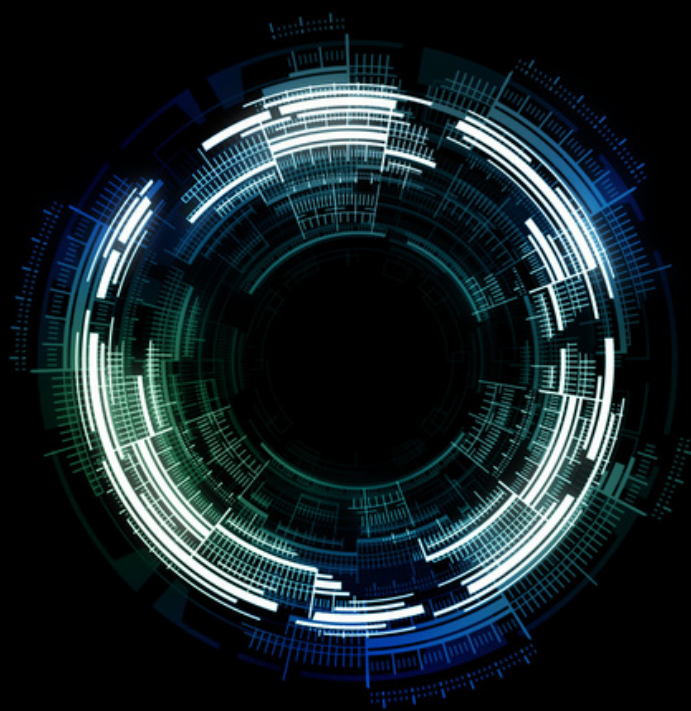


2024
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OSINT Report 9

PRIDE PARADE HATE WAVE

Monitoring homophobic contents in Italy



AN OPEN-SOURCE INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS

DEVELOPED BY:

CESIE - EUROPEAN CENTRE OF STUDIES AND
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<https://cesie.org/en/>

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ABOUT THE REPORT

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The OSINT Reports Series, of which this report constitutes the ninth release, has been developed with the aim of providing an overview of the potential applications, on a European scale, of open-source research and analysis methodologies in prevention and mitigation activities directed against a range of potential threats. Each report in the OSINT Reports Series will provide insights, gathered through open source intelligence, concerning a potential threat identified by Agenfor International Foundation with the support of public and private partners.

This report outlines the findings of a hate speech monitoring exercise conducted in Italy, focusing on the prevalence and trends of homophobic hate speech, intersectionality and the response of major social media platforms – Facebook and Twitter. The monitoring aimed to assess the effectiveness of reporting mechanisms and the removal of hate speech content.

Author: Dr. Maryna Manchenko, project manager and researcher - CESIE

Coordination & Revision: Viviana Gullo, OSINT Analyst, and Sergio Bianchi, Director – Agenfor International Foundation



INTRODUCTION

The UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech defines hate speech as “any kind of communication in speech, writing or behaviour, that attacks or uses pejorative or discriminatory language with reference to a person or a group on the basis of [...] their religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, colour, descent, gender or other identity factor.”[1]

There is no universal definition of hate speech under international human rights law.

But hate speech has been identified as a common “precursor to atrocity crimes, including genocide in many situations, from Rwanda to Bosnia to Cambodia”[2].

While there is currently no comprehensive global overview of online hate speech, both social networking platforms and organizations combating hate speech recognize the necessity for preventive strategies to address this detrimental online phenomenon. Although most instances of online hate speech target individuals based on ethnicity and nationality, there is a growing trend of incitement to hatred based on religion, class, gender, and sexual orientation.

Hate speech exists within the link between “freedom of speech”, individual, group, and minority rights, as well as principles of dignity, liberty, and equality. While there isn't a universally accepted definition, hate speech generally denotes expressions that incite harm, particularly discrimination, hostility, or violence, directed at a specific target based on their association with a particular social or demographic group. This encompasses speech advocating, threatening, or encouraging violent acts, but is not limited to such instances. Hate speech also encompasses expressions that contribute to a climate of prejudice and intolerance, operating under the assumption that such a climate may exacerbate targeted discrimination, hostility, and violence[3].



Tweet found through the OSINT platform: “those fucking homosexuals, they steal our children and our jobs. I can't stand those fucking faggots. They all have to die.”

METHODOLOGY

METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW

The research was conducted from June to December 2023 via an AI-powered OSINT system. It was based on the continuous (once per week) monitoring of social media, individualising hate speech content, analysis of the open social media posts that contained homophobic slurs and messages and reporting to the platforms.

The two platforms analysed were Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, and the second part of the research concerned platforms' reaction to the reports of hate speech, time of reaction and removal rate.

The research was conducted with the use of 4 main key phrases, discussed below.

