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FEDERATION, AT THE OSCE MEETING ON THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN RACIST, XENOPHOBIC AND ANTI-SEMITIC
PROPAGANDA ON THE INTERNET AND HATE CRIMES**

Paris, 16 and 17 June 2004

**Terrorist and xenophobic propaganda on public telecommunications
networks (the Internet)**

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Distinguished Forum Participants,

The rapid development of telecommunications technologies observed over the last few decades has led to the emergence of a radically new system for the dissemination and exchange of information. When speaking of such a system, we are mainly thinking of electronic telecommunications networks in the public domain, in particular the Internet, to which a wide circle of users have access.

Today, the possibilities of the Internet for the dissemination of information and its information impact are no less than those of traditional media such as newspapers, radio and even television.

Unfortunately, various extremist and terrorist organizations have begun to make active use of the many possibilities of the Internet for racial and religious propaganda and other forms of intolerance.

Today, there are a great many sites operating on the Internet that directly foster the development of xenophobia and extremism. These sites can tentatively be divided into four principal groups.

The first group consists of sites directly involved in spreading ideas of extremism, separatism and terrorism. In particular, international terrorist organizations use these resources to promote, virtually without hindrance, radical branches of Islam, preaching the ideology of jihad and the struggle against "infidels".

For our country, it goes without saying that the greatest threat is posed by websites providing information and financial support for members of international terrorist organizations. These sites encourage people to carry out acts of terrorism and promote separatism, religious intolerance and inter-ethnic discord.

It should especially be mentioned that via these sites, which depict the murder and torture of servicemen and peaceful citizens, a policy of large-scale information terror is being pursued. The broadcasting of the “execution” of an American citizen in Iraq, which shocked the entire civilized world, serves as an illustration of the consequences of publications along these lines.

It is worth noting that the majority of such sites have Internet addresses (domain names) registered in other countries (in international “Internet zones” such as “.com”, “.org” or “.info”).

Information: *information support for armed gangs operating on the territory of the Chechen Republic is provided through the following sites: www.chechenpress.com; www.kavkazcenter.com; www.kvestnik.org; www.kavkaz.org; www.daymohk.info; www.chechnya.nl and others. Fund-raising is done, for example, via www.angelfire.com/wy/sadagah with the aid of a system of banners (advertising links).*

The sites of non-traditional religious doctrines and sects can be included in a second group of Internet sites advocating xenophobia. As a rule, these religious groups teach their followers fanatical devotion and the rejection of other religions. In this connection, anyone wishing to do so can easily acquaint himself via the Internet with the teachings of Aum Shinrikyo, the Jehovah’s Witnesses, satanic sects and other cults.

Information: *with the help of the search engine Yandex (www.yandex.ru), which is widely used in the Russian sector of the Internet, it is possible to access sites for the religious organizations Hare Krishna (www.people.unov.ru/iskon; www.sanga.ru and others) and the Jehovah’s Witnesses (www.bashniastrazhi.bu.ru) and to familiarize oneself with various interpretations of satanic cults.*

Sites fomenting xenophobia on the basis of a person’s race or ethnic group can be included in a third group. Internet sites of an anti-Semitic or anti-globalist nature belong here in particular.

Thanks to the active counter propaganda measures being taken at the State level, social support for nationalistic and anti-Semitic forces has shrunk considerably in Russian society. Whereas only a few years ago they were represented by a network of well organized bodies with many branches (such as “Pamyat” (Memory), Russian National Unity (RNE) and the skinhead movement), today the ultra-right-wing groups in Russia are extremely small and disorganized.

That being the case, while nationalistic and anti-Semitic Internet publications do undoubtedly exist in the Russian sector of the Internet, they are episodic and unsystematic. As a rule, these publications are produced by individual followers holding marginal views.

Information: *the website of the National Bolshevik Party — www.nbp-info.ru — can be cited as an example; utterances promoting xenophobia are encountered extremely rarely, in individual forums and chat rooms.*

A particular concern for the Russian law-enforcement agencies are websites belonging to the fourth and final category. These include Internet sites of an informative

nature that only indirectly encourage unlawful activities. Information can be found on these sites on how to manufacture explosives at home, obtain powerful poisons and assemble home-made explosive devices.

***Information:** with the aid of the aforementioned Yandex search engine (www.yandex.ru), it is possible to find a site containing instructions for manufacturing such explosive substances as lead azide, silver fulminate, iodine nitride, silver acetylide, RDX, tetryl, TNT, nitroglycerine, hexogen, methyl nitrate and nitrocotton (www.sir-7.narod.ru; www.vault13.dtn.ru/boys/underground and others).*

Sites belonging to this group can be found operating openly in virtually any part of the network since the information they contain is presented merely as reference material. In the majority of cases, these sites are numerous, short-lived and frequently change their domain names.

The lack of control over the material placed on the Internet means that it is easy to glean information on places and installations selected for planned terrorist acts, methods of countering them, building plans, theoretical information on the possible consequences of various actions, the locations of particularly dangerous facilities and much more.

Unfortunately, it has to be admitted that extremists make great use of the unique features of the technical organization of the Internet, which make it possible to register the domain names of a site in one country and distribute information in another. Moreover, a site can be accessed from virtually any place in the world that is connected to the network. In that regard, differences in various national laws further complicate efforts to combat the dissemination of extremist material via the Internet.

What is more, email makes it possible for correspondents to exchange information anonymously throughout the world. This allows extremist and terrorist organizations to keep in touch and co-ordinate their activities.

Taking into account everything that has already been said and with a view to effectively countering the spread of racist, xenophobic and anti-Semitic ideas via the Internet, we believe it would be useful:

- To increase co-operation in the area of controlling and suppressing terrorist and xenophobic propaganda on the Internet;
- To implement systematic measures aimed at standardizing and improving national laws regulating the dissemination of information on public telecommunications networks;
- To devise a system for identifying Internet sites promoting xenophobia and racial and religious intolerance and, on the basis of this, to create a single list of such Internet sites with a view to co-ordinating efforts to stamp them out;
- To carry out joint measures to identify and make known the actual owners of the most offensive Internet sites.

Thank you for your attention.