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# Hate speech, racism and xenophobia: alert and coordinated response mechanisms [ALRECO]

## WP4: ALRECO TRANSFERABILITY ANALYSIS REPORT. ALRECO Knowledge Transfer

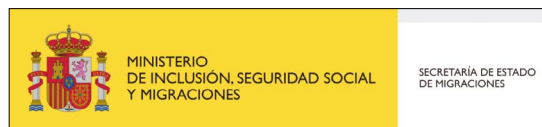
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## 1. Introduction

This report on the dissemination and descriptive analysis of knowledge transfer is part of the European project AL-RE-CO (Hate speech, racism and xenophobia: alert and coordinated response mechanisms), funded by DG Justice of the European Commission.

The ALRECO project is led by the Spanish Observatory on Racism and Xenophobia (OBERAXE)<sup>1</sup>, which forms part of the consortium with the following partners: the Ministry of the Interior, through the National Office for the Fight Against Hate Crime (ONDOD),<sup>2</sup> the University of Barcelona-CREA (Community of Research on Excellence for All),<sup>3</sup> and the Asociación TRABE, Initiatives for a social and solidarity driven economy.<sup>4</sup>

The overarching objective of the ALRECO<sup>5</sup> project is to train State authorities to identify, analyse, monitor and evaluate online hate speech with a view to designing shared strategies to address speech motivated by racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and anti-Gypsyism. It also supports the efforts of civil society organizations in monitoring manifestations of racist hatred, xenophobia and related intolerance on the Internet and in raising awareness of such activity, making it public and denouncing it.

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1 The Spanish Observatory on Racism and Xenophobia (OBERAXE) is attached to the State Secretariat for Migration at the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration, <https://www.inclusion.gob.es/oberaxe/es/quienessomos/index.htm>

2 <http://www.interior.gob.es/web/servicios-al-ciudadano/delitos-de-odio>

3 <https://crea.ub.edu/index/?lang=es>

4 <https://www.trabe.org.es>

5 <https://www.inclusion.gob.es/oberaxe/es/ejes/delitosodio/alreco/index.htm>

## 2. Executive summary

Incidents of racism and xenophobia have been on the rise around the world in recent years and social media and other forms of communication are being used as platforms to promote intolerance.

In its Communication “Tackling Illegal Content Online; Towards an enhanced responsibility of online platforms”, the European Commission voices concern about the enormous amount of illegal content that can be published and disseminated online every day (...), pointing out that what is illegal in the real world is also illegal in the virtual world.”<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, hate speech poses a threat to democratic values, social stability and peace. Combating and eliminating hate speech is crucial for progressing with the European Union agenda and promoting a peaceful, just and inclusive society.

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<sup>6</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, “*Tackling Illegal Content Online; Towards an enhanced responsibility of online platforms*”, COM (2017) 555 final, 28.9.2017 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ES/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52017DC0555&from=it>

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The ALRECO project seeks to:

- Contribute to the development of an alert mechanism against hate speech in social media and facilitate a coordinated response<sup>7</sup> by public and private institutions and organizations to prevent and eliminate hate speech linked to racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and anti-Gypsyism.
- Support the efforts of civil society organizations in monitoring manifestations of racist hatred, xenophobia and related intolerance on the Internet and in raising awareness of such activity, making it public and denouncing it.
- Support civil society in exploring ways to use the popularity of social media to combat racism and intolerance.

The ALRECO project is based on a methodology of experience sharing, identifying best practices in Europe and mutual learning.

In addition to building the State's capacity to identify, analyse, monitor and assess online hate speech, it seeks to establish and/or enhance synergies between institutions, security forces, judicial practitioners and key agents such as Internet platforms, the media, civil society and victims' groups in order to:

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<sup>7</sup> "Protocol to combat illegal hate speech online" The objective of this Protocol is to define and facilitate collaboration between all the signatories, each within the scope of its capacities and competences, in combating illegal hate speech online, focusing on the specific situation in Spain and applying relevant Spanish national law. The Protocol is based on the "Code of Conduct on countering illegal hate speech online" and the Commission's Recommendation (EU) 2018/334 of 1 March 2018 on measures to effectively tackle illegal content online. [https://www.inclusion.gob.es/oberaxe/ficheros/ejes/discursoodio/PROTOCOLO\\_DISCURSO\\_ODIO.pdf](https://www.inclusion.gob.es/oberaxe/ficheros/ejes/discursoodio/PROTOCOLO_DISCURSO_ODIO.pdf)

