ANALYSE

DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

PUBLIC DISCOURSES OF HATE SPEECH IN CYPRUS:

Awareness, Policies and Prevention

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- Hate speech is a persistent problem in Cyprus and undermines the prospects for peace.
- This report identifies three main nexuses of public hate speech in both Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities: intercommunal, inter-alterity and inter-gender.
- Both social and traditional media outlets lack effective policies and regulation in combatting hate speech incidents.
- Authorities must update the media regulatory framework and keep pace with the emerging challenges of the online environment.
- Joint initiatives involving civil society, authorities and law enforcement agencies are needed.

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HATE SPEECH DEFINITION AND THE ONLINE CONTEXT

The development of information and communication technologies and, more specifically, social media have redefined the boundaries of free speech. On the one hand, the internet made it possible to share ideas with large audiences around the world; on the other hand, it helps some intolerant individuals propagate negative and stereotypical assumptions about some groups. Thus, in the name of freedom of expression, some hide behind anonymity and take advantage of the lax rules of the internet, as well as the visibility it provides, to convey racist and discriminatory messages. Such prejudiced views and opinions against certain minority groups or against society in general are what we refer to as "hate speech".

1.1. WHAT IS "HATE SPEECH"? THE EU CONTEXT

Hate speech is a source of social unrest and it damages fundamental European and international norms of peace and unity. The term "hate speech", particularly in its legal context, is a contested one. There is no universally accepted definition for hate speech, because "there is no universal consensus on what is harmful or unsuitable", or on what constitutes (prosecutable) "hate speech". As hate speech is expressed and perceived in different ways, legislation on its own is not adequate to contain it or to clearly define and enforce where free speech ends and where hate speech begins.

Within the EU, according to the Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA of 2008, hate speech is "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" – where dimensions such as gender and sexual orientation are not included in the Framework's definition.

Due to variations and incoherencies amongst and within EU member states' legal systems on what constitutes prosecutable "hate speech", the European Parliament put forth a motion in 2017 for a resolution on establishing a common legal definition of hate speech in the EU.

Finally, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights has defined within the Framework Decision on Racism and Xenophobia the following priorities:

- the identification of hate crime,
- the increasing use of the internet as a tool of hate and propaganda,
- the under-reporting of hate crime,
- the rise of extremist groups and political parties in the EU.

Even if there is no definitive and consensual definition, two major definitions should be highlighted here. The first one is offered by the Council of Europe, which defines hate speech as covering "all forms of expressions that spread, incite, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism or other forms of hatred based on intolerance" (Council of Europe, n.d.). According to this definition, hate speech is then a broad, extremely negative discourse based on intolerance expressed in the form of aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism, discrimination and hostility against minorities and immigrants. A much broader definition is proposed by the United Nations, which argues that hate speech is "any kind of communication in speech, writing or behaviour, that attacks or uses pejorative or discriminatory language with reference to a person or a group on the basis of who they are, in other words, based on their religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, colour, descent, gender or other identity factor" (United Nations, 2019). Accordingly, LGBTI community members, migrants, disabled people, women and individuals belonging to a certain social class or a specific religion can be subject to such attacks. In the context of this project, the latter definition will be applied, as it covers much more various aspects of hate speech.

The existence of such discourses creates problems as they constitute a threat to social harmony and human rights: hate speech divides and categorizes individuals, exacerbating differences. Most of the time it is based on wrong assumptions and stereotypes. Through hate speech, perpetrators draw a distinction between a "We" (considered as the standard) and a "They", the discriminated alterity, who is seen as underdeveloped, abnormal, outdated and sometimes incompetent. Moreover, hate speech is a threat to democratic values, social stability and peace. The problem is exacerbated when

such discourses are shared and amplified on social media, giving to the hateful rhetoric an added resonance. Moreover, hate speech causes a feeling of insecurity in people targeted, as hate speech constitutes a direct incitement to violence and intimidation. In some cases, hate speech could even lead to hate crimes, as shown in OSCE's 2012 report (OSCE, 2013 November 15). Not only are individuals or groups the ones which are targeted but also symbolic places, such as religious institutions or other places of worship and meeting places of LGBTI community members or human rights activists, can also be subject to vandalism as an expression of hate.

1.2. CATEGORIZATION → STEREOTYPES → OTHERING

Social categorization divides individuals into social groups (Allport, 1979) typically on the basis of common and shared characteristics of a group (Cohen and Claire Lefebvre, 2005) (e.g. nationality, skin colour or religion). They are thus viewed more as uniform members of a specified social group rather than as individuals. Categorization can lead to constructing stereotypes and then prejudices (Mazzara, 1997: 72; Russo & Tempesta, 2017), which constitutes personal opinions (sometimes negative and hostile). This personal contrasting and perceived incompatibility based on personal worldviews tends to put together all people with similar characteristics in one single group, where all members share (negative) attributes. It is a process known as "othering" (Gabriel, 2008: 213). Othering can lead to hate manifestations (verbal or physical) towards the defined social groups, invoking basic defence instincts and defence strategies (Bennett, 1993; Castiglioni, 2005: 18-20). The Other is condemned out of fear and the feeling that the group is being "besieged" by the Other, underlining the "dangers" posed by this group (Assimakopoulos et al., 2017).

There are several strategies of othering that can be used to express such unfavourable positions towards members of a group. Categorization and stereotyping is one of them. This then leads to hate concealed as patriotism, the use of metaphorical language, sarcasm, allusions and constructed dialogue, which can all be "subtle", indirect ways in which discrimination emerges in public discourse.

An array of stereotyping and stigmatization processes may also have comparative consequences, since spreading contempt and disgust in relation to a particular group effectively encourages, or at least welcomes, the group's potential elimination from society (Chondrogianni et al. 2017; Assimakopoulos et al., 2017).

1.3. OTHERING → METAPHORS → ("SOFT") HATE SPEECH

A negative stance towards other groups often causes the use of indirect strategies, such as negative/racist metaphors (Baider & Constantinou, 2017a, 2017b). By framing socio-political complexity in simple terms and constructing the evil other, metaphors can promote ingroup solidarity and hostility towards the outgroup and persuade the public to plan to take (violent) action. For example, historical documents that labelled people as animals not only dehumanized them in this way, but also helped to desensitize others (Kohl, 2011; Musolff, 2008). For example, Nazis referred to Jews as "parasites," "vermin", "lice," or "demons" during the Holocaust, (Nagengast, 2002: 339). Hutus referred to Tutsis as "cockroaches" during the 1994 Rwandan genocide, "thus dehumanizing them and justifying their extermination" (Twagilimana, 2015: 115).

Metaphors in discourses (as well as in online discourses) desensitize the audience and the perpetrators (Baider & Kopytowska, 2017), and the use of metaphors (in the form of ("soft") hate speech) gains relevance in times of crisis and conflict. In the example of the refugee crisis in the EU, such simplifications of "us-good" and "them-evil" create perceived confrontations among host country citizens and refugees. In the same example of the refugee crisis, the "others" (refugee and migrants) are conceptualized as a "threat" in both physical and symbolic senses (Baider & Kopytowska, 2017).

The choices of metaphors and their frequency of usage are likely to influence the salience of issues among the public, activate certain moral evaluations and generate fear, thereby creating grounds for verbal and physical aggression targeted at the other.

Metaphors and dehumanization serve as a springboard for both individual acts of prejudice, as well as systematic discrimination and violence (Baider & Kopytowska, 2017). And while such manifestations and strategies of using metaphors may not belong to the category of prosecutable hate speech, they constitute soft hate speech (Assimakopoulos et al., 2017). The indirect use of metaphors in (soft) hate speech, despite their impact, is more likely to evade legal sanctions, in contrast to hate speech that clearly and directly incites hatred and violence. All these strategies create a fertile ground for hard hate speech to emerge, as they slowly but steadily legitimize discrimination and potentially even violence against vulnerable groups (Assimakopoulos et al., 2017).

1.4. SOCIAL NETWORKS AND HATE SPEECH

Social networks have taken our contemporary era by storm, hosting billions of users worldwide. They serve as effective platforms in which users' ideas can be spread in an easy and efficient manner, facilitating borderless communication (Alkiviadou, 2018). The emergence of the internet and the subsequent creation of social networks have added new dimensions to the already complex topic of hate speech (Alkiviadou, 2018). The internet, as an online communication platform, enables previously diverse and fragmented groups with radical ideas to connect and share values, ideologies and fears (Perry & Olsson, 2009). Sometimes, hateful and harmful ideas and messages expressed in online discourses (e.g., within groups in social networks), may amount to hate speech promoting and perpetuating nega-

tive messages concerning the other (Baider & Kopytowska, 2017). Given the near-instantaneous nature and high interactivity of social networks, these hateful messages are likely to reach the wider public and stir emotions (Kopytowska, 2013, 2017). At the same time, social networks constitute platforms through which hateful rhetoric is spread and normalized, and vulnerable and minority groups are systematically targeted (Alkiviadou, 2018). The use of metaphors in online discourses also desensitizes the audience and the perpetrators, who can effectively communicate discriminatory attitudes indirectly and can also interpret them as directly inciting violence to varying degrees (Chondrogianni et al.,2017; Assimakopoulos et al., 2017).

1.5. HATE SPEECH REGULATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA

In order to tackle the social media phenomenon, many conventions have been drafted, including the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (OHCHR, 1969). Article 4 of that convention imposes that states that have ratified it: "Shall declare an offence punishable by law all dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or hatred, incitement to racial discrimination, as well as all acts of violence or incitement to such acts against any race or group of persons of another colour or ethnic origin, and also the provision of any assistance to racist activities, including the financing thereof". Unfortunately, only a few countries have ratified this convention, while many others regard it as a threat to individual freedom of expression. With the ultimate objective of setting a delicate balance between the struggle against intolerance (including sanctions for violators) and continuation of the protection of free speech, a UN committee suggested in 2013 the following criteria (United Nations, 2013), qualifying what dissemination and incitement offences are punishable by law:

- What was the content and form of speech? Was the speech provocative and direct? In what form was it constructed and disseminated, and what was the style in which it was delivered?
- What was the prevalent economic, social and political climate at the time the speech was made and disseminated? Is there an existence of patterns of discrimination against ethnic and other groups, including indigenous peoples?
- What was the reach of the speech? How was it transmitted and what was the nature of the audience? Was the speech disseminated through the internet or mainstream media? What was the extent of the communication and frequency, in particular does repetition suggest the existence of a deliberate strategy to engender hostility towards ethnic and racial groups?
- What are the objectives of the speech? Speech protecting or defending the human rights of individuals and groups should not be subject to criminal or other sanctions.

The World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, held in Durban in 2001, is another example of efforts made by global institutions to fight hate speech (United Nations WCAR, 2001). This international event has contributed to encouraging discussions about the updated conventions related to hate speech. Intentional[1] and unintentional[2] racist offences were added to the jurisprudence. Then, in 2004, statements which tend to "target, stigmatize, stereotype or characterize by their profile (to profile)" members of certain groups, "negative generalizations", even if they are not strictly hateful, were considered to be "hate speech".

Despite all these efforts made by authorities, a question mark still hangs over the penalization of hate speech. Should hate speech be sanctioned because it represents a threat to social order, or because it compromises an individual's dignity and offends peoples' sensibilities?

Thus, with its many possibilities and opportunities, the internet (Web 2.0, social media, etc.) has facilitated spreading hate, hate speech and narratives on a global scale (European Network Against Racism, 2016). Conceptual variations of definitions of hate speech render effective challenging of online hate on this borderless medium particularly complex (Assimakopoulos et al., 2017). These variations in perceptions of hate speech, create incoherencies amongst national legal frameworks, which are necessary for effective hate speech regulation, and also at a universal level (given the nature of the internet as a global medium) (Alkiviadou, 2018).

Particularly, user-generated internet content (especially in social media) is a more conducive environment for hate speech than are mainstream media articles, as the latter are subject to (media) legislation, regulations and ethics, as well as established institutional monitoring. In the case of user-generated content, anonymity and weaker institutional control encourage incivility among internet users (Santana, 2014; Kopytowska et al., 2017; Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk, 2017).

The major social networks (mega-corporations such as Twitter and Facebook) have internal regulatory policies in relation to hate speech. For example, Facebook's community standards stipulate that: "We do not allow hate speech on Facebook [...] We define hate speech as a direct attack on people based on what we call protected characteristics – race, ethnicity, national origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, caste, sex, gender, gender identity and serious disease or disability" (Stjernfelt & Lauritzen, 2020).

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1 Cf. Kashif Ahmad v. Denmark (2000), in which a man was insulted by his son's teacher while he was waiting for him with his relatives in front of the room. The family members were referred publicly as "a bunch of monkeys" by the head teacher. This was considered a violation, as the victim had been insulted on the grounds of race. (UN Doc. CERD/C/56/D/16/1999 (2000)).

2 For example, the term "nigger" had to be removed from a sign at the sports ground in Australia. See *The Sydney Morning Herald* (2003).

YouTube, Facebook and Twitter have signed a Code of Conduct on the regulation of hate speech with the European Commission (Alkiviadou, 2018). Most social networks have aligned with the international guidelines and legal frameworks on combatting hate speech. However, in practice, this is not always feasible without recourse to national law (Alkiviadou, 2018). Issues of multiple jurisdictions, as well as of technological realities, have resulted in the task of online hate speech regulation being difficult (Alkiviadou, 2018).

1.6. THE CURRENT PROJECT

In this project, we aim to examine the case of hate speech **in Cyprus**. Our study offers an analysis of hate speech incidents in both the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities. Although the two communities differ from one another in terms of their main language and some aspects of their culture and traditions, the two communities seem to have similar patterns of hate speech.

Empirically, we identify three main nexuses of hate speech on both sides of the island: inter-communal, inter-alterity and inter-gender.

- The first nexus, intercommunal hate speech, is both a main cause and a serious consequence of the ongoing "Cyprus conflict." The de facto division of the island into to two entities has definitely hardened peoples' views towards one another.
- Another common pattern across the two communities is that they welcome large and diverse migrant populations from all around the world, which might engender inter-alterity discourses. The island's geography turns it into a bridge between Europe and the Middle East, but also offers a prime destination for the African youth who desire to study abroad. We observe that the constant increase in the number of migrants arriving on the island has led some of the native population to have a growing sense of insecurity. Therefore, inter-alterity hate speech, drawing on xenophobia, is on the rise.
- Finally, the two communities both belong to a Mediterranean culture in which patriarchal norms still prevail. As such, traditional views about gender roles predominate as well as sanction individuals who do conform to orthodox gender norms. We hence presume that there is also an inter-gender nexus of hate speech on the island, especially perpetrated against those who refuse to perform traditional gender roles.

It is not uncommon to hear Cypriots say, "There is no such thing in Cyprus", when speaking of hate speech. In fact, that is a clear sign of the level of widespread unawareness about the concept. It is within this context that, in this report, we seek to establish the extent of hate speech in modern Cypriot society. We identify and categorize public hate speech discourses along the intercommunal, inter-alterity and inter-gender nexuses. More specifically, our analysis shows, with various examples, the stereotypes used in each nexus. Finally, we briefly examine the role of media and efforts by official bodies, as well as some NGOs, in tackling public hate speech in Cyprus.

Our empirical focus is on public discourses circulating on the internet, such as social media users' offensive comments under news articles. But we also look at traditional stereotypes used in daily language as well as discourses exhibited by media outlets in their representations of political events. In addition to written text, we also analyse some unflattering visual materials, such as cartoons which are ridden with discriminatory discourses about specific groups of people.

2

HATE SPEECH IN THE GREEK CYPRIOT COMMUNITY

2.1. INTERCOMMUNAL NEXUS

The Greek Cypriot community is largely a conservative society with negative predispositions towards the various "others" (Katsourides et al., 2018). Stereotypes, discriminatory behaviour, intolerance and hate against the "other" are part of what is now the social conscience of the majority of Cypriots, even in cases where they are not directly expressed as such. Religion and collective memory play an important role in politics and everyday life in the Greek Cypriot community.

