



Thinkout

## THINKOUT Recommendations

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Thinkout is a Belgian based non governmental organisation.

Thinkout has for challenge to include, integrate and enforce the different cultures in Europe in the mainstream society while respecting the human rights.

Thinkout attended the session I of the meeting of OSCE concerning **“The Right to Freedom of Expression.”**

It was not a long ago that the voice of those claiming the Internet should remain a sphere of complete and absolute freedom, unrestrained from any regulation whatsoever, was loud.

Today such thinking belongs more and more to the history as increasingly the idea “what is illegal offline is illegal online” is adhered.

A recent study published last year by the Research Centre for Journalism, Media and Communication (COMET) of the Finish Tampere University, finds that hate speech on internet forums has a tendency to suppress diversity of opinions in public debates because victims of hate speech are reluctant to publicly voice their opinions.

In other words, the aggressive opinion victimizes the opinion of minorities and immigrants and injures the individuals' integration in the society.

Incitement through electronic means is not different from incitement by traditional means. In that sense, you could ask yourself if there is a relation between a paper pamphlet with the text 'kill all Muslims' being handed out in the streets and the actual killing of Muslims.

By now, the amount of extremist Web sites runs in the tens of thousands and it is increasing at a dramatic pace.

Little sparks can kindle big fires, which was proved by all the hate speech and dehumanization that was dished-out by media (including the Internet) during the Balkan war, conditioning the public to support any new conflict.

People tend to think that freedom of speech and the prohibition of hate speech are contradictory. They're not. If we look at the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, we will see that article 20 quite clearly states that

“any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law.”

While article 19 briefly worded states that:

“Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression. However, this freedom of speech is subject to certain restrictions, namely:

(a) For respect of the rights or reputations of others;

(b) For the protection of national security or of public order (ordre public), or of public health or morals.”

- We all have our separate responsibilities in dealing with incitement to hatred on the Internet, industry, NGOs [nongovernmental organizations] and governments. Which does not mean that we can't cooperate.
- In fact, it is imperative that we do. Hate has consequences that go further than violence and murder; hate disrupts society in all of its facets, including government and commerce.
- In combating hate on the Internet, we do not aim to hinder free speech, nor do we think we will be able to 'change the hearts and minds' of hatemongers. There will always be people who hate. Rather, by using the various national and international anti-hate speech legislation, we aim to curb the communication of hate speech, by this preventing the recruitment of others who do not yet hate, and prevent In Real Life hate crime.
- We strongly believe that freedom of speech is a condition for a successful democracy, whereas tolerance is essential for the survival of a democracy. Would

one allow hate speech to run proliferating, democracy will in the end be destroyed and tyranny would result, bringing with it the abolition of free speech....

- However, in the end the best protection against hate speech, which can be implemented everywhere no matter what, is education, teaching how information on the Internet can be assessed for its validity and how to recognize the rhetoric of hate.
- Lots of low-profile Web sites and hate language on Web forums never comes to the attention of law enforcement, or agencies that combat hate on the Net. By and large, it is this material that creates an atmosphere of hate and intolerance, and ultimately generates an environment in which hate becomes acceptable behaviour to people who are infected with prejudiced information. Especially, youth runs the risk of being misled, indoctrinated and recruited.
- We think it is imperative to educate and promote attitude change....One of the establishments of Thinkout is the fact that muslims are under -represented in the media that leads to a totally ignorance of their voice
- OSCE should take measures against the vision of the mainstream media who consider the Muslims as the “ Others”.  
Only by integrating the Muslims we can combat hatred caused by hate speech against Muslims. After all hate speech against Muslims leads to Islamophobia.

Thinkout  
Molenstraat 170  
1210 Brussel  
T. [+32 9.258.21.67](tel:+3292582167)  
F. [+32 9.258.21.68](tel:+3292582168)  
[info@thinkout.be](mailto:info@thinkout.be) - [www.thinkout.be](http://www.thinkout.be)