**Third Intercultural Morning Coffee**

Wednesday, 21, April, 2021, 09:30 am to 10:15 am CET Time

**Attendees:**

Participants: Atte Oksanen (Finland), Professor of Social Psychology, leader of Emerging Technologies Lab at the Tampere University and contributor to the Fourth Anna Lindh Intercultural Trends Report, Mayssa Rekhis (Tunisia/Sweden), PhD student and founder of The Young Republic.

ALF Representatives

**Chair of the meeting:** Eleonora Insalaco - Head of Operations and Intercultural Research

**Facilitator and rapporteur**: Johannes Jauhiainen – Social Media Executive

**Co-rapporteur:** Racha Omeyri - Intercultural Research Officer



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### **Background of the meeting**

The Third Intercultural Morning Coffee brought together two alumni of the Intercultural Trends and Media Platforms-meetings to discuss and reflect hate speech online.

The Morning Coffee on the 21st of April started with a brief presentation on an upcoming article on hate speech in the fourth edition of the Anna Lindh Intercultural Trends Report 2021, written by Atte Oksanen, Professor of Social Psychology at Tampere University.

Another point of departure for the Morning Coffee was also a recent statement by Reporters Without Borders who expressed [concern](https://www.euronews.com/2021/03/23/complaint-filed-against-facebook-in-france-over-online-hate-and-disinformation) over too little being done to eradicate hate speech and fake news from social media.

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### **Summary of key challenges and recommendations**

The Morning Coffee began with a short introduction by Atte Oksanen who gave an overview about how research of hate speech has developed during the last 10 years and the challenges that hate speech and speech online in general pose in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

During the meeting it was noted that hate speech online has evolved from a marginalized and fringe phenomena to something mainstream and common. This is seen in how journalists and academics are targeted online. Something equally worrying is also that these people targeted do not always report their experiences to the authorities.

Concerns were also raised with regards to social media being used as the main source for news for many people. Yet, it was also recognized that, at times, social media has offered a platform for information sharing that permitted free speech and exchange of information in an otherwise censored media landscape.

Specifically regarding the issue of migration, it was recognized that social media is a particularly powerful forum that shapes public perceptions, even though it would not be the only used source of news online. Hence, a challenge is not only to counter fake news but to counter fake impressions and perceptions, regarding for example, the phenomena that push migrants to leave their countries of origin.

With regards to promoting living together in multicultural settings, it was noted, based on the findings of the Intercultural Trends Survey of 2020, that one’s level of religiosity was not necessarily correlating with one’s level of tolerance towards others, which was much more essential in determining people’s values vis-à-vis diversity .

With regards to polarization in our societies and in online communities, it was also noted that acceleration of hate speech does not happen overnight but instead is a slow and steady process, of which there is a history as well particularly in Europe.

Regulations on social media were considered as both a threat and an opportunity. On the one hand, regulations may lead to a decrease in hate speech. But, on the other hand they may lead to censorship of free speech.

**Recommendations**

* It is encouraging to see that the European Commission is taking measures to tackle hate speech, misinformation and disinformation
* More discussions are needed on how to encourage and engage social media companies to regulate the content published on their websites, especially illegal material that is inciting violence.

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### **Annex II Post-event press release**

The Morning Coffee meetings are conceived as space for alumni of the Intercultural Trends and Media Platform to discuss informally up-to-date affairs with regards to dialogue and cross-cultural reporting in the media in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

The Morning Coffee on the 21t of April was arranged to shed light on an upcoming article on hate speech in the fourth edition of the Anna Lindh Intercultural Trends Report, written by Atte Oksanen, professor of social psychology at Tampere University.

“With Morning Coffees, we want to make it easy for academics, journalists and civil society members, to call each other, or send an email, for any pending questions they might have in relation to their work. We need more cooperation and discussions”, underlined Eleonora Insalaco, Head of Operations and Intercultural Research at the Anna Lindh Foundation, during the meeting on the 21st of April”.

**About the Intercultural Trends and Media Platform**

The Intercultural Trends and Media Platform is organised by the Anna Lindh Foundation and the Mediterranean Universities Union (UNIMED) bringing together media, academia and civil society to create a network and to discuss how perceptions between Europeans and Southern and Eastern Mediterranean people have evolved in recent years as a result of the growing migratory and refugee movements, the rise of populist’s discourses and phenomena of violent extremism.

If you are a journalist, member of civil society or academic who would like to participate in a future edition of the Intercultural Trends and Media Platform, please do not hesitate to contact us (Johannes.Jauhiainen@annalindhfoundation.org - Intercultural Research Social Media Executive).

For more information on the Intercultural Trends and Media work at the Anna Lindh Foundation you can contact: Eleonora.Insalaco@annalindhfoundation.org - Head of Operations and Intercultural Research.