- Offer access to the online tool created through the project to help monitor hate speech.
- Conduct analyses, draft reports and jointly publish data gathered by the different stakeholders that monitor hate speech.
- Assess the spread and harm caused by hate speech.
- Design shared work strategies, coordinated action and measures to discourage hate speech on social media.

## 2.1. Main outcomes of the ALRECO project

Following are the main outcomes<sup>8</sup>:

- A compendium of best practices to prevent and combat online hate speech. The compendium includes the information collection methodology gleaned from different experiences, the criteria considered when choosing best practices, and the characteristics that selected experiences had in common. The practices selected were then systematized to arrive at a series of conclusions and recommendations to be used in successive phases of the project and as the basis for developing indicators on hate speech in social media.

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<sup>8</sup> The outcomes of the ALRECO project and the texts that document them are available at the following links: <https://www.inclusion.gob.es/oberaxe/es/ejes/delitosodio/alreco/index.htm> <https://alrecoresponse.eu> <https://www.inclusion.gob.es/oberaxe/alreco/>

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- A “Protocol and system of indicators to detect hate speech on social media.” A system of indicators and search criteria was developed to detect speech that promotes online racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and anti-Gypsyism. It includes early warning indicators with which to assess the intensity, severity, distribution and potential impact of hate speech with a view to making recommendations for action to prevent possible discriminatory incidents and hate crimes.
- Creation of a computer tool for the systematic collection and analysis of hate speech. The University of Barcelona-CREA has developed a computer algorithm for the detection, display and analysis of hate speech on Twitter that also identifies the speech intensity (extreme hate, offensive hate, neutral speech, upstander speech);
- Design of Shared Strategies to combat online hate speech: reinforcing synergies between key stakeholders such as the public administration, civil society organizations, data hosting companies and others, including groups affected by hate speech.



## 2.2. Sustainability and development of ALRECO project outcomes

The sustainability actions proposed once the project has drawn to a close include:

- The aim to bring other institutions and CSOs collaborating with OBERAXE<sup>9</sup> on board to engage OBERAXE's daily monitoring of hate speech in the social media<sup>10</sup> with a view to building a more integrated system to better analyse this phenomenon and contribute to developing strategies and supporting solidarity-minded inclusive and democratic speech.
- The Secretariat of State for Migrations, through OBERAXE and in collaboration with the project partners, is working to facilitate access to the algorithm developed within the framework of the ALRECO project, for public and private institutions, civil society organizations, universities and research centres, through its website <https://www.inclusion.gob.es/oberaxe/alreco/>. It is hoped that its use will generate a collective body of knowledge encouraging the responsible use of social media and developing effective counter-narratives to prevent, detect and coordinate responses to hate speech.

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<sup>9</sup> Interinstitutional agreement to combat racism, xenophobia, LGBTIphobia and other forms of intolerance, with the aim of enacting active policies and prevention and detection measures in the sphere of racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance within the framework of the powers granted to the subscribing institutions. <https://www.inclusion.gob.es/oberaxe/es/ejes/coordinacion/interinstitucional/index.htm>

<sup>10</sup> OBERAXE has been participating, along with other institutions and CSOs from most European Union countries, in the exercises to assess compliance with the "Code of Conduct on countering illegal hate speech online" signed in 2016 by the European Commission and YouTube, Twitter, Facebook and Microsoft, and which other platforms such as Instagram and Tik Tok have joined. Since May 2020, OBERAXE has been publishing a monthly newsletter with the results of its monitoring efforts as material for reflection, analysis and design of activities to combat hate speech. These results are available at: <https://www.inclusion.gob.es/oberaxe/es/ejes/discursoodio/index.htm>

