

Press Release

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OSCE media freedom representative and Council of Europe hold forum on preserving freedom of Internet while countering hate speech

VILNIUS, 15 September 2010 – The international community must work to identify effective ways to address hate speech on the Internet without endangering freedom of expression, said the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Dunja Mijatovic, and Maud de Boer-Buquicchio, the Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, today at the Joint OSCE-Council of Europe Open Forum on Hate Speech vs. Freedom of Expression in Vilnius.

The meeting focused on possible alternatives to relying solely on governmental or legislative approaches to address the problem of hate speech without infringing on freedom of expression and silencing legitimate criticism.

"We have to identify effective ways to address hate speech on the Internet without endangering freedom of expression. I am confident that this impressive group of leading international experts gathered under the umbrella of the OSCE and the Council of Europe will help the international community advance in this field," said Mijatovic.

De Boer-Buquicchio said: "Hate speech is a direct attack on the right to be and to think differently. It might not stop at rhetoric, as it has the potential to shape the minds and attitudes of individuals who will believe they have the right to undermine other people's rights. A democratic society cannot afford the freedom to oppress. Instead, we have to identify how to strike the adequate balance between rights and freedoms."

The event was held as part of the Internet Governance Forum, a global platform, and was jointly organized by the Representative's Office and the Council of Europe. This was the first initiative of this scale implemented by the two international bodies promoting free expression.

The forum was facilitated by leading experts representing academia, international bodies and the private sector involved with Internet policies.

For more information, see the [leaflet about the event](#)

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