KEY RESEARCH PHRASES

The research was focused on the manifestations of homophobia, particularly on the use of specific phrases containing derogatory language targeting the LGBTQ+ community, primarily using the term "frocì" (a derogatory term in Italian equivalent to "f**got").

Key phrases used for the continuous monitoring were:

- "frocì pride";
- "frocì di merda";
- "frocì morire";
- "frocì culo".

The initial intention of also using single slurs was reconsidered as it was extremely unrepresentative and contained many reposts, quotations and generally different type of content, which will be discussed in "Limitation".



Che vergogna...

@dolcegabbana siete **frocì** e coglioni... Da oggi tanti saranno felici **di** farvi male))) sono la vostra scelta, prostitute **di merda**
#DolceGabbana #putane

Tweet found through the OSINT tool: "What a disgrace...

@dolcegabbana you are faggots and cunts.... From today so many will be happy to hurt you))) they are your choice, you fucking prostitutes

#DolceGabbana #women"



RESEARCH PROCESS

The reports in the OSINT software were controlled once per 1-2 weeks. The posts containing key phrases and words were analysed, and those that contained hate speech were reported to the platforms as “Hate speech” (Facebook) and “Hate” -> “Slurs and tropes” or “Violent speech” -> “Incitement of violence” (X/Twitter).

The posts were screenshotted, coded, anonymised and also inserted into an Excel chart. The cart was later reviewed and updated based on the response from the platforms.

RESEARCH SAMPLE

From June to December of 2023 the researcher in charge of monitoring analysed the following number of posts:

- “froci di merda” – 4201;
- “froci culo” – 1320;
- “froci morire” – 95;
- “froci pride” – 1635.



LIMITATIONS

The limitations of the research included, but were not limited to, the following:

- big number of reposts and quotations of hate speech content that per se cannot be considered hate speech. One of the examples can be several quotations and reposts of a homophobic rant of Italian singer and musician Morgan, the former judge of Italian X-Factor, that was widely reposted and quoted for several weeks. Those reposts were actually criticizing his behaviour and choice of words, as well as X-Factor’s management's choice to not fire him at that time. Such episodes can definitely influence the research sample.
- word substitution – at some point, the word “froci” in research reports with the phrases “froci pride” and “froci carnevalata” which was later excluded from the research completely, was automatically changed to the word “frock”. Both of these reports became almost completely unusable due to the large number of unrelated contents.
- the wide spread of sayings such as “froci con culo degli altri” and subsequent platforms' “blindness” towards such content that will be further discussed in “Findings”.

- certain number of posts by the representatives of the LGBTQ+ community that use homophobic slurs in a positive, uplifting and empowering way, especially in the posts about the amount of people heading to Prides in certain cities etc.
- big number of posts and contents with the use of homophobic slurs on platforms such as Reddit, Fourchan, Vkontakte and on the dark web. These spaces were not monitored and analysed in this research.

All of these instances and episodes definitely influenced the number of cases that were available for the analysis.



@ [redacted] @ [redacted] Interista **di merda** tu e quella banda **di froci**

Tweet found through the OSINT platform against Inter football team supporter and their “faggots’ gang”



@ [redacted] Voglio sperare che si limiti alla **carnevalata** del pride, ma, cercando in rete, i segnali sono scoraggianti...

Tweet found through the OSINT platform: “@account I want to hope that it is limited to the pride carnival, but, searching the net, the signs are discouraging...”



Giovanni Molinari
@pfbid02rUaFLCAqMB7LZTeZFRizxqaBHqnKnYsMfmHt36pRoUpp4fCqofHadZg3W8i16XI

Carnevale avviene a Febbrsio . Non sapevo che Confindustria bellunese sponsorizzasse tale **carnevalata**



Facebook post found through the OSINT platform commenting the sponsorship of the Dolomiti Pride Parade: “Carnival happens in Febbrsio. I did not know that Confindustria Bellunese sponsored such a carnival.”

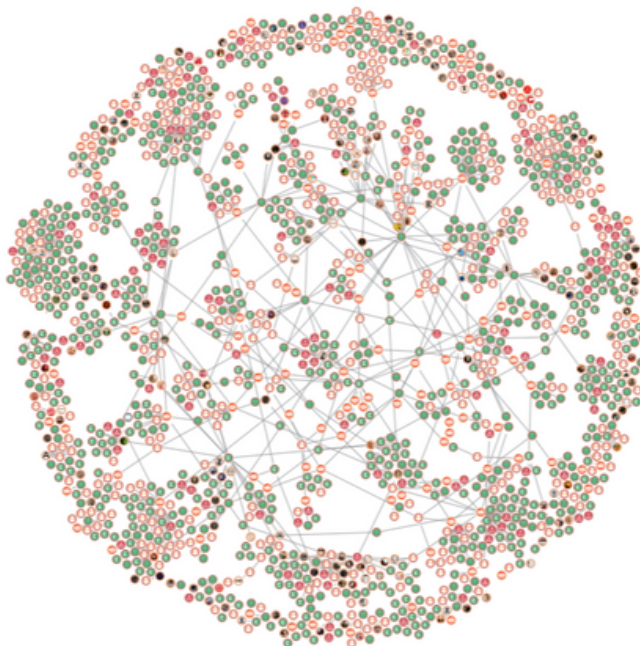
FINDINGS

STATISTICS

The following chart presents the number of posts found per platform and the number of posts analysed.

