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**Hate speech, racism and xenophobia: alert and coordinated response mechanisms  
(AL-RE-CO)**

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**Project Coordination: General Secretariat for Migrations – Directorate General for Inclusion and Humanitarian Aid, through the Spanish Observatory on Racism and Xenophobia  
(OBERAXE)**

WP 4: DESIGN OF SHARED STRATEGIES

# REPORT

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## Shared Strategies

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# 1. Introduction

This report is set in the [AL-RE-CO project \(Hate speech, racism and xenophobia: alert and coordinated response mechanisms\)](#), funded by the European Commission's Directorate General for Justice and led by the Spanish Observatory on Racism and Xenophobia (OBERAXE) (Secretariat of State for Migrations- Directorate General for Integration and Humanitarian Aid -Ministry of Inclusion, Migrations and Social Security).

The AL-RE-CO project [aims to improve State authorities' ability to identify, analyse, monitor and evaluate on line hate speech in order to design shared strategies to combat hate speech on the grounds of racism, xenophobia, islamophobia and antisemitism and anti-gypsyism.](#)

In the specific case of online incitement to hatred, coordination must be strengthened and joint strategies for action must be established. This coordination and dialogue for common action should not be limited to institutional spheres, but must rather be a strategy encompassing all sectors, particularly those Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) active in this field as well as the online platforms themselves with the purpose of setting a solid foundation for dialogue and cooperation among and between all of the parties involved to prevent online incitement to hatred.

Within the ALRECO [project's work packages](#) is [the Design of Common Strategies \(WP4\)](#). The [specific aim](#) (num. 3) is to establish and/or strengthen synergies among institutional and key actors (including civil society) and, by evaluating the dissemination and damage caused by hate speech, design shared strategies for coordinated work and action, and measures for discouraging the use of hate speech and reducing and repairing the damage caused.

As an expected result of this action (3.2) *"shared strategies and coordinated responses to hate speech will have been debated and agreed, enhancing coordination between institutions and the security forces, legal practitioners and civil society organizations as well as the groups affected with a view to early detection, discouraging use and repairing damage caused by hate speech (motivated by racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia and antisemitism). As added value of this project, anti-gypsyism was also included both in the indicator protocol and in the advisory group and in the algorithm monitoring group."*

This report comprises [four parts](#). First, [key actors](#) will be defined starting with: national, regional and local public administrations, civil society organizations, the victims themselves, Internet platforms, universities, the media, legal practitioners and European bodies.

[Secondly](#), synergies with other existing initiatives will be discussed. [Thirdly](#), the shared strategies and monitoring mechanisms will be presented together with the various key agents identified.

Lastly, the [fourth part](#) of the report puts forward shared potential shared hate speech monitoring, joint publication of data and production of periodic reports based on the algorithm designed in the ALRECO project.

Finally, the report contains a section offering conclusions and recommendations<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> To consult other inspiring experiences and best practices, please see the report on Best Practices and Experiences in the EU in analyzing online hate speech. Available at: [http://www.inclusion.gob.es/oberaxe/es/publicaciones/documentos/documento\\_0123.htm](http://www.inclusion.gob.es/oberaxe/es/publicaciones/documentos/documento_0123.htm)



## 2. Identifying key agents

Because of its cross-cutting nature, combatting racism, xenophobia and discrimination requires ongoing coordination and international, national, regional and local institutional and intergovernmental cooperation. In the ALRECO project, the specific aims in this regard are:

*In the early identification, discouraging and reparation of the damage caused by hate speech (**motivated by racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia, antisemitism and anti-gypsyism**), designing shared strategies and coordinated responses become even more important in order to enhance coordination between institutions, security forces, legal practitioners, civil society organizations and the very groups of individuals affected.*

The following provides an indicative though not exhaustive list<sup>23</sup> of the key agents considered for shared strategies in the ALRECO project:

- Public Administrations (national, regional and local).
- Civil Society Organizations (CSOs).
- Victims.
- Internet platforms.
- Universities.
- Media.
- Legal practitioners.
- European Bodies.

The following provides a brief explanation of how the key agents were chosen as well as some ideas regarding their potential role in the proposed cooperation and monitoring mechanisms (ALRECO protocol).

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<sup>2</sup> Throughout this report, when hate speech is mentioned with reference to the ALRECO project, it will be understood to cover racism, xenophobia, islamophobia, antisemitism, and anti-gypsyism, as in the ALRECO project. For the sake of concision, not all of these concepts will be mentioned each time hate speech is, as they will all be understood as being included in the concept.

<sup>3</sup> For instance, when deemed appropriate, the involvement of schools can be considered.



## 2.1. Public Administrations: national, regional and local

Cooperation and coordination between the various public administrations becomes essential in any type of public policy. Specifically, regarding being able to act against hate speech<sup>4</sup>, both preventively before it occurs and by discouraging its use and repairing the damage it causes, work must be coordinated between the national, regional and local administrations.

In matters of immigration, it is the State that regulates the legal framework for aliens, while the social assistance is provided at a much closer level by regional or local administrations. Both the case law issued through various Constitutional Court rulings on the distribution of jurisdiction among the different levels of government in article 149.1. paragraph 2 of the Spanish Constitution considers “nationality, immigration, emigration, aliens and the right to asylum” and the specific legislation on immigration and aliens (Organic Act 4/2000) have configured a framework for jurisdiction in which participation and dialogue appear as essential elements for designing public policy for immigrant integration.

