

Session 2: "Role of parliaments in the prevention of radicalization and hate speech"

9 September 2021 15:10 – 16:30

Dear...

The right to freedom of expression is one of the fundamental human rights contained in numerous international documents regulating the field of human rights protection.

As the right to freedom of expression is a relative right, its restrictions are permissible if they are prescribed by law, have a legitimate aim, and are necessary in a democratic society.

It is this right to freedom of expression, especially in recent times with the emergence of social networks, which is being massively abused through the expression of thoughts, ideas, attitudes and beliefs that threaten the rights of others.

This is supported by the fact that the fight at the European Union level against illegal content on the Internet is recognised as one of the key security challenges, especially after the terrorist attacks that took place in EU member states, where subsequent investigations revealed the misuse of the Internet and social networks in order to prepare an attack.

Of course, each country individually has its own strategy for combatting and preventing these problems, and also the specificity of the problems themselves.

Unfortunately, we in Bosnia and Herzegovina also face security risks and various forms of radicalisation and hate speech ranging from the departure of BiH citizens to foreign battlefields and their return from those same battlefields, through daily incitement through the media as well as facing a large influx of illegal migrants.

When we talk specifically about hate speech in BiH, there is a big problem that certain policies build their political rating on hate speech by publicly calling an entire nation criminal, or by placing the legitimate demands of one of the constituent peoples to elect their political representatives under the umbrella of a joint criminal enterprise.

With all the efforts made by states to respond to security challenges as successfully as possible, the role of parliaments is indispensable when it comes to creating legal solutions that contribute to solving problems when it comes to hate speech, radicalisation and other forms of security challenges.

Any legal solution must be the result of a consensus of key political actors participating in government so as not to prolong the crisis.

The best example of where certain legal solutions can lead to problems rather than solutions is the recent unilateral imposition of the BiH Law on Genocide Denial by the High Representative, which only deepened the country's political crisis precisely because such a legal solution is not the result of compromise.

But I believe that we will, above all as a society, know how to respond in the right way to all the challenges we face in order to reduce the impact of these negative phenomena on our security and the values of our democratic societies.

Thanks for your attention.