

Introducing the ECLIPSE project

Hate speech and legal challenges

Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB)

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Lines of Speech: Hate, Harm and the Laws Across Borders

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ECLIPSE: Preventing and combating online and offline hate speech and disinformation through multidisciplinary innovation, education, and awareness in Europe

Grant Agreement No.

101225823

Programme

Horizon Europe

Call Topic

HORIZON-CL3-2024-FCT-01-05

Duration

36 months (1 September 2025 - 31 August 2028)

Budget (Total)

€ ~3M



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ECLIPSE: Preventing and combating online and offline hate speech and disinformation through multidisciplinary innovation, education, and awareness in Europe

In a nutshell:

The ECLIPSE project aims to develop innovative tools, training methods and strategies for combating hate speech and mis/disinformation both online and offline across Europe, combining advanced technologies with insights from social, behavioural, criminological, and legal sciences.

VUB's role:

VUB-HALL is the project's legal and ethics partner, leading WP7 (Ethics, Data Protection Law & Security).



ECLIPSE: Preventing and combating online and offline hate speech and disinformation through multidisciplinary innovation, education, and awareness in Europe

Partners: FONDAZIONE BRUNO KESSLER [IT] (Project Coordinator); UNIVERSITA DEGLI STUDI DI TRENTO [IT]; UNIVERSITY OF NORTHUMBRIA AT NEWCASTLE [UK]; VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT BRUSSEL [BE]; SYNYO GmbH [AT]; FUNDACION EUROARABE DE ALTOS ESTUDIOS [ES]; FUNDACION CENTRO DE ESTUDIOS ANDALUCES [ES]; SABANCI UNIVERSITESI [TR]; CSI CENTER FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION LTD [CY]; ISTRAZIVACKO-RAZVOJNI INSTITUT ZA VESTACKU INTELIGENCIJU SRBIJE [RS]; HOCHSCHULE FUR DEN OFFENTLICHEN DIENST IN BAYERN [DE]; ANKARA VALILIGI [TR]; AYUNTAMIENTO DE MURCIA [ES]; CESIE ENTE DEL TERZO SETTORE [IT]; STOP HATE UK [UK]; YOUTH FOR EXCHANGE AND UNDERSTANDING INTERNATIONAL AISBL [BE]; INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR MIGRATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT [AT]; CREATIVE WORKERS-CREATIEVE WERKERS VZW [BE]; MINDS & SPARKS GMBH [AT]; MINISTERO DELL'INTERNO [IT]; DURHAM CONSTABULARY [UK]; VILLE DE LIEGE [BE]

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Initial phase: Task 1, WP7.

Legal & Ethics Requirements Monitoring

This task will identify the core ethical and legal requirements of the ECLIPSE project, divided into two categories: (a) requirements within the project, and (b) requirements beyond the project. The first category covers ethics, data protection, and compliance within the project, while the second focuses on the real-world application of ECLIPSE solutions after the project ends. The task will analyse relevant legal frameworks for LEAs, CSOs, international organisations, and IT/ SSH research, including international, **European, and national legislation, case law**, guidance, and emerging laws. It will ensure GDPR, **DSA**, and AI Act compliance for the ECLIPSE Toolbox and its components, outlining protocols for legal and ethical data handling.

[...]



Definitions

Digital Services Act

Article 3, (h):

‘illegal content’ means any information that, in itself or in relation to an activity, including the sale of products or the provision of services, is not in compliance with Union law or the law of any Member State which is in compliance with Union law, irrespective of the precise subject matter or nature of that law;

Recital 62:

[...]

For example, while the **Code of conduct on countering illegal hate speech online of 2016** sets a benchmark for the participating companies with respect to the time needed to process valid notifications for removal of illegal hate speech,

[...]



Definitions

Code of conduct on countering illegal hate speech online

p.1:

Illegal hate speech, *as defined by* the **Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA of 28 November 2008** on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law and national laws transposing it, **means all conduct publicly inciting to violence or hatred directed against a group of persons or a member of such a group defined by reference to race, colour, religion, descent or national or ethnic origin.**

Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA :

Recital (9):

‘Hatred’ should be understood as referring to hatred based on race, colour, religion, descent or national or ethnic origin.



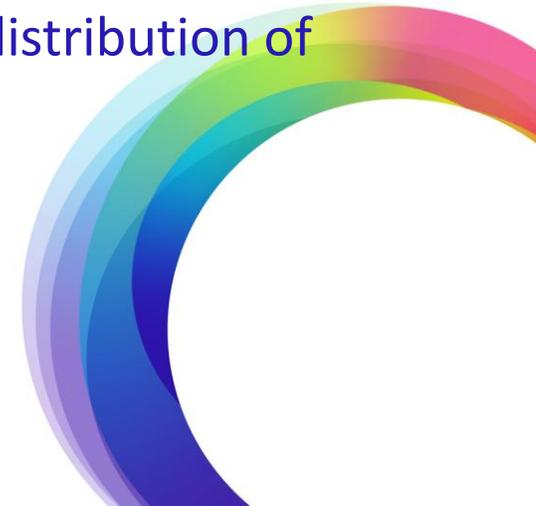
Definitions

Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA :

1. Each Member State shall take the measures necessary to ensure that the following intentional conduct is punishable:

- (a) publicly inciting to violence or hatred directed against a group of persons or a member of such a group defined by reference to race, colour, religion, descent or national or ethnic origin;
- (b) the commission of an act referred to in point (a) by public dissemination or distribution of tracts, pictures or other material;

[...]



Definitions

Italian Penal code: art. 604 bis:

The crime of propaganda and incitement to commit a crime for reasons of discrimination (Article 604 bis of the Criminal Code) constitutes a specific crime: it punishes with imprisonment up to one year and six months or with a fine of up to 6,000 euros those who propagate ideas based on racial or ethnic superiority or hatred, or instigate to commit or commit discriminatory acts on racial, ethnic, national or religious grounds.

Germany:

Penal Code (section 130): The law bans incitement to hatred and insults that assault human dignity against people based on their racial, national, religious or ethnic background

Network Enforcement Act (online hate speech) (2017)



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