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**INACH's 23d Anti-Cyber Hate  
Summit - Driving Change -  
Navigating the Evolving  
Digital Landscape**



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## **International Network Against Cyber Hate – INACH**

INACH was founded in 2002 to use intervention and other preventive strategies against cyber hate. The member organisations are united in a systematic fight against cyber hate, for example as complaints offices, monitoring offices or online help desks. In their respective countries, they provide important contacts for politicians, internet providers, educational institutions, and users.

Funding for INACH is provided by its members, the European Commission, the BPB and other donors. The International Network Against Cyber Hate (INACH) unites multiple organizations from the EU, UK, Albania, North Macedonia, Israel, Russia, South America, and the United States. While starting as a network of online complaints offices, INACH today pursues a multi-dimensional approach of educational and preventive strategies.

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## Introduction

The INACH Annual Conference 2025, titled “Driving Change - Navigating the Evolving Digital Landscape”, was held on September 26th at the Rosslyn Central Park Hotel in Sofia, Bulgaria – hosted by the Bulgarian member organisation Multi Kulti Collective.

The event brought together around 75 participants, attending both in person and virtually. As digital spaces continue to shape political conversations and social norms, online hate is evolving at an alarming rate. Disinformation, AI-generated hate content, and politically driven manipulation are creating new challenges for human rights and democracy. In response, our network brought together experts, activists, academia and policymakers to tackle these urgent issues and explore solutions. The issues were viewed and discussed from different angles due to the diverse backgrounds of participants from academia, representatives of NGOs, civil societies, political institutions, other stakeholders and social media platforms, among others.

The conference featured a diverse agenda, including a keynote speaker, a presentation, three breakout rooms and two networking fairs to connect as many organisations, companies and individuals as possible. The keynote speech addressed how online hate is shifting, highlighting the latest trends and emerging threats. Presentations and breakout sessions provided deeper insights into the Digital Services Act (DSA), trusted flagger mechanisms, algorithmic transparency, and the industry's response to combating online hate.

The event emphasised the importance of collaborative global efforts in creating safer digital environments while navigating the complexities of the rise in disinformation, post-democracy crises and evolving forms of online hate.

## Conference Day – 26th of September



### Welcome Address

The conference was opened by our General Manager and moderator, **Tamás Berecz** and **Dr. Steffen Eisentraut** of the INACH Board. **Dr. Eisentraut** welcomed and thanked everyone on behalf of the INACH board and members for

attending. He iterated that we come together in challenging times. Democracies across the globe are under increasing pressure from authoritarian regimes and from the rise of radical and populist movements. Freedom of expression – one of our most cherished values – is caught in the crossfire. On the one hand, accusations of “censorship” and “cancel culture” are shouted whenever hateful positions are contradicted. At the same time, satire is silenced when it dares to mock those in power. All of this is happening in a climate of increasing polarization, amplified by social media, where opposing groups drift further apart, often with little room left for dialogue. These are strange times indeed – times we may have anticipated, but not with such speed and not with such intensity. **Dr. Eisentraut** reminded everyone that much is at stake. The way societies respond to hate online will shape not only our digital future but also the resilience of democracy and human rights offline. **Dr. Eisentraut** explained that he is proud of the diversity of our network:

‘We bring together people from many communities and backgrounds – including those who, like Muslim and Jewish communities, face prejudice, stereotyping, and hostility in very concrete ways. We unite European and non-European perspectives, activists and academics, practitioners and policymakers. Despite our differences, we are bound by a

universal commitment: a deeply humanistic, rights-based approach that affirms the dignity of every person.'

