



International Meeting Thessaloniki “Words are stones” June 10th-12nd 2019

Monday June 10th

The first day

The international meeting in Thessaloniki involved 36 activists and citizens from Austria, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy and Spain in a participatory discussion on the dissemination of hate speech in public debate in Europe.

The initial welcome, to the 3 days of the international meeting in Thessaloniki, was given by Andreas and Pavlina of the Antigone Team.

The first session of the meeting was dedicated to the presentation of the **national reports** on hate speech edited by the partners of Words are stones and already discussed in the 6 national seminars organized in each country. The presentation of the reports focused on the presentation of the official data available on racist speeches and crimes, on the main target groups, on the topics that are at the centre of the disparaging and stigmatising rhetoric, on the public actors most active in the dissemination of messages and hate speeches. Finally the initiatives and strategies promoted by civil society to try to combat the phenomenon have been presented.



The lack of specific legislation against hate speech, the absence of a shared normative definition of hate speech, the lack of official data available, the connection between discriminatory political discourse and the new forms of nationalism and populism were common to all partner countries. The most affected target groups were migrants, asylum seekers, Muslims, homosexuals. In all countries, the civil society initiatives promoted to combat hate speech are manifold, but they are limited by a high degree of fragmentation. Among the most developed areas are monitoring and reporting activities, human rights and media education initiatives, online communication campaigns and projects that promote socialization and mutual understanding between indigenous and foreign citizens.

After the presentation of the reports, the participants were divided into 5 groups in charge of summarizing in large posters the categories of haters, the topics at the center of the hate speech and good contrast practices experienced in each country.

The day ended with a collective discussion on the program to be followed in the following days.



Tuesday June 11th

The second day: the storytelling

After initial welcome to the second day of meetings, the main focus was on the selection of the themes that will be the focus of the 5 videos that will be produced to create an online awareness campaign. This work, facilitated by two video-makers, was carried out in a first phase working in

groups. The groups then reported to the plenary where they held an intense and fruitful discussion that led to the identification of insecurity as a key theme of the hostile narratives, which were recurrent in all countries involved in the project, related to economy/welfare, identity, manipulation, solidarity and invasion.



The meeting continued in the afternoon when Dimitris and Asterios, video professionals invited to contribute and facilitate the session, they coordinated a workshop that had the aim of developing in a participatory way 5 proposals for storytelling for the creation of video clips. The participants, divided into 5 working groups, produced 5 storyboard proposals that were presented in plenary and then verified and modified in language.



Some useful suggestions emerged from the debate: for example Doros of the Kisa association invited to send "positive", sarcastic and provocative messages as "sub-messages" in the videos, while Martino di Lunaria focused more on the role of the campaign by asking some operational questions about the video production process and the common language to be used. **Edo** di Sos Racisme added that fear is not an issue or a narrative. Fear is a feeling. Manipulation is a tool. Start to think about values (e.g. dignity). Not repeat the dichotomy "we and them". The message should be something like "we want to be better". **Gabriella** added that is important to stress attention on the feeling of security in a society with opportunities for everyone, and not in a society with closed borders. After the exchange of ideas, the second day of the meeting ended.

Wednesday June 12th : partners' meeting

Wednesday morning was dedicated to the meeting between the project partners to review the work plan and set the timing for the final closure of the national reports, the international report, the production of the videos and to agree on a first draft program of the international conference scheduled in Rome in November 2019. We said goodbye and all of us met in Rome for the final event of the WAS project.