Within the national public administration, coordination<sup>5</sup> will be particularly important between the [Ministry for Inclusion, Social Security and Migrations](#) through the [Spanish Observatory on Racism and Xenophobia \(OBERAXE\)](#) with the following Ministries:

<b>Ministry of the Interior</b>	<b>Ministry of Justice</b>	<b>Ministry of Culture and Sport</b>	<b>Ministry of Education and Vocational Training</b>	<b>Ministry of Equality</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• National Office to combat hate crime</li><li>• Security Forces</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• General Council of the Judiciary (CGPJ)</li><li>• Office of the Prosecutor General</li><li>• Centre for Legal Studies</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• State Commission against violence, racism, xenophobia and intolerance in sport</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• State Observatory for harmonious internationalisation in schools</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• General Directorate for Equal Treatment and Racial and Ethnic Diversity</li><li>• Council on Equal Treatment and Non-discrimination</li></ul>

For their part, the various regional and local entities have conducted initiatives to combat racism, xenophobia, racial discrimination and other forms of intolerance in their geographies.

While there are not many activities underway, according to the study done by OBERAXE and the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP), in 2020<sup>6</sup>, as measures to combat

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<sup>4</sup> Includes racism, xenophobia, islamophobia, antisemitism and anti-gypsyism.

<sup>5</sup> The next section will address coordination action already underway, such as the following inter-institutional agreement:

<http://www.inclusion.gob.es/oberaxe/es/ejes/coordinacion/interinstitucional/index.htm>

<sup>6</sup>[http://www.inclusion.gob.es/oberaxe/ficheros/ejes/cooperacion/estFundLegalPlanesActuac\\_CAA\\_AALL.pdf](http://www.inclusion.gob.es/oberaxe/ficheros/ejes/cooperacion/estFundLegalPlanesActuac_CAA_AALL.pdf)

racism were barely existent and were found in fewer than 3% of the municipalities surveyed, from the migration governance standpoint, most of the municipalities surveyed (three out of every four) refer they have an Immigration councillor.

The following coordination with Regions and local entities is fundamental:

Regions	Local Entities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Sectoral Conference on Immigration and Emmigration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP) (*)</li> <li>•Other networks of municipalities (DIBA, Red Euskadi Langunkoia, Network of Basque municipalities for equality, etc.)</li> </ul>

(\*) The FEMP is the national association of local entities that has the broadest based presence, grouping together City and Town Councils, Provincial governments, and Island Councils. It has a total of 7,410, members representing 95% of Spain’s local governments.

## 2.2. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) make an essential contribution to inclusion and combatting intolerance of migrants through different types of action including activities of general interest in the sphere of foreign nationals, the defence of migrants’ human rights, the fostering of harmonious interaction and social cohesion, awareness raising in society, and activities aimed to combat racism and xenophobia.

Among the CSOs, informal social movements (i.e. those not formally constituted as an organization) yet at times playing a fundamental role as information platforms, vindicators of rights, unions of victims, and so forth, are considered. For instance, among other examples, the *Black Lives Matter* movement can be cited as well as platforms of victims, online activists, and so forth.

Cooperation with CSOs in the ALRECO project is therefore indispensable<sup>7</sup>. As addressed in section 4 of this report, various civil society organizations are participating in the monitoring of hate speech using the algorithm designed<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> [http://www.inclusion.gob.es/oberaxe/es/ejes/cooperacion\\_OSC/index.htm](http://www.inclusion.gob.es/oberaxe/es/ejes/cooperacion_OSC/index.htm)

<sup>8</sup> At the time this document was drafted, the CSOs were implementing the testing of the algorithm.

Among CSOs, the trade union movement has a significant impact in labour-related migration policies. As expressed by the International Labour Organization (ILO)<sup>9</sup> in its Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration, trade unions perform an essential function in a rights-based approach to labour migration.

Spain's major trade unions have special sections devoted to migrants and conduct different studies and research which at times focuses on hate speech.<sup>10</sup>



## 2.3. Victims

One of the ALRECO project's aims specifically mentions the inclusion of *"the affected groups themselves"* as essential key agents for early identification of hate speech, discouraging its use and especially repairing damage it causes.

As various studies have reflected<sup>11</sup>, it is through the proliferation and acceptance of hate speech that generates diminished empathy towards other groups that have been dehumanized. This spawns a breeding ground to justify discriminatory acts, abuse and various types of violent acts. While there can be no direct general connection made between the proliferation of hate speech and violent hate crimes, there is an increasingly close link between the two phenomena. While not all hate speech triggers episodes of violence, what does seem evident is that there are rarely episodes of hate crimes without prior stigmatization and dehumanization of victims.

