



## Campaign with #NoHateEP2014

**Conference : “Rhetoric of Media against vulnerable groups”**

**“Joint campaign initiatives between LGBTI  
and anti-racist organisations  
ahead of the European election 2014”**

### Minutes of the Conference

On Tuesday 13 May 2014 a conference under the title “Rhetoric of media against vulnerable groups” took place in the multi-purpose social space “Oikopolis”. The conference was organised by “ANTIGONE – Information and Documentation Centre on Racism, Xenophobia, Peace and Non Violence” and the Homosexual and Lesbian Community of Greece (OLKE) in the framework of the campaign “No hate during the electoral campaign of 2014 (#No HateEP2014)”, with Eleanna Ioannidou, Michalis Tremopoulos and Andreas Takis as speakers.

Ms Eleonora Zotou, representative of ANTIGONE, opened the conference and welcomed the participants and the speakers.

The first speaker, Ms Eleanna Ioannidou, lawyer and candidate mayor of Thessaloniki, explained the reasons for the existence of hate speech in the media and she related the issue with the economic and social crisis and with the deficiency in education that has been observed as a factor since several years. As far as education is concerned, she emphasised that young children should be prepared for being citizens since their early age and be aware of how to learn about their rights and the rights of others.



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She also referred to the expansion of racist incidents that take place in a blatant way during the last years and they are more often and intense compared to the past but not adequately condemned by the media, while she noted that local officers (mayors, council councilors etc), use racist expressions against vulnerable groups such as HIV patients in their public speech on TV or on radio. Finally, she mentioned that in Thessaloniki political parties that commit crimes of hatred, such as Golden Dawn, are not so active anymore thanks of the self-organisation of the civil society of the city and the coordinated action of anti-fascist groups and movements. According to her conclusion, people constitute themselves a wealth of which all the States should take advantage.

The second speaker was Mr Michalis Tremopoulos, lawyer – journalist, ex MEP and Candidate Head of Prefecture of Central Macedonia, who approached hate speech as a phenomenon that appeared in the local media (mainly press) since 1900 and it was intensified since 1912, when several racist and nationalistic incidents of the following period started taking place. He talked about interventions and persecutions against refugee groups that used to be regarded as “having a leftist tendency”, and also about antisemitic and anticommunist groups that participated in racist attacks against Jews of Thessaloniki.

He referred to newspapers that traditionally supported the rhetoric of hatred against the ethnic identity of several groups and managed to impose it as something “natural and accepted”. He also referred to the period of dictatorship and to murders of hatred that had taken place. He spoke about the “deep government” that is hidden behind the political parties of LAOS and Golden Dawn and about the TV stations that managed to bring racist and nationalist propaganda in all the Greek homes. Finally, he referred to the necessity for application of drastic solutions that would locate and isolate hate speech in the media while they would reveal its negative impacts at all levels.

In the end, Mr Andreas Takis, professor of Philosophy in the Aristotel University of Thessaloniki highlighted the incapacity of the “National Council for Radio and Television” to confront phenomena of hate speech on radio and on television, as



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it seems to prefer simplistic solutions such as the recommendations and the publication of “specific forbidden words”. He emphasised the difference between racist speech and racist incitement and he expressed the view that the former should be confronted with arguments in public life. On the contrary, according to Mr Takis, racist incitement during public speech, such as the one in the media, constitutes a hate crime and it should be combatted by the Law in an effective and serious way. He emphasised that the victims of hate speech are groups of persons with a different ethnic / racial origin, colour, language, religious belief, sexual orientation, disability and age.

Furthermore, he referred to his personal experience (as ex Head of Human Rights Section of the Greek Ombudsman) and to specific cases of rhetoric of hatred in the public speech, which should be dealt with promoting creative solutions and not through violence. He finally mentioned the example of a Municipality in Norway where authorities decided to include insulting words in official public documents in an attempt to diminish gradually the negative meaning of such a particular vocabulary.

After the speeches, a vivid discussion took place and the participants had the chance to raise questions and express their opinion about solutions and practical ways to combat rhetoric of hatred transmitted by the media and its impacts.



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