

Press release: antigypsyism and antisemitism online - resources, research, stakeholders, educational hub

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Although the racist perceptions of Jewish people and Romani people contrast with each other regarding their presumed "role" and "position" in society, those perceptions have the same devastating consequences: hatred, violence and exclusion. Both groups are perceived as a "threat" in and to societies. Romani people and Jewish people have been traditional scapegoats from the Middle Ages to the present. These and other findings will be presented by the analytical and comparative studies produced as part of the international project **Remember and ACT! (Re-ACT)**, which concentrates on researching these "old" concepts of hatred in their modern forms.

The project is implemented by the Czech NGO [ROMEA](#) organization together with the International Network against Cyber Hate [INACH](#), the French NGO [LICRA](#) and the Austrian research company [SYNYO](#).

The analysis of hateful posts online that INACH has produced for continental Europe has demonstrated strong links between current hate speech online and the practices that were customary to Nazi propaganda.

The studies produced during the Re-Act project aim to clarify the mechanism of recycling old stereotypes, half-truths, and myths about Jewish and Romani people. They aim to explain the principles underlying the revival of these deeply-rooted anti-Jewish or anti-Romani attitudes and demonstrate how these new forms of the same repeating xenophobic ideas exist online in modern forms, specifically on social media.

Antigypsyism

According to the analysts' findings in the project, it is evident that antigypsyism is on the rise online.

"The trend is continuing of normalizing hate speech against Romani people. Such speech today is not disseminated just by members of ultra-right groups, but also by 'ordinary' people or mainstream political parties," say Selma Muhić Dizdarević and Jitka Votavová, the authors of the study on antigypsyism.

"Fake news, hoaxes and manipulations are being used as instruments for spreading hatred. The trend of so-called humorous racism is also rising, creating a cocktail of irony, ridicule and humiliation that is attractive to young people, particularly," the authors say.

Naturally, the trend of either relativizing or outright denying historical facts related to the genocide of the Roma during the Second World War is continuing.

"Allegations appear quite frequently that there is a special kind of 'Romani crime', or that Romani people are receiving advantages compared to other inhabitants," the analytical materials report, giving as an example the hoaxes about free medications or higher welfare benefits for Romani people.

These anti-Romani attitudes create a "shared mainstream identity" and serve as a "lightning rod" for other social problems.

Antisemitism

There is no question that antisemitism is rising today. The global context of multidimensional crisis contributes to aggravating the situation even more. The resurgence of antisemitism appears online and in everyday life, including in European countries in Western, Central and Eastern parts.

For example, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, through social networks, many conspiracy theories are being disseminated about Jewish people, in particular being responsible for spreading the virus. This subject has become quite popular, and it is essential to focus on the antisemitic remarks being shared online.

Antisemitic hate speech online is the reflection of centuries of stereotypes, stigmatization, discrimination,

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and violence.

It is difficult to estimate the amount of antisemitic content. Still, social media, blogs, and other online platforms have widely contributed to disseminating and fostering violent, dangerous antisemitic myths, conspiracy theories and speech. Almost all major events could potentially lead to antisemitic content online.

For these reasons, it is crucial to address antisemitism through a common strategy based on education and transnational rules and definitions. Civil society has been at the forefront of reporting and tackling online antisemitic content in cooperation with mainstream platforms as well as with national and European authorities.

Project Re-ACT

The purpose of project Re-ACT is to raise awareness, based on analyzing hate speech and online practices, about the foundations of this speech and the motivations of those who engage in it, and how to defend against it effectively.

A crucial component of the project working is the willingness of experts to share their knowledge and experiences. Given that direct eyewitnesses to the horrors of the Holocaust are fewer and fewer and that the numbers of those who cast doubt on the impacts of Nazi ideology are growing, such activities are becoming more and more necessary.

As part of project Re-ACT, a virtual educational "hub" is also being created, a center for sharing educational and methodological materials where interested professionals (teachers, those who work with youth, representatives of civil society, politicians), as well as the broader public, can find up-to-date, verified information in the area online prevention of hatred against Jewish people, Romani people, and other marginalized groups, as well as the context of the current state of affairs.

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For more information about this project, visit the website React.inach.net

Studies for download:

- [Comparative report on the phenomena of online antisemitism \(2020/09\)](#)
- [Comparative report on the phenomena of online antigypsyism \(2020/09\)](#)
- [Analytical paper on debunking online antisemitism \(2020/09\)](#)
- [Analytical paper on debunking online antigypsyism \(2020/09\)](#)

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