

Thursday 25 October 2018

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Rise of neo-fascist violence in Europe

European Parliament resolution of 25 October 2018 on the rise of neo-fascist violence in Europe (2018/2869(RSP))

(2020/C 345/05)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
 - having regard to the report of 9 May 2017 by the UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance,
 - having regard to UN General Assembly Resolution 71/179 of 19 December 2016 on ‘Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance’,
 - having regard to the European Convention on Human Rights, in particular Article 14 thereof and Protocol No 12 thereto,
 - having regard to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination,
 - having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
 - having regard to Articles 2, 3, 6 and 7 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU),
 - having regard to Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 ⁽¹⁾ prohibiting discrimination on grounds of race and ethnic origin (the Race Equality Directive),
 - having regard to Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA of 28 November 2008 on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law ⁽²⁾,
 - having regard to Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime ⁽³⁾,
 - having regard to Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1141/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2014 on the statute and funding of European political parties and European political foundations ⁽⁴⁾,
 - having regard to the establishment in June 2016 of the EU High Level Group on combating racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance,
 - having regard to the Council of Europe resolution of 30 September 2014 on counteraction to manifestations of neo-Nazism and right-wing extremism,
 - having regard to the EU Code of Practice on Disinformation,
 - having regard to the Code of Conduct on Countering Illegal Hate Speech Online,
 - having regard to Rule 123(2) and (4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas as enshrined in Article 2 of the TEU, the Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities; whereas these values are common to all Member States;
- B. whereas the lack of serious action against neo-fascist and neo-Nazi groups has enabled the occurrence of the current xenophobic surge in Europe;

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 180, 19.7.2000, p. 22.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 328, 6.12.2008, p. 55.

⁽³⁾ OJ L 315, 14.11.2012, p. 57.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ L 317, 4.11.2014, p. 1.

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- C. whereas openly neo-fascist, neo-Nazi, racist and xenophobic groups and political parties have been inciting hatred and violence in society, reminding us of what they were capable of doing in the past;
- D. whereas the dissemination of hate speech online often leads to a rise in violence, including by neo-fascist groups;
- E. whereas neo-fascist groups have taken the lives of thousands of people of all kinds, such as refugees and immigrants, ethnic and religious minorities, LGBTQI people, human rights defenders, activists, politicians and members of the police force;
- F. whereas neo-fascist groups use and abuse our democratic tools to spread hate and violence;
- G. whereas, as reported by Europol, the EU Security Commissioner Sir Julian King, speaking at an event on 22 March 2017 to commemorate the 2016 Brussels attacks, highlighted the growing menace of right-wing violent extremism, stating that he was not aware of a single EU Member State that is not affected by the phenomenon in some way, specifically citing the 2011 Norway attacks, the assassination of British MP Jo Cox, and attacks on asylum centres and mosques across Europe to highlight what he warned was a 'less reported' threat to security; whereas neo-fascist and neo-Nazi groups manifest themselves in a variety of forms; whereas most of these groups exclude certain individuals or groups from society; whereas these organisations often use aggressive language towards minority groups and seek to justify their doing so by invoking the principle of freedom of speech; whereas the right to freedom of speech is not absolute;
- H. whereas Article 30 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights clearly states that nothing in the declaration 'may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms' set forth therein;
- I. whereas the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination affirms that its States Parties condemn all propaganda and all organisations which are based on ideas or theories of superiority of one race or group of persons of one colour or ethnic origin;
- J. whereas the promotion of fascism is banned in several Member States pursuant to their national laws;
- K. whereas the TESAT 2018 Europol report recorded a near doubling in the number of individuals arrested for right-wing extremist offences in 2017;
- L. whereas on 22 July 2011, 77 people were killed and 151 injured in the Norway attacks;
- M. whereas on 16 June 2016 Jo Cox, Member of the UK Parliament, was brutally murdered in Birstall, UK;
- N. whereas according to the TESAT 2018 Europol report, five foiled, failed or completed terrorist attacks attributed to far-right individuals were reported in 2017 ⁽¹⁾ in the United Kingdom;
- O. whereas on 21 September 2018 Eleonora Forenza, MEP, and her assistant Antonio Perillo were assaulted after an anti-fascist demonstration in Bari, Italy;
- P. whereas the French intelligence service has expressed concern at the increasing number of members of military and law enforcement forces joining far-right violent groups ⁽²⁾;

⁽¹⁾ <https://www.europol.europa.eu/activities-services/main-reports/european-union-terrorism-situation-and-trend-report-2018-tesat-2018>

⁽²⁾ <https://www.mediapart.fr/journal/france/090418/forces-de-l-ordre-liees-l-ultra-droite-violente-la-dgsi-s-inquiete?onglet=full>

