

OSCE Conference on the relationship between raciste, xenophobie
and anti-Semitic propaganda on the Internet and hate crime.
Paris 16 – 17 June 2004

Closing plenary: Reporting notes by Isabelle Falque-Pierrotin, chairperson of Le Forum des droits sur l'internet, Moderator of Session 3 on "Public and Private Partnership in the Fight Against Racism, Xenophobia and anti-Semitism on the Internet – Best Practices"

Introduction :

Representatives of public authorities, NGOs and industry (Internet Service Providers) have exchanged their views in this session.

Two main remarks:

- Beyond differences in theoretical views between countries, convergence of practical actions,
- There seems to be a general agreement on shared responsibilities between public authorities, private sector and NGOs in their respective fields of action.

1. Watch of hate speech online

The watch of the phenomenon induces two types of co-operations:

- National partnerships: For instance, watch by NGOs can sometimes be backed by public authorities,
- International co-operation: For instance, information from organizations worldwide can be collected in a central database.

2. Education is key

The development of public awareness has been recognized as a key tool against hate speech on the Internet.

3. Self-regulation of industrial players

Debates on self-regulation have been particularly consistent:

Many Internet Service Providers (ISPs) ban hate speech in their terms of service. This action generally seemed useful to most speakers.

ISPs co-operation networks allow fast transmission of information and efficient action between voluntary service providers: for instance, the European INHOPE network.

However, to some speakers, filtering of search engine results as well as of contents might induce democratic risks. How could be organized a democratic control of such filtering?

4. Societal action

Action from the community of Internet users should not be neglected. Interesting examples have been brought out:

- Influencing search engines results (“Google Bombing”),
- Internet users can also require enforcement of ISPs terms of service.

5. Institutionalizing the dialogue between stakeholders?

Dialogue between stakeholders (Public authorities, NGOs, members of the industry) is considered as a necessity.

Should this dialogue be encouraged by an institutional initiative? MP and president of the French parliamentary delegation to the OSCE will propose a resolution calling States to encourage the creation of permanent places of dialogue on these issues.

A public discussion forum will be opened Friday 18 onwards to discuss these proposals and issues on the Forum des droits sur l’internet web site: www.foruminternet.org