



MARANGOPOULOS  
FOUNDATION  
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (MFHR)  
ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΜΑΡΑΓΚΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ  
ΓΙΑ ΤΑ ΔΙΚΑΙΩΜΑΤΑ  
ΤΟΥ ΑΝΘΡΩΠΟΥ (ΙΜΔΑ)

## PRESS RELEASE

### Marangopoulos Foundation for Human Rights (MFHR)

#### 21 March – International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

On the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Marangopoulos Foundation for Human Rights (MFHR) underscores the urgent need for sustained vigilance and meaningful action against all forms of discrimination, racism, xenophobia, and intolerance.

21 March was established by the international community in commemoration of the Sharpeville massacre in South Africa in 1960, when 69 people participating in a peaceful protest against apartheid were killed by police gunfire. This day is not merely a symbolic reminder, but an ongoing call to actively uphold human dignity and fundamental rights, without exceptions or discrimination.

Despite significant progress at both international and European levels, incidents of racist violence, discrimination, and social exclusion continue to be reported at an alarming rate, both in Greece and globally. Migrants, refugees, Roma communities, and other social minorities remain particularly vulnerable.

In public and political discourse, hate speech continues to emerge, especially during periods of political tension or electoral processes, deepening social divisions. It is therefore crucial to highlight and amplify voices that resist such practices and promote democratic dialogue, respect, and social cohesion.

A particular challenge lies in the spread of hate speech online, where the rapid dissemination of information, anonymity, and the use of automated accounts (bots) exacerbate the phenomenon. Effectively addressing this issue requires coordinated cooperation between state authorities, digital service providers, and civil society organizations, as well as the use of artificial intelligence with full respect for human rights and democratic safeguards.

At the same time, the existence of a clear and effective legislative framework is a key factor in preventing and combating discrimination. In some cases, the absence of adequate legal definitions, sanctions, and victim protection mechanisms allows the phenomenon to persist. Strengthening national policies against hate speech, with the meaningful participation of civil society and adequate funding, is essential.

Συμβουλευτική ιδιότητα με ΟΗΕ (ECOSOC και Διεύθυνση Πληροφοριών), ΟΥΝΕΣΚΟ, Συμβούλιο της Ευρώπης  
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Particular concern arises from the fact that many incidents of racist violence and discrimination go unreported, due to a lack of trust in the competent authorities. Enhancing the training of police and judicial authorities, as well as building relationships of trust with vulnerable groups, are fundamental prerequisites for the effective protection of victims.

Furthermore, individuals and organizations actively engaged in combating hate speech are often targeted, which limits their public intervention. Ensuring a safe and supportive environment for human rights defenders is therefore necessary.

Finally, the impact of hate speech on children and young people is particularly pronounced, especially online. Human rights education, the promotion of critical thinking, and the cultivation of values of respect and acceptance are key tools for prevention.

At a time of multiple and growing challenges, MFHR reaffirms its steadfast commitment to the protection of human rights and the promotion of equality, tolerance, and multiculturalism. Combating racial discrimination is not only an obligation of states, but also a collective responsibility for us all.

Investing in education, raising awareness, fostering social cohesion are crucial tools for preventing and addressing this phenomenon. In this context, we call upon the State, institutions, and civil society to intensify their efforts to eliminate all forms of discrimination, actively contributing to the creation of a fair, open, and inclusive society for all.

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