European Directive 2012/29/EU of 25 October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision

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<sup>9</sup>[https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---americas/---ro-lima/---sro-san\\_jose/documents/publication/wcms\\_249015.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---americas/---ro-lima/---sro-san_jose/documents/publication/wcms_249015.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.ugt.es/hay-que-redimensionar-el-sistema-de-asilo-y-combatir-los-discursos-xenofobos>  
[https://www.ccoo.es/noticia:412394--%E2%80%9CLa\\_inmigracion\\_no\\_quita\\_el\\_trabajo\\_a\\_la\\_poblacion\\_espanola\\_ocupa\\_los\\_peores\\_empleos\\_con\\_salarios\\_mas\\_bajos\\_y\\_condiciones\\_laborales\\_mas\\_precarias%E2%80%9D](https://www.ccoo.es/noticia:412394--%E2%80%9CLa_inmigracion_no_quita_el_trabajo_a_la_poblacion_espanola_ocupa_los_peores_empleos_con_salarios_mas_bajos_y_condiciones_laborales_mas_precarias%E2%80%9D)

<sup>11</sup> For instance, Hate Speech in Social Media: the state of affairs (El discurso de odio en las redes sociales: un estado de la cuestión). Alex Cabo and Ana García Juataneý (2016), available at: [https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/bcnvsodi/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Informe\\_discurso-del-odio\\_ES.pdf](https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/bcnvsodi/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Informe_discurso-del-odio_ES.pdf)

2001/220/JHIA<sup>12</sup> states that “victims of crime should be recognised and treated in a respectful, sensitive and professional manner with no discrimination of any kind based on any motive such as race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, belonging to a national minority, property, birth, disability, age, gender, gender expression, gender identity, sexual orientation, residence status or health. The personal situation and immediate needs, age, gender, potential disability and maturity of victims of crime should be considered while fully respecting victims’ physical, mental and moral integrity in all contact with a competent authority in the context of criminal proceedings and any service that involves coming into contact with victims, such as victim support or restorative justice services. Victims of crime should be protected from secondary and repeat victimisation, from intimidation and from retaliation. They should receive appropriate support to facilitate their recovery and should be provided with sufficient access to justice.”

Also, the Statute of Victims of Hatred Act 4/2015 of 27 April<sup>13</sup> “does not only respond to the European legislator’s requirement for minimum standards set by the European lawmakers through the text finally approved in the previously mentioned directive 2012/29/EU, but also aims to be more ambitious, conveying Spanish society’s demands and needs in its effort to complete the design of the rule of Law, focusing nearly always on procedural safeguards and the rights of the person accused, prosecuted or sentenced”. It further states that “protection and support for victims is not only procedural, nor does it merely depend on their position in a trial, but rather takes on an extra-procedural dimension. It is underpinned by a broad notion of recognition, protection and support in order to provide comprehensive safeguards for the victim. It is therefore fundamental to offer victims, among other measures, all of the facilities possible in order to be able to exercise and protect their rights, eliminating unnecessary paperwork that generates a second victimisation, and providing victims with information and effective guidance regarding the rights and services of which they can avail themselves, forwarding them to the competent authority, providing humane treatment and the possibility of being accompanied by a person of their choice throughout the process, notwithstanding the applicable procedural representation. Action taken must always be geared to the victim, and this requires an evaluation and individualized treatment of each and every victim, without prejudice to the specialized treatment that certain victims require. As indicated, recognition, protection and support of victims is not limited to material aspects and monetary reparation, but also encompasses a moral dimension”.



## 2.4. Internet Platforms

Internet data hosting service providers (herein IT companies) have an important role to play in combatting illegal content disseminated online that may be encouraging hate speech.

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<sup>12</sup><https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1421925131614&uri=CELEX:32012L0029>

<sup>13</sup><https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1421925131614&uri=CELEX:32012L0029>

The “Code of Conduct on Countering Illegal Hate Speech Online”<sup>14</sup> was signed in 2016 by the European Commission and several IT companies aiming to establish cooperation and mechanisms to facilitate their withdrawal of illegal hate inciting content in less than 24 hours. Since the signing of the Code of Conduct, several hate speech monitoring exercises have been conducted with the participation of various civil society organizations in Spain and also that of the Secretariat of State for Migrations through OBERAXE and the Secretariat of State for Security through the National Office to Combat Hate Crime.

In June 2020, the fifth evaluation of the Code of Conduct on Countering Illegal Hate Speech Online was published. The results are generally positive<sup>15</sup>: *“the internet companies evaluate 90% of the reported content within 24 hours and 71% of the content considered illegal hate speech is removed. However, the platforms need to further improve transparency and user response. The platforms assessed 90% of the marked content within 24 horas, while they had only evaluated 40% of the content in 2016. Of the content considered to be illegal hate speech, 71% was eliminated in 2020, while in 2016 the figure was merely 28%”*.

For its part, EU Recommendation 2018/334 of the European Commission dated 1 March 2018 on measures to effectively tackle illegal content online (herein the Recommendation)<sup>16</sup> proposes that EU member States adopt effective and proportionate measures to combat illegal online content through agreements between State authorities and IT companies; designate one or several contact points in the central administration to act as interlocutors with the IT companies regarding notifications and communication of withdrawal or blocked content that may constitute a hate speech crime; collaboration among IT companies and reliable communicators.



## 2.5. Universities

Universities play an essential role in addressing hate speech from a three-pronged approach:

- ⇒ Research. Various universities in Spain have researched<sup>17</sup> hate speech. The algorithm designed for the ALRECO project was designed by the CREA group<sup>18</sup> at the University of Barcelona.
- ⇒ Scientific dissemination. Courses, seminars, workshops and conferences<sup>19</sup> that tackle hate speech are one of the best ways to combat this practice based on knowledge and awareness raising.

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<sup>14</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/es/IP\\_16\\_1937](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/es/IP_16_1937)

<sup>15</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/codeofconduct\\_2020\\_factsheet\\_12.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/codeofconduct_2020_factsheet_12.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.boe.es/doue/2018/063/L00050-00061.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> <http://rua.ua.es/dspace/handle/10045/47442>

<sup>18</sup> <https://crea.ub.edu/index/about/?lang=es>

<sup>19</sup> <https://vicerrectorado.pucp.edu.pe/academico/noticias/redes-discursos-odio-universidad/>

⇒ Teaching. This is an essential element in preventing, combatting and palliating the effects of hate speech.