Hate speech is rooted in Cyprus' historical legacies, conservative and nationalistic worldviews. It takes several forms and permeates Cypriot society, targets all vulnerable groups (migrants, refugees, LGBTI persons, women, Turkish Cypriots, Muslims, disabled persons and persons with serious diseases and health syndromes) (KISA, 2019). However, most times is not explicitly expressed and does not take a violent turn (Katsourides et al., 2018).

The conservative segment in Cyprus, which constitutes a large part of society, invokes specific stereotypes, offensive discourse and falsified narratives amounting to stigma against vulnerable groups, in its effort to consolidate its nationalistic and discriminatory views. The lack of awareness raising and holistic education of public opinion on minorities' rights gives further ground to hate narratives.

Hate speech in Cyprus is mostly expressed through the fundamental elements of nationalism and otherism. Cyprus' EU accession and adopted legislation have served to curb explicit hate speech. The mainstreaming of certain hate speech political agents, for example, the extreme right party National Popular Front (ELAM), who are now in parliament, has forced authorities to restrain explicit hate speech from their members.

Nevertheless, hate speech and racist statements are frequent and often dominant in Greek Cypriot society and public sphere (KISA, 2017a). Public figures, including politicians, members of the government, church officials and journalists, often employ hate speech in their statements, without any consequences whatsoever. The mainstream media make regular use of hate speech, especially against migrants and refugees while the use of discriminatory speech in social media is uncontrollable.

2.1.1. Cyprus' Conflicting Nationalisms and Hate Speech

The collective memory of the conflicts of Cyprus shapes the perspectives of individuals and groups in a way that symbolic and realistic threats are exacerbated, sustaining prejudice and distrust (Psaltis 2016: 19).

Relations between the two ethnic communities in Cyprus date back to the conquest of Cyprus by the Ottomans in 1571. Since then, their history cannot be seen in isolation. Their coexistence went through various stages and took several forms, but it was decisively shaped during British colonialism (1878–1960). In this period, both Greek and, later, Turkish nationalisms developed (Katsourides et al., 2018).

The politicization of ethnicity led to the Greek Cypriots demanding union with Greece (enosis) and subsequently to the Turkish Cypriots demanding partition (taksim). This confrontation was utilized by the British administration to implement a "divide and conquer" policy, as a strategy to serve their interests on the island and in the region. Eventually, Cyprus was declared an independent state in 1960, and the rigidity of the Constitution fixed ethnic identities in such a way that the two communities were segregated (Trimikliniotis and Demetriou, 2011; Katsourides et al., 2018).

Cyprus's contemporary history abounds with ethno-racial violence, particularly in the turbulent period between the mid-1950s and 1974. Since then, and due to the de facto partition of the island, following the Turkish invasion, it has taken other forms, namely, fearmongering and divisive and hate-promoting rhetoric.

The nationalist narratives in Cyprus (Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot) are exclusionary by nature, and therefore set the context for hate speech to take root. In their pursuit of a national identity, Greek Cypriots consolidated it as a part of the Greek nation, while at the same time they identified the Turks with the notion of the "eternal enemy" that was seeking to establish its power through the Turkish Cypriot community. Nationalists of the two communities used hate speech to dominate over the other and to justify the inter-ethnic hate crimes they had committed, while the 1974 Turkish invasion established the nationalistic rhetoric in the public sphere (KISA, 2019).

Hate speech between Greek and Turkish Cypriots has subsided in recent years, also due to the lack of intercommunal violence since 1974. The opening of the checkpoints has also contributed to that end, as frequent intergroup contact has proved beneficial towards substantially reducing levels of prejudice for those engaged in direct and indirect contact in both communities. However, hate speech can be easily triggered by political and social actors who reference history and/or isolated violent incidents.

Finally, the education system is another structure promoting prejudice and hate speech, especially in history education. The education system severely lags behind its mission and is not doing enough to combat hate speech. It is fed by nationalism, and it perpetuates nationalism and ethnic stereotypes. This applies to both communities, albeit with variations in approach and intensity, and with some recent education reforms having taken place. An example of a setback in school education was in February 2017, where the RoC Parliament voted in favour of ELAM's proposal to commemorate the 1950 enosis referendum in public schools. The proposal was voted for by all parties except AKEL, whereas DISY abstained). This act, attained by a small ultranationalist minority, shows how history can be politicized in a way that highlights nationalistic feelings and divisive elements. At the same time, it delivered a blow to the political system itself and the peace efforts. The result was the fierce reaction of the Turkish Cypriots and the interruption of the negotiation talks.

2.1.2. The "Turkish Side" – "Us" and "Them" – Perceptions and Media Narratives

In the Greek Cypriot (mainstream) media and political narratives, Turkish Cypriots are perceived as completely interlinked to Turkey and are referred collectively as "the Turkish side" (Trimikliniotis and Demetriou, 2012). The Turkish Cypriot community is considered to be Turkey's extended arm, its obedient and subdued servants, and the mouthpiece of its policies. Turkish Cypriots are stereotyped as being unreliable and untrustworthy. This "Turkish side" grouping connects with the hate speech narrative, where the "Turks" (who, together with Turkish Cypriots, are the same "other") are the great, "eternal" enemy of the Greeks/Greek Cypriots, and Turkey's greater plan is to gradually settle the whole island and wipe out the Greek Cypriot element (KISA, 2019).

The Greek Cypriot community's stereotypes and prejudices for the Turkish Cypriots are mostly instinctive and unconscious, and are expressed through attitudes and beliefs. They are not easily voiced openly, but they are inherent in approaches of certain individuals and political groups. Moreover, indirect forms of hate speech are expressed, building upon prejudice, such as Turkish Cypriots "exploit" the benefits of RoC's European membership at the expense of the Greek Cypriot community, where the Greek Cypriots are eventually becoming "second-class citizens" (Katsourides et al., 2018). In the public opinion, there is expressed hatred against Turkish settlers, considered uncivilized and thieves (KISA, 2019).

Historically, in the context of the Cyprus conflict, journalists and media of both sides had claimed to be the representatives of the "nation" and of their community, as well as to represent the official/partisan positions or officials. The media spoke on behalf of, or as if they represented, those groups. From 1960 to 1985, the main features of the Greek Cypriot press were intolerance, lack of will to engage in dialogue, one-sided interpretations, and the intention to annihilate the opponents. In a relevant research, 25% of the Turkish Cypriot and 31% of the Greek Cypriot media headlines were negatively oriented towards the "other" (Christophorou et al., 2010).

Until today, most of the current media and journalism structures of both communities make no attempt to try to understand the "other" position by engaging in dialogue and giving a chance to (moderate) members of the other community to present the other point of view (or at least explain their community's context, to give a primer). Instead, what is taking place in media reports is the (exclusive and verbatim) portrayal of the nationalistic and antagonistic political perspectives and actors of the "other" community – perpetuating the "us, good-them, bad" narrative.

2.1.3. Cyprus Solution and Hate Speech

The perpetually reinforced monolithic "Us, good-Them, bad" approach is used to blame each other community for the intractability of the Cyprus problem. Moreover, another source of hate speech, promoted by political and social organizations, has to do with the approaches for a solution to the Cyprus problem.

In the Greek Cypriot community, the emphasis of this type of hate speech focuses on criticizing the bi-zonal, bi-communal federation (BBF) plan. Although BBF has been mutually agreed on as the framework for a solution of the Cyprus problem (High-Level Agreements of 1977 and 1979), politicians' and media's systematic negative depictions of the "other" community undermine any current and future high-level efforts to reach a settlement over the Cyprus problem based on BBF (or any settlement at all, due to lack of trust) (Trimikliniotis and Demetriou, 2012).

Hate speech in this context mostly targets Turkish Cypriots' political rights. As the Turkish Cypriot population is numerically less than the Greek Cypriot community, this relationship is directly intertwined with the question of structure of, and power relations within, the independent state of Cyprus and, most importantly, with the prospect of a future coexistence in a BBF (Katsourides et al., 2018).

The day after the 2004 Annan Plan referendums marked a course reversal of the relations between the two communities and, eventually, a new era of distrust (Christophorou et al., 2010).The overwhelming rejection by the Greek Cypriot community of the 2004 UN peace plan for the solution of the Cyprus problem had led to a rise in nationalistic sentiments and to an intolerant atmosphere, which was quickly taken up and exploited by opportunistic populist politicians who aimed at ensuring the delegitimization and rejection of all future UN peace plans (Trimikliniotis and Demetriou, 2012).

Cyprus has experienced the increase in support for ELAM and its influence in the re-emergence of ultranationalism in the context of the negotiations for a solution to the Cyprus question (European Network Against Racism, 2016). Thus, with the deadlock in the negotiations for a solution to the Cyprus question continuing since 2017, the nationalist, populist and neo-Nazi forces trotted out the rhetoric of the "eternal enemy", namely the Turks and, therefore, the Turkish Cypriot community.

2.1.4. The Far-Right "Political" Hate Speech

The Greek Cypriot society fosters conservative and religious values which form the very backbone of national identity and find their manifestation in nationalist and far-right movements (Baider & Kopytowska, 2017).

Nationalism has been extremely powerful in Cyprus, and the resulting mainstream narratives of both history and politics in the two Cypriot communities have sidelined any other concerns and discussions (Katsourides et al., 2018).

The new far-right agenda is essentially a new racial and anti-immigrant agenda. The national identity and well-being is perceived as being threatened by migration and ethnic dilution in a mass hysteria of collective existential angst (Trimikliniotis and Demetriou, 2012).

"Political" hate speech, as expressed and witnessed within Cyprus, can only be defined as the incitement to hostility and hate against members of a group with specific characteristics, especially in relation to their race, colour, status in the country and religious and ethnic origin by people in influential power positions, under the guise of the nationalistic narrative of a "duty to be a patriot" (KISA, 2019).

Public statements containing hate speech are a common phenomenon within the political actors' discourse. Without ever vanishing completely, it peaks in times of economic crises and in the pre-election periods when political parties and figures use this discriminatory agenda in their opportunistic pursuit of power.

Many politicians and other public figures, such as the Archbishop, invariably use hate speech in their attempt to divert popular attention away from the establishment's inability or unwillingness to provide viable and effective solutions to a very challenging political and socio-economic environment in Cyprus. The strategy is also used to attract lost and/or new voters and for other political expediencies. Politicians and public figures resort to hate speech that incites hate crime, violations of human rights, deep social divisions and inequalities, the marginalization and exclusion of the weak and the vulnerable. They make use of over-simplifications and fake news to appeal to people's basic instincts, popular resentment, mistrust and discontent, fears and feelings of a widespread sense of insecurity and national identity and apprehensions for their and their children's future.

Hate speech is a powerful tool in the hands of conservative powers who manipulate it to shift public discourse from rationality to irrationality. Also used to demonize, dehumanize and belittle individuals or social groups, hate speech can become a mechanism for the isolation of political competitors, activists or the "other" and for the interception of social movements and progressive changes (KISA, 2019).

2.1.5. ELAM and Far-Right Hate Speech Against Turkish Cypriots

The far-right, military-style political movement, ELAM, was founded in 2008 and was approved as a political party in May 2011(Council of Europe, ECRI, 2016).

The party promotes Greek nationalism and describes its ideology as "popular and social nationalism". The party supports a nativist economic model that (solely) benefits the natives (the GCs) and that is protected against "alien" (TCs) influences (Katsourides et al., 2018). ELAM has been openly connected with the Greek far-right political party Golden Dawn, which it describes as a "brother movement". It has also been (self-)described as "the Golden Dawn of Cyprus". The (recently-convicted) Golden Dawn party in Greece, has been described as neo-Nazi, although ELAM is considered significantly milder than Golden Dawn.

ELAM, whose key feature is anti-Turkishness, cultivates and expresses hatred against the Turkish Cypriots. Typical of the situation is the fact that when ELAM refers to the TCs, they use the word "Cypriot" in brackets in order to emphasize that TCs are not really Cypriots but Turks.

ELAM did not confine itself to rhetoric, but it was involved in acts of violence. ELAM promotes an anti-Turkish Cypriot, racist and xenophobic agenda. It is believed to be responsible for attacks on Turkish Cypriots and migrants. However, ELAM has since then toned down its rhetoric and has kept a low profile in recent years, especially after first winning MP seats, thus entering mainstream politics.

Along with ELAM, there is EAK (Nationalist Liberation Movement), a far-right, pro-military movement, declared to be the successor of EOKA B, that seeks Cyprus' union with Greece through armed struggle. Its supporters aim at "cleansing" Cyprus from Turkish Cypriots and Turks and constantly use hate speech and incitement to hate crimes towards that end. (KISA, 2019).

2.1.6. Legitimization and Normalization of Hate Speech

The rise of the far-right and its influence on political speech and social conscience succeeded to normalize hate speech (KISA, 2019). The legal impunity for both hate speech and racial violence, have all contributed to the strengthening of the far-right agenda (Trimikliniotis and Demetriou, 2012). The result is an under-valuing and trivialization of the breadth of the problem of hate speech, racial violence and intolerance in Cyprus.

A twisted construction of "free speech" and "pluralism" as a liberal democratic right in the Greek Cypriot context has resulted in the re-legitimization of "schools of thought", which had been legally, ideologically and morally discredited in the 1970s. Far-right ideologies, such as Nazism/fascism, as well as other ideologies connected to the Greek junta and the far right of Greek Cypriot politics, have emerged in new forms and have gained momentum with followers too young to remember (or unborn at the time) when these became synonymous with war, disaster and shame.

Hate speech discourses parade regularly in the media, whilst it is now perfectly legitimate for the public media to include panelists from neo-Nazi and other far-right organizations as "the other point of view", which needs to be heard in order to have a balanced representation. Despite the fact that, in recent years, new laws have come into force, strengthening the legal regime for addressing ethno-racial hatred and hate speech, the reality on the ground appears to have shifted the terms of the debate towards the opposite direction, that of mainstreaming hate speech as an emerging norm (Trimikliniotis and Demetriou, 2012).

The presence of ELAM in parliament legitimized and mainstreamed the party in the political life of Cyprus. It has provided the platform for normalizing ultra-nationalism and its constituent elements of racism, hate speech and hate crime, violence and exclusion of all "other" communities and minorities, including Turkish Cypriots and, by extension, all Muslims.

2.1.7. "Traitors", "Turks", "Collaborators"; Equalization of Racists and Anti-Racists

Hate speech does not only target minorities and vulnerable groups, but also anyone who defends their rights and stands up for their safeguarding. Activists/groups and civil society organizations, who are active with migrants and refugees are stigmatized as enemies and opponents of the Greek nation. Those who are pro-solution and anti-nationalist and get involved with Turkish Cypriots towards that end are seen as Turkey's agents, "enemy collaborators" and "anti-Greeks" for facilitating Turkey's interests in taking over the country (KISA, 2019). They are accused of undermining national security, sovereignty and identity by defending the "aliens", the "Arabs", the "perverts" etc.

A rather conservative, technical and legalistic tradition in Cypriot politics leads to the depiction of anti-racists as troublemakers, on a par with their racist "counterparts". Mainstream politicians and journalists attempt to keep a distance from both racists and anti-racists, blaming both equally for violent confrontations. This has led to a mainstreaming of racist speech that has changed the terms of the debate and tilted the balance in favor of the camp that encompasses sensationalist media, populist right wing politics and the far right (Trimikliniotis and Demetriou, 2012).

While the mass media regularly air far-right views and frame the anti-racist camp as "unpatriotic" and "foreign agents", anti-racism and tolerance towards diversity, as ideologies, are increasingly approached with suspicion and are quickly losing ground among mainstream society.

Below, three examples of this hate speech category are presented.

