

## ***Racist Hate Speech in Spain: a 2018 case analysis –towards possible 'alternative narratives'***

### **Background**

This national report has been produced in the framework of the European project **Words Are Stones**, developed in six EU countries by the following organizations: Adice (F), Antigone (GR), Grenzelos (A), Kisa (CY) and the project coordinator Lunaria (I). Six national reports have been produced in all partners' countries. The main results will be compared and summarized in an international report.

The project Words Are Stones tackles racist political discourse as well as strategies to combat it. The project aims to:

- analyze political discourses that exacerbate xenophobia, intolerance and discriminations against immigrants, refugees and other minorities crossing the public debate;
- enhance the capacity of civil society organizations, European citizens and institutions to prevent and respond to hate speech;
- involve European youth in campaigns to counter hate speech;
- sensitize European politicians to promote intercultural dialogue, protection of human rights of all, and social pacific coexistence.

This national report is divided in five chapters. In Chapter 1 of the report, the Spanish context and legislation are introduced, as well as the working definition for 'hate speech'. In Chapter 2, the characteristics of 'political racist hate speech' in Spain are introduced, with its main targets, motivations and actors within the political arena. In Chapter 3, a selection of examples of political racist hate speech is presented, according to five racist narratives which were identified in the analysis of racist hate speech in 2018 in Spain. In Chapter 4, successful initiatives to counter hatred are presented, including reflections on the anti-racist and anti-discrimination strategies and alliances. In Chapter 5, the conclusions summarize the main findings of the report on political racist hate speech in Spain.



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## 1/ The Spanish national context

In 2018, hate speech has been an essential tool used by extreme-right parties and organizations to spread intolerance, racism, islamophobia, xenophobia and other forms of discrimination, in order to increase their supports and establish their own agendas in national debates.

Through false or misleading information, rumours or media manipulation, certain issues have been portrayed as issues of national crisis, generating alarmism and reactions based on fear, suspicion, rejection or even hate. Immigrants from the global South have been one of the most vulnerable groups targeted by this increasingly common racist hate speech.

In terms of representation of the extreme right in institutional politics, Spain used to be an exception in Europe. Before 2018, Spain was one of the very few EU countries where no extreme right-wing party had entered regional or national parliaments. In December 2018, this situation changed with the emergence of VOX -a relatively new extreme right-wing party<sup>1</sup>. The party entered the regional parliament in Andalusia (southern Spain region) after obtaining over 400.000 votes, which translated into 12 deputies in the regional parliament. VOX's extremist discourse fit perfectly within the rise of trans-national extreme-right populism across Europe, North America and Latin America.

### 1.1/ What has been the “VOX effect” so far?

The normalization of extremist speech in public debates in Spain has created a relative sense of legitimacy for their proposals, defended on principle of freedom of speech, even when political claims have represented a direct attack to democratic values.

The emergence of an extreme-right ultra-nationalist party has also provoked an important qualitative shift within the political spectrum; that is, parties of the traditional right, the centre-right and even the centre-left have shifted –up to different extents- their political discourses in that direction.

In other words, not only VOX has pushed a more extreme discourse at a national level, but also other political parties have aligned in this direction, in line with their own electoral interests. It can be discussed that, further than VOX's strict electoral results so far, this “VOX effect” can be seen as part of the party's (relative) political success.

Therefore, the challenges to face hate and discriminatory speech in Spain have become more complex, as it will be analysed throughout this report.

### 1.2/ Definitions and legal framework on hate speech

Definition of “hate speech” requires deep reflection, since its impact on individuals and groups cannot be ignored, even if its effects are largely underestimated.

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<sup>1</sup> VOX's electoral programme included proposals such as creating a wall between Ceuta/Melilla and Morocco, deporting migrants without documentation or even repealing the current Gender Violence Law, among many others (SOS Racisme, 2018).

Even though there is still no consensus on one single definition of what exactly “hate speech” is, what it has been agreed is that “hate crimes” attack *“identities of an individual and the communities s/he belongs. It is an attack against the essential nature of the victim/survivor, an attack against her/his individual and collective right to enjoy the exercise of rights and equal participation in society. Hate speech must be dimensioned from the violation of fundamental rights that supposes, affecting equality, dignity, freedom, political participation and freedom of expression”* (Serra, 2018).

Therefore, hate speech does not only impact and affect vulnerable collectives, but also an individual victim and her/his environment. Amongst its consequences, hate crimes can disturb mental and physical health of an individual (anxiety, stress, panic attacks, feel of lack of control and power, etc.) (Serra, 2018).

According to international law, the most important article regarding hate speech can be identified in Article 20 of the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) which states that *“any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law.”* Furthermore, the General Comment n°34 by the Committee on Human Rights indicates about specific response from the state, and what does “prohibited by law” means in terms of *lax specialis*:

*“The acts referred to in article 20, paragraph 2, must cumulatively (a) advocate, (b) be for purposes of national, racial or religious hatred, and, (c) constitute incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence. By “advocacy” is meant public forms of expression that are intended to elicit action or response. By “hatred” is meant intense emotions of opprobrium, enmity and detestation towards a target group. “Incitement” refers to the need for the advocacy to be likely to trigger imminent acts of discrimination, hostility or violence. It would be sufficient that the incitement relates to any one of the three outcomes: discrimination, hostility or violence.”* (PRISM, 2018).

