

# Words that Lead to Hate

## Hate Speech in Greece during 2018

Edited by



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This report has been written in the framework of **Words Are Stones** project



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## **Background**

This national report has been produced in the framework of Words are stones project, coordinated by Lunaria (Italy) in partnership with l'Association pour le Développement des Initiatives Citoyennes et Européennes (ADICE) (France), ANTIGONE - Information and Documentation Center on Racism, Ecology, Peace and Non Violence (Greece), Grenzenlos (Austria), KISA (Cyprus) and SOS Racisme Catalunya (Spain). Nationalist, populist and xenophobic movements which instrumentally mix euroscepticism, intolerance, hate and racism in order to increase their consent in public opinion represent a danger for the construction of a democratic, united, cohesive and peaceful European society. The public debate is crossed by stereotypes and prejudices targeting immigrants and refugees that often degenerate in racist offenses and attacks. In this context, the project Words are stones aims to:

- analyse political discourses that exacerbate xenophobia, intolerance and discriminations against migrants, refugees and minorities crossing the public debate;
- enhance civil society organizations, European citizens and institutions capacity to prevent; and respond to hate speech;
- involve European youth in campaigns countering hate speech;
- sensitize European politicians to promote intercultural dialogue, human rights protection and a pacific coexistence among nationals and people coming from other countries.

Six national reports will be produced in all partners' countries. The main results will be compared and summarized in an international report.

*This report has been produced with the financial support of the Europe for Citizens Program of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of Lunaria and cannot be considered to reflect an official opinion of the European Commission.*

## Introduction

Hate speech, both online and offline is one of the most pressing issues in the European Union in the recent years. Since the early 2010's several member states of the EU, including Greece, saw the rise of the extreme right and far right parties joined national parliaments as well as the European parliament. The recent European elections which took place on 26 May 2019 saw the surge of the extreme right as a large number of nationalists were elected<sup>1</sup>.

For this reason six No Words Are Stones is collaboration among six European Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) active in the field of combating hate speech which focuses documenting instances of hate speech in the European public space during 2018. The project's main goal is to appeal to NGOs, activists and citizens and make them aware of hate speech during 2018. An additional goal is the creation of an international campaign which will focus on combating hate speech.

As part of the project, ANTIGONE is responsible of documenting incidents of hate speech in Greece during 2018 that took place at a local level, national level and on the media.

This report is divided in different sections that cover the legal framework in the country, the monitoring and documentation mechanisms as well as some examples of incidents that took place during 2018. The final section focuses on ways with which hate speech can be combatted and it derives from a workshop which took place on 17 May 2019 as part of Antigone's national meeting "Words that lead to hate". Before going forward with the analysis it is important to clarify the term hate speech.

It should be noted that there is no commonly agreed definition of hate speech and in Greece there is no legal definition of hate speech. For example the Council of Europe mentions:

*"Hate speech has no particular definition in international human rights; it is a term used to describe broad discourse that is extremely negative and constitutes a threat to social peace. According to the Committee of Ministers, hate speech covers all forms of expressions that spread, incite, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism or other forms of hatred based on intolerance. Along with the development of new forms of media, online hate speech has been brought about. Hate speech in the online*

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<sup>1</sup> Shaun Walker, "European elections: far-right 'surge' ends in a ripple," *The Guardian*, May 27, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/may/27/european-elections-far-right-surge-ends-in-a-ripple>.

*space requires further reflection and action on the regulation and new ways for combating it.”<sup>2</sup>*

This report adopts the Council of Europe’s definition due to its broad nature.

The purpose of the current report is twofold: first it tries to highlight the issue of hate speech in Greece; most importantly it tries to highlight the fact that hate speech and racist speech in the country are usually put in the same framework, something that is evident in the Greek anti-racist law. In addition the report tries to shed light on the situation in the country and make it understandable to a non-Greek audience. It should be noted that the report is not a legal analysis and the part that mentions the Greek legal framework is examined briefly in order to become comprehensible to non-experts from an international audience.

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<sup>2</sup> “Hate Speech,” Council of Europe, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/freedom-expression/hate-speech>.

## 1. Legal Framework in Greece

*It should be noted that this section briefly looks at the Greek legal framework and it does not attempt to analyse it.*

Greece does not have a legal framework that refers specifically to hate speech. Due to the broad and not definite definition of hate speech there are concerns on whether it can or it should be legally defined and consequently persecuted<sup>3</sup>. However, in September 2014 the Greek parliament ratified the law 428/2014 which is more commonly known as the Anti-Racist Bill based on which hate speech that incites criminal activities can be persecuted.<sup>4</sup>

The Anti-racist Bill as ratified after several discussions and amendments over the years<sup>5</sup>. According to Gabriella Lazaridis and Mariangela Veikou, activists were concerned about the bill due to 'hidden dangers' as its re-examination of principles of free speech could lead to restrictions on freedom of expression<sup>6</sup>. On the other hand, however, the Anti-racist bill has been praised as innovative in the sense that the definition/basis of forms of discrimination is widened and as such manifestations of racism and xenophobia can be considered as a criminal offence<sup>7</sup>.

Prior to the Anti-racist Bill, however, racism and other forms of discrimination were regulated by a various bills within the national legal framework as well as by international conventions that the country has ratified. This legal framework is briefly examined below and includes the Constitution of Greece, Law 927/1979 and its amendments. The end of this section will look at the Anti-racist Bill in further detail.

### 1.1 The Constitution of Greece

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<sup>3</sup> Lazaridis, Gabriella, and Mariangela Veikou, "The Rise of the Far Right in Greece and Opposition to 'Othering', Hate Speech, and Crime by Civil and Civic Organisations," *Journal of Civil Society* 13,

<sup>4</sup> Lazaridis, and Veikou, "The Rise of the Far Right in Greece and Opposition to 'Othering'", 1-17.

<sup>5</sup> Συμεωνίδου-Καστανίδου, Ελισάβετ. «Η ποινική αντιμετώπιση του ρατσισμού και της ξενοφοβίας στην Ελλάδα», στο *Έγκλημα και Ποινική Καταστολή σε Εποχή Κρίσης* (Εκδόσεις Σάκκουλα 2016)

[Simeonidou-Kastanidou, Elisavet. "Criminal Treatment of Racism and Xenophobia in Greece," in *Crime and Criminal Suppression in Times of Crisis*,] (Sakkoulas 2016).]

<sup>6</sup> Lazaridis, and Veikou, "The Rise of the Far Right in Greece and Opposition to 'Othering'", 10.

<sup>7</sup> Συμεωνίδου-Καστανίδου, «Η ποινική αντιμετώπιση του ρατσισμού και της ξενοφοβίας στην Ελλάδα». [Simeonidou-Kastanidou, "Criminal Treatment of Racism and Xenophobia in Greece," in *Crime and Criminal Suppression in Times of Crisis*,]

Several articles within the Greek Constitution define the legal framework regarding discriminations and they cover a wide frame of freedoms and protections<sup>8</sup>.

Through Article 2, Paragraph 1 the Greek State has the protection of the value of the human being as its primary obligation. Article , paragraph 1 protects the people's personality:

*"All persons shall have the right to develop freely their personality and to participate in the social, economic and political life of the country, insofar as they do not infringe the rights of others or violate the Constitution and the good usages."*

Article 5, paragraph 2 extends full protection without discrimination to all those living within the Greek territory:

*"All persons living within the Greek territory shall enjoy full protection of their life, honour and liberty irrespective of nationality, race or language and of religious or political beliefs. Exceptions shall be permitted only in cases provided by international law. The extradition of aliens prosecuted for their action as freedom-fighters shall be prohibited."*

Article 9, paragraph 1 ensures the full protection of people's private and family lives:

*"Every person's home is a sanctuary. The private and family life of the individual is inviolable. No home search shall be made, except when and as specified by law and always in the presence of representatives of the judicial power."*

Article 13, paragraph 1 defines religious freedom within Greece:

*"Freedom of religious conscience is inviolable. The enjoyment of civil rights and liberties does not depend on the individual's religious beliefs."*

## **1.2 Law 927/1979 and its Amendments**

The first Bill regarding racial discriminations that was ratified by the Greek State was Law 927/1979 on the punishment of acts of racial discrimination which consequently ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discriminations of 1966.<sup>9</sup> The International Convention on the