## 2.6. Media

According to the [study by the Hate Speech in the Media Observatory](#)<sup>20</sup> in certain media, up to eight different strategies for disseminating so-called “hate speech can be found:

- insults and slander, particularly against the Muslim community;
- non-critical reproduction of far-right politicians’ hate speech;
- de-legitimation of actors or actions which, according to the media, combat hate speech or defend non-discrimination;
- search for information confirming that media’s prejudice or stereotypes;
- depiction of origin, skin colour, ethnicity, culture or religion in news about crime, sexual abuse or terrorism when this information has no bearing on the news;
- Use of photographs or videos, at times subtitled or edited, that confirm prejudice or stereotypes;
- Opinionated news outside the editorial section containing prejudice or stereotypes;
- Generation of news linking “actors-us”, identified by these media as the autochthonous white population.

The Hate Speech in the Media Observatory<sup>21</sup> is a project run by the Ramon Barnils group of journalists with the support of the Citizens’ Rights and the Diversity Directorates of the Barcelona City Council. One of its objectives is for *“journalists and citizens in general themselves to have the tools to identify hate speech that is taking hold in our society”*.

Another such initiative is the [Fundación Al Fanar’s publication on “Islam, Muslims and journalism: a guide for journalists”](#).<sup>22</sup> This guide provides facts and recommendations for journalists to take into consideration various conceptual frameworks, loaded with negative stereotypes, in which we unconsciously pigeonhole Islam and Muslims.

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<https://universidadeuropea.es/noticias/estudiantes-de-la-universidad-europea-participan-en-un-programa-universitario-internacional-para-luchar-con-el-discurso-de-odio-en-redes-sociales>  
<sup>20</sup> <https://miquelpellicer.com/2017/03/como-se-construye-el-odio-en-los-medios-de-comunicacion/>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.media.cat/discursodimitjans/qui-som/>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.fundacionalfanar.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Islam-personas-musulmanas-y-periodismo.pdf>

According to the [definition of the Panhispanic Dictionary of Legal Spanish](#)<sup>23</sup> legal practitioners are persons or entities intervening in the creation, interpretation and application of laws and regulations or those involved in enforcing them. This expression comes from the English language and is often used in Europe, especially in Spain, associated with the sphere of Law. In private and social sectors and in markets, legal practitioners are those lawyers, members of defence or consultancy law firms, and all those offering their knowledge and legal skills in litigation, certification, expertise, management skills and lobbying.

Based on this definition and in the ALRECO project, we will make reference to lawyers represented by the [General Council of the Spanish Bar](#) and the various [Bar Associations in different localities around Spain](#).

Their role is fundamental in preventing, countering and sanctioning hate speech through two essential functions:

- ⇒ [Legal work](#). Information services and legal counselling particularly in the event of racism, xenophobia, intolerance and hate crime. One example can be cited in the service that the Madrid Bar Association (Ilustre Colegio de Abogados de Madrid) has provided for more than ten years in the city's 21 districts through its agreement with the Madrid City Council<sup>24</sup>.
- ⇒ [Teaching](#). Specialized courses on combatting racism, xenophobia, homophobia, transphobia and hate crime for legal professionals contribute to fostering greater knowledge of these subjects and about existing case law. As an example, (September 2020) the recent HELP course on combatting racism, xenophobia, homophobia and transphobia given by the Consejo General de la Abogacía Española (General Council for the Spanish Bar) can be cited.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup><https://dpej.rae.es/lema/operador-jur%C3%ADdico-operadora-jur%C3%ADdica#:~:text=1.,el%20control%20de%20su%20cumplimiento>.

<sup>24</sup><https://www.madrid.es/portales/munimadrid/es/Inicio/Servicios-sociales-y-salud/Direcciones-y-telefonos/Servicio-Municipal-de-Orientacion-Juridica-en-materia-de-Extranjeria-y-para-supuestos-de-Racismo-Xenofobia-Homofobia-y-Transfobia-/?vgnnextfmt=default&vgnextoid=1968a34376ec8210VgnVCM1000000b205a0aRCRD&vgnnextchannel=2bc2c8eb248fe410VgnVCM1000000b205a0aRCRD>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.abogacia.es/actualidad/noticias/curso-help-sobre-lucha-contra-el-racismo-la-xenofobia-la-homofobia-y-la-transfobia/>

[The Spanish Observatory on Racism and Xenophobia \(Oberaxe\) is the European Fundamental Rights Agency's contact point](#) (Fundamental Rights Agency-FRA, Art. 8.1 of Regulation (EC) 168/2007 of the Council of 15 February 2007 establishing the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency), and collaborates on the following activities:

- Participates in bi-yearly meetings of National Liaison Offices (NLOs), held in Vienna.
- Distribution of reports and documents prepared by the Agency among national bodies with an interest in the area.
- Oberaxe elaborates proposals that it sends to the FRA as Spain's official contribution. They are compiled by competent ministerial departments with whom it consults on a regular basis.
- Participates in the "Working Group on Improving the Reporting and Recording of Hate Crime in the EU" established by the FRA, and others.

