



Presidency of Germany  
Council of Europe  
November 2020 - May 2021  
Présidence de l'Allemagne  
Conseil de l'Europe



## ***“Human Rights in the Digital Age, Hate Speech, and the Role of the Council of Europe”***

*Conference organised by the*  
German Delegation to the Congress of the Council of Europe  
in cooperation with the University of Applied Sciences - Public Administration and Finance  
Ludwigsburg

*Date: 29 January 2021, 2 p.m. - 6 p.m.*

### **CONCEPT**

In the framework of the German Presidency in the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, a conference on “Human Rights in the Digital Age, Hate Speech, and the Role of the Council of Europe” will shed light on the question whether the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) is still equipped to adequately address the new challenges of the digital age. Especially hate speech is a problem, which has been increasing for the last few years. The perceived anonymity of the internet leads to some people voicing their criticism against politicians in a more and more harsh and drastic way, which in some cases even results in calls for violence. The homicide of the German regional politician Walter Lübcke has shown that hate speech can indeed lead to violent action and even murder. Local politicians are especially affected by hate speech. Therefore, it is relevant to discuss the different ways of how local and regional authorities react to cases of hate speech and what the Council of Europe can do. Is the ECHR able to address the current challenges in this context, or do we need to reform the convention in order to adapt it to a time when the political discourse is getting more and more polarised?

The conference aims at discussing the problem of hate speech from a legal as well as from a practical, political perspective. For that, there will be two groups of keynote speeches in order to address the topic from both angles. After that, there will be workshops in which the young participants elaborate on the inputs given and develop their own ideas on the matters discussed. In the end, there will be a concluding wrap-up to bring together the results of the workshops and an open discussion in the plenary in order to elaborate on them.

The conference will be held as a cooperation event between the German Delegation to the Congress of the Council of Europe and the University of Applied Sciences - Public Administration and Finance Ludwigsburg. The target group are primarily the students of the Master programme European Public Administration, while also other actors, such as the Youth Delegates to the Congress, will be included. The event will be in line with the priorities of the German Presidency in the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. More specifically, the targets of strengthening human rights in the internet as well as promoting the Council of Europe among the youth will be covered by the conference’s topic and participants.

NOTE: Due to the COVID-19 situation, the event will be executed in an online format.

Zoom access:

Link: <https://zoom.us/j/98379092839?pwd=WnRkZ1lZZFVldncxQ0JvZzhvVU0rUT09>

Meeting-ID: 983 7909 2839

Code: 046212

## AGENDA

Friday, 29 January 2021

2:00 - 2:45 p.m.

### Welcome and Introduction

- *Bernd Vöhringer, Leader of the German Delegation to the Congress of the Council of Europe and Lord Mayor of Sindelfingen*
- *Anna Steidle, Prorector of the University of Applied Sciences - Public Administration and Finance Ludwigsburg*
- *Guido Wolf, Minister of Justice and European Affairs of Baden-Württemberg*
- *Dietmar Allgaier, District Administrator of Ludwigsburg*

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2:45 - 3:10 p.m.

### Keynote 1: Need for Reform? - The European Convention on Human Rights in Times of Digitalisation and Hate Speech

- *Onur Andreotti, Coordinator of Superior Courts Network, European Court of Human Rights*

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3:10 - 3:35 p.m.

### Keynote 2: The Work of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance in Combating Hate Speech and Violence

- *Barbara John, European Commission against Racism and Intolerance*

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3:35 - 3:40 p.m.

### Break

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3:40 - 4:15 p.m.

### Keynote 3: Mayors under Pressure - My Personal Fight against Hate Speech

*Local politicians personally affected by hate speech:*

- *Robert Biedron, Member of the European Parliament, Former Mayor of Slupsk*
- *Jos Wielen, Mayor of Haarlem, Vice-President of the Congress of the Council of Europe*

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4:15 - 5:00 p.m.

### Workshops on the Topics of the Keynotes

*Primarily students and other young participants (especially Master European Public Administration, Youth Delegates to the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, Young European Federalists, Bachelor students)*

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5:00 – 6:00 p.m.

### Final Wrap-Up, Discussion, and Conclusion

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6:00 p.m.

### End