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<sup>8</sup> *The Constitution of Greece*. As revised by the parliamentary resolution of May 27<sup>th</sup> 2008 of the VIII<sup>th</sup> Revisionary Parliament, <https://www.hellenicparliament.gr/UserFiles/f3c70a23-7696-49db-9148-f24dce6a27c8/001-156%20aggliko.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination was adopted in 21 December 1965 by the United Nations General Assembly in Resolution 2106. Greece ratified the convention after the fall of the Military Junta which was in power from 1967-1974. More on the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial

Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discriminations defines what constitutes racial discriminations and commits its members to their elimination and to the respect and promotion of understanding among all races. It is important to note that Article 4 implies the condemnation of hate speech:

*“States Parties condemn all propaganda and all organizations which are based on ideas or theories of superiority of one race or group of persons of one colour or ethnic origin, or which attempt to justify or promote racial hatred and discrimination in any form, and undertake to adopt immediate and positive measures designed to eradicate all incitement to, or acts of, such discrimination and, to this end, with due regard to the principles embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the rights expressly set forth in article 5 of this Convention, inter alia:*

*(a) 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;*

*(b) Shall declare illegal and prohibit organizations, and also organized and all other propaganda activities, which promote and incite racial discrimination, and shall recognize participation in such organizations or activities as an offence punishable by law;*

*(c) Shall not permit public authorities or public institutions, national or local, to promote or incite racial discrimination.”*

Returning to the Greek legal framework, Law 927/1979 penalises the depictions of acts that could lead to racial discrimination either through speech acts or written acts including drawings.

In 1984 Law 1419/1984 amended and supplemented the pre-existing framework with the addition of protection against discriminations based on religious beliefs through article 24.

Further legislation was adopted in order to include protection against gender discrimination, amendments to articles of the Greek penal code, and the adoption of international legislature.

### **1.3 Anti-racist Bill (Law 4285/2014)**

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discriminations and Resolution 2106 here:  
[https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg\\_no=IV-2&chapter=4&lang=en](https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-2&chapter=4&lang=en) and [https://treaties.un.org/doc/source/docs/A\\_RES\\_2106-Eng.pdf](https://treaties.un.org/doc/source/docs/A_RES_2106-Eng.pdf).



As aforementioned Law 4285/2014, known as the Anti-racist Bill amended Greece's previous legislature. It also adapted to the 'Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA of November 2008 on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law'<sup>10</sup>.

The Anti-racist Bill raised concerns regarding limits of freedom of expression. For example quoting an interviewee in Lazaridis and Veikou's research,

*"We fear that the declared commitment to hate speech criminalization will act as a means of shutting down the anti-racist critique. I am interested to see how such a silencing and keeping us from being heard will be accomplished in the name of the suppression of hate speech. Protest is often rude and frequently revolves around mocking the stupidity of the police and the authorities. Without the freedom to insult both individuals and groups, the great tradition of people's street protest in Greece will give way to censorship."*<sup>11</sup>

However, according to Prof. Elisavet Symeonidou-Kastanidou the discussions regarding the Anti-racist Bill as well as the discussions over the amendment of 927/1979 show the problematic nature of Greece's public debate over such issues<sup>12</sup>. Professor Symeonidou-Kastanidou continues by expressing the view the Anti-racist Bill *"significantly improved the existing legal framework by limiting the crime only in cases where the word is transformed into a criminal act, challenging the equal and free participation of all in social life."*<sup>13</sup>

The chapter that follows looks at several cases of hate speech that were persecuted under the Anti-racist Bill.

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<sup>10</sup> For information on 2008/913/JHA see: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A32008F0913>

<sup>11</sup> Lazaridis, and Veikou, "The Rise of the Far Right in Greece and Opposition to 'Othering'", 12.

<sup>12</sup> Συμεωνίδου-Καστανίδου, «Η ποινική αντιμετώπιση του ρατσισμού και της ξενοφοβίας στην Ελλάδα». [Symeonidou-Kastanidou, "Criminal Treatment of Racism and Xenophobia in Greece," in Crime and Criminal Suppression in Times of Crisis,]

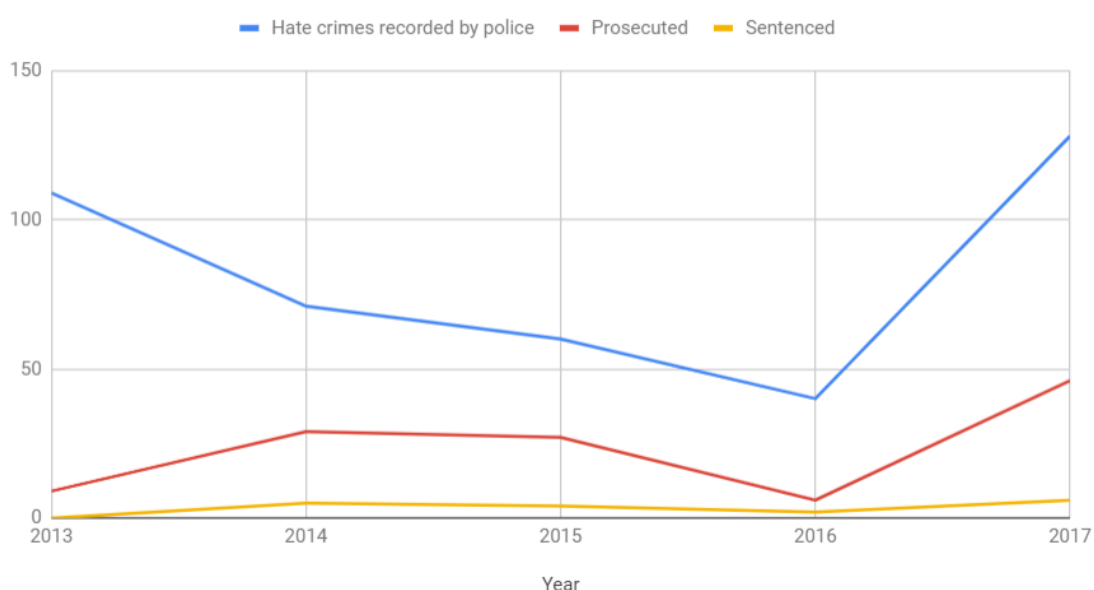
<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

## 2. Hate that Leads to Crime: Who Documents What

Even though several non-governmental organisations monitor hate speech in Greece, especially online and media hate speech, Greece does not have an official network that solely documents and monitors hate speech. Nevertheless, crimes that are related to hate are recorded by the Hellenic Police and reported to OSCE's Hate Crime Reporting. The Hellenic Police established two departments with 68 offices throughout Greece for countering racist and hate crimes<sup>14</sup>. These departments apart from acting when incidents of hate or racist crimes are reported, they are collecting data that monitor such crimes.

As OSCE's notes, however, "Greece has not reported on cases of hate crimes separately from cases of hate speech"<sup>15</sup>. For example according to OSCE, for the year of 2017 "the police number includes an unspecified number of hate speech incidents falling outside the OSCE definition of hate crimes"<sup>16</sup>. Nevertheless such data can provide a clearer image of the situation in the country regarding the rise (or fall) of hate crimes over the years.

Hate crimes recorded by police, Prosecuted and Sentenced



### 1 Source: OSCE (based on data by the Greek Police)

According to the graph above from 2013 until 2017<sup>17</sup> 408 incidents of hate crimes were recorded by the Greek authorities, with the highest number being in

<sup>14</sup> "Hellenic Police"

[http://www.astynomia.gr/index.php?option=ozo\\_content&lang=%27..%27&perform=view&id=23730&Itemid=1027&lang=](http://www.astynomia.gr/index.php?option=ozo_content&lang=%27..%27&perform=view&id=23730&Itemid=1027&lang=)

<sup>15</sup> "Greece," OSCE Hate Crime Reporting, <http://hatecrime.osce.org/greece>

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Until the moment this report was written the data of 2017 was the last available data that were provided to OSCE.

2017 (128) and the lowest in 2016 (40). What is surprising, however, is the number of those who were prosecuted and sentenced and its deviation between the crimes that were recorded. For example, in 2013, 109 incidents were recorded, 9 people were prosecuted yet no one was sentenced, and in 2017 128 crimes were recorded, 46 people were prosecuted and only six were sentenced. One explanation for this deviation, however, might be the complexity of the Greek penal law as well as the time consuming legal process.