[The Spanish Observatory on Racism and Xenophobia \(OBERAXE\) is Spain's National Contact point for the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights \(ODIHR\) of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe \(OSCE\) to defend human rights and for the prosecution of hate crimes.](#) As such, it performs the following activities:

- Attends the annual meeting of national contact points.
- Forwards information on hate crimes and non-discrimination reported in Spain for the elaboration of the ODIHR annual report on hate crime.
- Forwards examples of best practice for the elaboration of the ODIHR's handbook for judges and prosecutors: Prosecuting Hate Crimes. A Practical Guide.<sup>26</sup>

Additionally, there are two European projects directly related to the ALRECO project in which OBERAXE has participated:

OBERAXE has led the European Project ["Proximity policing against racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance" \(PROXIMITY\)](#) whose objective was to contribute to awareness raising and prevention of racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance and the promotion of non-discrimination and harmonious interaction on a local level with the municipal police working in a preventive role and as mediators in conflicts between neighbours. One of the expected outcomes of this project was for the project partners to continue working in a network. Undoubtedly, this enables them to contribute to and take ownership of the shared strategies protocol and contribute to monitoring hate speech. The main PROXIMITY partners from different European police forces and public administrations are:

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<sup>26</sup> [http://www.inclusion.gob.es/oberaxe/es/publicaciones/documentos/documento\\_0077.htm](http://www.inclusion.gob.es/oberaxe/es/publicaciones/documentos/documento_0077.htm)

PROXIMITY PROJECT	COUNTRY
University of Milan	Italy
Ministry of Justice of Finland. Anti-discrimination and Fundamental Rights Team	Finland
Bradford Hate Crime Alliance (BHCA)	United Kingdom
Madrid Municipal Police	Spain
Lisbon Police (LP)	Portugal
Riga Municipal Police	Latvia
Estonian Police and Border Guard Board (EETPolice)	Estonia
Foundation for Access to Rights - (FAR)	Bulgaria

- OBERAXE is a partner of the European project [CLARA \(Local Communities for Learning against Racism, Xenophobia and hate speech\)](#). The project aims to improve the ability of local authorities, municipal police and communities to prevent, identify and combat racist and xenophobic incidents, hate speech and hate crime through learning communities (CLAPs) complemented by a model for monitoring and supporting the victims of these crimes, incorporating lessons learned from other European local experiences and transferring their products and general results. The main European local police and public administration partners in the CLARA project are:

CLARA PROJECT	COUNTRY
Madrid Municipal Police	Spain
Fuenlabrada City Council	Spain
Cordoba City Council	Spain
Leganés City Council, Citizens' Security Council, Municipal Police	Spain
Alcobendas City Council	Spain
Bradford Hate Crime Alliance	United Kingdom
Elche Town Council	Spain
Málaga City Council	Spain
Getafe Municipal Police	Spain
Salamanca Municipal Police	Spain
Pamplona Municipal Police	Spain



### 3. Synergies with other initiatives

Having identified the key agents as a step prior to the proposal for shared monitoring and coordination strategies for the ALRECO project, it is necessary to see whether there are other initiatives with which there are opportunities for coordination due to affinity.

Currently, in the homestretch of the ALRECO project<sup>27</sup>, within its [institutional sphere](#), the [Agreement](#)<sup>28</sup> signed between the General Council of the Judiciary, the Office of the Prosecutor General, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Social Security, the Ministry of the Presidency, Relations with the Courts and Equality, the Ministry of Culture and Sport, and the Centre for Legal Studies for intra-institutional cooperation to combat racism, xenophobia, LGBTIphobia and other forms of intolerance is the continuation of an agreement signed in September 2015. In both instances, the objective is to structure active policies and measures for preventing and detecting racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance within the remit of each one of the parties.

[The activities](#) fall within the following areas:

- a. Organization and joint implementation of training and awareness raising activities.
- b. Collaboration on activities to improve statistical computation, data collection on the number of complaints filed, and the type of criminal violations recorded in the criminal statistics system.
- c. Implementation of academic research and joint publications.
- d. Exchange of publications as well as information, consultancy, assistance and mutual support on any issues of common interest that foster the implementation of activities.

[The working groups](#) are:

- Hate speech group:
  - 14 March 2018 – [Workshop on monitoring online hate speech](#) 
- Group on analysis of judgments and statistics:
  - **2 August 2018** - [Analysis of cases and judgements on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance](#) . [Summary](#) 

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<sup>27</sup> Because of the f project implementation delay due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the European Commission has extended the ALRECO project until 30 April 2021” instead of the date currently appearing.

<sup>28</sup>[http://www.inclusion.gob.es/oberaxe/ficheros/ejes/cooperacion/Acuerdo\\_insterinstitucional\\_original.pdf](http://www.inclusion.gob.es/oberaxe/ficheros/ejes/cooperacion/Acuerdo_insterinstitucional_original.pdf)

- Group on Training.

The monitoring committee<sup>29</sup> meets on a half-yearly basis.

Additionally, as this report was being prepared, the signing of a [Protocol to Combat Illegal Online Hate Speech](#) is pending as an instrument for effective cooperation of stakeholders combatting Illegal Online Hate Speech in Spain, that is, public administration institutions, civil society organizations and IT companies. All in compliance with the legislation safeguarding the right to freedom of expression and information.

Beyond any doubt, once signed, this protocol must be taken into account in the shared strategies and in the ALRECO project.

