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## Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination

### Declaration to mark the International day for the elimination of racial discrimination, 21 March 2017

adopted on 20 March 2017

#### A manifesto for keeping the internet free from racial hatred

On the eve of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (21 March), the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) renews its commitment to combating racism and hatred in all their forms. The internet must become a safe public and private space for open and pluralist debates, where freedom of expression is fully respected.

The internet has unfortunately offered fresh outlets for hatred. Yet, the committee is convinced that everyone, all users and service and platform providers has a crucial role to play in complying with the rules and spreading greater respect for individual dignity and integrity on the web. The internet should be a platform for opportunity rather than a vehicle for danger, fear and hate.

In line with the Assembly's recent resolution on "Ending cyberdiscrimination and online hate", the committee urges member States, civil society and other relevant players to take measures to foster a common culture for the responsible use of the internet. Comprehensive strategies and countermeasures should be developed and implemented on a daily basis to prevent and tackle online hate speech, and combat the manipulation of information and public opinion.

The committee strongly supports initiatives against hate speech, such as those of the No Hate Parliamentary Alliance, as well as numerous civil society organisations and individuals who work daily towards a more accountable internet. More needs to be done to raise awareness of the need to resolutely combat online racism. For their part, governments and parliaments must enact strong laws to regulate online content and promote ethical conduct, providing for proper complaint systems and criminal sanctions to ensure that perpetrators are brought to account.