For 2018, between January 2018 and December 2018 the Hellenic Police recorded 226 incidents of racist violence, 63 of which were due to hate speech<sup>18</sup>.

## 2.1 Racist Violence Recording Network

Apart from the official Greek authorities the Racist Violence Recording Network also provides data related to racist and hate crimes. The Network was established in 2011 on a pilot basis due to the lack of an official and effective network as well as because of the need to connect all networks that were individually monitoring hate incidents in the country<sup>19</sup>. The creation of the Racist Violence Recording Network was initially created by National Commission for Human Rights and the Greek department of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as well as various non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Currently the 42 NGOs that are part of the network provide legal, medical and social services to victims of hate crimes<sup>20</sup>.

Since 2011 the network recorded 1,051 incidents of hate crimes<sup>21</sup>. It should be noted that the network's monitoring activities expand every year thus the

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<sup>18</sup> Δίκτυο Καταγραφής Ρατσιστικής Βίας, UNHCR, ΕΕΔΑ, «Δίκτυο Καταγραφής Ρατσιστικής Βίας. Ετήσια Έκθεση 2018,» 2019. [Racist Violence Recording Network, UNHCR, NCHR, "Racist Violence Recording Network. Annual Report 2018," [http://rvrn.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/RVRN\\_report\\_2018gr.pdf](http://rvrn.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/RVRN_report_2018gr.pdf).

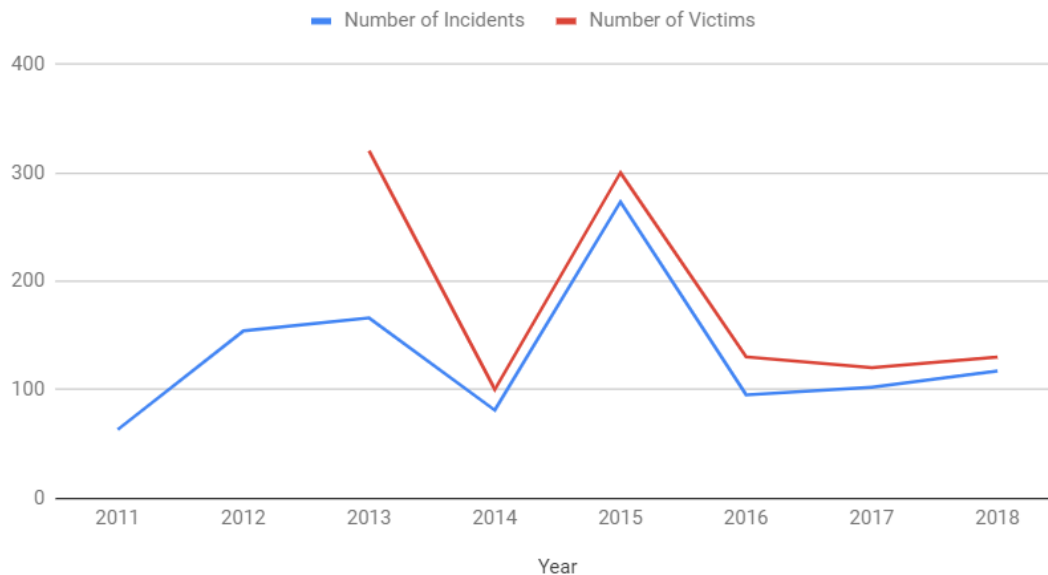
<sup>19</sup> Racist Violence Recording Network <http://rvrn.org/%CF%84%CE%BF-%CE%B4%CE%AF%CE%BA%CF%84%CF%85%CE%BF/>

<sup>20</sup> *ibid*

<sup>21</sup> Δίκτυο Καταγραφής Ρατσιστικής Βίας, UNHCR, ΕΕΔΑ, «Δίκτυο Καταγραφής Ρατσιστικής Βίας. Ετήσια Έκθεση 2011,» 2012. [Racist Violence Recording Network, UNHCR, NCHR, "Racist Violence Recording Network. Annual Report 2011," 2012] <http://tiny.cc/rais7y>; Δίκτυο Καταγραφής Ρατσιστικής Βίας, UNHCR, ΕΕΔΑ, «Δίκτυο Καταγραφής Ρατσιστικής Βίας. Ετήσια Έκθεση 2012,» 2013. [Racist Violence Recording Network, UNHCR, NCHR, "Racist Violence Recording Network. Annual Report 2012," 2013] <http://tiny.cc/gdis7y>; Δίκτυο Καταγραφής Ρατσιστικής Βίας, UNHCR, ΕΕΔΑ, «Δίκτυο Καταγραφής Ρατσιστικής Βίας. Ετήσια Έκθεση 2013,» 2014. [Racist Violence Recording Network, UNHCR, NCHR, "Racist Violence Recording Network. Annual Report 2013," 2014] <http://rvrn.org/2014/04/424/>; Δίκτυο Καταγραφής Ρατσιστικής Βίας, UNHCR, ΕΕΔΑ, «Δίκτυο Καταγραφής Ρατσιστικής Βίας. Ετήσια Έκθεση 2014,» 2015. [Racist Violence Recording Network, UNHCR, NCHR, "Racist Violence Recording Network. Annual Report 2014," 2015] <http://tiny.cc/t5ks7y>; Δίκτυο Καταγραφής Ρατσιστικής Βίας, UNHCR, ΕΕΔΑ, «Δίκτυο Καταγραφής Ρατσιστικής Βίας. Ετήσια Έκθεση 2015,» 2016. [Racist Violence Recording Network, UNHCR, NCHR, "Racist Violence Recording Network. Annual Report 2015," 2016] <http://tiny.cc/l8ks7y>; Δίκτυο Καταγραφής Ρατσιστικής Βίας, UNHCR, ΕΕΔΑ, «Δίκτυο Καταγραφής Ρατσιστικής Βίας. Ετήσια Έκθεση 2016,» 2017. [Racist Violence Recording Network, UNHCR, NCHR, "Racist Violence Recording Network. Annual Report 2016," 2017]

number of these incidents is only representative and may be higher. It should be noted that the network follows a very strict methodology and documents incident of racist crimes only with a face-to-face interview with victims.

### Number of Incidents and Number of Victims



### 2 Source: Racist Violence Recording Network

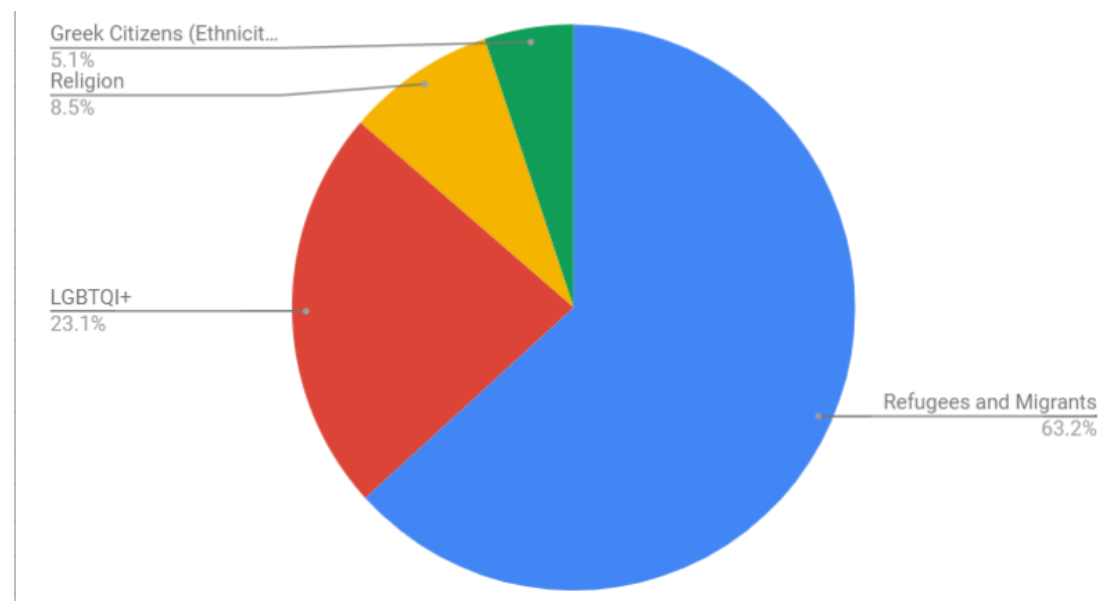
The above chart showcases the number of cases that were recorded as well as the number of victims (since 2013). It is interesting to note that in certain years that number of victims is double the number of cases. For example in 2013 166 incidents were recorded with 320 victims, 143 of whom were refugees or migrants. However, it should be noted that this number is due to the now infamous Manolada case which took place in 2013 when a farmer opened fire and shot against Bangladeshi workers who were working in his fields and demanded to be paid<sup>22</sup>. Based on the Network's reports since 2011 the year with most documented cases of racist incidents was 2015 (273) whereas the year with the least was 2011 (63). It should be noted, however, that 2011 was a pilot year.