CASES

a. An incident of a police officer humiliating and degrading a Turkish citizen in August 2017 sparked hatred against human rights defenders, the eyewitnesses and the activists that testified and supported the victim. Hate speech comments from nationalist and far-right groups, attacking both the human rights organization (KISA) and the witnesses personally for covering up and "**working for the enemy"**.
b. In July 2018, the Union of Cyprus Journalists condemned death threats made online against a journalist following his comments in his personal Facebook account regarding the effects of the 1974 Turkish invasion. In one of the far-right affiliated Facebook groups, a user commented on a posted article: "I accidentally tuned into the radio station his show is on every afternoon and all I thought was that someone should put a bullet through his head to be over with. **A Turk in every sense of the word**". The incident was reported to the police by the journalist himself but no further progress has been made in the investigation (KISA, 2019).
c. In July 2018, journalist Maria Siakalli was targeted for participating in the preparation of "Words that matter: A glossary for journalism in Cyprus". The publication identified the most controversial media terminology, looked for less controversial alternatives and provided a list of 56 words that journalists from both sides who cover the Cyprus problem are invited to reconsider and opt to use so as to avoid inciting a rhetoric of tension. Both the Representative and the international expert of the project underlined that this glossary is not about political correctness and that journalists should remain free (Alkiviadou, n.d.). Siakalli defended the glossary. In return, she was attacked by different social media users sympathising/affiliated with the far right. They left messages on her Facebook newsfeed and sent direct messages threatening to kill or rape her. They called her a **traitor** of her country who **sold out to Turkey**'s interests.
d. Journalist Pavlos Mylonas, during a daily news show he hosted, launched into a tirade about Greek Cypriots who cross over to the north to do business or buy goods and services, calling them "koprites" (Greek for "mongrels" or "deadbeats") and saying they were "**unworthy of their patriotic ancestors**". The offensive word was used several times. A €6000 fine was imposed on Mega TV.

2.1.8. The Church of Cyprus

Orthodox Christianity plays a big role in Greek Cypriot society (in its religion, culture and identity). It is represented by the Church of Cyprus (the longest surviving institution on the island). The Church plays an active part in politics and everyday life (Baider & Kopytowska, 2017), and its leaders seek and actually succeed to influence the public sphere (KISA, 2019). The leaders hold a particularly important role in shaping public opinion and consciousness of the Greek Cypriot community (Katsourides et al., 2018).

The Church of Cyprus (and its prelates) represents a conservative ideology and worldview, and often their public statements consist of hate speech. The discourse of race and religion in xenophobic talk in Cyprus renders anyone not conforming to the Greek Orthodox faith to endure the similar processes of Othering (Baider & Kopytowska, 2017).

Often, the Church of Cyprus connects Greek identity of the Greek Cypriot community with the Christian Orthodox faith itself, sometimes placing it higher than its humanistic and universal values.

CASES

a. The church's public discourse, which often promotes feelings of fear and hatred against the Turks, considers TCs as intruders. Publicly commenting on a possible Bizonal Bicommunal Federal solution of the Cyprus problem, Archbishop Chrysostomos II stated that "in such an event, the 82% of the Cypriot people, which consists of Greek and other Christian minorities, will become captive in the hands of 18%" (Katsourides et al., 2018).
   In the past, the Archbishop has repeatedly targeted refugees, migrants, asylum seekers, Turkish Cypriots, homosexuals[3] and the LGBTI community (KISA, 2019). Furthermore, the Archbishop openly admitted on TV news that he supported the causes of the National Popular Front (ELAM), an extreme right neo-Nazi party (Council of Europe, ECRI, 2016).
b. In another televised interview with the Archbishop (Holy Synod of Orthodoxy), which aired on 5 July 2016 on CyBC, he referred to a bishop of African origin in a derogatory and indirect racist way, repeatedly referring to his colleague as "the Black" instead of saying his name. KISA made a complaint to the Anti-Discrimination Authority, but on 23 February 2017, the Commissioner of the Authority stated that she decided not to proceed with an investigation of the complaint (KISA, 2017b).
c. In May 2017, the Archbishop was interviewed during a TV show at the state broadcaster RIK, where he stated: 'there are around 300,000 persons, they are Anatolians ("Orientals", "settlers"), uncouth and uncivilized, they will not become Europeans not even 100 years later […] they spawn a dozen children per family […] they only had one aim (coming here), they wanted to shift the demographic structure of our people'. KISA filed a complaint to the Attorney General in relation to the above[4], and in his reply the Attorney General has supported the Archbishop's positions, and he also criticized KISA for allegedly commending and trivializing war crimes (KISA, 2019).
d. At the end of 2017 and on the occasion of Christmas Day, the Archbishop, in his Christmas circular described refugees as "threat to the nation" because they are Muslims and urged people "to fight against" this threat. He added that "Muslims are sent to Cyprus by Turkey as so-called refugees with the intention to alter our national and cultural identity" with the danger that "what is described in the book of Exodus will happen", that is, that "in case of war, they will become one with the enemy". KISA again filed a complaint, however, no further measures were taken by the competent authorities and no political party took a stand on this.

2.2. INTER-ALTERITY NEXUS

During the last five years Europe has experienced increased arrivals of migrants and refugees. Refugees have been coming to Europe due to conflicts (since the summer of 2015, e.g. from Syria, Iraq, Libya…) and political and civil unrest (e.g. the extreme dictatorship in Eritrea). Migrants have been coming for economic reasons, including escaping high and extreme poverty in their countries of origin (e.g. from Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan…).

Mainstream media and portrayals of the refugee crisis and of the refugees entering Europe, have been instrumentalised for far-right political agendas. Alarmist media rhetoric on the issue of refugees and on migration in general, give a focus on subsequent violence and threat (Assimakopoulos et al., 2017). The integration of refugees and migrants, and migration in general, are major issues in the public opinion in Europe.

As a result, Europe has been experiencing the growth of nationalism and the Far Right, the instrumentalization of feelings of fear and anger among the public in order to gain votes, and the increase of violence, hate speech and hate crimes against refugees and migrants.

As soon as immigration into Cyprus begun, in the early 1990s, there have been "concerns" about immigration in the Greek Cypriot society (Trimikliniotis & Demetriou, 2012). When Cyprus joined the European Union and had to abide by the European framework on asylum and migration, nationalism fell on fertile ground to also target minority groups of asylum seekers and migrant workers (KISA, 2019). Different language, appearance and habits become grounds for express-

3 See for instance: Michael, P., "Bishop says homosexuality passed on to the unborn when pregnant women enjoy anal sex", *Cyprus Mail*, 2019 July 26. https://cyprus-mail.com/2019/07/26/bishop-says-homosexuality-passed-on-to-the-unborn-when-pregnant-women-enjoy-anal-sex/

4 KISA, 6.01.18. "KISA condemns the latest bout of hate speech by the Archbishop of Cyprus". https://kisa.org.cy/kisa-condemns-the-latest-bout-of-hate-speech-by-the-archbishop-of-cyprus/

ing racist behaviours, hate speech and crimes. However, racism in Cyprus has a class dimension: wealthy immigrants are welcome in the Greek Cypriot society in contrast to immigrants from lower socio-economic strata, even if they have the same colour and origin as the wealthy immigrants (Evagorou et al., 2015).

The increased numbers of immigrants in recent years (and the unresolved political problem of the island) provide fertile ground for hate speech to grow (Katsourides et al. 2018). There has also been a rise in racist violence against migrants (Council of Europe, ECRI, 2016): asylum seekers and refugees in particular, are identified to migrants due to complete ignorance of the asylum legal framework and the situation in their countries of origin (KISA, 2019). These target groups are affected in a different way according to their other specific characteristics (religion, gender) that add to the discrimination already faced (KISA, 2019). Depending on the circumstances, hate speech targets social groups subjected or vulnerable to discrimination, racism and xenophobia and which become the scapegoats for all ills (KISA, 2019).

2.2.1. Migration, Financial Crisis and (Far Right) Hate Speech in Cyprus

During the first migratory moving during the 1990's, Cyprus was indeed seeking foreign workers in order to respond to the augmented needs of its rising economy. Back then, it was agreed that Cypriot workers would be prioritized for these posts (a prerequisite that still exists in law for Cypriots and EU nationals) and that foreigner's remuneration would be reasonable and not low, in order to avoid the creation and exploitation of a cheap labor force that would undermine the employment of locals. Despite the numerous incidents of labor trafficking and exploitation of migrants, this stereotype gains more attention especially since 2013, when Cyprus entered the economic crisis (KISA, 2019).

The circumstances of economic crisis favoured the dissemination of feelings of xenophobia, racism and hostility against migrants (KISA, 2019). Rising unemployment makes Cypriots more vulnerable to rhetoric of hostility towards immigrants. Racism and intolerance are increasingly finding fertile ground amongst the sectors most hardly hit by the economic crisis. This affects their political behaviour which becomes less tolerant, or even hostile towards immigrants, as they hold them accountable by ignoring the real causes (Evagorou et al., 2015).

Migrants are being used by the media and political circles as scapegoats for economic problems, commonly associated with the rising unemployment (Evagorou et al., 2015). Prior to the presidential elections in early 2013 and against the back-drop of the economic crisis, some politicians and public figures blamed migrants for unemployment and portrayed them as receiving higher state benefits than Cypriots (Council of Europe, ECRI, 2016).

While the state is exercising its social policy and commitments under European and international law (e.g. reception conditions for applicants for international protection), migrants, refugees and asylum seekers are portrayed as abusers of social assistance, as well as "idle", "lazy" persons that only rely on help by the state. Refugees are often accused of not being 'real refugees' and of abusing the system in order to get advantage of its benefits (KISA , 2019).

Far-right organizations benefit in times of economic crisis, such as the one Cyprus is going through today, and are given ground to express their ideological views by carrying out racist attacks (Evagorou et al., 2015). Hate speech against migrants and refugees has been proven as a powerful political tool for the Far Right to persuade voters and rally public opinion to political agendas (KISA, 2019). Through the participation of representatives from the far right in the public debate and the public sphere in general, the terms of the debate have changed: immigrants are no longer construed as merely the 'other' but rather as the enemy that must be fought against by the patriotic forces (KISA, 2019).

2.2.2. Islamophobia and the "Turkish Masterplan" for Takeover and Islamization though Migration

In the particular setting of Cyprus, religion is a central part of the collective identity (Baider et al., 2017). The Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus recognizes and expressly protects Islam as one of the two main religions of Cyprus. Islam is affiliated with the Turkish Cypriot community (also established in the Constitution as one of the two constituent communities of Cyprus), as well as the Cypriot Muslim Roma/Kurbets (CERD, 2016). In light of the increase of Islamophobia in Europe, in Cyprus, Islam is increasingly and predominantly confounded with the Turkish ethnicity (Baider et al., 2017).

The hate discourse targeted against Muslim migrants and refugees is not replacing the rhetoric against the Turkish enemy, but they are connected. A recently emerging discursive frame in the media and in political debates is in fact linking the two "archenemies", the migrants and Turks (i.e., "Turkish Cypriots"). The idea of an invasion of migrants and social beliefs about the "big replacement", always articulated with the Turkish invasion and settlement, emerged in the Cypriot political landscape (KISA, 2019).

Migrants are believed to be "illegals" that enter the Republic of Cyprus through the northern part of the island under the instructions of Turkey. They are believed to be the Trojan horse directed by Turkey in its "masterplan" to undermine the culture and religion, change the demography of the south, achieve a gradual settlement and attain full control of the island with war (KISA, 2019). Officials whose policies are "friendly to foreigners" are sometimes labelled as agents who conspire to de-Hellenize Cyprus (Trimikliniotis & Demetriou, 2011).

This narrative of Islamisation of Cyprus is methodically supported by the spread of fake news and is also linked to terrorism – presenting Muslim migrants and refugees as terrorists who are coming to Cyprus in order to operate an attack in Europe (KISA, 2019).

The result is a community that feels as if it is politically, socially and psychologically under siege, while the public opinion is constructed around sentiments of fear, hate and fanaticism against the multiple enemies (KISA, 2019; Baider et al., 2017).

The rise in Islamophobia has manifested itself through attacks against Turkish Cypriots and an increase in racist and anti-migrant discourses (European Network Against Racism, 2016). In particular, Muslim migrants, refugees and asylum seekers are seen as savages with a tendency to criminality and alienated from Western civilization. Moreover, ELAM also proposed that no money should be spent in preserving Muslim monuments in the RoC.

The Cypriot mainstream media irresponsibly and continually exploit this discourse (Chowdhury & Kassimeris, 2011). Migrants, particularly Muslims, are frequently presented in the media in a negative light and associated with problems such as rising unemployment and criminality. This is not new but a series of mediatized events (some fake), which are fed into racialized stereotypes about Muslim men (European Network Against Racism, 2016).

2.2.3. Media Portrayals of Migrants and Refugees

Representations of migrants and refugees in mainstream media are, in their majority, negative and tend to place excessive emphasis on the threats posed by these groups to members of host societies (Baider & Kopytowska, 2017). The Greek Cypriot society has been considerably affected by the media-constructed refugee crisis and terrorist scare, even though it has not borne the brunt of the recent migrant crisis and terrorist incidents to the extent other countries have (Baider & Kopytowska, 2017).

The media's general depiction of target groups, such as migrants, has created a general climate of hostility and scapegoating. This normalization, once again, often stands in the way of critical thinking in relation to the information contained in relevant articles (AEQUITAS, 2016).

The media is an important factor influencing the phenomenon of racism, as it largely determines public opinion. The position they take in relation to the issue is very often reflected in the consciences of Cypriots. Most of the time, statements are made with the aim of using immigrants as scapegoats and blaming them for unemployment, crime and the economic crisis. Many times, television and radio broadcasts refer to the benefits received by political refugees and asylum seekers, without mentioning that they are based on international law and regulations that Cyprus follows (MANDOLA, 2017).

Public figures, including politicians, often employ hate speech in their public statements, and the mainstream media make regular use of hate speech (KISA, 2017a). Television channel programs, newspapers and radio stations in Cyprus use and reproduce hate speech also through dramatizing and distorting events. Such stereotypes and prejudices are produced and reproduced through repeatedly exposing the audiences to the mass media (Katsourides et al., 2018). This is reflected in the influence the media exert in shaping the views of citizens and normalizing discriminatory behaviours. The media's broad generalizations and stereotyping only contribute to dehumanizing the "others" in the public's consciousness and further deteriorate the violation of their human rights (KISA, 2017b). The selective or light response of the competent authorities further aggravates this problematic situation (KISA, 2019).

In Cyprus, journalists tend to work from a perspective aligned to the media owners' political, corporate and other agendas and affiliations, and this applies to their coverage of migration and refugees. This political bias, as well as external political interference in the media, compromises their operation (Christophorou & Karides, 2020; European Network Against Racism, 2016).

TV shows broadcast information that in most cases creates a negative image of immigrants. In cases of crimes, special emphasis is given when the immigrant is the perpetrator, while in cases where the immigrant is the victim, it is not considered particularly important news. In fact, the media often mislead the public by covering up racist attacks on immigrants. In addition, there are frequent conflicts between groups of immigrants without giving a reason, although giving the impression that these individuals created incidents without a cause (British Council, 2008). However, the media has not given Cypriot society the opportunity to get to know the immigrants and their culture in order to break down the stereotypes and prejudices that often prevail, due to ignorance (MANDOLA, 2017).

Public figures, including politicians, often employ hate speech in their public statements, and the mainstream media make regular use of hate speech, especially against migrants and refugees (MANDOLA, 2017). Migrants, particularly Muslims, are frequently presented in the media in a negative light and associated with problems such as rising unemployment and criminality (MANDOLA, 2017).