### 3. Vision and consideration of the knowledge transfer structure

Following are **proposals for the transfer of knowledge** derived from the ALRECO project to the EU for reflection in the High Level Group on Combating Racism and Xenophobia, and other forms of intolerance:

- Develop strategies to transfer the knowledge and outcomes obtained from the monitoring of hate speech on social media with a view to promoting the exchange of experiences and coordinated strategies among EU Member States that will ultimately enhance the effectiveness of efforts to prevent and combat hate speech on social media. These strategies will have to consider the knowledge transfer context within the EU itself and among the different Member States, each with its own particularities, from a global perspective and within a framework of comparative practices, bearing in mind the security, geographic, economic, political and social environment. They must also contemplate an evaluation to address relevance, social impact and collaboration with other public and private institutions, civil society and academia.
- Establish synergies between public institutions and the academic community together with civil society organizations to disseminate and optimize the knowledge generated in the project. Therefore, outcomes must be effectively disseminated and used, while respecting intellectual property, with a view to transforming them into new products and services.

All of this contributes to the achievement of the following **milestones**:

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- Foster networking between the largest possible number of key public and private stakeholders that play a proactive role in Internet platforms, using the tools that the platforms themselves have to report content while raising awareness about their use, thus enhancing the value of the ALRECO project's computer tool.
- Designate a national contact point (which could be the representatives of the EU's high-level group on combating racism and xenophobia), whose tasks could include the coordination of measures related to knowledge transfer between public and private bodies contributing to the prevention of and fight against hate crime and hate speech on social media. This would enable monitoring hate speech on social media specifically address transnational aspects in collaboration with contact points in other Member States, and provide open access to the ALRECO project's computer tool.
- Encourage the signing of research agreements and contracts in the framework of collaboration between public institutions and Universities, especially in the field of IT systems and computing, sociology of language, law and social sciences.
- In order to promote and enhance the potential of the ALRECO project's computer tool, we recommend continuing to encourage its use as a support mechanism to generate counter-narratives and tolerant speech in line with the protection of human rights.
- Supervise activities related to the protection of intellectual property, knowledge transfer and success stories, and disseminate them periodically. The outcome of the analyses resulting from the ALRECO computer tool, technical knowledge and intellectual property rights should be made more visible to the private sector, to civil society organizations monitoring hate speech on social media, and to academic research centres with a view to promoting its use<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> Commission Recommendation of 10 April 2008 *on the management of intellectual property in knowledge transfer activities and Code of Practice for universities and other public research organisations*, Annex I, "Principles for a knowledge transfer policy," OJEU of 5.6.2008, L 146/21.

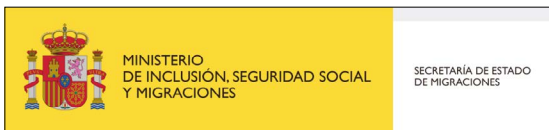
## 4. Conclusions

- The design of the “ALRECO Project’s Shared Strategies” aims to encourage the use of the computer algorithm developed in the project to support key actors in the early detection, monitoring and analysis of hate speech, and to foster the adoption of measures and a coordinated response.
- The basis for creating value from knowledge and ideas must continue to rest on public and private investment in R&D&I. Moreover, public and private actors must be provided with coordination mechanisms and collaboration between public organizations and universities must be sustained in order to take advantage of their research, teaching and scientific work on strategies to prevent, combat and mitigate the effects of hate speech. They must act as co-creators and interactive partners in innovation ecosystems.<sup>12</sup>
- This collaborative approach of joining forces, fostered by the sustainability of the ALRECO project over time, will bear fruit through a network made up of the different levels of government, civil society organizations, universities, trade unions, legal practitioners, Internet platforms, the media, and victims’ groups, to help mobilize the world against hatred in all its forms and in favour of human rights.

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<sup>12</sup> Report *Boosting Open Innovation and Knowledge Transfer in the European Union* : [file:///Users/juan/Downloads/gp\\_eudor\\_WEB\\_KI0214284ENC\\_002.pdf.en.pdf](file:///Users/juan/Downloads/gp_eudor_WEB_KI0214284ENC_002.pdf.en.pdf)

EU website on innovation: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation_en)



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