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<http://tiny.cc/mals7y>; Δίκτυο Καταγραφής Ρατσιστικής Βίας, UNHCR, ΕΕΔΑ, «Δίκτυο Καταγραφής Ρατσιστικής Βίας. Ετήσια Έκθεση 2017,» 2018. [Racist Violence Recording Network, UNHCR, NCHR, "Racist Violence Recording Network. Annual Report 2017," 2018] [http://rvrn.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Report\\_2017gr.pdf](http://rvrn.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Report_2017gr.pdf); Δίκτυο Καταγραφής Ρατσιστικής Βίας, UNHCR, ΕΕΔΑ, «Δίκτυο Καταγραφής Ρατσιστικής Βίας. Ετήσια Έκθεση 2018,» 2019. [Racist Violence Recording Network, UNHCR, NCHR, "Racist Violence Recording Network. Annual Report 2018," 2019] [http://rvrn.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/RVRN\\_report\\_2018gr.pdf](http://rvrn.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/RVRN_report_2018gr.pdf).

<sup>22</sup> Smith, Helena. "Greece's migrant fruit pickers: 'They kept firing. There was blood everywhere'." *The Guardian*, September 1, 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/01/greece-migrant-fruit-pickers-shot-they-kept-firing>.

## Incidents in 2018



### 3 Source: Racist Violence Recording Network

For 2018 the network documented 117 incidents of racist violence with more than 130 victims. Of those, 74 were refugees and migrants, 27 members of the LGBTQI+ community, 10 were attacked due to their religious beliefs and six were Greek citizens who were victimised due to the colour of their skin or their ethnicity<sup>23</sup>.

It is important to note that the Racist Violence Recording Network dedicates a whole section on incidents caused by the Greek authorities due to the rise of such incidents. The Network recorded 22 incidents of racist violence in which police officers were involved, five more than 2017. The victims of those attacks were mostly refugees, migrants and asylum seekers. Nineteen victims mentioned that they faced physical violence in public spaces as well as in police stations in Athens<sup>24</sup>.

In addition there were seven incidents of racist violence perpetrated by public servants against refugees and asylum seekers. At the Racist Violence Recording Network notes “such incidents showcase that every targeted group has to deal with issues during their contact with the [Greek] public sector”; they also highlight “the lack of tolerance on diversity”<sup>25</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> Racist Violence Recording Network et al. “Annual report 2018,” [http://rvrn.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/RVRN\\_report\\_2018gr.pdf](http://rvrn.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/RVRN_report_2018gr.pdf).

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 21

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 21

### 3. Examples of Hate Speech and Hate Crimes during 2018

As it was noted in the beginning of this report, the purpose of Words Are Stones is to highlight hate speech in the European public sphere. For this reason ANTIGONE chose several incidents which are considered as prominent examples of the situation in Greece. In addition the Greek report tries to provide a whole and clear image of what is happening in the country and for this reason it places its focus on specific sectors: hate speech on the media; hate speech by public figures (political figures on a local level; hate speech by political figures on the national level; figures of the Greek Orthodox Church); hate speech by the authorities; hate speech by supporters of the far right; hate speech by members of unions. The victims of these incidents belong to the LGBT community, are refugees, migrants of asylum seekers, or are from the Greek Roma population.

The incidents are only representative and were chosen through the archive of filed complaints of the Racist Crimes Watch of the Greek Helsinki Monitor as well as several media sources. It should also be noted that the first example that is mentioned in this report took place in 2015 but was chosen for three reasons: a. the influence of the perpetrator; b. the long-lasting legal and judicial procedure; c. the impact to the targeted community. Finally, the incidents below are not in chronological order but are separated depending on their theme.

#### 3.1 Hate Speech by Public Figures

##### ***9 December 2015-January 2019: Metropolita of Kalavryta and Aigialeia, Amvrosios: Derogatory comments against the LGBT community in Greece***

In December 2015 Metropolitan of Kalavryta and Aigialeia, Amvrosios, wrote a blog post in response to the civil partnership law and the inclusion of LGBT couples. He said:

*"Homosexuality is a diversion from the Laws of Nature! It is a social felony! It is a sin! Those who either experience it or support it, are not normal people! They are scums of the Society! So spit on these shambles! Disapprove them! Beat them up! They are not human! They are abominations of nature!*

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<sup>26</sup> Μητροπολίτης Καλαβρύτων και Αιγιαλείας, «ΑΠΟΒΡΑΣΜΑΤΑ ΤΗΣ ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΑΣ ΣΗΚΩΣΑΝ ΚΕΦΑΛΗ!» December 9, 2015, [http://mkka.blogspot.com/2015/12/blog-post\\_9.html](http://mkka.blogspot.com/2015/12/blog-post_9.html).

On 9 January 2016, nine citizens filed a lawsuit which was accepted by the public prosecutor and a court date was scheduled for 15 March 2018.<sup>27</sup> During his court hearing, Metropolitan Amvrosios defended his position by saying:

*"If I had a gun and if I was allowed by the law, I would shoot them."*<sup>28</sup>

Metropolitan Amvrosios was declared innocent from the Court of Appeals of Aigio.<sup>29</sup> However, a few days later (26/03/2016) an appeal against the acquittal of Metropolitan Ambrosios was brought by the prosecutor of the Misdemeanour Court of Aigio<sup>30</sup>. This specific court decision has been characterised as extremely important for the LGBT community in Greece and for human rights in the country. The counsel for the civil claimant said:

*"This is a particularly important decision, which puts a limit not only on the racist speech by whomever it is used, but it limits the ardent excuse when expressed by a person who can have a great impact and influence in the world and when that reason jeopardizes the dignity and freedom of the person"*<sup>31</sup>

On 29 January 2019, Metropolitan Ambrosios was declared guilty based on the Greek antiracist law (N. 4285/2014).<sup>32</sup>

**10-12 October 2018: Racist slur by Chios councilman Giorgos Tsakos during local council meeting and during a radio interview on Realfm 97,8**

During a council meeting in Chios in which the Greek Minister of Migration, Dimitris Vitsas was present, councilman Giorgos Tsakos intervened with a racist slur against refugees and migrants. In specific, during the meeting Dimitris Vitsas compared the recent refugee flow to the refugee flow of the 1990's. Giorgos Tsakos intervened in order to correct the Minister of Migration and called recent

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<sup>27</sup> Μελπομένη Μαραγκίδου, «'Όταν και 'Όπου τους Συναντάτε, Φτύστε τους' - Ο Αμβρόσιος Επιτέλους θα Δικαστεί για τις Ομοφοβικές του Δηλώσεις,» *Vice*, Νοέμβριος 16, 2017, <https://www.vice.com/gr/article/ywb49k/otan-kai-opoy-toys-synantate-ftyste-toys-o-ambrosios-epiteloys-8a-dikastei-gia-tis-omofobikes-toy-dhlwseis>.

<sup>28</sup> Μελπομένη Μαραγκίδου, «'Όσα Τρομακτικά και Ομοφοβικά Ακούστηκαν στη Δίκη που Αθωώθηκε ο Αμβρόσιος,» *Vice*, Μάρτιος 15, 2018, <https://www.vice.com/gr/article/7x75qz/osa-tromaktika-kai-omofobika-akoysthkan-sth-dikh-poy-a8ww8hke-o-ambrosios>.