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- Q. whereas the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), established by the Council of Europe, expressed alarm over the rise of right-wing extremism and neo-fascism in Croatia in a report published on 15 May 2018 ⁽¹⁾;
- R. whereas in Poland, during a demonstration in November 2017, pictures of six Members of the European Parliament, who stood up for tolerance, the rule of law and other European values, were strung from a makeshift gallows in a public square in the southern city of Katowice by the members of the far-right Polish movement ONR (National Radical Camp); whereas an investigation is still ongoing, but no charges have been brought so far against any of the suspects, even though the event was reported in numerous media, including video footage;
- S. whereas in November 2017 to mark Poland's independence day, far-right organisations organised a large demonstration in Warsaw, gathering more than 60 000 people; whereas the demonstrators were holding xenophobic banners with slogans such as 'white Europe of brotherly nations', including some depicting the 'falanga', a fascist symbol from the 1930s;
- T. whereas the trial of the neo-Nazi party Golden Dawn, on charges of being a criminal organisation and of the assassination of Pavlos Fyssas, among other crimes, including attempted murder, is still ongoing in Greece;
- U. whereas on 21 September 2018 LGBTIQ activist Zak Kostopoulos was brutally assassinated in the centre of Athens; whereas one of the accused is allegedly related to extreme-right forces; whereas a full investigation is needed so that those responsible for his ill-treatment and death can be brought to justice;
- V. whereas an Italian man has been sentenced to 12 years in prison for shooting and wounding six African migrants in a racially motivated attack in the central Italian city of Macerata;
- W. whereas seven members of a far-right 'vigilante' group arrested in Chemnitz in mid-September 2018 for breaching the peace were recently arraigned on suspicion of forming a terrorist organisation calling itself Revolution Chemnitz; whereas according to federal state prosecutors, investigators had upgraded the charges from criminal to terrorist after reviewing the group's internal communications;
- X. whereas in France on 7 December 2017 five members of the movement Génération Identitaire were convicted of incitement to racial and religious hatred; whereas individuals linked to far-right groups, including Action Française, were planning a terrorist attack against a number of French politicians and mosques during the 2017 presidential elections; whereas on 24 June 2018, 10 members of the far-right group Action des Forces Opérationnelles (AFO) were arrested for planning a series of attacks targeting members of the Muslim community; whereas on 14 September 2018, two ex-skinheads were found guilty of the murder of Clément Méric, a young student and anti-fascist activist killed in June 2013;
- Y. whereas in Spain 12 members of the neo-Nazi organisation Hogar Social Madrid are currently being investigated for incitement to hatred; whereas members of the Spanish fascist groups Falange, Alianza Nacional and Democracia Nacional were arrested and convicted by the Supreme Court in Spain after attacking the Blanquerna Cultural Centre in Madrid during the celebrations of Catalonia's National Day in 2013; whereas in 2016 the anti-racist NGO SOS Racismo documented 309 cases of xenophobic violence; whereas the president of this organisation received death threats after reporting these cases and has condemned the lack of effective mechanisms to denounce these crimes;
- Z. whereas 19 people have been accused by the Francisco Franco Foundation, an entity that glorifies a dictatorship and its crimes, and the Franco family of several offences that could amount to 13 years of prison after carrying out a peaceful and symbolic action which involved unfurling two large banners from the Pazo de Meirás manor house calling on the public authorities to intervene to reclaim this property for the Galician people;
- AA. whereas the Spanish Congress of Deputies has adopted a motion to move Francisco Franco's remains from his tomb at the war memorial known as the Valley of the Fallen, a place of pilgrimage for the far right; whereas all remaining symbols or monuments exalting the military uprising, the civil war and Franco's dictatorship should effectively be removed and those that cannot be removed should be subject to the necessary contextualisation and reinterpretation, so that they may contribute to public awareness and remembrance of the past;

⁽¹⁾ <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-croatia/16808b57be>

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- AB. whereas the neo-Nazi Nordic Resistance Movement (NMR) regularly stages rallies throughout Scandinavia, chanting slogans and waving the organisation's green-and-white flags; whereas several members of the NMR have been convicted for violent attacks on civilians and the police; whereas the numerous arson attacks against refugees reception centres led the Swedish Government in 2015 to hide the location of buildings earmarked for housing refugees;
- AC. whereas every year on 16 March thousands of people gather in Riga for Latvian Legion Day to honour Latvians who served in the Waffen-SS;
- AD. whereas since the beginning of 2018 C14 and other far-right groups in Ukraine such as the Azov-affiliated National Militia, Right Sector, Karpatska Sich and others have attacked Roma groups several times, as well as anti-fascist demonstrations, city council meetings, an event hosted by Amnesty International, art exhibitions, LGBTQI events, women's rights and environmental activists;
1. Strongly condemns and deplores the terrorist attacks, murders, psychological violence, violent physical attacks and marches by neo-fascist and neo-Nazi organisations that have taken place in various EU Member States;
 2. Is deeply concerned at the increasing normalisation of fascism, racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance in the European Union, and is troubled by reports in some Member States of collusion between political leaders, political parties and law enforcement with neo-fascists and neo-Nazis;
 3. Is especially worried about the neo-fascist violence affecting society as a whole and targeting particular minorities such as black Europeans/people of African descent, Jews, Muslims, Roma, third-country nationals, LGBTI people and persons with disabilities;
 4. Strongly condemns all violent attacks by neo-fascist groups against politicians and members of political parties as reported in some Member States, and in particular the recent attack by CasaPound fascist squads against Eleonora Forenza, MEP, her assistant Antonio Perillo and others who took part in an anti-fascist demonstration on 21 September 2018 in Bari, Italy;
 5. Is deeply concerned by the impunity with which neo-fascist and neo-Nazi groups operate in some Member States and stresses that this sense of impunity is among the reasons that explain the alarming rise in violent actions by certain far-right organisations;
 6. Acknowledges the worrying trend of neo-fascist and neo-Nazi groups using social media and the internet to organise and strategise across the European Union;
 7. Deplores the fact that in some Member States public broadcasting has become an example of single political party propaganda, which often excludes opposition and minority groups from society and even incites violence;
 8. Recalls that the fascist ideology and intolerance are always associated with an attack on democracy itself;
 9. Calls on the Member States to strongly condemn and sanction hate crime, hate speech and scapegoating by politicians and public officials at all levels and on all types of media, as they directly normalise and reinforce hatred and violence in society;
 10. Calls on the Member States to take further measures to prevent, condemn and counter hate speech and hate crime;
 11. Calls on the Commission, the Member States and social media companies to counteract the spread of racism, fascism and xenophobia on the internet, in cooperation with the relevant civil society organisations at a national and international level;
 12. Calls on the Member States to investigate and prosecute hate crimes and to share best practices for identifying and investigating hate crimes, including those motivated specifically by the various forms of xenophobia;