Table 1. Statistics per platform.

| | Facebook | X/Twitter | Youtube | Reddit | Other | Total |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|----------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| “froc di merda” | 114 | 456 | 4 | 3500 | 127 | 4201 |
| “froc culo” | 245 | 868 | 2 | 3 | 202 | 1320 |
| “froc morire” | 14 | 12 | 2 | 0 | 67 | 95 |
| “froc pride” | 1335 | 91 | 1 | 0 | 207 | 1635 |
| Total | 1708 | 1427 | 9 | 3503 | 603 | 7251 |



Linkchart created through the OSINT platform of the accounts using the keyword “froc di merda” [fucking faggots]

The provided chart details instances of the use of the research phrases across various social media platforms, specifically Facebook, X/Twitter, YouTube, Reddit, and Others (Vkontakte, Fourchan, dark web, Google search). Here's a breakdown of the key observations:

Facebook:

The term "froci di merda" received 114 instances on Facebook.

"Froci culo" had 245 occurrences.

"Froci morire" was relatively low, with only 14 instances.

"Froci pride" saw a notably high frequency, with 1335 instances.

X/Twitter:

"Froci di merda" had a considerably higher frequency on X/Twitter, totalling 456 instances.

"Froci culo" received 868 occurrences.

"Froci morire" and "Froci pride" had lower instances compared to Facebook, with 12 and 91 instances, respectively.

YouTube:

Instances of hate speech on YouTube were relatively low for all phrases, with only single-digit occurrences.

Reddit:

Reddit displayed a substantial prevalence of hate speech, especially for the phrase "froci di merda," with 3500 instances.

Other phrases had minimal occurrences on Reddit.

Other Platforms:

Other platforms collectively contributed 603 instances of hate speech across all phrases.

General Observations:

The total instances across all platforms amounted to 7251, indicating a significant presence of hate speech containing the term "froci"

As a result of the monitoring, 233 cases of homophobic hate speech were reported:

-Facebook - 16;

-X/Twitter - 216;

-YouTube - 1.

Other cases analysed in the majority of cases either couldn't be considered hate speech or were posted on platforms that were not considered in this research.

The majority of reported hate speech exhibited illegal elements, often mirroring patterns found in legal hate speech. The content frequently contained discriminatory language and harmful rhetoric.



TIMEFRAME

The number of cases varied from month to month:

- In July we reported 116 cases;
- In September – 19;
- In October – 3;
- In November – 48;
- In December – 46.

Due to the nature of the monitoring, the reports per month could include the contents created in the previous months as well.

Analysing this data, it is safe to conclude that June and July were the months in which the majority of hateful content was created. It can be partially explained by June being the Pride month and the fact that the majority of Pride parades are usually organised from June to September.

PREVALENT HATE SPEECH CATEGORIES AND INTERSECTIONALITY OBSERVATIONS

The most prevalent hate speech categories in the Italian sample were homophobic and transphobic, as well as related to sex and gender identity.

The primary intersectionality observed was between sexual orientation and various forms of racism, including mostly anti-black and anti-Arab racism, and anti-ziganist comments and posts. These categories align with topics commonly used in political far-right propaganda, where groups often repost homophobic, transphobic, and anti-minority content.

The intersection manifested in scapegoating content, blaming specific groups for societal issues.

Ribadisco il concetto siete dei Froci amanti dei mussulmani che vi faranno il culo e la pelle a breve termine.

[Translate post](#)

2:36 PM · Nov 18, 2023 · 25 Views

Tweet found through the OSINT tool: “To reiterate the concept, you Muslim-loving Faggots will have your asses and your skin soon”

Various forms of dehumanisation are used, as well as incitement to hate and violence.



un aspetto positivo dell'islamizzazione dell'europa
 è che i froci saranno sterminati
 (io ho amici omosessuali ma in tv si esagera
 pensate al messaggio della tv agli adolescenti:
 non serve studiare, prendilo in culo e sarai ricco e famoso...

