Hate Narratives in the Western Balkans and Turkey

Key research findings

Across the Western Balkans and Turkey, hate narratives feed political narratives, perpetuating political turmoil and even violence. The context of hate narratives is similar across the region, ranging from political content to controversial representations of groups. Hate narratives exacerbate and normalize the views of the European Union.

In many cases, hate narratives are clearly politically orchestrated, and may be disseminated through media affiliated with the leading political parties. While the hate narratives identified in the research are not new, they have been normalized to a very significant extent. Reflecting a specifically conditioned, industry-wide sense of theɑ all politics and popular media, hate narratives are a regular part of public discourse.

Hate narratives are prevalent in user comments, permeating xenophobic sentiments, marginalized groups, prejudices and hostilities, describing those politically affiliated (e.g. in Montenegro) or bystanders in a particular aspect of the general public. Media outlets play a negative role when they fail (due to lack of resources or lack of will) to adequately deal with these user comments. Hate narratives particularly escalate in user comments.

Regrettably true to both sides, the region’s countries can be seen as a success story in countering and addressing hate narratives. However, too often we must accept that hate narratives influence the public discourse and are deeply entrenched. While the hate narratives identified in the research are not new, they have been normalized to a very significant extent. Reflecting a specifically conditioned, industry-wide sense of theɑ all politics and popular media, hate narratives are a regular part of public discourse.

Across the region, there is a reluctance within the judiciary to process oral or written hate speech. This reluctance is seen as a cause of destabilization in adverse social media, promoting voluntary respect for journalistic norms but they cannot be expected to influence the public discourse which intentionally or thoughtlessly spreads harmful content.

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Hate narratives on political opponents

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Some perform in the region’s generate and spread hate narratives and disinformation on nutrients while subjecting to negative representations of the “Other” largely through focusing on unbalanced narratives, publishing arbitrary statements, and failing to provide a balanced view. These narratives, media outlets participate in the promotion of disinformation and hate speech through their daily news items and on social media platforms.

Besides the established media outlets, right-leaning websites and platforms constitute a particular vector with an important role in the dissemination of public disinformation and dissemination of hate narratives. The rise of the so-called independent or “alternative” media has facilitated the rise of hate narratives and disinformation. Right-leaning websites and platforms participate in the promotion of disinformation and hate speech through their daily news items and on social media platforms.

The lack of public trust in a transparent, impartial media in the online media sector diminishes hate narratives and disinformation. Media outlets participate in the promotion of disinformation and hate speech through their daily news items and on social media platforms.

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