## **Keynote Speech - Mega tech and mega hate or how the new mega leadership transforms the digital era into post-democracy of escalating crises by Prof. Anna Krasteva**



**Prof.** Krasteva explains that crises in modern day society are often a construct. "If the crisis didn't exist, it would have been invented by populist/post-democratic leaders" – Sartre. Political leaders increasingly manufacture crises rather than resolve them. The Post-Democracy

society means not "anti-democracy" but a hollowing of democracy: institutions exist but serve small oligarchic circles. However, institutions risk becoming empty shells. The 3F's of Post-Thruth are very prominent and reshape politics and nations: Facts, Fears and Fantasies. **Prof. Krasteva** gave the example of Bulgaria, where citizens believed immigration was 11% (actual figure was 2% pre-Ukraine war). Post-democracy comes with Mega-Leadership. The weaker institutions become, the stronger leaders grow. From big leadership to mega leadership: for example, in the US the mega leadership consists of Trump and big tech. And this type of leadership shifts from managing crises to creating crises. There is a shift from evidence-based policies to values/identity-driven politics. It is the paradox of populism: the far-right emerged when democracy appeared consolidated, not when it appeared fragile.. Additionally, platform politics has led to fake news, emotional mobilization and algorithm-driven visibility. The platforms prioritize engagement over truth.

Finally, the word crisis has evolved from a marginal concept to a mega-metaphor. The classic crisis was objective, temporary and linked to institutional incapacity. But the populist or post-democratic crisis is often symbolic, performative, and with uncertain temporality. For example, the migration “crisis” is framed as a crisis of solidarity, not numbers. In her concluding remarks, **Prof. Krasteva** underlines the need to map the field of the fight against hate. Ethics of responsibility: “Our responsibility towards others makes our own existence meaningful.” – E. Levinas.

## **Talk - Resisting the normalization of digital surveillance by Udbhav Tuwari (Signal)**



**Udbhav Tuwari** explained that the mission of Signal is to make private communication accessible. Its ethos is that privacy is built into the design and nature of Signal. Communications are private — only sender and recipient can read them. It protects not only message

content but also metadata (when, where, group, location, etc.). Because metadata is often used for surveillance and tracking. Signal is open source: the code available on GitHub for public scrutiny. There are challenges to privacy:

1. Government demands:
  - Backdoors, traceability requirements — undermine encryption.
  - “You can’t build a house and hand the keys to the police.”
2. Client-side scanning:
  - Proposals to scan/report device content to authorities.
  - Creates a massive privacy invasion under the pretext of crime prevention.

Signal invests in research to ensure encryption withstands future quantum computing threats. AI-enabled chips can take screenshots of user activity. The concern is that private communications and interactions risk being recorded by default. The Signal countermeasure is a DRM-like feature that blacks out the screen if someone tries to screenshot a chat. The principle is that every digital interaction should not be permanently recorded. The risk is that AI agents are deployed on devices without adequate user control. The solution is that users must have the option to opt out. In his concluding remarks, **Tuwari** underlines that encryption is a critical infrastructure for digital safety and democracy, supported strongly by the cybersecurity community.

## Breakout room Sessions

### Room 1 - Changing societies - Rise of anti-Muslim racism, disinformation in the



### Romanian elections and gendered hate speech

Breakout room 1 was held by **Dunia Khalil** from INACH member organisation Dokustelle in Austria, and **Dr. Raluca Radu** from the

University of Bucharest. The session was moderated by Selma Muhic Dizdarevic (INACH & Charles University). **Dunia Khalil** explained that Dokustelle is a documentation and counselling center that focuses on human rights. Its mission is to make Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism visible, measurable, and actionable in Austria. They document cases of anti-Muslim incidents, publish annual anti-Muslim racism Reports. They monitor social media, news media, and political speeches. **Khalil** prefers to use the term anti-Muslim racism over Islamophobia or anti-Islamic hate as those imply fear or religious bias. Anti-Muslim racism focuses on power structures, systemic racism, and colonial legacies. Islamophobia legitimised through policy and public discourse.