<sup>29</sup> «Αθωώθηκε ο Μητροπολίτης Αμβρόσιος για το 'άρθρο μίσους',» March 15, 2018, <http://www.kathimerini.gr/954033/article/epikairothta/ellada/a8ww8hke-o-mhtropolitsh-ambrosios-gia-to-ar8ro-misoys>.

<sup>30</sup> Μελπομένη Μαραγκίδου, «'Όσα Τρομακτικά και Ομοφοβικά Ακούστηκαν στη Δίκη που Αθωώθηκε ο Αμβρόσιος,» 2018.

<sup>31</sup> «'Ενοχος ο μητροπολίτης Αμβρόσιος για το ομοφοβικό κείμενό του,» *Αυγή*, January 29, 2019, <http://www.avgi.gr/article/10844/9544238/enochos-o-metropolitsh-ambrosios-gia-to-omophobiko-keimeno-tou>.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

refugees ‘illegal migrants’ a term which is no longer used in legal context and is no longer acceptable in the public sphere.<sup>33</sup>

Following the council meeting Giorgos Tsakos was asked to comment on his comments during an interview with Greek radio station Realfm 97,8. During his interview Giorgos Tsakos defended his stance and compared the recent refugee flow on the island to Greek refugees who arrived in Greece after the Asia Minor catastrophe in 1922. He said in specific:

*"I was angered when the municipal education committee said that "the Chian people do not forget the reception and integration of the refugees of 1922. These fools dared to compare my grandmother, my mother, my aunt who came here when they were 1,5 -2 years old, with these ones [refugees from the MENA<sup>34</sup> and Asia]. The people of 1922 were real refugees, Greeks from their birth. I do not accept their comparison to the refugees of 1922. These are not refugees. All Chians are furious."<sup>35</sup>*

He continued by saying:

*"They are not refugees. This is an influx of people who try to swell Europe. There is a plan to ruin us."*

In addition he mentioned that there are ‘intermarriages’ between Greeks and refugees and migrants and specifically referred to marriages between Greeks and Albanians and said the same will happen ‘now that coloured people are coming [to Greece]’.<sup>36</sup>

### ***October 2018: Slur against Roma in Aspropyrgos by the mayor of Aspropyrgos***

During a talk, Nikolaos Meletiου, the mayor of Aspropyrgos, a suburb of Athens, targeted the Roma community that lives there by saying that they are the ones responsible for criminal activities in the area. He called for a demonstration against the community and threatened for future violent actions against them. A

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<sup>33</sup> «Ο Δ. Βίτσας σε ταραχώδη συνεδρίαση Δ.Σ. Χίου,» ΕΡΤ, October 17, 2018, <http://tiny.cc/opns7y> and «Ένταση στο δημοτικό συμβούλιο Χίου - Δημοτικός σύμβουλος είπε τη λέξη ‘λαθρομετανάστης’ και καταχειροκροτήθηκε από το ‘ακροατήριο’,» *alfavita*, October 17, 2018, <https://www.alfavita.gr/koinonia/270933-entasi-sto-dimotiko-symboylio-hiyou-dimotikos-symboylos-eipe-ti-lexi>.

<sup>34</sup> Middle East and North Africa

<sup>35</sup> «Ρατσιστικό παραλήρημα από δημοτικό σύμβουλο της Χίου στον Realfm: Αυτοί δεν είναι μετανάστες - Υπάρχει σχέδιο να μας ρημάξουν,» *enikos.gr*, October 12, 2018, <http://www.enikos.gr/society/600638/ratsistiko-paralirima-apo-dimotiko-symvoulo-tis-chiou-ston-realfm> and «10 και 12/10/2018: Ακραίος ρατσισμός δημοτικού συμβούλου Γιώργου Τσάκου στη Χίο,» *Racist Crimes Watch – Παρατηρητήριο Ρατσιστικών Εγκλημάτων*, October, 12, 2018, <https://racistcrimeswatch.wordpress.com/2018/10/12/2-149/>.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid*



demonstration against the Roma community took place on 16 October 2018<sup>37</sup>. Additionally Nikolaos Meletiou threatened violence against the Roma community:

*“The State needs to do something so that this problem is solved because we can not take it anymore. I suggest the State listens to us so that we do not become witnesses of further incidents; so that we do not end up using force.”<sup>38</sup>*

## **2 November 2018: Racist Tweet by Attica regional consultant Thanos Tzimeros against Roma**

Thanos Tzimeros, who is a regional councillor in Attica tweeted a slur against Roma saying:



The image shows a screenshot of a tweet from the user Thanos Tzimeros (@ThanosTzimeros). The tweet is in Greek and contains a racist message targeting Roma children. The text of the tweet is: "Ο μόνος τρόπος για τον έλεγχο των γύφτων είναι η εφαρμογή του νόμου. Αν εσύ έστελνες το παιδί σου όχι στο σχολείο, αλλά στα φανάρια να ζητιανεύει, δεν θα έχανες τη γονική μέριμνα; Δεν θα καθόσουν στο σκαμνί για παραμέληση εποπτείας ανηλίκου; Ο γύφτος διέπεται από άλλη νομοθεσία;". The tweet has 220 retweets and 973 likes. Below the tweet, there are icons for reply (52), retweet (220), like (973), and share.

**Θάνος Τζήμερος**  
@ThanosTzimeros

Follow

Ο μόνος τρόπος για τον έλεγχο των γύφτων είναι η εφαρμογή του νόμου. Αν εσύ έστελνες το παιδί σου όχι στο σχολείο, αλλά στα φανάρια να ζητιανεύει, δεν θα έχανες τη γονική μέριμνα; Δεν θα καθόσουν στο σκαμνί για παραμέληση εποπτείας ανηλίκου; Ο γύφτος διέπεται από άλλη νομοθεσία;

Translate Tweet

9:12 PM - 2 Nov 2018

220 Retweets 973 Likes

52 220 973

### **4 Source: Twitter**

“The only way to control gypsies is by implementing the law. If you made your child beg at the traffic lights, wouldn’t you lose their custody?”

<sup>37</sup> «Μηνυτήρια αναφορά για αντισιγγανισμό και απειλές του Δημάρχου Ασπροπύργου Ν. Μελετίου,» *Racist Crimes Watch – Παρατηρητήριο Ρατσιστικών Εγκλημάτων*, October, 12, 2018, <https://racistcrimeswatch.wordpress.com/2018/10/12/1-679/>.

<sup>38</sup> *ibid*

Wouldn't you be in court for neglecting a minor? Are there different laws for gypsies?"<sup>39</sup>

### ***Golden Dawn MP calls for massive deportations of Albanians***

Golden Dawn, the Greek neo Nazi party, asked for massive deportations of Albanians through their MP and parliamentary representative, Ilias Kasidiaris as a response to the killing of Konstantinos Katsifas who was killed by the Albanian police during an altercation<sup>40</sup>.

*"Any negotiation for Albania's European membership must immediately stop and every Albanian who has committed any crime in Greece should be deported."*<sup>41</sup>

## **3.2 Hate Speech by the Authorities**

### **October 2018. Moria hotspot, Lesbos: A police officer shouts at an elderly woman asylum seeker using derogatory comments**

In a video captured by Italian journalist Valerio Cataldi for a documentary for RAI, a Greek police officer is seen shouting at an elderly woman asylum seeker who was waiting in the food line: *"Fuck you; shit old lady; get out of here; lizard"*<sup>42</sup>

The incident received a lot of attention which led the Head of the Hellenic Police to suspend the police officer who used this language and to transfer those who were present and did not react to other locations in Greece. In addition a Sworn Administrative Inquiry was ordered which will examine whether their behaviour had racist elements. <sup>43</sup>

Amnesty International Greece reacted and asked for the reaction of the Greek Minister for Citizens Protection.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> «02/11/2018: Ακραίο αντιτσιγγανικό tweet Θάνου Τζήμερου,» *Racist Crimes Watch – Παρατηρητήριο Ρατσιστικών Εγκλημάτων*, November 2, 2018, <https://racistcrimeswatch.wordpress.com/2018/11/02/2-161/> and Thanos Tzimeros, «Ο μόνος τρόπος για τον έλεγχο των γύφτων είναι ,» *Twitter*, November 2, 2018. <http://tiny.cc/t9os7y>.

