the same order previously described, but the ratio of cases recorded on websites falls to a meagre 9.54 per cent (7.84 per cent in last quarter) and the ratio of cases on blogs and forums falls to around or below 3 per cent (2 per cent in last quarter).



These numbers clearly show that social media sites have completely taken over and fundamentally changed the landscape of cyber hate by letting their users spewing out hateful and violent content against minority communities in the form of memes, conspiracy theories, fake news and other viral content. Even more alarmingly, these platforms made it possible to extremist groups and individuals to deliver such content to users who do not actively seek it out, paving the way for radicalization among adolescents and young adults.

**3. Actions Taken by Partner Organisations Against Instances of Cyber Hate**

Partner organizations that participate in the project mainly focus on getting instances of cyber hate removed from social media and other platforms. Therefore, it is not surprising that, among the reported actions that had been taken by our partners, request for removal is the unquestionable leader with 87 per cent (86 per cent in last quarter).



This is followed by cases where no actions were taken. The number of these cases has fallen between the 2nd and 3rd quarters from 6 per cent to 3 per cent, which is a positive development. Finally, sometimes INACH discovers hate speech online that is so serious that it is not enough to just report it to the platform where it had been posted, but the case has to be reported to state authorities too. This can be the police, the prosecutor's office or

any other law enforcement agency. Altogether, cases forwarded to these authorities counted for 8 per cent of all cases in the second quarter of 2016 and in the 3rd quarter they have seen a 2 per cent rise, reaching 10 per cent of all cases.

#### **4. Removal Rate**

Removal rates can be very varied and inconsistent when it comes to the three big social media platforms. INACH's project partners received most of their complaints on Facebook, followed by Twitter and YouTube. The fourth highest number of complaints was received on Google +, but that number is dwarfed by the aforementioned triumvirate.

The removal rate of Facebook was fairly high on average. Between May and July 2016, across all six partner countries, the platform's removal rate was 78.57 per cent. However, this ratio has fallen in the 3rd quarter by more than 5 per cent to 73.4 per cent, which is signalling a bad trend that will hopefully turn around in the 4th quarter. Twitter on the other hand is still doing a lot worse, with its removal rate falling to 66.34 per cent from 67.01 per cent in the same time period. The biggest fall, however, was seen by YouTube. The platform's removal rate was very close to Facebook's with an exceptionally high 86.27 per cent during the previous quarter. As we mentioned it in our previous report, that high ratio was fairly unusual for the platform and that statement has been underpinned by YouTube's abysmal numbers in this quarter. The platform's removal rate has fallen to 62.22 per cent, a lower rate than Twitter's, which is already very low. This, hopefully, is not a sign of things to come, and YouTube's removal rate will rise again in the next quarter instead

of solidifying this trend. “Google+ is used by a lot less people than the previous three platforms, and the number of complaints on the platform is a lot lower, but these are still not sufficient excuses for the very low removal rate by the site, which is a meagre 30 per cent.” We wrote in our previous report. Sadly, the grim picture described in that report has become even grimmer in this quarter. Google+’s removal rates have almost halved by falling to 16.67 per cent, which signals a dangerous nonchalance towards online hate speech on the platform’s behalf.

Name of Platform	Percentages of Cases Removed	Percentages of Cases Not Removed
Websites (comments on websites too)	65.12%	34.88%
Blogs	10.00%	90.00%
Forums	66.67%	33.33%
Facebook	73.40%	26.60%
Twitter	66.34%	33.66%
Youtube	62.22%	37.78%
Google+	16.67%	83.33%
Vimeo	75.00%	25.00%
Dailymotion.com	100.00%	0.00%
VK.com	12.50%	87.50%
Tumblr	0.00%	100.00%
Telegram	66.67%	33.33%
Other Social Media Sites	66.67%	33.33%

The issues NGOs and users face - sadly - still have not changed either. If we take a look at individual removal rates in different partner countries in different months, we can see the biggest problem NGOs that fight cyber hate have with these sites. They are outrageously inconsistent in their removal rates between countries and in cases that are very similar to each other. It is understandable that these companies’ community guidelines are interpreted in relation to given countries national laws, but the guidelines are the same globally, therefore, the same infractions should be removed everywhere. However, that is most definitely not the case. Removal rates are highly influenced by the amount of complaints given social media site receives about an instance of online hate, and by who the complainer is. If it is an authority or a very well established local NGO, or other civil society organization that is a trusted reporter or flagger, it is much more likely that the hateful content will be removed; just like when a lot of people complain about a certain

content. This should not be the case. Illegal content and content that violates the guidelines should be removed globally and universally, irrespectively of the number of complainers or who the flagger is.