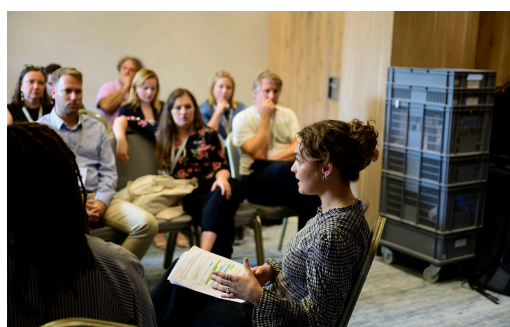
“Neutrality” laws (e.g., hijab bans) mask discriminatory intent. There is a lack of institutional accountability and persistent 'enemy image' of Islam. Austria ranked among worst EU countries for discrimination.

**Dr. Raluca Radu** explained the case study she carried out on disinformation in the 2024 Romanian Elections. In Romania there is a rise of the far-right with conspiracy-driven, Eurosceptic narratives. Since 2020, social media became the main source of news:

- Facebook – 64%
- YouTube – 56%
- WhatsApp – 56%
- Facebook Messenger – 54%
- TikTok – 31%
- Instagram – 27%

Candidate Georgescu’s campaign gained traction via bots and viral posts. There was widespread use of conspiracy content, memes, and movie quotes. The campaign surge occurred in the final two weeks before the election. No counter-campaign was mounted by centrist parties. Georgescu initially won, but after investigations, the election was re-run and he was disqualified. The event mobilized more voters and benefitted centrist candidates in the re-election. Lessons Learned: there is a need for AI-based monitoring systems across social and mainstream media to detect misinformation early. Importance of public awareness initiatives and PROMPT-style response mechanisms.

## **Room 2 - Changing collaboration - Best practice of strengthening networks**



### **between policymakers and NGOs**

Breakout Room 2 was held by **Elena Haig** from the European Commission and **Andrea Busetto** from Google. The session was moderated by **Rita Isiba** from INACH member organisation Zara in Austria.

During the session the speakers discussed how change is driven from their perspective. From EC's side, the collaboration with CSOs takes place on many levels: within the framework of the DSA, through the high level group on hate speech and the annual Monitoring Exercises. From Google's side, cooperation with CSOs continues. They adapt their policies to local expertise from CSOs. They also have invested in the CCOAH, which is a coalition on antisemitism. Google contributed to 600K in seed funding, bringing together a broad range of stakeholders working on antisemitism. According to Google it is important to fund these CSO initiatives. The breakout room was based significantly on a comprehensive, very interactive and dynamic Q&A session including questions from the public.

### Room 3 - Changing Responses - Innovations in legal frameworks, tech and the new



### right to appeal tech platform content decisions

Breakout Room 3 was held by **Arthur Treguier** from the European Commission and **Thomas Hughes** from the Appeals Centre Europe. The session was moderated by **Michael Wörner-Schappert** from INACH member

organisation [jugendschutz.net](https://jugendschutz.net). Arthur Treguier explained that one of the main aims of the DSA was to increase transparency. He explained the role of Trusted Flaggers under the DSA and the criteria for becoming a Trusted Flagger: expertise & competence and independence from any online platform. Once awarded, submitting notices for content they consider illegal to all online platforms that must be treated with priority. Once a year, Trusted Flaggers submit a report on their activities. The European Commission will soon publish its guidelines on Trusted Flaggers. **Thomas Hughes** from the Appeals Centre Europe explained the work they do. Under the DSA there is the possibility of out-of-court dispute settlement (Art. 21). A user must be located in the EU to raise a dispute, content should be visible in the EU but does not need to be created within EU

and can also concern events outside of the EU. The Appeals Center is relevant for INACH members:

- Individual redress – content removed or restored
- Systemic risks – identifying patterns and seeking product design changes
- Decision data – research and advocacy

## **Closing Remarks**

**Tamás Berecz** thanked everyone for attending the conference and announced that next year's summit will be held in Vilnius, Lithuania.