<sup>40</sup> «Βίντεο-ντοκουμέντο από τη «μάχη» του Κατσίφα με τους Αλβανούς αστυνομικούς,» *CNN Greece*, October 29, 2018, <https://www.cnn.gr/news/ellada/story/152614/vinteo-ntokoymento-apo-ti-maxi-toy-katsifa-me-toys-alvanoys-astynomikoys>.

<sup>41</sup> «Χρυσή Αυγή: Μαζικές απελάσεις αλβανών για την δολοφονία Κατσίφα – BINTEO,» *Χρυσή Αυγή*, 5 November 2018, <http://archive.is/I8AY1#selection-781.1-781.314>

<sup>42</sup> Valerio Cataldi, "L'isola e le altre prigionie. Viaggio ai confini d'Europa," *Facebook*, 2018, [https://www.facebook.com/valerio.cataldi.35/videos/vb.1546539490/10217267223383070/?type=2&video\\_source=user\\_video\\_tab](https://www.facebook.com/valerio.cataldi.35/videos/vb.1546539490/10217267223383070/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab).

<sup>43</sup> Newsroom Iefimerida.gr, «Σε διαθεσιμότητα ο νταής αστυνομικός που έβρισε χυδαία την πρόσφυγα στη Μόρια [βίντεο],» *iefimerida.gr*, October 21, 2018.

<https://www.iefimerida.gr/news/452794/se-diathesimotita-o-ntais-astynomikos-poy-evrise-hydaia-tin-prosfyga-sti-moria-vinteo>.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

### ***Physical and Verbal violence towards asylum seekers detained in Fylakio Reception and Identification Centre***

According to a report published by Human Rights Watch, asylum seekers held at the Reception and Identification Centre (R.I.C.) of Fylakio in Orestiada near the Greek-Turkish border received threats, verbal and physical violence by the Greek police. According to the report asylum seekers claimed that the police is always calling them with swear words such as 'asshole'. They also claimed that they have seen the police hitting children, as well as adults in the detention centre that is next to the R.I.C.<sup>45</sup> Those interviewed also claimed that the police were racially discriminating people based on their nationalities.<sup>46</sup>

### ***August 2018: Online attacks against journalist Stratis Balaskas in Lesvos***

Stratis Balaskas, a correspondent for Greece's Press Agency (AMNA) was targeted the far right for his reports on the refugee crisis in Lesvos. Among those who attacked him was a police officer and a military officer.<sup>47</sup> On a facebook post Stratis Balaskas wrote:

*"Last Sunday, August 12, at the port, I was attacked by a group of extremists returning from the infamous fiesta of the downhaul of the flag, who defrauded me. Even during the fire in Tsamakia Park, another far right extremist, who was there, was guiding the firefighters to even capture migrants who helped to extinguish the fire; he was swearing at me while I was doing my job and shouted that I was covering up the "illegal monkeys" and "I am paid by NGOs". He was posting similar things on his facebook a few hours later."*

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<sup>45</sup> <https://racistcrimeswatch.wordpress.com/2018/07/27/2-137/>

<sup>46</sup> <https://racistcrimeswatch.wordpress.com/2018/07/27/2-137/>

<sup>47</sup> <http://www.efsyn.gr/arthro/mytilini-hontrainoyn-oi-apeiles-akrodexion-kata-dimosiografon>



5 Source: Efsyn.gr

Three comments from the above discussion on Facebook refer to journalist Stratis Balaskas with derogatory comments such as: ‘pig’, ‘useless’, ‘Turkish seed’<sup>48</sup>.

### ***15/08/2018: Racist speech on a Facebook post against refugees by police officer in Lesvos***

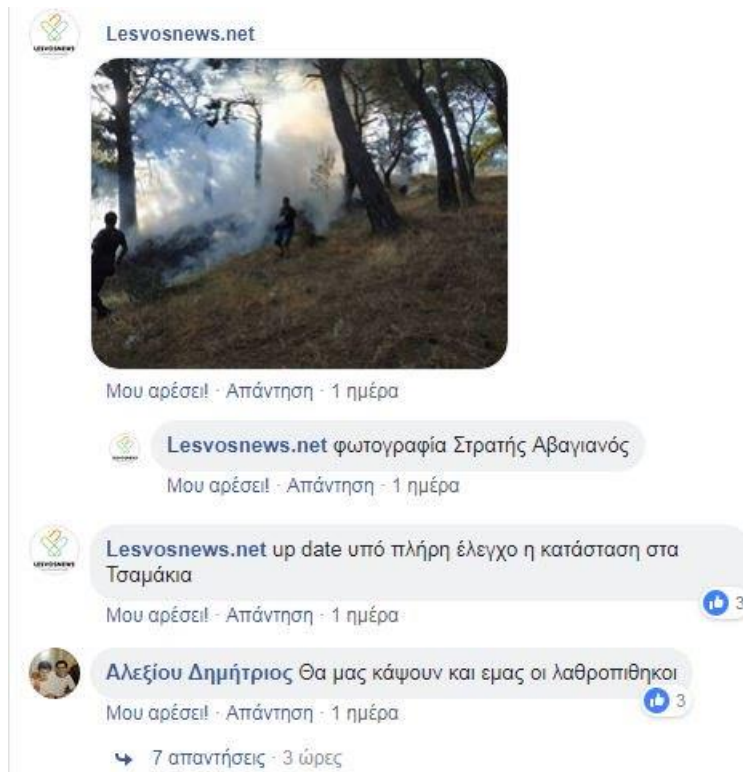
Greek police officer Dimitris Alexiou used a racist slur ‘illegal under a photo published on facebook by Lesvosnews.net; the photo was posted on Facebook in order to update on a fire near the hotspot of Moria.<sup>49</sup>

He specifically said: “*In the end those ‘illegal monkeys’ will burn us alive*’.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>48</sup> This refers to the racist slur in Greece ‘Tourkosporos’ which is considered very derogatory and demeaning.

<sup>49</sup> «15/08 & 01/09/2018: Μήνυση για ρατσιστικό σχόλιο στο Facebook του Δημήτρη Αλεξίου, αστυνομικού στη Λέσβο,» *Racist Crimes Watch – Παρατηρητήριο Ρατσιστικών Εγκλημάτων*, August 15, 2018, <https://racistcrimeswatch.wordpress.com/2018/08/15/2-140/>.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.



6 Source: Facebook and Greek Helsinki Monitor

Following the incident, on 1 September 2018, the Greek Helsinki Monitor filed a lawsuit against the police officer. The Greek Helsinki Monitor had sued the same police officer for a similar incident.<sup>51</sup>

### 3.3 Hate Speech by Supporters of the Far Right

#### *September 2018: Online attack against journalist Anthi Pazianou in Lesvos*

Anthi Pazianou, a journalist for Greek newspaper 'Kathimerini' and 'Empros' was targeted by far right extremists due to an article in which she reported the violent attack of a 9 year old Greek girl by locals at the village Gera who thought she was a Muslim refugee.

Anthi Pazianou sued her attackers and asked for their arrest. Two of the four attackers were arrested.<sup>52</sup>

### 3.4 Hate Speech by Members of Unions

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Γιώργος Παγουρίδης, «Διαδικτυακές επιθέσεις από ακραία στοιχεία,» *Η Εφημερίδα των Συντακτών*, September 10, 2018, <http://www.efsyn.gr/arthro/diadiktyakes-epitheseis-apo-akraia-stoiheia>.

