

PACE President and Norwegian Speaker back plan for a European Day for the Victims of Hate Crime

22 July, anniversary of Utøya massacre, proposed as parliamentary Speakers from across Europe gather in Oslo

Strasbourg, 10.09.2014 - On the eve of the European Conference of Presidents of Parliament in Oslo on 11-12 September, Anne Brasseur, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), and Olemic Thommessen, President of the Storting, made the following joint statement:

“Three years after the terrible massacre at Utøya and the bombing in Oslo by a person who viewed his victims as traitors for supporting immigration and multiculturalism, hate continues to kill. Terrorists only seek to propagate hatred and violence, fully demonstrated by the barbarity of the recent beheadings posted on the internet, bringing this hatred and barbarity to new levels.

Hate propaganda is increasing in the political arena and extremist parties have entered parliament at national and European level.

Hate speech is neither normal, nor acceptable.

We, as parliamentarians, have the responsibility to speak out against hatred. The fight against xenophobia, racism and mounting nationalistic extremism requires a resolute response from all democratic parties, over and above political divisions.

Awareness raising and educational measures are necessary to combat and prevent hate speech. We welcome the forthcoming launch of the ‘No hate parliamentary alliance’ by PACE. This calls on parliamentarians ‘to lead by example and fully take up, visibly and forcefully, their responsibilities to prevent, combat and condemn manifestations of racism and racial discrimination and intolerance’.

In this context, we fully support the No Hate Speech Movement, the youth campaign initiated and coordinated by the Council of Europe to raise awareness of and combat hate speech online. The youth campaign has called for a day of remembrance, and to set the date of 22 July as a symbol and a reminder of the victims of hate crime.

Let us promote this idea and make 22 July a day of remembrance for victims of hate crime, showing solidarity with those targeted and those left to mourn, while raising public awareness about hate crime and its consequences for society.

We invite our colleagues, the Speakers of Parliaments across Europe, to support this initiative and we encourage PACE to endorse this proposal when adopting a resolution on ‘Counteraction to manifestations of neo-Nazism’ at its next session starting on 29 September.”

Around 60 Speakers and Presidents of Parliament are to gather in Oslo on 11 and 12 September for a biennial [parliamentary summit](#), organised by PACE and the Storting, during which the proposal will be further discussed.