CASES

One of the most publicized cases of hate speech in Cypriot media involved popular Greek singer Notis Sfakianakis, who has in the past expressed his support for the far-right Greek party Golden Dawn. During his interview on a weekly TV show (*Tête-à-tête*, on CyBC), he expressed racist, Islamophobic and xenophobic views about Syrian refugees in Greece. Comments such as "they are not refugees, they are deserters and cowards […] hordes of people arrived which rape our country [...]. [T]hey Islamize Greece, and because they reproduce like rabbits, there will be no Greece, no Greeks" (KISA, 2019).

He referred to refugees as "illegal immigrants" and "*ripsaspides*" (coward deserters) and argued that "they rape Greece". He claimed refugees are all rich people and that they serve "Turkey's plan for the Islamisation and hence the extinction of Greece".

KISA became aware of some of the above through advertising clips before the actual broadcasting and asked the CyBC not to air the show. Ignoring KISA and others, the CyBC went ahead and aired it three times. It is important to note that, despite the outcry about Sfakianakis' racist rhetoric after the first broadcast, the CyBC decided to rebroadcast the show twice (KISA, 2017b).

Following complaints by KISA and others, the Anti-Discrimination Authority and the Cyprus Media Complaints Commission (CMCC) examined the case and found that the CyBC should not have aired the show that promoted racism, Islamophobia and xenophobia. More specifically, in its reports, the Anti-Discrimination Authority highlighted that "hate speech is dangerous because its effects and impact on individuals, society and democracy cannot be underestimated or ignored: What is at stake is human dignity, human rights, the claim for equal opportunities and equal participation, the idea of an open and peaceful coexistence, the democratic values of modern civilization". Moreover, the Cyprus Radio-Television Authority found that there were violations of the Cyprus Broadcasting Law by airing content "inciting hatred based on race, sex, religion or nationality", and imposed a total administrative fine of €21,000. In addition, following a complaint by KISA, the police opened an investigation of the case and found that there were grounds to prosecute Sfakianakis. However, the Attorney General decided not to prosecute him due to public interest (KISA, 2017b).

2.3. INTER-GENDER NEXUS

2.3.1. LGBTI and Hate Speech in the Greek Cypriot community

Cyprus is still a socially conservative country when it comes to issues pertaining to sexuality, including LGBTI issues. This conservative climate is reflected through public opinions, inadequate legal or institutional provisions to ensure equal rights and, generally, a lack of discourse on LGBTI matters. LGBTI matters are still considered taboo, and thus lack visibility. The LGBTI community is viewed as a threat to social and moral values. Discrimination and hate speech against LGBTI people are a usual behaviour within Cypriot society, deeply rooted in conservatism and "religiousness", which cuts across the social conscience of Cypriots. Homosexuals are directly or indirectly stigmatized as a threat to the institution of family and moral values, which are in fact identical to religious values (KISA, 2019).

Homophobic speech by public figures in past years, which has also received attention and criticism by civil society and the media, has gone largely undetected and without comment by the State itself (MANDOLA, 2017). Mainstream politicians use offensive discourse targeting LGBTI persons.

Homophobic sentiments are often expressed in the media. The mainstream media often exploit the subject for sensational reporting, and for exposing and ridiculing LGBTI persons. In March 2010, a Member of Parliament (Andreas Themistokleous), during a live broadcast, likened homosexuality to pedophilia, bestiality and necrophilia. There was no official response by the Government. The European Parliament condemned the politician in a letter dated 31 May 2010, stating that his remarks were "seriously misjudged and wrong" (Council of Europe, ECRI, 2016). The MP's party (DISY) then issued a statement denouncing the homophobic comments, but without naming the politician who expressed them.

Moreover, when LGBTI communities from across the divide cooperate with reconciliation movements, LGBTI individuals are seen as the enemy within the nation and are, thus, traitors (Chondrogianni et al., 2017; Kamenou et al., 2019).

There are gaps in the anti-discrimination and hate speech legislation and enforcement for protecting sexual orientation or gender identity (KISA, 2019). In the RoC, homophobic and transphobic hate speech has been criminalized since 2015, and homophobic and transphobic violence is a reason for additional penalties imposed by the courts since 2017 (Kamenou et al., 2019). Before this, homophobic hate speech and homophobic hate crimes were dealt with as indistinguishable from other crimes and remained undocumented.

In Cyprus, LGBTI equality remains a work in progress. Decision-makers have been slow – if not reluctant – to align national legislation with EU and international legal standards. In the Republic of Cyprus, LGBTI activists achieved some positive legal changes in homophobic and transphobic hate speech (Kamenou et al., 2019). However, the new legislation for protecting the LGBTI community against homophobic statements requires proof of motive for an incriminating judgment, which makes it very difficult to prove, and thus the law cannot function properly.

2.3.2. The Role of the Church of Cyprus

The Church of Cyprus and its representatives have many times taken a clear public anti-LGBTI stance, as presented in the media (Council of Europe, ECRI, 2016). LGBTI people, primarily targeted by the Archbishop but also by other Church representatives, are invariably called "sick", "abnormal" and "zoophiles", which undermine the very basis of "our religion, values and morals" (KISA, 2019).

a. The Archbishop, who was a guest on a TV show (*Veto*, Mega Channel) at the end of 2016, said that they were establishing schools "that will give children principles". Commenting on how he would talk about homosexuality to pupils that might themselves belong to that social group, he said that he would tell them that homosexuality is a sin and unnatural and that one ought to struggle to overcome it. Accept-Cyprus, an NGO defending LGBTI rights, reported the Archbishop's hate speech to the Attorney General, who chose not to proceed on the matter (KISA, 2019).
b. In June 2019, the Bishop of Morfou made a speech to a group of people that went viral on the internet. In that speech, he contemplated that homosexuality passes on to the unborn when pregnant women enjoy anal sex. He insisted that he was "only expressing the positions of the Church and the

positions of the saints" (KISA, 2019).

c. In August 2019, following international public outcry, the Attorney General called for an investigation of the Bishop of Morfou's statement that gay men give off a "particular odor" and can be identified by "holy men". The police dropped the case, finding no element of hate speech (ILGA-Europe, 2019). Between 2015 and 2019, this was the only case of public homophobic rhetoric that was ever investigated by the police (Kamenou et al., 2019).

2.3.3. Hate Speech and Sexism

Sexism continues to saturate the social fabric, with subsequent hate speech emerging in public, social and political life (Munt, 2020).

Migrant women are a particularly vulnerable group, both being female and having a migratory status. Filipino and Sri Lankan women are only viewed as housemaids, while Chinese and Vietnamese migrant women were long stereotyped as prostitutes (KISA, 2019; Council of Europe, ECRI, 2016 June 7). Indeed, in online discourses, metaphors relating to amorality are used in relation to female foreigners, which includes prostitution or sexual promiscuity and lack of decent/moral behaviour (Assimakopoulos et al., 2017; Baider & Kopytowska, 2017).

Apart from the historical and political aspects of the Cyprus problem, however, there are also social implications that influence the way ascribed gender roles have developed in Cypriot society. The male-dominated national struggles have determined social norms in Cyprus, and the right for women to choose a different lifestyle has been considered "out of line". The Cyprus problem has dominated all aspects of Cypriot society and has contributed to making national patriarchies and traditional gender roles persistent, which leaves little to no space for women's movements to develop (Munt, 2020).

MP Irene Charalambidou has challenged both gender stereotyping and masculinity hegemony. Perhaps this is one of the reasons she is more often, than other female politicians, the target of sexist attacks on social media. Male MPs have posted gender-based hate speech on Facebook against Charalambidou on two different occasions (from MPs Themistokleous and Kyprianou, respectively). Nevertheless, Charalambidou has shown that Facebook can be a tool of resistance and amplify feminist voices when she used it in the second case (with MP Kyprianou).

3

HATE SPEECH IN THE TURKISH CYPRIOT COMMUNITY

3.1. INTERCOMMUNAL NEXUS

3.1.1. Hate Speech Towards the Ethnic "Other": The "Infidels"

In the Turkish Cypriot community there are many incidents of hate speech that are perpetrated in the context of the intercommunal relationship between the Turkish Cypriot and the Greek Cypriot communities. While the island's de facto partition has persisted since 1974, the politics of two communities evolved differently. When the Greek Cypriots joined the European Union, the Turkish Cypriot side continues to exist in a political limbo. One can say that the history of the Cyprus conflict is full of examples of hate speech by each of the two communities against the other.

In the Turkish Cypriot community, this can be best exemplified by the use of the word "gavur"[5], which is a pejorative term in the Turkish language referring to a non-Muslim person. There are proverbs using the word "gavur" that are still widely used in Turkish nationalist discourse, such as: "*Gavurdan dost, domuzdan post olmaz!*" (You cannot trust a non-believer as you cannot make leather using the skin of a pig!) (Özuslu, 2014 April 15). A prominent example of the use of the infamous proverb in the political sphere was by Mrs. Gülin Küçük, the wife of the then Turkish Cypriot Prime Minister İrsen Küçük, and recorded in 2010, at a meeting organized by the Women's Branch of the National Unity Party (Kıbrıs Postası, 2010 December 26). Since then, the press has not reported any political figure using the word "gavur" and the associated proverb. Its usage still remains prevalent among ordinary Turkish Cypriots, particularly in their online comments in response to incidents of intercommunal violence or, in general, to any news about the strained economic or political relations between the Turkish and the Greek Cypriots. For instance, in response to the news that a Turkish Cypriot's car was damaged in a racist attack in the Greek Cypriot south, one user of *Gündem Kıbrıs* news website commented that "A gavur (infidel) is a gavur, you should expect all the horrible things from them, how can one live together with them!" (Gündem Kıbrıs, 2018 February 18). When reacting to the news about the closing of some checkpoints across the Green Line, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, a Turkish Cypriot asserted that "The gavur will drown in its excrement due its greediness!" (Kıbrıs Postası, 2020 February 28).

Although there have been efforts to rewrite history textbooks to eradicate ethnocentric discourse in the Turkish Cypriot community since early 2000s (Papadakis, 2008), in politics and daily life the use of hate speech towards the Greek Cypriots is still persistent. A word that carries an indirect negative connotation towards Greek Cypriots is *"Rumcu"* (literally meaning being pro-Greek Cypriot). *Rumcu* is used as a pejorative to label some Turkish Cypriots as having lost their Turkish Cypriot identity and are hence considered ethnically impure and politically compromised. In other words, it is not a direct insult towards Greek Cypriots, but it implicates that being pro-Greek is a repulsive quality for a Turkish Cypriot person. *Rumcu* is also politically charged; it is often used in political debates to belittle those who are staunchly supporting the peace process on the island. Niyazi Kızılyürek, a Turkish Cypriot MEP (Member of European Parliament), said in an interview with Turkish daily newspaper *Hürriyet* that he has been referred to as *Rumcu* in the north of the island as he chose to live and work in the south (Bilge, 2019 January 19).

Another common element of hate speech discourse the Turkish Cypriots use towards the Greek Cypriot community is the use of word "barbarian" to define what Turkish Cypriots perceive as the ultimate Greek Cypriot misdeeds. While commenting on the desecration attack on Köprülü Mosque in Limassol, Yalçın Cemal, a Turkish Cypriot columnist for the newspaper *Star Kıbrıs*, asserted that it was an act of *barbarism* by the whole of the Greek Cypriot community (Cemal, 2020 June 3). In the northern half of Nicosia, there is a museum named Barbarism Museum (*Barbarlık Müzesi*), which tells the story of a Turkish military officer's wife and their three children, who were massacred in the early 1960s' intercommunal fighting. The account provided in the museum implicates the whole Greek Cypriot community as the "barbarian culprits", instead of pointing out that only a small group of Greek Cypriot paramilitaries were probably involved in the massacre. This is a common feature of the conflicting Cypriot historical ac-

5 According to OSCE's (2018: 53) publication, 'Words That Matter: A Glossary for Journalism in Cyprus', "the word giaour/gawur usually has a very negative connotation. The word is sometimes used in a derogatory manner or as a slur in the Turkish Cypriot media when referring to the Republic of Cyprus or Greek Cypriots".

counts maintained by both communities of the island; the violent incidents of the recent past are often labelled by one community as a collective act of other community.

Another derogatory term Turkish Cypriots use is "*cira*", originating from the Greek word "*κορίτσι*", which has a negative connotation to refer to a Greek Cypriot woman. The usage of *cira* has been in decline, as Turkish Cypriots are recently using Greek originated words to a much lessser extent in their daily life due to the impact of the mainsteam Turkish language they encounter via their exposure to mainland Turkish media. But there are still some Turkish Cypriots, particularly the elderly, who even in their narration of good relations with the Greek Cypriots in the past keep referring to the Greek Cypriot women as "ciracıklar" (little *ciras*) (Yenidüzen, 2017 January 24). The exact meaning conveyed by the term "*cira*" or "*ciracıklar*" remains elusive and dependent upon the context, but it is clear that "*cira*" carries a certain sense of belittlement towards the women who are called that. Greek Cypriots are also collectively labelled as "*kalleş*", or "*hain*", which means both treacherous in Turkish and "*ahlaksız*" (immoral) by some Turkish Cypriot commentators and politicians. A prominent example is Turkish Cypriot "Foreign Minister" Turgay Avcı who, in 2009, was quoted to have declared that "Greek Cypriots lack political morality" (*Kıbrıs Postası*, 2 April 2009). Eşref Çetinel in his column (23 Novemeber 2017 by the Turkish Cypriot daily *Havadis Gazetesi*, used the word "kalleş" (treacherous) to describe Greek Cypriots, and also repeated the same slur on 2 October 2018 (Çetinel, 2 October 2018). Another word often used to belittle Greek Cypriots is "alçak" (coward). For instance, in the case of the attack on Köprülü Ağa Mosque in Limassol, the Rebirth Party's vice president, Ahmet Yölüer, issued and official written statement that noted the incident as "alçaklık" (cowardice) and implicated the incident to have been committed by Greek Cypriots, though the perpetrators were unknown (Diyalog Gazetesi, 3 June 2020). Again, in response to the news about an attack on Tuzla Mosque in Larnaca a few days later, a Turkish Cypriot Facebook user commented by calling the Greek Cypriots "cowards" (alçaklar) (*Kıbrıs Postası*, 7 June 2020).

3.1.2. Online Hate Speech in the Context of Intercommunal Incidents

The worst kinds of hate speech appear in response to the news of intercommunal incidents. In order to document this pattern, we checked the comments posted by the public underneath the news articles that Turkish Cypriot websites post on Facebook after a recent incident. On the night of 11 October 2020, some Greek Cypriot protestors walked to the Derinya/Deryneia checkpoint in Famagusta to protest the opening of some parts of the fenced-off city of Varosha the day before by the Turkish Cypriot authorities. Turkish Cypriot news websites *Kıbrıs Postası* and *Gündem Kıbrıs* posted videos of the incident and also reported that some of the protesters started a fire and threw fireworks across the Green Line. In reaction to the video that *Kıbrıs Postası* posted, many people posted in the comments insults and varying degrees of hate speech targeting Greek Cypriots. A striking example was the comment posted by a supporter of Turkish Cypriot leader Mustafa Akıncı,[6] who is normally expected to be pro-reconciliation. The person wrote: "You shall die in your own shit, hopefully, you dirty dogs!" Another person commented with the earlier mentioned Turkish proverb "You cannot trust a non-believer as you cannot make leather using the skin of a pig" (*Kıbrıs Postası*, 11 November 2020). Even the day after, *Gündem Kıbrıs* posted a report of the Greek Cypriot leader Nicos Anastasiadis' condemnation of the incident. One individual commented underneath that "Greek Cypriots are ignoble!" (*Gündem Kıbrıs*, 12 October 2020). Hate speech against Greek Cypriots can also be found on the mainland Turkish media websites. Both the news articles and the comments below them are riddled with negative terms used for Greek Cypriots. A report by the Hrant Dink Foundation in Turkey found that, in 2019, Greek Cypriots are often pinpointed as "culprits" in Turkish media headlines, particularly on the occasions of the 45th anniversary of the Turkish military intervention in Cyprus and the 36th anniversary of the self-proclamation of the "TRNC[7]" (Hrant Dink Vakfı, 2019: 20).