### ***Formal adoption of the term 'illegal migrant' by a trade union body of secondary education teachers in Lesbos***

The Trade Union of Secondary Teachers in Lesbos (ELME) adopted the term 'illegal immigrant' after the suggestion of DAKE - one of its political components which is affiliated to the Greek centre right party Nea Dimokratia. The decision defies a legal decision issued by Greece's highest court regarding the term 'illegal migrant'. According to the deputy leader of DAKE the reason they suggested the use of this term is because:

*"A refugee is someone who is in the first transit country. Migrant is someone who has every legal document. Illegal immigrant is someone who gone through the procedure (to become a migrant) but there [the procedure] is pending"*<sup>53</sup>

In an interview with the Greek radio station RealFM 97,8, the Mr Vareltzis defended their decision and went on to say:

*"We are in a sensitive region, you know the problems that we are facing. Some are trying to make us accept and integrate the problem in our daily lives. In their try there is a mention of a refugee [crisis], they are trying to identify the Greek refugees of 1922 from Asia Minor and the Black Sea (Pontos) with the current disgrace. Because we are the beginning of the school year in a period when educational programmes are being designed, we wanted to inform our colleagues regarding the right terminology. Children should be taught history as it is, and not as some people wish [to teach it]."*<sup>54</sup>

In addition in a public Facebook post, Apostolos Vareltzis supported their decision by saying that the term 'illegal migrant' is not insulting but is considered as such but supporters of political correctness.<sup>55</sup>

The decision for the usage of this term sparked a series of reactions throughout the educational community of Lesbos<sup>56</sup>.

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<sup>53</sup> Efsyn.gr, «Αντιδράσεις μετά τη χρήση της λέξης «λαθρομετανάστης» απ' την ΕΛΜΕ Λέσβου,» *Η Εφημερίδα των Συντακτών*, October 10, 2018, <http://www.efsyn.gr/arthro/antidraseis-gia-ton-oro-lathrometanastis-ap-tin-elme-lesvoy>.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Απόστολος Βαρελτζής, «Ο όρος λαθρομετανάστης δεν είναι υβριστικός,» *Facebook*, October 10, 2018, <https://www.facebook.com/avareltz/posts/1694784207300252>.

<sup>56</sup> «Οι εκπαιδευτικοί στην Λέσβο αντιδρούν στην απόφαση της χρήσης του όρου λαθρομετανάστης στα σχολεία από την ΕΛΜΕ Λέσβου,» *Κίνηση Απελάστε τον Ρατσισμό*, October 15, 2018, <https://www.kar.org.gr/2018/10/15/oi-ekpaideytikoi-stin-lesvo-antidroyn-stin-apofasi-tis-chrisis-toy-oroy-lathrometanastis-sta-scholeia-apo-tin-elme-lesvoy/>



Απόστολος Βαρελτζής

October 10, 2018 · 🌐



Ο όρος λαθρομετανάστης δεν είναι υβριστικός, κατάντησε να θεωρείται έτσι από μια λαθρο-κουλτούρα πολιτικής ορθότητας. Και βέβαια δεν υπάρχουν λαθραίοι άνθρωποι, όπως διατείνονται όσοι αντιμάχονται τη λέξη. Όμως η έννοιά της, κυριολεκτικά και ετυμολογικά, σημαίνει αυτόν που μετανάστευσε "λάθρα" (=κρυφά), όπως λαθρέμπορος, λαθροκυνηγός, λαθρεπιβάτης κ.λ.π. Δεν είναι μειωτικός χαρακτηρισμός, λοιπόν, αλλά περιγραφικός. Φθάσαμε στο σημείο να καταγγέλλεται ακόμη και το επίθετο "παράνομος" (μετανάστης) και να προτείνεται το "παράτυπος", λες και η παραβίαση των συνόρων και των διεθνών νόμων είναι μια απλή παρατυπία, επουσιώδης και ασήμαντη. Έλεος πια με την πολιτική ορθότητα, και την οργουελιανή μετάλλαξη της σημασίας των λέξεων!



78

5 Comments 9 Shares

### 3.5 Hate Speech by the Media

#### ***26 May 2018: Opinion Article against Albanians in Greece at Proto Thema Newspaper***

Themis Anastasiadis, publisher of the Greek Newspaper Proto Thema, wrote an opinion article in which he expressed racist and xenophobic views against Albanians and leftists in Greece. He said in specific:

*“The aggression of the Albanians, which we literally made people, while they came from the Communist paradise of Enver Hoxha as animals, should have been a lesson to us.”<sup>57</sup>*

The Racist Crimes Watch which is an initiative of the Greek Helsinki Monitor sued Themis Anastasiadis for racist speech.<sup>58</sup>

#### ***Sports presenter uses racist slurs against basketball player***

Takis Tsoukalas, a sports presenter with his own TV show, called Thanasis Antetokounmpo, a basketball player with Greek sports team Panathinaikos, a monkey. Referring to Panathinaikos he said:

*“You are a brothel. With a monkey. That Antetokounmpo is a monkey.”<sup>59</sup>*

<sup>57</sup> Θέμος Αναστασιάδης, «Εμείς φταίμε που κάναμε ανθρώπους τους Αλβανούς και τους αριστερούς,» *Πρώτο Θέμα*, May 26, 2018, <https://www.protothema.gr/blogs/themis-anastasiadis/article/791060/emeis-ftaime-pou-kaname-anthropous-tou-alvanous/>.

<sup>58</sup> «29/05/2018: Μήνυση για ρατσιστικό μισαλλόδοξο άρθρο Θέμου Αναστασιάδη σε βάρος Αλβανών,» *Racist Crimes Watch – Παρατηρητήριο Ρατσιστικών Εγκλημάτων*, May 29, 2018 <http://tiny.cc/k1ts7y>.

Maria Yannakaki, the General Secretary for Human Rights, asked for the intervention of the National Council for radio and Television (NCRTV).<sup>60</sup>

### 3.6 Concluding Notes on Examples

As it has already been mentioned these examples were chosen in order to order to paint the picture on hate speech in Greece during 2018. What seems to be clear is that hate speech is evident throughout sectors and throughout political affiliations and parties. In addition, it is clear that those most vulnerable to hate speech, hate crimes as well as hate speech that can lead to crimes come from all classes, all genders and all nationalities.

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<sup>59</sup> «Ρατσιστικό κρεσέντο Τσουκαλά: Αποκάλεσε «πίθηκο» τον Θ. Αντετοκούνμπο! (Video),» *Documento*, November 10, 2018, <https://www.documentonews.gr/article/ratsistiko-kresento-tsoykala-apokalese-pithhko-ton-o-antetokounmpo-video>.

<sup>60</sup> «Αίτημα για παρέμβαση του ΕΣΡ και του Αρείου Πάγου στην εκπομπή του Τσουκαλά - Αποκάλεσε τον Αντετοκούνμπο... 'Πίθηκο'» *Dikaiologitika*, November 12, 2018, <https://www.dikaiologitika.gr/eidhseis/koinonia/232804/aitima-gia-paremvasi-tou-esr-kai-tou-areiου-pagou-stin-ekpompi-tou-tsoukala-apokalese-ton-antetokoumpo-pithiko>.



## **4. Countering Hate Speech: Results from the Greek National Meeting**

During ANTIGONE's WAS national meeting titled "Words that Lead to Crime: Hate Speech in Greece and Europe" participants took part in a workshop which aimed to the identification of hate speech counter-narratives. The workshop was designed in a way that all participants had an active role and could be part of the discussion. Participants were divided in three groups which focused on direct hate speech, indirect hate speech, and online hate speech; the online hate speech group was then divided into two subgroups. The group facilitators, who were members of ANTIGONE and the Greek NGO Solidarity Now presented several incidents of real life hate speech and participants were called to discuss, debate and come into several conclusions regarding methods of combatting the phenomenon and counter narratives.

### *Direct Hate Speech*

During this session the group's facilitator used examples of hate speech towards migrants and refugees from the present national report. More specifically participants were called to discuss the following incidents:

Physical and verbal violence towards asylum seekers detained in Fylakio Reception and Identification Centre.

Formal Adoption of the term 'illegal migrant' by a trade union body of secondary education teachers in Lesbos.

This group's participants had the opportunity to discuss a varied terminology regarding people on the move including 'irregular migrant', 'asylum seekers', "running for your life" seeker', and 'sans papiers'.

Following a discussion on the incidents, participants identified six ways with which hate speech can be combatted:

1. Through organizing several actions for and with the public that is not involved in such initiatives.
2. Through cooperation with political institutions and the authorities.
3. By focusing on the term itself in order to showcase the political side of it and the political situation.
4. Through the creation of a dictionary that will be distributed and used at schools.
5. Through education.
6. Through media literacy.

It should be noted that the following actions can be implemented through the work of the civil society or individually.

### *Indirect Hate Speech*

This group's facilitator used two examples of indirect hate speech that took place in Greece and she identified through her work as a social worker.