For its part, [the Forum for the Social Integration of Immigrants](#)<sup>30</sup>, under the Under the Secretary of State for Migrations of the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migrations, is currently made up of 32<sup>31</sup> Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and its functions include:

- Formulating proposals and recommendations for promoting immigrant and refugee integration in Spanish society.
- Receiving information on programmes and activities implemented by the national administration, the regional administrations, and local administrations involving social integration of immigrants.
- Receiving and channelling proposals made by social organizations active in the sphere of immigration with a view to facilitating consummate harmonious interaction between immigrants and the host society.
- Producing an annual report on the work and activities performed.
- Producing an annual report on the status of immigrants' and refugees' social integration.
- Producing reports on proposals, plans and programmes potentially affecting the social integration of immigrants both on its own initiative or when requested to do so by the competent bodies of the national administration.
- Promoting and producing studies and initiatives on matters related to the social integration of immigrants and refugees.
- Cooperating with other counterpart bodies internationally, regionally or locally to coordinate and improve all action that benefits the social integration of immigrants and refugees.
- Issuing compulsory reports on the national administration's projects affecting the social integration of immigrants as well as the national plans and programmes in this sphere, before their approval.

The Forum has a [Standing Committee](#) and [four commissions](#):

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<sup>29</sup> <http://www.inclusion.gob.es/oberaxe/es/ejes/coordinacion/interinstitucional/index.htm>

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.foroinmigracion.es/es/index.htm>

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.foroinmigracion.es/es/MANDATO-FORO-2015-2018/Vocalias/index.htm>

- [Commission on Education and Social Awareness raising](#) whose remit includes Education, Childhood, Youth, Family and Social Awareness Raising.
- [Commission on Employment and Equal Opportunities](#) whose remit includes Employment, Training, Gender, Equal Treatment and Combatting Discrimination.
- [Commission on Integration, Interculturality, Harmonious Interaction and Social Cohesion policies](#): whose remit includes: Reception, Housing, Harmonious Interaction, Health, Participation, Social Services and Social Inclusion.
- [Commission on Legal and International Affairs](#): whose remit covers legal affairs tied to immigrant integration.

The Forum holds at least two regular sessions each year. The next session is scheduled for the month of December 2020.



## 4. Coordination and monitoring mechanisms: shared strategies

Having identified the key agents and uncovered the potential synergies that the ALRECO project has with other initiatives that are either already underway or about to be established (for instance the Protocol to Combat Illegal Online Hate Speech whose signature is pending) a proposal can be made for coordination and monitoring mechanisms constituting the [ALRECO Shared Strategies](#) for monitoring hate speech.

The ALRECO shared strategies came about with the [aim](#) of establishing and/or strengthening synergies between institutional actors and key agents (including civil society) in order to, once the hate speech's dissemination and damage has been evaluated, design shared strategies to work and coordinate as well as other measures to disincentivize the use of hate speech and reduce and repair the damage caused.

The following steps to build coordination and monitoring mechanisms must be taken in order to fulfil this objective.



### 4.1. Shared Strategy Functions

The mission of ALRECO shared strategies is to [spread the use of the algorithm to monitor hate speech](#) across a [network](#) made up of the various levels of public administration, Administration, CBOs, universities, trade unions, legal practitioners, Internet platforms, media and European bodies. This involves fostering measures to disincentivize the use of hate speech and reduce and repair the damage it causes.

To do so:

- a) The network will serve as a platform to share information among its members about hate speech, racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance and about experiences involving other types of hate speech monitoring.
- b) Online hate speech will be periodically monitored using the designed algorithm and periodic reports will be published.
- c) Awareness will be raised both in Europe and nationally about the significance of combating online hate speech, racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance, particularly through the training of those who use social media.
- d) Cooperation will be driven between institutions, organizations and their members serving as a potential source of collaboration in preparing periodic reports on the monitoring of online hate speech.
- e) Other existing initiatives will be identified in order to develop new strategies for combatting hate speech, racism, xenophobia and hate crimes.
- f) Training, research and other action to combat hate speech, racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance will be promoted.



## 4.2. How to join the ALRECO shared strategies to combat online hate speech

OBERAXE will [establish a database](#) with all of the key agents interested in participating in ALRECO shared strategies to coordinate and monitor hate speech. Various types of action are put forward in this regard:

1. An [online form](#)<sup>32</sup> where interested entities and organizations can sign up directly to receive all of the information generated by the ALRECO project and also to monitor hate speech.
2. Dissemination of the protocol in [4 training sessions](#) scheduled for the first quarter of 2021, with universities CBOs, the General Council of the Judiciary, and the Public Prosecution. The proposal is for trade unions and media to be included in the training sessions.
3. Dissemination of the protocol in [the webinar](#) scheduled for 2021. The proposal is to invite the OSCE and the FRA and the previously mentioned partners of the Proximity and the CLARA projects.
4. Presentation of the Shared Strategies document at the upcoming meeting of [the Institutional Agreement Monitoring Committee](#) (scheduled for December 2020).
5. Presentation of the Shared Strategies document at the Plenary meeting of the [Social Forum for Immigrant Integration](#) (scheduled for December 2020).
6. Presentation of the Shared Strategies document at the Council for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.
7. Holding an informational meeting with the [Sectoral Conference of the Autonomous Communities on Immigration and Emigration](#) to present the ALRECO project.
8. Holding an informational meeting with the [FEMP](#) to introduce the ALRECO project to other municipal networks.
9. Developing [thematic programming](#) based on the notes and analysis document from the ALRECO project's [debate fora](#)<sup>33</sup> on online hate speech.