Although it is an almost unsurmountable task to measure the full scale of online hate speech perpetrated by Turkish Cypriots vis-à-vis Greek Cypriots, we argue, on the basis of the examples provided above, that the prevalence of hate speech towards the Greek Cypriots by the Turkish Cypriots is a frequent occurrence. There are, however, increasing efforts towards eradication of such behaviour in the Turkish Cypriot community. The Turkish Cypriot Journalists Association, for instance, has made efforts to increase hate speech awareness and even devoted the 2019 issue of its *Medya* magazine to the topic of "Racism and Hate Speech in Media". They compiled various incidents along with analysis on the subject. Vasfi Çitçioğlu, one of the contributors to that *Medya* issue, notes that on both parts of the island hate speech is committed by media outlets, particularly towards foreigners, and there are incidents where some Turkish Cypriot newspapers use hate speech even in their headlines. The author pointed out two headlines from Turkish Cypriot papers as examples: "There will be armed conflict" (*Diyalog Gazetesi*, 3 August 2015), "Hunting rifles are ready" (*Volkan Gazetesi*, as cited by *Haber Kıbrıs*, 7 August 2015). Both headlines incited the Turkish Cypriot public to use violence towards Greek Cypriots in case the two communities agreed to adopt a certain "rumored" proposal for the resolution of the property issue of the Cyprus conflict. The same *Volkan Kıbrıs* newspaper continued the same rhetoric with another similar headline on the same subject: "We are watering the wooden sticks" (*Volkan Gazetesi*, as cited by *Gündem Kıbrıs*, 13 August 2015). Al-

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6 The person is deemed an Akıncı supporter because her Facebook profile picture included an Akıncı election campaign banner.

7 The "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" ("TRNC") is only recognised by the Republic of Turkey. While for Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots, Ersin Tatar serves as "President" of the "TRNC", the international community considers him the communal leader of the Turkish Cypriots. As the government of the Republic of Cyprus remains internationally recognised as the government of the whole of the island, the entire island is now considered to be a member of the European Union. However, the acquis communautaire is suspended in northern Cyprus pending a political settlement to the Cyprus problem (see Protocol no. 10 of the Accession Treaty).

though other media organizations heavily criticized the paper for such headlines, there was no official condemnation by the journalists' association or the media ethics board, with the exception of Basın-Sen (the Press Workers Trade Union).

The efforts of some journalist organizations and the rewriting of Turkish Cypriot history textbooks have contributed towards lessening the occurrence of hate speech in media and official discourse. However, the worst kinds of hate speech are still perpetrated by some members of the public underneath online news articles reporting incidents of violence between the two communities. In the Turkish Cypriot community, the lack of a specific authority to monitor internet media hinders the formulation and implementation of uniform measures to prevent hate speech. Most websites do not monitor hate speech and there is often no action taken to remove such messages. Some politicians and the wider public commenting on Facebook or news websites are largely unaware of the significance of avoiding using negative terms and aggressive discourse vis-à-vis the other community.

3.1.3. Hate Speech Towards the Ethnic "Kin": The "Black-Bearded" Turks

The inter-kin nexus of hate speech in the Turkish Cypriot community involves incidents perpetrated by Turkish Cypriots towards mainland Turks. In linguistic terms, hate speech is often committed with the use of some specific derogatory words in order to denote a mainland Turk living on the island. The most prominent words of such connotation are *garasakal*, *gaco* and *fica*. *Garasakal* means "black-bearded", and refers to the undercover Turkish intelligence officers sent to the island in the 1950s, and the word *fica* means "sea weed". Although the word gaco has no clearly defined meaning in the Turkish Cypriot dialect, some Turkish dictionaries suggest that it is a slang word that means woman or a non-Gypsy person in the Gypsy culture (Kubbealtı Lugatı). More recently, the word *Amerikalı* (literally, American) has been also used to refer to the Turks. Those calling the Turks on the island "American" are supposedly claiming an analogy between the Turk and the Western cowboy who recognizes no state authority (Bizden, 2013). Although Turkish Cypriots widely use the abovementioned derogatory words in their daily language, they are usually hard to come by in media or official discourse.

In reviewing the media coverage of various criminal incidents, however, we came across some news headlines and cartoons that embody hate speech towards the mainland Turks. The reports of criminal incidents involving Turkish citizens on the island often use the word "turist" (tourist) to refer to the Turkish people who visit the island on "tourist" visas. Some examples include the following news reports: on 9 June 2017, *Kıbrıs Gazetesi*, "Gezmeye değil, hırsızlık için geliyorlar" (They come for theft, not for tourism) (Tokay, 2017); on 12 February 2018, *Kıbrıs Manşet*, *"Turist Olarak Geldi, 3 Günde Hırsızlık Yaptı"* (Came as a Tourist, Stole in Three Days) (*Kamalı*, 2018); on 27 September 2018, *Kıbrıs Gazetesi*, "Turist Değil Hırsız" (Not a tourist but a thief) (Demir, 2018); on 8 October 2018, *Havadis Gazetesi*, "Turist Değil Gaspçı" (Not a Tourist But a Mugger); and on 31 August 2019, *Kıbrıs Postası*, "Turist süresi doldu, hırsızlıktan tutuklandı" (Tourist visa expired, arrested for theft). In all the news stories the culprits' full names were given, which helps the readership identify their country of origin as Turkey. An even more striking example is the cartoon published by *Kıbrıs Gazetesi* on 6 May 2017, in which there is a ship labelled "Turist" carrying passengers to the

Cartoon by Utku Karsu, *Kıbrıs Gazetesi*, 6 May 2017

"TRNC". Most of those on the ship are depicted having pointed moustaches (which indicates their mainland Turkish background) and holding either a knife, a sword, a baseball club or a pistol. The cartoonist, Utku Karsu, thus makes the point that some people from Turkey coming to the island on tourist visas are intent to commit criminal activities. In the days following the publication of the cartoon, a group of people protested outside the newspaper's main office claiming that the cartoon is discriminatory and constitutes an insult to people who are of mainland Turkish origin (Yenidüzen, 19 August 2017). Although the protest was organized by Yeniden Doğuş Partisi (Rebirth Party), it also drew criticism from some other political parties who claimed such cartoons should be considered within the parameters of the freedom of speech (*Kıbrıs Postası*, 21 August 17).

3.1.4. The Inter-Kin Political Crises and Hate Speech: "Invasion", Citizenship and Elections

Hate speech acts are also commonly committed in response to political crises between Turkish Cypriots and Turkey. A recent example of such crisis happened in January 2018, when Turkish Cypriot daily newspaper *Afrika* reported that the Turkish military incursion into Syria is an "invasion" like Turkey's 1974 intervention on the island. The paper's reporting irked Turkish President Erdoğan, who called upon "his brothers" in Cyprus to react to the newspaper (Diken, 22 January 2018). In the following days a protest took place in front of *Afrika's* office in Nicosia. The crowd, mostly composed of people who are of mainland Turkish descent, stormed the newspaper's office and were hardly stopped by the police, as they damaged the furniture in the office. Subsequent to the violent protest incident, a protest march that was organized by Turkish Cypriot labor unions took place in Nicosia to show solidarity with the newspaper and to protest the violence exhibited in the previous protest, which took place in front of the newspaper's office. A very interesting aspect of hate speech acts related to the *Afrika* incident is that it happened both ways. There are Turkish Cypriots committing hate speech towards mainland Turkish people living on the island, and some mainland Turks perpetrate hate speech acts towards Turkish Cypriots. We examined the comments posted by social media users underneath the news article covering the *Afrika* incident on *Kıbrıs Postası* (22 January 2018) news website and found various examples of hate speech by both Turkish Cypriots and the mainland Turks towards each other. One Facebook user posted a comment referring to *Afrika* staff as "dogs" who deserve the violence. Many others claimed the paper was pro-Greek Cypriot and a few even called for the use of more violence, including the beheading of the newspaper editor. Those who posted such comments were of Turkish-origin and living on the island, according to the information publicly available on their Facebook profiles. On the other hand, some Turkish Cypriots, who could be identified by their use of the Turkish Cypriot dialect or from the public information available on their Facebook profiles, also posted negative comments underneath the same news article. The recurring theme in their case was that the country was now full of bandits and such groups of people should return to where they originally belong to (i.e., Turkey). One Turkish Cypriot even wrote that the protestors were "ignorant, brainless and uneducated creatures". Although only some protestors were violent and those were arrested by the police, the comments on *Kıbrıs Postası* (22 January 2018) in general included no qualifiers as they referred to the whole.

Granting citizenship to more mainland Turks is a contentious issue in Turkish Cypriot politics. Right wing governments are usually blamed for granting citizenship to increasing number of Turks, while left wing governments are criticized for blocking the applications of those who have fulfilled the citizenship criteria. A flurry of hate speech is usually committed underneath online news articles about the citizenship issue. For instance, in December 2018, Bertan Zaroğlu, who himself is a naturalized citizen and a member of the Turkish Cypriot Parliament, remarked that the government is too strict with granting citizenship. Many Turkish Cypriots responded with lots of hate speech scattered throughout their comments. A Turkish Cypriot Facebook user commented on the *Kıbrıs Postası* (25 December 2018) news article which conveyed Zaroğlu's remarks that he does not want to see any more Turks being granted citizenship as there are already too many on the island, which made the Turkish Cypriots a minority and hence Turks should actually be sent back. Another man responded to Zaroğlu by saying: "Those like you should not reproduce, you bastard!". Another one commented: "Get out, you guys already received too many citizenships, and have no benefit to the country!" Interestingly, one person pointed out the hate speech, saying, "Leave aside what he said, but it is embarrassing to see such comments humiliating people" (*Kıbrıs Postası*, 25 December 2018). And a few Turks who responded to the Turkish Cypriots comments underneath the same news article questioned whether the Turkish Cypriots were "sufficiently" Turkish, as they were not fond of their kin.

The political participation of Turkish-origin "TRNC" citizens in elections is a thorny issue for the Turkish Cypriot public. It is uncommon to find news or comments posted online decrying any political activity of Turkish-origin "TRNC" citizens. For instance, Şener Levent, the editor of the Turkish Cypriot daily newspaper *Avrupa* (previously known as *Afrika*) in his column on 19 October 2020, the day following the second round of the Turkish Cypriot presidential election, argued that the Turkish-origin people who live in the İskele district are the reason why Musfata Akıncı, the leftist candidate, lost the election. According to Levent (19 October 2020), those people from Turkey (*Türkiyeliler* in Turkish) are on the island to undermine the will of the Turkish Cypriot people, and that mentioning this "fact" should not be regarded as "discriminatory", "racist", or an affront to "multiculturalism". In other words, the author is well aware of the hate speech embedded in his writing but still claims that, as the Turkish-origin people in İskele voted overwhelmingly for Ersin Tatar, the right-wing candidate, they in a way deserve the "hate speech". The comments posted by some Turkish Cypriots in response to the news (*Kıbrıs Postası*, 19 October 2020) highlighting that Tatar had overwhelming support in both rounds of the elections in İskele are also full of hate speech. Some even claimed that all the voters in the district are either bought off (*satılmışlar*) or totally ignorant.

3.1.5. The Inter-Kin Religious Divide: Hate Speech Against "Hala Sultan"

Finally, some hate speech examples can also be found in the comments concerning religious education in the Turkish Cypriot community. For example, the news about Hala Sultan Theological College, a public high school with a focus on religious studies established in 2013, is often discussed by the public with hate speech references. For many Turkish Cypriots, the Hala Sultan Theological College is an institution established to cater to the children of mainland Turks who are, allegedly, more conservative than the natives. Some Turkish Cypriot labour unions and political parties assert that the school is a stepping stone for Turkey to create a more religious society on the island. So, it is a widespread occurrence that any news about the religious school leads to responses that are riddled with hate speech. According to the news article titled "Töre: Theological School is a Need", by *Kıbrıs Postası* (19 December 2019), Zorlu Töre, the deputy speaker of the Turkish Cypriot Parliament, visited the school and expressed his support. The comments posted under the article on the news website, however, are mostly critical of the school's existence. Some users of the website claimed that the school is for "brainwashing" and that those who support the school, including Mr. Töre, are helping the bigots to move to the island, but instead they should go back to Turkey since there is no place for them in Cyprus.


Sosyolog Nihal Salman, KKTC'ye önlenemez bir şekilde gelen suçlu niteliğindeki göçlerin, kısa sürede bu küçük ülkede suç oranlarında inanılmaz bir artışa sebep olduğunu vurguladı. Salman, kısa sürede tedbir alınmaması halinde ise bugün yaşanılanların boyutunun daha da ülke huzurunu tehdit edecek noktalara ulaşacağını belirtti

Suçlu göçü

ülkeyi bitiriyor

Salman: Biz kendi çocuklarımızı, nitelikli insanları beyin göçü ile gönderiyoruz. Niteliksiz insanı da göç olarak alıyoruz. Bu da küçük ülkemizde gördüğümüz gibi suç oranlarında inanılmaz bir artışa sebep oldu. Aldığımız göç maalesef suçlu göçüdür

"Bu kadar kısa sürede, bu kadar hızlı ve kötüye yönelik bir değişim çok dikkat çekicidir. Bunun da sebebi kötü yönetimdir. Eğer kötü yönetim olmamış olsaydı, bugün 3. Dünya ülkelerinden gelen insanlar hakkında her gün gazetede cinayet, tecavüz ve huzursuzluk gibi ağır suçlarla karşılaşmazdık."

"Bunların aslında kontrolü çok kolaydır. Gelişmiş ülkeler artık bu sorunları çok rahat çözüyor ve gelişimi biz takip edemiyoruz. Küçük ülkemizde aklımızın hayalimizin alamayacağı suçlarla karşılaşıyoruz çünkü ülkemize niteliksiz göç alıyoruz. Bu en büyük sorundur."

Nihal Salman: "Criminal migration is finishing the country", *Yeni Bakış,* 24 March 2019

In a subtler example of hate speech, a Turkish Cypriot leftist news website, *Gazedda Kıbrıs* (13 November 2020), published a news article with the title "Anniversary Celebrations with a Poem Mentioning Islamic Prayers". It is reported that a student from Hala Sultan Theological College read out a poem full of Islamic motifs in the reception held at the Turkish Cypriot President's Office as part of the "TRNC's" 37th anniversary celebrations. Almost all of the comments underneath the news article posted on Facebook by *Gazedda Kıbrıs* (13 November 20) decry the article as divisive and that it is aimed at a certain segment of the society who are sending their children to the school. The news article can be considered a striking example of indirect hate speech if one is to remember that many Turkish nationalist poems cited regularly at celebrations are full of Islamic motifs that insult non-believers or members of other religions. The media outlet thus committed a subtle form of hate speech by putting the emphasis on the pupil's identity in its reporting rather than on the widespread usage of nationalistic and religious motifs together in such poems.

3.2. INTER-ALTERITY NEXUS

3.2.1. The "Law Breaker" and "the Unqualified" Migrant

Hate speech is always based on stereotypes, namely oversimplified views of a group in which members share the same characteristics. They create a constant distinction between "us", which represents a group who fits to the standards socially determined in terms of norms and conducts, and "them", always depicted as "different" or even deviant. Although not stated clearly in discourses, these labels are detectable on social media and are used against migrants.

Cyprus has always been a meeting point of migrant populations. The geographical location of the island makes it strategically significant for major powers and also a migration hotspot. Nowadays, Turks from Turkey and African youth are the largest migrant groups in the northern part of Cyprus. Although the migration of the two is due to different reasons (the former seeking employment, while the latter arriving for education), they seem to receive the same kind of treatment by the natives, in terms of hate speech. As mentioned previously, Turks are often depicted as "law breakers" who disturb the tranquility of the north of the island. Although a cultural and ethnic kinship exists between the Turkish and Turkish Cypriot communities, the natives insist that differences should remain, and especially in terms of culture. The Turks are sometimes described as dangerous, unpredictable, incapable of subduing their drives and continuing outdated practices such as honour killings. Migrants from Africa are also recipients of similar negative discourses.