The first incident had to do with *a kindergarten student of African ethnicity that came from a single parent family*. The student dealt with discrimination and isolation in her school environment due to false rumours that were circulating at school regarding her mother being a prostitute. The rumours were circulated by other parents and were influencing the student's teacher. In addition to a media focus at that time on African women who worked as prostitutes in Greece the child was influenced to a large degree.

The second incident focused on *a second generation migrant born in Greece to parents of African ethnicity*. Since the beginning of the so called refugee crisis the child did not have any issues during his school years. However, this changed after the refugee crisis came at its peak and resulted in the isolation of the teenager from his friends and school mates. As a result the teenager tried to escape this isolation by become active on online networks and social media which made him vulnerable to aggressive behaviours by strangers.

Participants of this group focused on several issues including the influence of the media; the school environment; current stereotypes regarding migrants, the behaviours of public servants, the limits of art and the freedoms of artists, behaviours that are considered normal in a society.

At the end of the workshop participants identified four ways to combat indirect hate speech.

1. Education: informative actions in schools and workplace for the acceptance of diversity. Education in emotional intelligence, cultivation of a 'team philosophy', the discussion of hate speech counternarratives during school hours, open and unified parent councils.
2. Children: the importance for children to speak out regarding hate speech and to inform adults when they are victims of hate speech.
3. Public Figures: informing and raising awareness of the general population to reduce 'neutrality'; informing and supporting teachers to support children in the field of hate speech.
4. Media: the public television should focus on groups of people who are willing to talk about being victims to several forms of violence. The goal of such TV programming would be the urge those who have been victims of hate speech to speak out.
5. Art: the beginning of a discussion regarding hate speech that is spread through various forms of art.

## *Online and Offline Hate Speech*

Due to the large number of participants and the broad nature of the topic participants were divided into two subgroups. One group focused on offline hate speech while the other on online hate speech.

### 1. Offline Hate Speech

The subgroup that focused on offline hate speech looked into a hate crime attack against a young boy. The facilitator distributed an article to participants regarding the aforementioned attack so as to open the discussion on several issues:

- a. the possible profile of hate speech;
- b. the profile of hate crimes victims;
- c. the social context under which hate speech and hate crimes emerge as well as the specific practices that can prevent and combat hate speech and hate crimes in Greece.

Specific details taken out from the article on purpose in order to enable the group to think of various cases of hate expressions against different groups of people. In addition the group was called to come up with several ideas on preventing and combating measures including legislature, political and personal levels.

The participants talked about the importance of differentiating speech that promotes violence or hate attacks, and freedom of expression and speech. An important part of the discussion focused on Thessaloniki and the political dimension of urban planning, and inequality and degradation of specific spots in cities is built and specific neighborhoods become ghettos running on purpose out of law.

The participants of this subgroup came to the conclusion that inequality and ghettoisation is combatted through political decisions that come through the pressure of local citizens. In addition the participants talked about the importance of human rights based awareness campaign. This could be done through collaboration between political groups, activist groups, NGOs, active citizens, all civil society in a common effort.

Finally participants placed their focus on education and the need for interaction between schools and the local society. Participants concluded that *in mixed, multicultural neighbourhoods where we can get to know the different, perceive it as no threat, develop tolerance, freely express ourselves and learn how to handle diversity and contradictory issues that come up through democracy, respect to*

*human rights, collective decision making through discussion till consensus, collaboration and solidarity.*

## 2. Online Hate Speech

The subgroups of online hate speech were given three examples of hate speech on twitter and were called to discuss them. The facilitator mentioned the terminology around hate speech and then emphasised on the fact that it is almost impossible to control it.

The three examples that were distributed by the facilitators opened up a discussion that lead to several collusions regarding ways that social media users can use in order to respond to hate speech or avoid being victims of online hate speech. Education came up as the main tool which can help combat such a phenomenon.

On the question whether social media users should respond to online hate directed to them (either verbally or by deleting such comments), participants mentioned that this is a very sensitive issue as deleting for example a comment may be regarded as censorship.

Participants suggested the creation of an algorithm or a tool that can be implemented by social media companies in order to ban or delete certain words or posts that someone writes or uploads. Finally, participants mentioned that reporting online hate speech to the Department of Electronic Crime that is part of the Hellenic Police is useful as they have the tools to monitor users/perpetrators of hate speech and then take action if such action is needed.

### **4.1 Concluding Remarks on Worksop Results**

Through this workshop participants had the chance to take an active part to the national meeting and be the ones that come up with ways of combatting hate speech. It is obvious that the key word of this workshop is **education** as it came up as the main tool of combatting hate speech.

The main conclusion that can be made is that hate speech can be combatted through formal and non-formal education and as such relevant actors should place their focus on that and emphasise on ways that they can raise awareness to students. Finally one of the main ways in order to raise awareness hate speech, both online and offline is through participatory actions and with the engagement of official bodies, the civil society.

## 5. Report's Final Remarks

As mentioned in the beginning this report was the result of “Words Are Stones” project and part of a collaborative project of six European NGOs. Our aim with this report is not to provide a full overview of the legal framework regarding hate speech or hate crimes in Greece. Our goal was to present the situation in the Greek public sphere in order to raise awareness on hate speech in the country.

For the aforementioned reason, “Words that Lead to Hate” starts with a very brief overview of the Greek legal framework. Instead of presenting every pre-existing and existing law and their amendments that might refer to hate speech we chose to focus on the specific articles of the Greek constitution as well as those bills that seem to be more relevant to the current discussion. Our conclusion is that even though Greece has a complex legal framework, the most recent bill which is known as the ‘Anti-racist bill’ is broad enough to include several crimes that can be characterised as racist as well as other discriminations including but not limited to gender, race, ethnicity, religion. In addition, one of our conclusions is that this bill has been used in cases of hate speech; something that is can be seen in detail on Chapter 3.

Following the brief presentation of the Greek legal framework, our report looks at those who document incidents of hate speech and hate crime. We place our focus on the Greek police and specifically at the departments engaged in the fight against racial violence. It is noteworthy that the Greek authorities and these specific departments, apart from monitoring hate crimes they also monitor incidents of hate speech; something that is not common in every European country. This data is made available annually by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). In addition to the Greek authorities the Racist Violence Reporting Network is documenting incidents of racist violence through a very detailed and strict methodology.

By looking at the work of both the Greek authorities as well as the Racist Violence Reporting Network it is obvious that more crimes are documented by the network rather than the authorities. This, however, could be due to various reasons including the fact that some victims of racist violence do not trust and do not wish to make an official report.

In addition to the work of the aforementioned bodies, it should be mentioned that the Racist Crimes Watch that is part of the Helsinki Monitored and has been cited in several examples in the current report, is taking legal actions to incidents that it considered racist; be it racist speech, hate speech or hate speech. It should be noted though that even though the Helsinki Monitor is suing several perpetrators of what it considers as racist speech, some incidents may not move forward with the legal procedure.

The next chapter places its focus on several examples of hate speech in the Greek public sphere during 2018. Although 2018 is the reference year for the current report, the first example that is mentioned took place in 2015. The reason we chose to include it is because we aim to show the length of legal processes in the country. The rest of the chapter looks at hate speech incidents separated in five parts: hate speech by public figures; hate speech by the authorities; hate speech by supporters of the far right; hate speech by members of unions; hate speech by the media. We chose to place our emphasis on those who used hate speech – the victimisers – rather than the victims for three reasons: that hate speech in Greece can have different forms, it can come from anyone with any sort of power and it can be directed to anyone that might be considered as ‘the other’.

The final chapter is a summary of a workshop that took place on 17 May 2019 and was part of our national meeting. Although the participants of the workshop were divided in three main groups – including a subgroup – they all came to the same conclusion: hate speech can be fought through education. Not a vague form of education, but an education and an educational system that places human rights at its core. Another important conclusion of the workshop is that participants believe forms of campaigning that raise awareness and target the wider public can be successful tools for fighting this phenomenon.

Last but not least it should be noted that hate speech is not a phenomenon that started recently or that it will end soon no matter the number of counter-narratives and tools we use to combat it. Hate speech is something that in the core of the society and surpasses class, gender, ethnicity, religion. Our goal is to raise awareness to this phenomenon so that those who might be interested can understand the dangers that hate speech entails.