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<sup>32</sup> <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfBfZTsra0sxs9QwHR-H9moY5JaHpsjTbZtek80yZqkKznrVA/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1&flr=0>

<sup>33</sup> <http://alrecoresponse.eu/resultados/>



## 4.3. How the work is structured

The network structure aims to be simple and operational to enable coordination and ongoing voluntary exchange of information without adding a burden of responsibilities or commitments other than those that interest each participant.

The basic structure involves:

- [A Technical Secretariat](#) which the Spanish Observatory on Racism and Xenophobia will undertake.
- [Working groups](#) based on the tracks of work shared or propelled by the entities participating in the network.
- [Information](#) to be periodically elaborated on a bimestrial basis, [the Social Media Hate Speech Monitoring Bulletin](#)<sup>34</sup>. Additionally, an [annual encounter](#) may be held to debate and think through the evolution of hate speech, new monitoring tools, potential action and so forth.

The [Technical Secretariat shall perform the following functions](#):

- Manage Shared Strategy membership requests.
- Generate opportunities for members to communicate in order to develop action, share experience and knowledge, and foster thought and debate about hate speech in the social media, the fight against racism, xenophobia and hate speech.
- Offer support for network institutions, organizations and individuals to help develop contexts, communication and alliances in their work.
- Develop a practical, quick and easy system for members to exchange information through the means they deem most appropriate (the Internet, social media, bulletins, and so forth)
- Implement an annual work plan to be approved by members.
- Support the working groups constituted.

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<sup>34</sup> See section 5



## 5. Proposal for sharing experience in hate speech monitoring: joint data publication

Since 2017, the Spanish Observatory on Racism and Xenophobia (OBERAXE) has been participating in the monitoring exercise "Code of Conduct on Countering Illegal Hate Speech Online" signed by the European Commission and the main IT companies (YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and Microsoft) in 2016. Since then, other companies have joined.

Since May 2020, OBERAXE has been monitoring hate speech daily on: Facebook, Twitter and YouTube in Spain, and has been notifying the platforms of what his considered to be "hate" content.

Furthermore, this monitoring will be able to be enhanced through the [ALRECO project Protocol and System of Indicators to detect hate speech in the social media](#).<sup>35</sup>

The production of a bimestrial [joint report](#) is proposed to compile [hate speech monitoring on social media](#).

Its [contents](#) could include:

- The number of items analysed, reported, and removed from Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.
- The number of items removed within 24 hours, 48 hours and 1 week.
- Motives for hate speech discrimination by national origin, ethnicity and religion on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.
- The ALRECO algorithm.

In addition to the report on hate speech monitoring in the social media, a space with [capsules of food for thought](#) is proposed where brief articles (500 words) would be posted accompanied by an [explanatory video](#), and where, with more of an awareness-raising and counter-narrative approach, different cases could be shared with lines of argument and data to neutralize them.

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<sup>35</sup> <http://alrecoresponse.eu/resultados/>



## 6. Knowledge Transfer

The formulation of the ALRECO project envisages the following [aims](#).<sup>36</sup>

- To adopt mechanisms to alert and prevent against online convening of racist, xenophobic and intolerant gatherings, for instance hate music concerts and xenophobic demonstrations.
- To support both the efforts of NGOs and civil society to monitor online demonstrations of racist and xenophobic hate and associated intolerance and their efforts to share them, make them public and denounce them.
- To support civil society in exploring ways of using social media's popularity to combat racism and intolerance.

The fact that the ALRECO project properly contributes to fulfilling these objectives together with specific training for key actors in the use of the computer tool assures it will be properly implemented to prevent online hate speech, and that coordinated, concrete action will be taken to ensure the projects' sustainability and impact.

Sustained impact over the long term will be ensured through greater implementation of strategies combatting the incitement of hatred and, as a result, will contribute to reducing racially or ethnically motivated discrimination online.

Furthermore, the [EU Anti-Racism Action Plan 2020-2025](#)<sup>37</sup> includes essential action that is to contribute to the transferability of knowledge generated by the ALRECO project, the following of which can be highlighted:

- [The Digital Services Act](#)<sup>38</sup> which will step up and harmonise the responsibility of online platforms and information service providers, and will bolster supervision of the content of platforms in the EU<sup>39</sup>.
- Under the aegis of the EU Internet Forum, the Commission is working with the member States and IT companies on a reference list of symbols and banned extremist violent groups to be used voluntarily as a basis for their content moderation policies.

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<sup>36</sup> Aims included in the Comprehensive Strategy to Combat Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and other related forms of intolerance. Available at: [http://www.inclusion.gob.es/oberaxe/es/publicaciones/documentos/documento\\_0076.htm](http://www.inclusion.gob.es/oberaxe/es/publicaciones/documentos/documento_0076.htm)

<sup>37</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/a\\_union\\_of\\_equality\\_eu\\_action\\_plan\\_against\\_racism\\_2020\\_-\\_2025\\_es.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/a_union_of_equality_eu_action_plan_against_racism_2020_-_2025_es.pdf)

<sup>38</sup> [https://www.boe.es/diario\\_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2020-12355](https://www.boe.es/diario_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2020-12355)

<sup>39</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1598456462256&uri=CELEX:52020DC0067>

This list was presented at the Ministerial meeting of the [EU Internet Forum in December 2020](#).