The media outlets often contribute to the perpetration of stereotypes towards foreigners. For instance, in 24 April 2019, in *Yeni Bakış* newspaper, Nihal Salman opined that migration into the northern part of the island led to a surge in the crime rate. In her statements titled "The criminal migration is finishing the country", she points out that various crimes, including rape and theft, are committed by "third world" nationals and that the country is facing a "criminal migration" (*suçlu göçü*). Salman also argued that many "unskilled" migrants are let in by the authorities. She also noted that there is a clear distinction between the unskilled, illiterate, criminal migrants from "third world" countries, and the "bright" (skilled) natives who emigrate from the island, leading to a brain drain.

The contrast between "us" (namely, the skilful natives) and "them" (the unskilled, dangerous, poor, incompetent migrants) is striking. Such discourse based on over-generalizations, portraying all migrants as unskilled and potentially criminal, is a straightforward case of hate speech.

Salman's hate speech ridden statements caught the attention of the Media Ethics Board, which issued a warning to *Yeni Bakış* (11 April 2019), noting that the article was discriminatory and xenophobic. The board stated that they received several complaints about Salman's statements and called on media outlets to avoid hate speech (*Gündem Kıbrıs*, 11 April 2019).

3.2.2. Representing Migrants in Cartoons: The "Fake Student" Figure

Not only words can convey hate speech: sometimes, visual contents are significant and can also spread negative discourses. As an illustration, we can refer ourselves to Utku Karsu's cartoon published in Kıbrıs Gazetesi (as cited by Afrika, 20 February 2019, p.8). Different individuals from various countries are represented in the cartoon, all drawn with specific stereotypes: a veiled woman; a foreigner holding a suitcase from which a weapon is sticking out; a man wearing a djellaba; African individuals represented with a bone on their heads (!). All the details emphasized here aim to highlight the idea that the newcomers are too "different" and do not fit into Turkish Cypriot society. The cartoon emphasizes that the flow of migrants is a problem for the locals. The incomers' identity is unknown (as shown by the question mark on the sign saying "Arrivals"), therefore, the migrants are "a group a people" with no proper characteristics. This cartoon is by all means a striking example of hate speech towards migrants.

By Utku Karsu, *Kıbrıs Gazetesi* (as cited by *Afrika,* 20 February 2019, p.8)

Such a negative approach towards foreigners can be explained by the influx of migrants to the island, especially for education. For the 2019-2020 academic year, according to the "TRNC Ministry of National Education and Culture", Higher Education and Foreign Affairs Department (2020), 41,219 foreign nationals, 50,286 Turks and only 12243 Turkish Cypriots were registered to study at Turkish Cypriot universities.

The foreign students were from 140 different countries, including Syria, Cameroon, Iran, Zimbabwe, Pakistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Libya, Egypt and Palestine. But, according to Hatay (2017), most of the foreign students are from two countries: Nigeria (7,916) and Jordan (3,405).

If migrants in general are victims of hate speech, populations coming from the African continent seem to be more subject to stereotyping. Nigerians, Zimbabweans, Cameroonians, Kenyans, South Sudanese, Ghanaians, South Africans, Tanzanians and Angolans are studying at the universities. Although the international student population can be considered as an advantage for the Turkish Cypriot economy, they also become the targets of negative attitudes and sentiments. Hate speech towards the African population implies, for example, that the students who were supposed to migrate for education are in reality not "playing by the rules". Numerous articles in Turkish Cypriot newspapers showing some of them involved in criminal activities contribute, in a way, to the construction of a negative image in the minds of Turkish Cypriots of African students. This situation can also be explained by the fact that, most of the time, the news only reports international students as delinquents, conveying the sensation that they are constantly committing unlawful acts. Pictures constantly showing them in the courts of justice, surrounded by policemen and wearing handcuffs reinforce the growing negative sentiment towards them. It is then not surprising to see that some locals deplore the lack of safety created by the students' arrival.

In the comments collected, some even doubt international students' intentions and their real commitment to education. Instead, they are depicted as dedicating their life to drinking parties, enjoying vibrant nightlife and being even addicted to drugs. The "fake student" figure who disturbs the social order and takes advantage of Cypriot hospitality emerges then from the public discourses.

Utku Karsu's cartoon (below) is significant in terms of the representation of "African migration". To the question asked by the passport officer, "Are you a student?", the black character answers, "Hopefully". The reply emphasizes the uncertainty of his present situation but also of his future on the island. His status is ambiguous, and as he depends on destiny

The Passport Officer: Student…?, The student: Hopefully. By Utku Karsu, Kıbrıs Gazetesi (n.d.)

The Baby: "Leave me elsewhere…", Caption: A new issue, the abandoned babies…, By Utku, Karsu, Kıbrıs Gazetesi, 12 October 2017

and fortune (conveyed in the cartoon by the word "kısmet"). His small suitcase rather looks like a toolbox and does not give the impression that the student is prepared to study for four (or more) years. His outfit provides information about his background and age: on the one hand, his clothes are modern and reflect the generation he belongs to, but his pants are almost down, giving a glimpse of his underwear. This detail points out the negligence but also the individual's non-compliance with Cypriot manners. The visual depiction of the character is also significant in terms of hate speech: the use of "black face" combined with the large red lips is definitely controversial.

Another cartoon by the same artist is about babies who were abandoned by some African students. It is reported that, in 2017, five babies, one only 15-days old, were abandoned by their mothers for different reasons in the hospital (Özyağcı, 2017). One mother declared that the father refused the child and that she could not look after a handicapped baby; another stated that she was married in her country and already had a child and that this second pregnancy was unwanted. Such cases are heavily criticized by the Turkish Cypriots, who considered child abandonment as an insult to social values. One social media user stated on Kıbrıs Gazetesi.com (29 December 2017): *"It is an attitude that does not comply with the TRNC's culture and it is contrary to the family structure."*

Social media users believe that pregnancy in this population is essentially the result of debauchery, implying that the women involved are probably of "easy virtue". Here again, the figure of the happy-go-lucky student/migrant is emphasized: *"It is the new fashion, these bitches/whores should be sterilized like stray animals."*; *"There are more to come, who are born without registration, they are not coming to study but to f…"*

3.2.3. Denying Differences as a Means of Hate Speech

Another incident that can be cited here to illustrate the treatment of foreigners is the theft of a bicycle by two people, which was recorded by the security camera of the victim (*Haber Kıbrıs*, 19 May 2020). Below the online news article of the incident, some hate speech towards the African population was written, even though the article provided no information about the thieves' ethnicity. The perpetrators, identified as "Arabs"[8], were described as "*pislik*" (scumbag) that should be got rid of. The researchers noted that term is commonly used in the collected discourses to designate alterity: "*Wherever there is a scumbag, it is an Arab. All the news in papers are full of them every day. Put them in a boat and send them back, maybe it will make an example*".

This confusion of different ethnicities is very commonly used in the discourses collected. Thus, "Africans", "Arabs", "Syrians", and "Bangladeshi" are cited altogether, even though only one nationality is mentioned in the incident. For some users, all foreigners are considered as "*ipsiz*" (literally "without a rope", but actually meaning "lost his way"), implying

8 In the Turkish Cypriot dialect, the word Arab is often used to refer to black people.

that they have no sense of belonging, they are stateless individuals, vagrants. This state of wandering makes them dangerous and unpredictable, as they leave the country as fast as they arrive.

This idea of roaming is also observable as various categories of migrants are designated by the term "tourist". If the regular definition of this word refers to "someone who visits a place for pleasure and interest, usually while on holiday" (Cambridge Dictionary, dictionary.cambridge.org), this term can take a negative connotation, implying that the person coming to the country has difficulty to adapt to and understand locals' habits and customs. This lack of information leads to an awkward situation where the tourist is seen as a "stupid idiot" who can disturb the public space with total impunity.

Another observable attitude that generates negative generalizations is the confusion of the terms "refugees" (*mülteci*) and "migrants" (*göçmen*), as these words are combined most of the time with some negative qualifications to become "illegal migrant" (*kaçak/ yasadışı göçmen*). This mistake reinforces the negative aspect of migration that all newcomers are fugitives or have the same status. In fact, the status varies from one person to another. One can be a regular student who enters the country with an official visa, while another can have migrated by illegal ways, such as "boat people". The confusion of terms tends then to "criminalize" people unfairly, contributing to the development of hate speech against migrants.

The language is a strong vector of hate discourse, as it creates categories. As mentioned above, in the Turkish Cypriot society, it is common to observe that "Arabs" get mixed up with the African population and sometimes even with "Afro-Cypriots". This attitude is discriminative and leads to hate speech, as various populations who have nothing in common are put in the same basket. Their ethnic and cultural, but also personal characteristics are ignored. Moreover, an individual is constantly referred to in the plural by community (e.g. Africans), race or even by colour (e.g. *Zenciler,* "Niggers"), as if the person should be blamed for all the negative actions some others did.

Different levels of generalizations and stereotypes that lead to hate speech were observed:

1. The individual is referred to as a "member of a population": The person has no proper identity or personality, and is only defined by others by nationality or even by colour. The plural here is emblematic: "Syrians"; "Nigerians".
2. Sometimes, the individual is identified not by his/her own nationality, but is viewed as a member of a continent (e.g. not "Zimbabwean" but "African"). Here again, the particularities of the culture, habits and practices, and norms are ignored.
3. Confusing various nationalities or ethnicities that have almost nothing in common: Africans vs. Syrians; foreigners (*yabancılar*); migrants (*göçmenler*).

The fear of foreigners can be explained by the history of the island. Cyprus has hosted various populations for varying periods of time. After having been under British rule for many years, Cypriots faced internal conflict between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots. Intercommunal conflict has heightened the fear of losing one's country and belongings.

The fear was exacerbated when the first wave of Turkish migrants arrived on the island post-1974. From that moment onwards, the installation of the Turks has gradually created the image of the stranger "who stays" and sometimes even "who invades" the territory (crystallized in locals' thoughts as the "settlers"). We note that, subsequently, this vision is perpetuated and applied to all populations who migrate to the north of the island. Yet, in the representations, a dichotomy emerges with the figure of the *tourist*, a foreigner who comes to the territory and leaves, who disturbs public order by wandering and not conforming to established rules and not attempting to integrate with Cypriot society and culture. And on the other hand, there is the figure of the *invader*, an alterity that comes and settles in the territory, imposing its own rules and behaviour, and disfiguring the urban landscape. One social media user's comment illustrates this point of view: *"Sunday, I was really scared while walking around the streets of Nicosia. I certainly don't think of myself as a racist, but everywhere was swarming with Africans, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Iraqis, and Syrians. In Nicosia, there is even a place called the "Negro stop". I think these people could not have come to a place as small as the TRNC for educational purposes. TRNC needs to take measures*." (*Gündem Kıbrıs*, 17 February 2018).

In such discourses, the fear is reflected in statements such as "we are becoming extinct" ("tükeniyoruz"), "we dwindle" ("azalıyoruz"), which highlight the fear of disappearing as a people, of being invaded by foreigners (like a tsunami). These arrivals are then seen as a threat to the social identity.

3.2.4. The Afrika Newspaper Logo Incident

Another incident of hate speech involves the left-wing newspaper *Afrika*. The newspaper is known for subversive writings and was initially called *Avrupa* (that is "Europe") when it first launched in September 1997. It ran as *Avrupa* until November 2001. Following prosecution, the journal shut down and, on 15 December 2001, resurfaced as *Afrika*. To justify the choice of the new name, the editor-in-chief, Şener Levent, affirmed that Northern Cyprus has nothing in common with Europe but is more like Africa "where the laws of the jungle reign". Also, a monkey was added to the paper's logo. This detail combined with the name *Afrika* led in 2019 to the reaction of the founders of the non-profit organization VOIS (Voices of International Students in Cyprus),[9] who accused the paper of encouraging racism and stereotyping. After a series of meetings with the representatives of the NGO, who

9 Voices of International Students in Cyprus (VOIS) is a non-profit organization that aims to attract attention to various problems (including racism and hate speech) encountered by international students in the northern part of Cyprus. See: https://www.voiscyprus.org/.

pressured the editorial team to drop the monkey icon, the paper was renamed *Avrupa*, and replaced the monkey in its logo with a donkey.

3.3. INTER-GENDER NEXUS

3.3.1. Hate Speech Towards the LGBTI Community

The LGBTI community (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex) are also victims of hate speech, most particularly because of the prevalence of the patriarchal system in Cyprus that dictate the social roles individuals should play in accordance with binary gender roles. It is then not surprising to see that some social movements and campaigns were initiated by various associations to make LGBTI members express issues they faced in society, formulate their demands but also stress their need for social support. Unfortunately, despite organizing marches to denounce the discrimination they experience in the northern part of Cyprus, the LGBTI community did not succeed in getting the public to embrace their cause fully. They are not discouraged however, as various other associations have made a great deal of effort to make the LGBTI community visible. In 2015, the first Gay Pride parade was organized in the north of the island. One year later, the same march was followed by a week of events supported by several organizations of civil society, NGOs and unions, such as MAGEM, Kuir Kıbrıs, YKP-FEM or DAÜ SEN (Detay, 15 May 2016). Such manifestations are a way for the LGBTI community to denounce the stereotypes and make society aware of the homophobic discrimination they face. Several incidents towards the LGBTI community have encouraged the creation of associations aimed at helping the members to stand for their rights.

For instance, the constant abusive police raids at the Bird Cage bar, where LGBTI members used to go to socialize and discuss what actions could be taken to improve their conditions, led to the creation of the Kuir Kıbrıs Derneği, Initiative Against Homophobia (Homofobiye Karşı İnsiyatif) (Yenidüzen, 26 May 2014).

The second incident that motivated the creation of this initiative was the arrest of a person who went to the police to complain about being blackmailed by his former boyfriend. Unfortunately, the complainant was not aware of the laws, especially the penal code (Chapter 154, Article 171) of that period which stated it is illegal for "having unnatural" sexual relationship or "allowing a man to have sexual intercourse against the natural order". Anyone who violated that was liable to five years of imprisonment. In other words, homosexuality was considered a crime. During the first public debates about the legislative amendment, many members of the public articulated some forms of hate speech, for instance, as reported in *Yenidüzen* (12 April 2013), some pondered: "*Does it mean that 'being a fagot (ibnelik)' will be legalized?"*

As political debates about changing the law in favour of the LGBTI community intensified during this period, some associations published in January 2014 an announcement in the newspapers to protest the reform and alert society about the potential disastrous consequences this legal change could lead to (*Kıbrıs Postası*, 19 January 2014). The protesters said that changing the law was a mistake, which "will open irreversible wounds in our society", "will shake the family structure deeply" and will spread, normalize and encourage homosexuality. They described homosexuality as a threat to the next generation and children. Finally, the law, which was a legacy from British colonial rule, was amended on the 24 January 2014. However, the propaganda of homosexuality still remains a crime.

Unfortunately, the stereotypes and hate speech against the LGBTI community persist in the Turkish Cypriot community: non-heterosexual relationships are often designated as "abnormal", "unnatural" or "sinful". The intimacy of LGBTI persons is also considered merely "sexually" oriented, as if emotional and romantic attachment was impossible. LGBTI are also designated as "sick", because of their so-called "abnormality", which defies social norms, but also because of the sexual diseases they could transmit to each other. Members of this community are depicted as not fitting into the norms of society and as dangerous because they can "contaminate" the entire society (by their way of life but also by their sickness). Their behaviours suggest that they are bad examples for younger generations, as they do not represent the gender roles prevalent in the patriarchal society. Thus, they represent a threat to the entire system.

