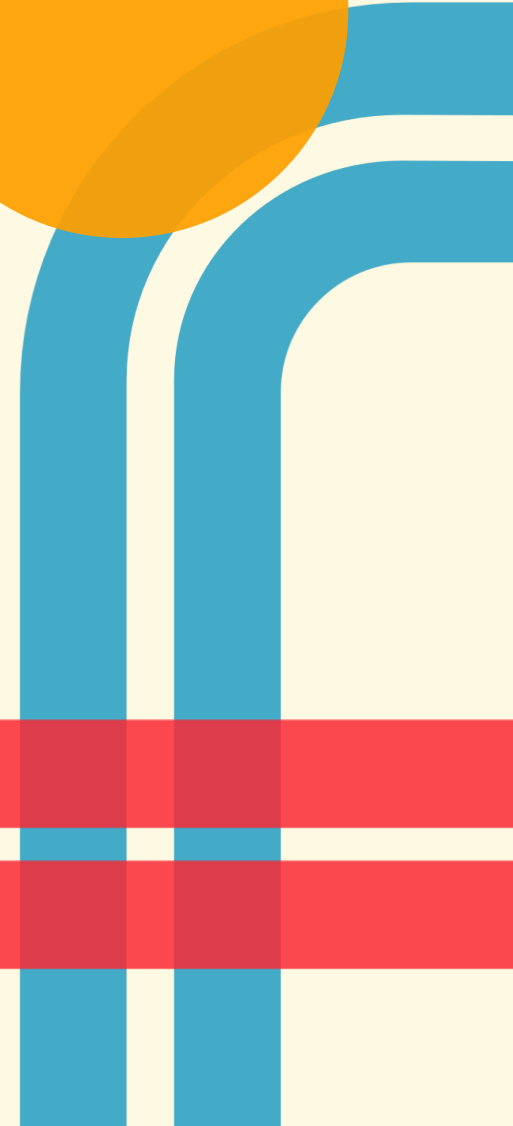




Hate Speech & Freedom of Information on Online Platforms



**Public Awareness Campaigns and
International Perspectives on
Regulating Online Media Content**





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Bulgaria: National Context

- ❑ **43% of adults exposed to hate speech** → persistently high since 2013
- ❑ **Shift in exposure: social media overtook television**
- ❑ **Low reporting rates**
- ❑ **Chilling effect: vulnerable groups withdraw** → audiences receive a poorer, distorted flow of information





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Bulgarian Legal Safeguards

- ☐ **RTA bans incitement to violence/hatred** (Arts. 10, 17(2))
- ☐ **CEM oversight:** proportionate enforcement, respecting rights
- ☐ **VSPs' duties (Art. 19e):** reporting tools, complaints, age assurance, parental controls
- ☐ **Users' rights:** VSPs' terms coordinated with CEM; enforceable in court
- ☐ **Prevention:** media-literacy promotion alongside enforcement



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Illegal vs. Harmful Speech

- ❑ **Illegal hate speech — calls to violence/hatred** (e.g., racist/xenophobic)
→ courts; sanctions; platform duties.
- ❑ **Lawful-but-harmful** — offensive but legal → platform rules/design, counter-speech, media literacy.
- ❑ **ECtHR** — closer to **calls to violence/hatred** → narrower **Article 10** protection; non-inciting political speech protected.
- ❑ **Clear boundary** — **punish illegal hate** and **preserve freedom to receive information**.



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Bulgaria: Oversight & Awareness

- ❑ **Elections:** CEM monitors campaigns; flags spikes to CEC — protects voters' access to plural, reliable information.
- ❑ **Awareness:** *Bulgaria Faces Hate Speech; Check before you trust.*
- ❑ **Coalition:** Bulgarian Coalition against Disinformation — strengthens find-and-verify skills.



Civil Society Contribution

- ❑ **EqualTogether (2023–25, EU-funded):** Equal.bg reporting → ~140 cases → anonymised data to OSCE/ODIHR
- ❑ **From Words to Stories (2024–26, EACEA-funded):** training, dialogue, advocacy
- ❑ Civil society ensures **inclusive, accessible information flows**





Europe's Combined Response

- ❑ **Enforcement + education — beyond takedowns:** pair removals with prevention (design changes, counter-speech, media literacy).
- ❑ **National initiatives:**
 - **Ireland** — *Be Media Smart* (“Stop, Think, Check”).
 - **Finland** — *Faktabaari* materials for schools.
 - **Netherlands & Croatia** — teacher training to recognise and respond to hate speech.
 - **Austria & Germany** — counter-narrative digital campaigns.
 - **Spain & Italy** — **curricular integration** in media-literacy programmes.



EU User-Protection Framework

- ❑ **AVMSD**: bans **calls to violence/hatred**; proportionate **VSP** safeguards.
- ❑ **DSA**: platform accountability for **illegal content** & **systemic risks**; transparency; **minors-by-default**.
- ❑ **EU Guidelines (Art. 28)**: privacy-by-default; limit autoplay/live; proportionate age checks.
- ❑ **Code of Conduct+ (2025, voluntary)**: faster handling of accredited notices; country-level transparency.
- ❑ **EMFA (from 8 Aug 2025): Media Board**; coordinated action on high-risk non-EU media services.
- ❑ **Ireland's Online Safety Code**: EU-wide impact via Irish jurisdiction over many VLOPs



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Enforcement & Cooperation

- ❑ **Commission enforcement:** DSA proceedings vs **Meta, TikTok, X.**
- ❑ **Cross-border:** structured cooperation; **EBDS** mediation; expedited (≤ 14 days).
- ❑ **Media Board:** coordinated action on high-risk services **established outside the EU.**
- ❑ **Purpose:** uphold safe, plural access to information.



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Systemic Risks and Gaps

- ❑ **Gaps:** local-language moderation under-served; slow notice handling; limited recommender redesign.
- ❑ **Algorithms & AI:** engagement-driven amplification; deepfakes distort what users receive.
- ❑ **Political cycles:** aggressive rhetoric normalises hate; chills participation.
- ❑ **Focus:** reduce exposure while protecting freedom to receive information.





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Way Forward: Strategic Pillars

- ❑ **Deterrence + resilience:** empower users, not only remove content.
- ❑ **Four pillars:** platform design that slows amplification; **public, comparable data** on exposure/outcomes; **local-language moderation; support & redress** for victims.
- ❑ **Goal:** reduce hate while preserving plural, open, reliable access to information.



The background features abstract, thick, rounded lines in red and orange. A red line runs horizontally across the top left, with an orange line running vertically through the center. They intersect at a point marked by a small black dot. Another red line runs horizontally across the top, also intersecting the orange line at a black dot. A large green circle is positioned in the bottom right corner. The text "THANK YOU" is centered in a bold, dark blue font.

THANK YOU

CEM, 2025