



Press Release

#SpreadNoHate: Hate Speech Against Migrants and Refugees in the Media Symposium

Brussels - 26 January 2017

The European Union (EU) and the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) are organizing jointly a one-day symposium on Hate Speech Against Migrants and Refugees in the Media on 26 January, 2016 in Brussels.

The symposium is organized within the framework of UNAOC #SpreadNoHate initiative against the backdrop of the rising rhetoric of hate speech and incitement against migrants and refugees across Europe and elsewhere. Increasingly, anger and polarisation characterise domestic politics, and harsh measures targeting migrant and refugee communities are put forward in a number of countries. This is partly due to misconceptions and prejudice in a context where communities are confronted with challenges related to the arrival of refugees and migrants with diverse backgrounds, cultures and religions.

In this context, the media plays a major role in shaping perceptions about migrants and refugees. Every day, information from the media is influencing people's thoughts, perceptions and opinions. The media is well placed to inform, communicate and connect citizens across the globe. Instead, in many cases, it acts as a powerful platform for discrimination, exclusion and incitement to hatred and violence.

The EU/UNAOC symposium draws on the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants of 19 September 2016 and on its commitment to counter hate crimes, hate speech and racial violence. The symposium also dovetails with the launch of the United Nations TOGETHER INITIATIVE to changing negative perceptions and attitudes towards refugees. UNAOC is one of the working groups contributing to this campaign.

The EU/UNAOC #SpreadNoHate symposium will gather around 100 selected participants from the media and civil society, as well as international organisations in Europe and its neighbourhood. The symposium aims at understanding the triggers and mechanisms of hate speech against migrants and refugees, exploring means of dissemination and replication of successful initiatives that have been launched to prevent negative narratives against migrants and refugees, and examining means of improving the quality of media coverage about migrants and refugees, notably by promoting ethical journalism; building partnerships between media and civil society; and preventing hate speech on the Internet.

The symposium can be followed online via livestream (<http://www.unaoc.org/live/>). Questions can be asked and comments can be shared online, using the hashtag #SpreadNoHate. UNAOC and the EEAS will cover the symposium live on social media using the Twitter accounts @UNAOC and @eu_eas.