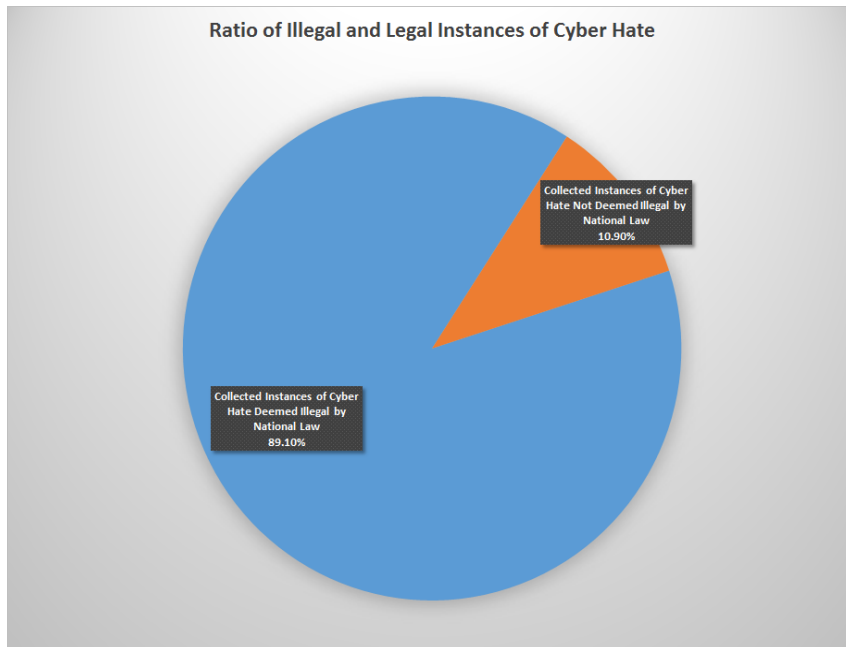
Taking all this into account, it is very aggravating that removal rates variegate vastly between countries. For example, jugendschutz.net in Germany had a 84.66 per cent removal rate on Facebook in August, whilst ZARA in Austria only had 30.77 per cent success rate in removals and Licra in France faced similar numbers to ZARA's (31.25 per cent) in those months.

There are very similar problems with Twitter. jugendschutz.net had a 100 per cent removal rate (based on 2 handled cases) on Twitter in October, whilst Licra had an 87.5 per cent success rate, but, for instance, MCI in Spain and ZARA in Austria did not manage to get anything removed from the platform in that month.

The list could be continued, but the point is already clear. There are major differences in removal rates on a monthly basis and between countries. This insinuates that social media companies interpret their own rules and guidelines subjectively and arbitrarily. This arbitrariness makes the job of NGOs and other organizations extremely hard and frustrating, whilst it also nurtures an enabling culture online towards extremist groups and people who hold extreme ideas and ideologies. Highly illegal, violent, hateful and vile contents are left online for months without any real explanation from social media giants, whilst minor and benign infractions are removed within hours. This attitude and the companies' modus operandi must change, if we are ever to have an online community that respects the human rights of all of its members.

## **5. Legality of Instances of Cyber Hate**

What is mainly noted by the data collected by INACH is that, although some cases might be considered hate speech by the public or by INACH members, it might not always be considered illegal. As presented in our previous report, in the second quarter of 2016, 89.58 per cent of reported or discovered instances of cyber hate were deemed illegal by the complaints officers of our partner organizations. This ratio did not fundamentally change. The ratio of cases deemed illegal by our experts in the third quarter of the year was 89.1 per cent, a very minor decrease.



This means that 10.9 per cent of cases assessed by our officers fell into a murky field, in which the inspected speech is highly offensive, dangerous, demeaning and/or goes against human dignity, yet it does not fall into what given nation state considers as illegal hate speech. Even though this ratio is still not very high, EU member states should pay more attention to hate speech that falls through the cracks of legislation in order to be able to stand up against hate speech even more effectively.

#### **IV. End Remarks**

Reaching extensive conclusions based on numbers collected in the first and second three months of our data collecting period would be still fallacious and premature. Some minor changes and shifts in the data can be already observed, but these minor fluctuations are still not enough to draw far-reaching conclusions. Such trends cannot be drawn up based on such a relatively small sample size. Therefore, we will discuss trends, shifts in the data and the conclusions that can be drawn from them in our extensive and comprehensive yearly report that we will publish in late 2017.