3.3.1.1. COMBATING ANTI-LGBTI HATE SPEECH: THE AWARENESS PROJECT AND THE BILLBOARDS' INCIDENT

To counter these negative representations, the LGBTI community developed an awareness project in November 2016. They put up posters on billboards all over the northern part of Cyprus with quotes of members about their coming out. Thus, it was possible to read statements such as "Auntie Mediha, I am gay" or "Brother Kamil, I am lesbian". The campaign's goal was to increase the visibility of LGBTI people who are ignored and to build a safe social space. Unfortunately, the campaign led to homophobic reaction, as one of the posters was taken down by İskele municipality and some others got vandalized (as shown below).

These billboards not only provoked reaction in the public sphere but also from some columnists, and particularly from Gökhan Altıner (Altıner, 2016 November 4). That journalist of

Source: Havadis Gazetesi, 2 November 2016. https://www.havadiskibris.com/kuir-kibristan-homofobik-davranislara-tepki/

Kıbrıs Postası, who considered the campaign shameful, claimed there was no discrimination against homosexuals in "TRNC"', as nobody prevented anyone "to go to cinema or to the supermarket" due to their sexual orientation. According to Altıner, one can be gay or lesbian "on his/her own", and homosexuality, which is caused by a "hormonal disorder", is not a problem as long as homosexuals do not speak out about their sexual orientation. As such sexual orientations contradict the social customs and traditions, they are a "bad example for children". Moreover, the journalist asserted that homosexuals should be more careful in their behaviour, as they usually harass others who do not like them with "sexually oriented" language. Such discourse is a typical example of the dichotomy created by hate speech: on the one hand, we have the "us", considered as the group which defines the standards for the prevalent norms, and, on the other hand, "them", who disturb the social order with their attitudes, their own way of life and pose a threat to the perpetuation of society. They are the "bad example" that should not be followed, and especially by children. Hate speech makes them a group with an unbridled sexuality, and defines them only through the scope of their sexual orientation. This representation of the "wild" sexuality also reinforces the discourses that refute that homosexuals can be "role models". For example, columnist Kartal Harman (5 January 2009) wondered if homosexuals can become teachers. In terms of hate speech, we found some negative comments to an article, published in *Havadis Gazetesi* (4 July 2014), on the adoption of a child by two homosexuals. Some comments included various insults, such as "*ibne*" or "*puşt*" (faggot), and even threats of violence: *"Come on my son, look at the cries of the faggots, you neither have a place in this world nor in the other world, how do you think that you 'being a fagot' is ingenuity (…) I don't like the ones who disrupt the ecosystem, scums, shame on you*".

For many others, homosexuals are "sick" and their sexual orientation is a disease. Their "vulnerability" needs to be cured and prevents them from being a role model. As individuals, they should be approached with pity, as they have a hormonal problem and suffer an incurable disease, namely homosexuality. One social media user asserted that, "*I think this situation resulted from a chromosome error, I look at it as a kind of disease because I think that nature has created the male and the female genders differently, I think medicine is very advanced, I wish they could find a cure, to avoid these distortions from occurring, because a life full of chaos awaits that child."* (Havadis Gazetesi, 4 July 2014).

Thus, public, political and even media discourses seem to play a crucial role in the spread and even the normalization of hate speech against LGBTI people in Northern Cyprus. The discourse of Member of Parliament Zorlu Töre in 2017 (Sonay, 20 June 2017) represents one striking example. The politician criticized LGBTI members openly, describing their practices as "out of nature" ("*fıtrat dışı*") and homosexuality as "a wrong way of life". Zorlu said, "A mother, a father, a son or a person… nobody would want their spouse to be homosexual". His statements caused controversy in the assembly, and the Queer association of Cyprus (Kuir Kıbrıs Derneği) responded to denounce the hate emanating from his political discourse (*Yenidüzen*, 22 June 2017).

Problems faced by LGBTI people are complex. The community members face discrimination in all areas of social life and also hatred and intolerance. They are subject to societal pressure which imposes on them the "right way of life" by trying to change them. They are constantly depicted as dangerous as they defy the social norms but also seen as infected by disease. Moreover, observable hate speech against LGBTI shows that their rights as individuals and citizens are denied: some social media users stated for example that they refuse to respect homosexuals. Whenever hate speech is not clearly apparent, it is still understandable that LGBTI are regarded as alterity, especially in comments mentioning the fact that the community members could be accepted on the condition that they remain invisible. Such comments of hate were noticeable underneath the news post about the awareness campaign (*Yenidüzen*, 2 November 2016): *"As if gays or lesbians were attacked or something was done until today to them, this group already knows each other and is experiencing their special situation, the problem is that the EU is financing this business as if there was no other shit to eat and they are screaming that 'we are who we are' with drums … keep this shit for yourself, nobody cares… but don't shriek around…"*

All in all, this situation is still about exclusion, stigmatization and maintenance of boundaries between "us" and "them".

3.3.1.2. THE TRADITIONAL GENDERED SOCIAL ROLES AS A BURDEN

When we look at the discourses of the LGBTI organizations, we see that they explain discrimination their members face by the prevalent patriarchal norms in the Turkish Cypriot society. For them, the intolerance against members of the community comes from the social norms imposing a binary vision of genders and determining precise social roles for each of them. If the dominance of a patriarchal and traditional system of values cannot be denied, the history of Cyprus could explain this unchangeable/inflexible dual vision of gender: the Cyprus problem and more particularly the several intercommunity conflicts that have reinforced gender roles between men and women, generating and imposing on society the idealistic image of the "male soldier who fights for his community" or even the "martyr" who sacrifices his life for the national cause. Thus, the memory of war, which still prevails in today's society, seems to have perpetuated notions of manhood and the role that must be played by males. The famous expression of "every Turk is a born soldier" ("*Her Türk asker doğar*") is a good illustration of the social expectations that males should conform to.

The prevalent gender roles and their imposition by institutions at the macro level are denounced by the association Kuir Kıbrıs in a booklet entitled *LGBTI+ & The Struggle Against Militarism in the northern part of Cyprus* (Kuir Kıbrıs, 2020). In the booklet, the authors criticized the treatment of men in society in general, but also particularly during their military service. The social norms stipulate that men should display strong and aggressive behaviours and women must accept a more passive role. The authors argue that such a militaristic view is responsible for the perpetration of binary gender roles and should be readjusted as it does not suit everyone's will. The booklet also mentions all the terms used to encourage males to act "as real men" during their national service training: "faggot" (*ibne*), "homo", "Nancy-boy" (*top*), "running like a girl" ("*kız gibi koşan*"), "big girl's blouse" ("*ana kuzusu*"), "prostitute" ("*fahişe*"), "little miss" ("*küçük hanım*"). All such terms contribute to maintaining a boundary between the "good" and "bad" gender behaviour and could lead to the normalization of hate speech against LGBTI as they serve to denigrate men either by comparing them to women or to emphasize the fact that homosexuality is a "weak state".

To solve the problem of intolerance towards LGBTI members and therefore to decrease the amount of hate speech in north Cyprus, some supporters of the LGBTI cause have proposed to include in school curriculums a course entitled "Education on Social Gender" (Afrika, 2016 November 4).

3.3.2. Sexism

In Cyprus, hate speech against women and LGBTI are also observable. This phenomenon might be connected to the patriarchal system that prevails in this Mediterranean island, which rigidly defines how social roles should be distributed among the genders. Thus, every behaviour or sexual orientation that does not fit into this determined system would be considered deviant.

If hate speech against women is still prevalent in Cypriot society, recent social movements, such as "#Metoo" or "Denounce your pig" in Europe, but also all the efforts made by the public authorities to increase awareness on women's issues seemed to have limited the expanse of such discourses. In April 2020, the Turkish Municipality of Nicosia (LTB), with financial support from the EU, ran a project titled "Together Against Violence". The municipality started a video campaign themed "Being a woman in Cyprus" (*Kıbrıs Gazetesi*, 24 April 2020). Unfortunately, the launch of the campaign, planned to take place on International Women's Day, namely on 8 March, was postponed due to the tragic murder of Elif Lort by her ex-fiancé.

3.3.2.1. FEMINICIDES IN NORTHERN CYPRUS

On 8 March 2020, 45-year-old Elif Lort was stabbed in the street in Kyrenia, and her life could not be saved, despite the doctors' efforts. The murderer, Abdullah, her ex-fiancé, was arrested afterwards (Haber Kıbrıs.com, 9 March 2020). The incident was recorded by a passer-by, who was severely criticized by the public for not trying to help protect Elif. On 10 March, organizations such as "Kadın Eğitim Kolektifi", "Baraka" and "Bağımsızlık Yolu" organized a march in Kyrenia to denounce feminicides (*Gazedda Kıbrıs*, 11 March 2020).

By looking at the comments on social media about this murder, one could expect to find hate speech against men, as men perpetrate the majority of such cases. Yet, surprisingly, a completely different type of discourse emerges here: individuals see this tragic incident as a problem related to the attacker's "Turkish identity" rather than his gender. Feminicides are then considered and constantly explained in reference to the perpetrator's identity and origins.

> *"Turkish men are the most jealous and insecure in the world ... the statistics say so! If you date or marry a Turkish man... You are exposed to a bully because most of them feel insecure and mostly control their wife or daughter. Bad, in 2020. Get alerted."* (Haber Kıbrıs.com, 9 March 2020)

Thus, feminicide, oppression against women and even domestic violence are considered as a "Turkish" practice that does not exist in the Turkish Cypriot society. This view then creates a duality in the discourses, between "them" (the Turks) who are impetuous, who cannot control their drives but who over-control and beat their wives, their daughters and their girlfriend, and "we" (the Turkish Cypriots), who know are educated, civilized and more democratic when it comes to women. This duality can be observed in the comments made underneath the article about Elif Lort's murder: "*Our country is not used to such events. This type of thing is the fact of the black-bearded*" (*garasakal*) (Haber Kıbrıs, 2020 March 9).

As we see in the quote above, the murder of women is not interpreted as a gender issue (man vs. woman) but rather as an inter-kin problem.

The rejection of the alterity on the grounds of the way they treat women is not new. In the common history of the Turkish and Turkish Cypriot populations, we can see that this topic has always been a basis for comparing the value of each other. When the first Turkish migrants arrived in Cyprus from rural parts of Turkey post-1974 for political motives, a cultural clash between them and the locals occurred (Dilmaç, 2019). The literature is full of examples describing this cultural conflict. Migrants are described as illiterate, traditional and devoutly religious (the situation is characterized by women wearing veils or their preference for an imam wedding rather than an official one). Migrants from Turkey are also criticized for their high birth rate. For the native Turkish Cypriots, this population have a strictly rural lifestyle, which prevents them from having open-minds about the world, due to the fact that they have not travelled abroad. Since the Anatolian population arrived on the island, Turkish Cypriots have called them "*fellah*" (literally, peasant). In fact, fellah is a pejorative term, originally used to refer to farmers brought from Egypt and settled in Adana, in the south of Turkey, following the war between the Ottoman Empire and Egypt in 1832. Other terms complete this vocabulary of otherness: the continentals are designated as "those from Turkey" (*Türkiyeli*), "Anatolians" (*Anadolular*) or "TCs" (in reference to "*Türkiye Cumhuriyeti*", literally, the "Republic of Turkey"), as well as the earlier-mentioned derogatory terms such as *gaco*, *garasakal* and *fica*.

All such terms are linked to the island's history and constitute a basis for hate speech: they mark the distinction between "we", the locals, and the "others", who are different and who act in an "unconventional" way. It seems that the lifestyle of mainlanders but also their way of thinking pose problems for the natives: perceived as more "traditional" and inclined to religious practices, mainlanders' attitudes are always depicted as differing from those of the Cypriot population who have their own culture based on norms, values and belief system. Despite sharing a common language, Turkish people from Turkey are considered by some Turkish Cypriots as "uncivilized", "Oriental" and even demonstrating "backward" practices and mentality. This could explain why, for example, feminicides are tremendously criticized by Turkish Cypriots and systematically connected to those coming from Turkey.

In fact, the reason for this stigmatization is that the practice of honour killing still exists in some rural parts of Turkey, where there is a strong patriarchal system. Turks emigrating from those regions of Turkey to Cyprus are thus seen as bringing with them their own habits, norms and beliefs but also their views on gender. They appear as refusing to adapt themselves to the host society and even as imposing their own way of life on locals. This perspective seems to have its roots in the history of Cyprus: the former Vice President of the Republic of Cyprus, Fazıl Küçük, expressed skepticism (Hitchens, 1984: 111) about the arrival of the first Turkish migrants who were in conflict with the Turkish Cypriot culture due to their religious faith and practice of vendetta.

The clash of these two cultures is symbolised by the term "Texas": whenever a feminicide or criminal activity occur, Turkish Cypriots tend to react by saying that because of the presence of Turks, the island has become like "Texas", a reference to the widespread possession of firearms in Texas, USA. Thus, hate speech against Turkish migrants tends to describe them as dangerous outlaws or troublemakers who disturb the social order.

Another case of feminicide took place in April 2017 and also illustrates how gender-related issues may easily lead to hate speech against Turkish people on the island. Gamze Pehlivan, after breaking up with her ex-husband in Turkey, moved to Cyprus to take up a job. Her ex-husband, Suat Aşır, followed her in order to reconcile with her. The two met, but after it became apparent that there was no chance of reunion, the ex-husband stabbed Gamze to death and even tried to burn her body. Comments posted underneath the news article reporting the feminicide on Havadis Gazetesi (20 April 2017) are full of hate speech. It is not the gender of the perpetrator or the victim that represents a problem, but the national identity of the murderer. In the comments presented below, we can see that not only feminicide but all social issues such as murders and problems of safety and violence are attributed to Turks. In terms of hate speech, several negative terms are used to label the Turkish population, like "scourges", "ignorant" and "dogs".

The word "dog", used here, is a classic example of hate speech: it is used for individuals who are perceived to have uncontrolled behaviour, no manners and who follow "the law of the jungle". These attitudes change the aura of the country (*"Oh my Cyprus, what they have made you, two female murders in three days"; "They turned the country into Texas")* (*Havadis Gazetesi*, 20 April 2017).

Interestingly, the comments also mention the responsibility of Cypriot authorities and denounce them as being too permissive and taking no actions against such threats. Authorities are seen as partners in crime, as they allow Turks, through their lax controls, to come and go whenever they want. This explains why the term "without rope" is constantly used in such hate speech.

Through feminicides, Turkish Cypriots denounce the violent behaviour of Turks and the way they treat women. Such discourses do not aim only to criticize a so-called archaic way of life and thinking but also to mark the differences between the two populations. Hate speech in this case is then used to reassure the Turkish Cypriots' identity by denigrating Turks by assuming that all people from the mainland have aggressive tendencies that could lead to destruction. Moreover, from some comments, we can also see that these behaviours are also linked to their food: *"This is the value given to women in a society fed with starch"*.

Turks are depicted as invaders who do not respect the host country's serenity and the prevalent gender norms. They reproduce their own rural way of life; therefore, in every sense, Turkish Cypriots consider them to be troublemakers.

3.3.2.2. COMBATING SEXISM THROUGH TWITTER: #A MAN SHOULD BE AWARE OF HIS SOCIAL STATUS (#ERKEK YERINI BILSIN)

In Turkey, a phenomenon could be observed on Twitter: many women rewrote sexist idioms present in the Turkish culture by inverting the gender used in those expressions. This trend was very popular in northern Cyprus and spread throughout social media. This was significant as it was used to inverse gender hate speech and apply it to men to increase people's awareness of sexist stereotypes perpetuated by those sentences. As an example, we can cite the very first tweet sent by the musician Gaye Su Akyol: "A man who does not wear a top on the beach is like a house without curtains. It is either for sale or for rent."[10] Other sentences, which that would normally criticize women and sometimes legitimize attack on them, were rewritten: "If a male dog does not wag its tail, the female one will not follow him."[11] The aim of this trend was to denounce with humour hate speech that women can be victims of sometimes.