[Translate post](#)

12:36 AM · Dec 3, 2023 · 7 Views

Tweet found through the OSINT tool: "a positive aspect of the Islamisation of Europe is that faggots will be exterminated (I have homosexual friends but on TV it goes too far, think of the message on TV to teenagers: no need to study, open your ass and you'll be rich and famous"

REMOVAL, FEEDBACK, AND REACTION

The removal rate was remarkably low, with only about 79 cases out of 233 reported instances on both Facebook and X/Twitter. This can be partially explained by the fact that we didn't use the trusted flagger channel and reported all of the cases from the usual user accounts. In some cases (X/Twitter) the response from the platform was "we acted accordingly", however, the posts are still online with the notice "May violate our standards" or "Withheld in Italy". However, we can still see those posts from Italy.

In the case of Facebook, we saw another anomaly - even though after the first or second report we received notices that the content was removed, it is still visible online without any warning or restriction.

X/Twitter generally provided feedback in less than 24 hours, while Facebook's feedback was slower, sometimes taking up to a week.

Several cases on both platforms received no feedback at all.

Restriction actions on X/Twitter were swift, typically aligning with feedback times. However, the effectiveness of these restrictions was questionable. Twitter initially removed hate speech content but shifted to applying restrictions, accompanied by a decline in review quality.

Overall, Facebook's restriction actions were not disclosed, making it challenging to assess their impact accurately. Facebook exhibited the lowest removal rate, and their handling of visual hate speech, such as ape gifs, raised concerns about content evaluation accuracy.

We also arrived at a disturbing conclusion that X/Twitter doesn't remove or restrict homophobic slurs in cases when they are applied in order to offend the voters of other political parties, football players or supporters of football clubs. One of the examples can be seen below.



Oggi a Reggio Emilia si è tenuto la reunion dei froci del PD ma solo che la piazza era piena di immigratis a portare le bandiere rosse per un tozzo di pane delle cop rosse pagate dai tutti i contribuenti italiani e poi stasera vi allieteranno la serata con i manici neri.

3 replies 1 like 157 views

Tweet found through the OSINT software: "Today in Reggio Emilia there was the PD faggots' reunion but only the square was full of immigrants carrying red flags for a loaf of bread from the red cops paid for by all Italian taxpayers and then this evening they will cheer you up with black handles"



>>18038 Le fonti sono il porcoddio di rapporto della FDA. E stato affisso 6 volte. mannaggia ai froci comunisti transessuali con la merda che gli cola dallo scroto spaccatro.

Tweet found through the OSINT software: "18038 The sources are the FDA's pigshit report. And it's been posted 6 times. damn transsexual communist faggots with shit dripping from their split scrotum."



LE PERSONE AL FALLIMENTO ... ED ECCO L'UNICA PRIORITÀ CHE DIO VI FULMINI FROCI DI MERDA 🍌

Post on VK found through the OSINT tool: "People are desperate... and this is the only priority... may God strike you down you fucking faggots"



Questo è il volto dei buonisti sinistroidi del cazzo, del politically correct .Andatevene a fare in culo . FROCI DI MERDA



Post on VK found through the OSINT software: "This is the face of the fucking leftist, politically correct do-gooders . Go fuck yourselves. fucking faggots"

CONCLUSIONS

High Prevalence: The study identified a substantial presence of hate speech instances - 7251 across various social media platforms, with peaks observed in June and July, coinciding with Pride Month.

Primary Hate Speech Categories: Homophobic and transphobic language emerged as the predominant categories, often intersecting with various forms of racism. This aligns with themes commonly used in political far-right propaganda.

Intersectionality Manifestation: The intersection between sexual orientation and racism was evident, leading to scapegoating content and blaming specific groups for societal issues.

Removal Challenges: The removal rate was notably low, with only 79 cases addressed out of 233 reported instances on Facebook and X/Twitter. Challenges were observed in the effectiveness of platform actions, particularly on Facebook.

Feedback Responsiveness: While X/Twitter generally provided feedback within 24 hours, Facebook's feedback was slower, sometimes taking up to a week. Several cases on both platforms received no feedback.

Anomalies and Concerns: Anomalies were identified, including instances where content remained visible despite removal notices, raising concerns about the accuracy of content evaluation. Another concern is that X (Twitter) apparently doesn't remove or restrict homophobic slurs in cases when they are applied in order to offend the voters of other political parties, football players or supporters of football clubs

Recommendations: The study highlights the need for improved strategies to address hate speech effectively, emphasizing ongoing monitoring, awareness campaigns, and collaborative efforts to create safer online spaces for diverse communities.

In summary, the research underscores the challenges in combating online hate speech, necessitating concerted efforts from platforms, policymakers, and advocacy groups to enhance response mechanisms and foster a more inclusive online environment.



REFERENCES

[1] UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech

[2] UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech

[3] Vittorio Lingiardi, Nicola Carone, Giovanni Semeraro, Cataldo Musto, Marilisa D'Amico & Silvia Brena (2019): Mapping Twitter hate speech towards social and sexual minorities: a lexicon-based approach to semantic content analysis, Behaviour & Information Technology, DOI: 10.1080/0144929X.2019.1607903



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