

Group 2: Social media and conflict

Guiding questions

- Do you have examples of successful/innovative projects aiming to tackle hate speech and violence incitation contents online and/or to harness the potential of social media platforms to mitigate tensions, promote tolerance, dialogue and build peace?
- What elements should the European Commission take into consideration when supporting projects in this area? (What pitfalls should it avoid?)

Participants' comments and recommendations

- The smallest platforms should be targeted rather than the mainstream
- Public-private initiatives can be useful for building the capacities of governments and civil society organisations (CSOs) to help them to stop harmful information from being shared
- The United Nations (UN) has good co-operation with INTERPOL and solid expertise on counterterrorism (CT)/countering violent extremism (CVE) capacity building programmes involving social media
- The inclusion of the closure of social media accounts as part of sanctions can create strong leverage over the targets of those sanctions
- It is important to take into account the context: in some cases traditional media (e.g. radio) still have a greater reach than social media
- Given the significant differences in internet coverage between regions, it is important for peacebuilders not to overlook those people who do not have internet access
- Research has shown that social media has affected conflict dynamics in several countries in recent years, including Chad, Cameroon, Nigeria, Pakistan and Sri Lanka
- The EU could consider the inclusion of a (social) media component in various actions which are supported through the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP)
- The EU could develop an IcSP action aimed at facilitating groups of experts to study the issue of social media and conflict in selected countries and to make concrete recommendations on conflict sensitivity to EU officials and social media companies
- It is important to be aware of the risks of trying to shut down/limit platforms which host dissenting voices and/or targeting specific groups as this can risk making marginalised groups feel even more marginalised
- Rather than targeting young people specifically in social media-related projects, the EU should try to be more inclusive in its approaches
- The EU could look to the UN Secretary-General's ['Global Pulse'](#) flagship innovation initiative
- Examples of projects:
 - creating and sharing videos with interviews of young people in order to create a counter-narrative to negative stereotypes and messages on social media (Poland, Hungary and Romania)
 - building media awareness and news literacy to identify the source of news (e.g. guidelines for organisations on how to use media and sharing databases on news sources)
 - media literacy workshops (Myanmar)
 - targeting social influencers who can spread reliable information (Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC))
 - [Studio Tamani](#) and [Mikado FM](#) (Mali)
 - [Radio Dabanga](#) (Sudan)

For more information about any of the issues which were raised in this small group discussion, please contact [Ben Moore](#).