Moreover, hate speech using gender stereotypes is not only prevalent on the internet but also exists in the political sphere in the northern part of Cyprus. Political actors occasionally make use of gender stereotypes in quarrels with their peers. A recent example was the statement by the General Secretary of UBP (National Unity Party), Ersan Saner, referring to Ayşegül Baybars, the Minister of Interior, as "the little woman" (Detay, 22 July 2020).

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10 "Plajda üstsüz erkek perdesiz eve benzer. Ya satılıktır ya kiralık".

11 "Erkek köpek kuyruğunu sallamazsa dişi kovalamaz."

4
POLICIES, REGULATIONS AND PREVENTION OF HATE SPEECH IN THE GREEK AND TURKISH CYPRIOT COMMUNITIES

4.1. REGULATIONS IN THE GREEK CYPRIOT COMMUNITY: DATA COLLECTION, UNDER-REPORTING

The Republic of Cyprus has ratified most European and United Nations Conventions relating to discrimination. These include the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime and its Additional Protocol on criminalization of acts of a racist and xenophobic nature committed through computer systems.

Although there is no explicit definition of hate speech as such, national legislation criminalizes certain forms of expression, without however defining them as hate speech.

Currently, hate speech is prohibited when it targets a person or a group of persons on the basis (or the assumption) of their ethnic origin, race, colour, religion, gender identity and sexual orientation.

The Cyprus legislation fully penalizes the public condoning, denying or grossly trivializing crimes against peace, crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes as defined by relevant international instruments, 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 when the conduct is carried out in a manner likely to incite to violence or hatred against such a group or a member of such a group.

In addition, the Criminal Code criminalizes any speech or any type of publication which offends any religion. In 2011, the Council Framework Decision 2008/913 has been implemented into national law: The Combatting Certain Forms and Expressions of Racism and Xenophobia by means of Criminal Law (2011), Law 134 (I)/2011, which is the major legislation relevant to hate speech.

The law criminalizes any person who deliberately transmits in public and publicly incites, in any way, violence or hatred against a group of people or a member of a group, which is determined on the basis of race, colour, religion, genealogical origin, national or ethnic origin (note that the Law does not refer to sexual orientation and gender identity) in such a way to cause public disorder, or that has a threatening, abusive or offensive character. Such a breach of law is liable to up to five years of imprisonment and/or a fine of up to EUR10,000, or both in case of a conviction. Cyprus chose to incorporate only the provision provided in the Council Framework Decision for punishing only conduct which is either carried out in a manner likely to disturb public order or which is threatening, abusive or insulting. The notion of public dissemination has been interpreted to include not only oral communication but also the distribution of tracts, written material or pictures, or the representation of ideas or theories with any other means including computer systems which include electronic data.

In addition, Law 134(I)/2011 establishes that racist and/or xenophobic motive must be taken into account as an aggravating factor on the imposition of the penalty, but the law itself does not cover any other protected characteristics (such as homophobia, misogyny, transphobia, ableism, ageism) as an aggravating factor.

The **2015 amendment of the Penal Code (Law 87(I)/2015)**, amending the Criminal Code, incorporates **Article 99A** into the Criminal Code, which punishes hate speech targeted at a person or person's sexual orientation or gender identity. Before this amendment, hate speech was only criminalized in regard to racism and xenophobia.

Law 87(I)/2015 criminalizes the intentional public incitement of violence or hatred – but not discrimination – directed against a group of persons or a member of such a group defined by sexual orientation or gender identity. The conduct carries imprisonment of up to three years or a fine of up to EUR5,000 or both, which are significantly lower penalties than for racially motivated hate speech.

According to par. 2 of Article 99A, these acts can be prosecuted only upon the approval of the Attorney General, who has exclusive power to give such approval.

The Criminal Code contains two provisions in relation to hate discrimination. Section 47 (1)(b)6 penalizes the commission of acts in public with intent to promote enmity between the communities or religious groups on account of race, religion, colour or gender. The national law on offences involving the

dissemination of racist and xenophobic material through computer systems (L. 26(III)/2004) provides for imprisonment of up to five years, a fine of up to €20,000 or both.

While the legal framework covering hate speech does exist, it is inadequate and selectively applied to hate speech incidents. The response of the criminal justice system on hate crime is not effective. The criminal law provisions against racist hate speech are not being applied, and perpetrators (including public figures, government ministers and church officials,) are not facing any consequences whatsoever, which sends a message of impunity.

Hate speech incidents are either not identified and recorded properly, or, even if properly recorded, they are not prosecuted most of the time, because they are not substantiated, according to the authorities.

There is inconsistency and mismatch in the official data and the actual extent of the problem. Hate crime incidents are more common than official data suggest, and underreporting is a major issue. Migrants, especially undocumented migrants, and refugees seldom report these incidents to the police, as they mistrust the police, lack confidence that reporting will have an impact, fear of being victimized and lack awareness of their rights.

Police and authorities lack expertise on how to identify and investigate hate speech. This results in miscategorising the incidents that are indeed reported, but not identified as hate speech, therefore the hate motive is not taken into account.

There is no single authority collecting data on hate speech. Also, the Attorney General's Office and the courts do not collect data on hate crime cases. This lack of data on hate speech hinders updating policies and the capacity to identify crimes of hate speech when those are committed.

Whilst the police collect some data on hate speech, these are not accurate. **The Office for Combatting Discrimination (OCD)**, which is under the Criminal Investigation Office (CIO) of the Cyprus Police, has the responsibility to monitor the investigation of complaints and reports submitted to the police on incidents of discrimination. However, complaint forms are general and do identify hate speech as a separate issue. The OCD is understaffed and is burdened with multiple mandates, which results in inadequate resources and capacity to monitor and prosecute racist crime.

As for media regulation, **the Cyprus Media Complaints Commission (CMCC)** is responsible for both printed and online news media. Its mandate is independent from government interference or judicial supervision and examines complaints or ab initio violations of the Code of Conduct of Journalists, including hate speech and offensive narrative.[12] **The Cyprus Radio Television Authority (CRTA)** operates as an independent body responsible for ensuring that private radio stations and television channels act in compliance with the laws and regulations of the Radio and Television Broadcasters Law of 1998 to 2016.[13] The law contains provisions prohibiting media service providers from broadcasting programmes containing any incitement to hatred based on race, sex, religion or nationality. They also forbid the promotion of discrimination based on the same grounds as well as on racial or ethnic origin, disability, age or sexual orientation.

4.2. REGULATIONS IN THE TURKISH CYPRIOT COMMUNITY: MEDIA REGULATION AND THE JOURNALISM CODE OF CONDUCT

The legislation in the northern part of the island is not in line with European and international norms, as the Turkish Cypriot authorities lack any direct official ties with the European and international institutions, which would require them to adopt the aforementioned conventions. There is no legal authority in north Cyprus that is specifically tasked with monitoring and reporting of the hate speech or discrimination charges in general. The Criminal Code only specifies hate speech as a crime, punishable by up to two years in prison sentence, if committed because of one's sexual orientation or gender. But there is no mention of hate speech towards minorities or other groups.[14] The only legal recourse available to the victims or the bodies representing victims of non-gender-based hate speech is to sue the persons involved on the grounds of defamation. The Criminal Code specifies two different kinds of defamation, Article 68 specifies defamation towards the foreign dignitaries as a crime when it is deemed to harm international ties, and Article 194 defines publication of audio, visual or print materials intentionally belittling individuals as a crime, but makes no mention of hate speech. In terms of the efficiency of legal remedy, the cybercrimes law, adopted by the Turkish Cypriot "parliament" in June 2020, requires the internet service providers and news websites to promptly follow a court order.

There are both governmental and non-governmental bodies involved in monitoring and preventing hate speech in print and broadcast media. Some civil society organizations have been trying to fill the gap left by the authorities in the north. We briefly discuss below the roles played by **the Supreme Council of Broadcasting (Yayın Yüksek Kurulu)**, an official body, and **the Media Ethics Board (Medya Etik Kurulu)**, a non-governmental body, in prevention of hate speech in Turkish Cypriot media. As for hate speech occurring via social media, there is no authority or non-governmental organization tackling hate speech incidents or raising awareness about the issue.

12 "Cyprus Media Complaints Commission", http://www.cmcc.org.cy/about_us.html.

13 "Cyprus Radio Television Authority, History – Development", http://www.crta.org.cy/default.asp?id=266.

14 "Hate Speech", Article 171 of the Criminal Code. The full text of the law can be accessed at: https://www.mahkemeler.net/birlestirilmis/f_155.doc.

The Supreme Council of Broadcasting (Yayın Yüksek Kurulu) is an official body tasked with regulating radio and TV broadcasts and regularly issues warnings and fines for violations of the Broadcasting Principles, introduced by the Public and Private Radio and Television Establishment and Broadcasting Law, enacted in 1997.[15] The law specifically lists 24 Broadcasting Principles, including Principles 6 and 7 which prohibit any form of hate speech.

-**PRINCIPLE 6** states that a broadcaster should "not condemn people in any way for their race, gender, social class or religious beliefs".

-**PRINCIPLE 7** supplements that broadcasters should "not allow any broadcast that incites the society to violence, terrorism and ethnic discrimination and creates feelings of hatred in the society".

In practice, the Supreme Council of Broadcasting has only rarely made references to Principles 6 and 7 in its warnings and fines issued to radio and TV channels for their programmes violating the Broadcasting Principles. Most recently, on 29 June 2020, the council issued warnings to *Kanal Sim* and *Radyo Mayıs* for incitement of hatred towards Turkey, on a TV programme and a radio show, respectively.[16] However, the council, which is widely considered ineffective, this time became the subject of serious criticism from the Turkish Cypriot Teachers Union (KTÖS, 2020). The union threatened the official body with international legal action on the grounds that the council is part of a silencing campaign against oppositional figures who are simply criticizing Turkey and the Turkish officials for their interference in Turkish Cypriot politics.[17] Only hate speech against Turks or Turkey appears to have been attended seriously by the supervisory council, but even in that case hate speech was considered controversial by some members of the Turkish Cypriot community. At the same time, many other forms of hate speech (particularly against Greek Cypriots) can be found on Turkish Cypriot TV and radio programmes, which often go both unnoticed and unwarned.

Another important body in the realm of hate speech monitoring is **the Media Ethics Board**. The Media Ethics Board is a non-governmental organization, and its membership is composed of journalists and academics. The board issues warnings to news outlets upon request of parties concerned. The non-governmental organization prepared the Journalism Code of Conduct[18] and the Internet News Journalism Declaration[19] in order to guide Turkish Cypriot journalists. In the Journalism Code of Conduct, **Articles 8, 15 and 16** call for careful use of language in news that leaves no room for hate speech. **Article 7** of the Internet News Journalism Declaration also reiterates the same principle to avoid hate speech. There have been some hate speech incidents that were reported to the board, mostly by LGBTI rights groups. The board subsequently issued warnings to the online news websites that committed the hate speech.[20] However, the body's effectiveness is limited, as it is a voluntary organization and news organizations do not have to heed its advice or warnings.

Both the Cyprus Turkish Journalists Union and the Press Workers Trade Union are also eager to tackle hate speech. The former devoted an issue of its official magazine, *Medya*, to "Racism and Hate Speech in Media" in May 2019. The two organizations also regularly issue statements condemning high profile hate speech incidents.[21]

In sum, hate speech is a persistent problem for the Turkish Cypriot media despite all the efforts by bodies involved in media regulation. Although some progress has been made, the level of awareness concerning hate speech recognition remains low, and measures aimed at preventing breaches of the code of conduct in journalism fall short.

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15 The full text of the law can be accessed at https://www.mahkemeler.net/birlestirilmis/39-1997.doc.

16 "Yayın Yüksek Kurulu'ndan Yayın İhlallerine Ceza" (Penalties for Broadcasting Violations from the Supreme Council of Broadcasting), *Yenidüzen*, 1 July 2020. Available at https://www.yeniduzen.com/yayin-yuksek-kurulundan-yayin-ihlallerine-ceza-128683h.htm.

17 The union's declaration on the subject can be found at http://ktos.org/yayin-yuksek-kurulundan-acik-tehdit/.

18 Medya Etik Kurulu, "Gazetecilik Meslek İlkeleri". http://medyaetikkurulu.org/wordpress/index.php/gazetecilik-meslek-ilkeleri/.

19 Medya Etik Kurulu, "İnternet Gazeteciliği Deklarasyonu". http://medyaetikkurulu.org/wordpress/index.php/hakkimizda/internet-gazeteciligi-deklarasyonu/.

20 For example, in 2016 the Queer Cyprus Association filed a complaint to the board concerning a news story titled "Lesbian Relationship Ended Up in Police Station". The board issued a warning to the news website which published the news story. Available at http://medyaetikkurulu.org/wordpress/index.php/kuir-kibris-derneginin-sikayeti-degerlendirildi/.

21 For instance, a joint press release was issued by the two organizations in response to incidents of hate speech targeting the Turkish Cypriot leader Mustafa Akıncı in May 2018. See *Kıbrıs Gazetesi*, "Insults and Hate Speech Against Akıncı is Unacceptable", 8 May 2020. Available at https://www.kibrisgazetesi.com/kibris/akinciya-yonelik-hakaret-ve-nefret-soylemi-kabul-edilemez-h41662.html.

4.3. JOINT INITIATIVES ARE NEEDED: POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CIVIL SOCIETY, AUTHORITIES AND LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

The hate speech incidents and the responses by authorities and civil society are similar on both sides of the island, and, hence, we offer a set of recommendations below, which are equally applicable for both communities.

However, we should note that the Turkish Cypriot community has a relatively less developed legal framework in terms of combatting hate speech and therefore we particularly recommend to the Turkish Cypriot authorities to bring their legislation in line with European and international conventions.

On the basis of the findings presented in the report, we recommend both communities to form joint initiatives involving civil society, authorities and law enforcement agencies, particularly on the issues listed below:

- An effective data collection mechanism for recording hate speech is necessary in order to locate and evaluate the problem. Data collection should be in partnership with civil society organizations, not only from police records. There must be improvement in communication between CSOs and law enforcement agencies for the purpose of recording and investigating hate crime incidents.
- Campaigning and education on the actual notion of hate speech and the extent of its use. Awareness raising campaigns to delegitimize hate narratives, populism and media sensationalism.
- Inclusive, multicultural education must become meaningful and must be integrated across the national curriculum.
- Authorities must update the media regulatory framework and keep pace with the emerging challenges of the online environment.
- Delivery of specialized training to law enforcement agencies in identifying, recording, preventing and combatting hate speech and discriminatory practices.
- Delivery of training to prosecuting authorities focusing on the implementation of the law, so as to ensure that hate speech will be prosecuted.

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PUBLIC DISCOURSES OF HATE SPEECH IN CYPRUS:

Awareness, Policies and Prevention

This report focuses on hate speech prevalent in public discourses circulating on the internet, e.g. social media users' offensive comments under news articles, in both Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities of Cyprus. Traditional stereotypes used in daily language as well as discourses exhibited by media outlets in their representations of political events are examined. Some unflattering visual materials, such as cartoons which are ridden with discriminatory discourses about specific groups of people, are also studied. Three main nexuses of hate speech on both sides of the island are identified: intercommunal, inter-alterity and inter-gender. The hate speech incidents and the responses by authorities and civil society are similar on both sides of the island. Hate speech is a persistent problem for the Greek and Turkish Cypriot media despite all the efforts by bodies involved in media regulation. Although some progress has been made, the level of awareness concerning hate speech recognition remains low, and measures aimed at preventing hate speech fall short on both social and traditional media. On the basis of the findings presented in the report, we recommend both communities to form joint initiatives involving civil society, authorities and law enforcement agencies.