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13. Calls on the Member States to envisage and provide for adequate support for the victims of racist or xenophobic crimes and hate crimes, and the protection of all witnesses against the perpetrators;
14. Calls on the Member States to set up anti-hate crime units in police forces; calls on police forces to ensure that their personnel do not engage in any form of racist, xenophobic or discriminatory act, and that any such act committed is investigated and those responsible brought to justice;
15. Calls on the Commission to launch a call for civil society organisations to monitor and report hate speech and hate crime in the Member States;
16. Supports, commends and calls for the protection of community groups and civil society organisations that fight against fascism, racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance;
17. Calls for consolidated EU anti-discrimination legislation, including the transposition/implementation of existing legislation and the passing of new legislation, including the Equal Treatment Directive;
18. Recalls that Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law, the implementation deadline for which was November 2010, provides for a legal base for imposing penalties on legal persons publicly inciting violence or hatred against a minority group, such as exclusion from public benefits, disqualification from commercial activities, placement under judicial supervision or the issuance of a winding-up order;
19. Urges the Commission to update its 2014 report on the implementation of the aforementioned Council Framework Decision, and to initiate infringement proceedings against those Member States that have not complied with the provisions of the Decision;
20. Urges the Member States to safeguard their compliance with the provisions of the Council Framework Decision, to counter organisations spreading hate speech and violence in public spaces and online and to effectively ban neo-fascist and neo-Nazi groups and any other foundation or association that exalts and glorifies Nazism and fascism, while respecting domestic legal order and jurisdiction;
21. Calls for full and timely cooperation between law enforcement, intelligence agencies, the judiciary and civil society organisations in the fight against fascism, racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance;
22. Calls on the Member States to follow the Council of Europe's recommendations on counteracting manifestations of neo-Nazism and right-wing extremism;
23. Calls on the Member States to provide mandatory, human rights-based and service-oriented in-service training to law enforcement officers and officials in the judicial system at all levels;
24. Calls on the Member States to focus on prevention through education, awareness-raising and the exchange of best practices;
25. Calls on the Member States and national sports federations, in particular football clubs, to counteract the scourge of racism, fascism and xenophobia in stadiums and in the sports culture by condemning and punishing those responsible and by promoting positive educational activities targeting young fans, in cooperation with schools and the relevant civil society organisations;
26. Encourages the Member States to provide training to those working in public broadcasting and the media to raise their awareness about the challenges and discrimination faced by the victims of neo-fascist and neo-Nazi groups;
27. Calls on the Member States to put in place national 'exit programmes' to help individuals to leave violent neo-fascist and neo-Nazi groups; underlines that such programmes should go far beyond one-to-one interventions and should involve long-term support for those struggling to find jobs, relocate and develop new and safe social networks;
28. Emphasises that an awareness of history is one of the preconditions for preventing such crimes from occurring in the future and plays an important role in educating the younger generations;

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29. Calls on the Member States to condemn and counteract all forms of Holocaust denial, including the trivialisation and minimalisation of the crimes of the Nazis and their collaborators; points out that the truth about the Holocaust must not be trivialised by political and media discourses;
30. Calls for a common culture of remembrance that rejects the fascist crimes of the past; is deeply worried that the younger generations in Europe and elsewhere feel less and less concerned about the history of fascism, and hence risk becoming indifferent to new threats;
31. Encourages the Member States to promote education through mainstream culture on the diversity of our society and on our common history, including the atrocities of World War II, such as the Holocaust, and the systematic dehumanisation of its victims over a number of years;
32. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Council of Europe, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the United Nations.
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