- The work of the [European Observatory on Digital Media](#) to support fact checkers and researchers in combatting disinformation will particularly focus on disinformation and conspiratorial beliefs targeting minority groups. Mitigating the spread of racial discrimination speech through disinformation is also an important part of media literacy campaigns. The “Media Literacy for All” projects support these initiatives. This work will continue into the next European Democracy Action Plan<sup>40</sup> and in the plan of action for the media and the audio-visual sector.

These and other measures included in the framework of the EU Anti-racism Action Plan 2020-2025<sup>41</sup>, point to the appropriateness of transferring knowledge from the ALRECO project and to continue both using the algorithm and jointly monitoring hate speech with tool and its subsequent versions.

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<sup>40</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/initiatives/ares-2020-440026\\_es](https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/initiatives/ares-2020-440026_es)

<sup>41</sup>

[https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/a\\_union\\_of\\_equality\\_eu\\_action\\_plan\\_against\\_racism\\_2020\\_-2025\\_es.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/a_union_of_equality_eu_action_plan_against_racism_2020_-2025_es.pdf)



## 7. Conclusions and Recommendations

### Regarding key agents:

- Coordination must be strengthened and strategies for joint action must be established. This coordination and dialogue for joint action should not be limited to institutional spheres, but rather encompass all sectors and particularly the Regions (Spain's Autonomous Communities) and local entities as well as civil society organizations (CSOs) that are active in this area and the online Internet platforms themselves in order to lay a solid groundwork for dialogue and cooperation between all of the parties involved in the prevention of inciting hate online.
- Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) make an essential contribution to inclusion and to combating intolerance of immigrants through various actions, particularly those organizations that are of general interest in issues related to foreign nationals, those defending migrants' human rights, and those working towards harmonious interaction and social integration, awareness raising in society and the fight against racism and xenophobia.
- Victims of online hate speech have an essential role to play in the early identification of hate speech, in disincentivising its use, and, particularly, in repairing the damage it causes.
- IT companies play an important role in combatting illegal content disseminated online that might encourage hate speech.
- The results of the fifth evaluation (June 2020) of the Code of Conduct on Countering Illegal Hate Speech Online" are positive: "Internet companies evaluate 90% of the reported content within 24 horas and eliminate 71% of the content considered to be illegal hate speech. Nevertheless, the platforms need to further improve transparency and user response. While the platforms evaluated 90% of the marked content in 24 hours, they had only evaluated 40% of this content in 2016, and while 71% of the content considered to be illegal hate speech was eliminated in 2020, it was only 28% in 2016".
- Universities play an essential role in tackling hate speech from a threefold perspective: research, dissemination and teaching.
- In certain media, up to eight different formula can be detected in spreading so-called "hate speech". A study done by the Hate Speech in Media Observatory shows formulas that range from explicit insults to other "more subtle strategies".
- Legal practitioners are essential in preventing, combating and sanctioning hate speech in two ways: through their legal work and through their teaching.

### Regarding the European dimension and synergies with other initiatives:

- It is essential for a transnational dimension to be afforded to the ALRECO project by involving both bodies such as the European Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in order to defend human rights and prosecute hate crimes.
- Also, European partners from other projects that OBERAXE has participated in, such as PROXIMITY and CLARA, and soon LEARN (2021-2023), should be involved.
- Synergies with other existing initiatives should be a starting point for the ALRECO Shared Strategies, for instance the Inter-institutional Agreement, the Forum for the Social Integration

of Immigrants, the Council for Equal Treatment and Ethnic and Racial Diversity and the Protocol to Combat Illegal Online Hate Speech.

- To make the use of the ALRECO algorithm widespread in monitoring hate speech, it is imperative for there to be a network including different levels of public administration, CBOs, universities, trade unions, legal practitioners, Internet platforms, media and European bodies.

#### Regarding Forums for Debate on Online Hate Speech:<sup>42</sup>

- Of the 11 debates open on the different forums, a total of 107 comments have been published with an average of 8 participants per thread. Interesting conclusions have been drawn that will be included in the training seminars to be held during the first quarter of 2021.
- Conclusions have been drawn in the following areas: impact of online hate speech; groups transmitting online hate speech; collaboration between public and private institutions; victims' awareness of hate crimes and formal complaints; the role of fake news in sustaining hate speech; social media communication platforms; how women suffer from online hate speech; and on initiatives, tools and civil society and the public administrations' resources to prevent and neutralize online hate speech.

#### Regarding the proposal for ALRECO Shared Strategies looking towards the future:

- Steps will be taken to establish a virtual network whose functions will include serving as a platform to share information among member entities about hate speech, racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance and about experience in other ways of monitoring online hate speech by using the algorithm designed and publishing periodic reports.
- The production of a joint bimestrial report is proposed that compiles hate speech monitoring in the social media. Additionally, a space to post capsules of food for thought is proposed where brief articles (roughly 500 words) can be posted and accompanied by explanatory videos.
- In the framework of the EU Antiracism Action Plan 2020-2025, several different measures regarding online hate speech are considered and refer to the appropriateness of transferring knowledge from the ALRECO project and to continue with the use of the algorithm, joint monitoring of hate speech through the ALRECO project, and its sustainability.

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<sup>42</sup> See the full document on ALRECO debate forums at <http://alrecoresponse.eu/proyecto/>