These legislations put a ground-breaking responsibility on states to develop punitive law towards hate crimes. They also establish important differentiations of what “incitement” and “advocacy” imply, where “incitement” is directly related to an “act of discrimination”, which is in practical terms the main difference between the two definitions.

Another essential norm in international law that highlights and develops state responsibility on the prohibition of hate speech by law is to be found in Article 4 of the Convention for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (‘CERD’):

*“States Parties condemn all propaganda and all organizations which are based on ideas or theories of superiority of one race or group of persons of one colour or ethnic origin, or which attempt to justify or promote racial hatred and discrimination in any form, and undertake to adopt immediate and positive measures designed to eradicate all incitement to, or acts of, such discrimination and, to this end, with due regard to the principles embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the rights expressly set forth in article 5 of this Convention, inter alia:*

*(a) Shall declare an offence punishable by law all dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or hatred, incitement to racial discrimination, as well as all acts of violence or incitement to such acts against any race or group of persons of another colour or ethnic origin, and also the provision of any assistance to racist activities, including the financing thereof;*



*(b) Shall declare illegal and prohibit organizations, and also organized and all other propaganda activities, which promote and incite racial discrimination, and shall recognize participation in such organizations or activities as an offence punishable by law;*  
*(c) Shall not permit public authorities or public institutions, national or local, to promote or incite racial discrimination.” (PRISM, 2018).*

Therefore, it is clear that the understanding and specific the definitions of “hate crime and speech” have been highly developed in international legislative frameworks.<sup>2</sup>

In European law, the recommendation n°R (97) 20 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to Member States adopted on 30 October 1997 reiterates that “hate speech” should be understood as:

*“all forms of expression which spread, incite, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism or other forms of hatred based on intolerance, including: intolerance expressed by aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism, discrimination and hostility against minorities, migrants and people of immigrant origin” (Council of Europe).*

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) General Policy Recommendation n°15 on Combating Hate Speech – adopted on 8 December 2015 - defined “hate speech” as:

*“the advocacy, promotion or incitement, in any form, of the denigration, hatred or vilification of a person or group of persons, as well as any harassment, insult, negative stereotyping, stigmatization or threat in respect of such a person or group of persons and the justification of all the preceding types of expression, on the ground of “race”, colour, descent, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, language, religion or belief, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation and other personal characteristics or status.” (ECRI, 2018).*

These definitions can be considered to be the main guidelines to define hate speech at a European level. Yet, they use quite different approaches, and some problems can be identified. For instance, the ECRI definition includes forms of discrimination such as “gender identity” or “sexual orientation”, while the Council of Europe leaves those categories for a wider interpretation.

Also, the definitions previously quoted show some ambiguity and they are not specific about who are the subjects affected by hate speech or hate crime, or the circumstances, which makes a common categorization more problematic. However, in practical terms, **the particular punitive effects of hate speech depend on national legislation.**

At the state level, first of all, the 1978 Spanish Constitution is based on principles of democratic values, equal treatment and non-discrimination. The existing legislation towards anti-discrimination appears to be “broadminded”, as it has been described in PRISM Report about Spanish legislative frameworks (PRISM).

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<sup>2</sup> Other international legal resources also exist as reference, such as the American Convention on Human Rights.

An important legislative reference is Law 19/2007 against Violence, Racism, Xenophobia and Intolerance in Sports ("*Ley 19/2007, de 11 de julio, contra la violencia, el racismo, la xenofobia y la intolerancia en el deporte*", 11 July 2007), which includes some hate-related administrative offences such as insulting or showing banners, symbols or other signs with insulting or intimidating messages against any person on grounds of his or her racial, ethnic, geographic or social origin, religion, belief, disability, sex or sexual orientation, or harassing anyone on these grounds.

In this sense, the ECRI's extensive fifth report on Spain (2018) is essential in order to understand the advantages and disadvantages of the Spanish legislative framework on the matter. In general terms, the ECRI sees important positive developments and progress over time, but also identifies several problems regarding the Spanish legislation on hate crimes and hate speech – most of which will be briefly summarized below.

Since the '90s, the Spanish Criminal Code (from now on, "CC) includes articles that expressly penalize slander and insults (Articles 205 to 209) and attacks to honour and dignity (Article 173) and states increased penalties for threats that intend to frighten members of a "*population, ethnic, cultural or religious group or social or professional group or any other group of people*" (Article 170).

In 2015, the Spanish CC adopted ECRI's 7<sup>th</sup> General Policy Recommendation to persecute racism and racial discrimination through several articles that expressly penalize public incitement to violence or hatred. The most relevant action taken was the reformulation of Article 510, that criminalizes offences that attack people's dignity through "*humiliation, contempt or disparagement*" because of their "*belonging to an ethnic group, race or nation, national origin or sexual orientation*". Article 510.1.c CC criminalizes "*public denial, trivialization and glorification of crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity of against persons protected in armed conflicts*" –even if ECRI states that this Article can be problematic since elements of "incitement" of hate are hardly possible to prove.

Article 511 CC also makes reference to criminal offences for "*anyone in charge of a public service to deny a person a benefit to which he/she is entitled on the grounds of ethnicity or race, national origin, sexual orientation or gender*", what is punishable with disqualification from their professional activity, as Article 512 CC explicitly states.

The ECRI report on Spain highlights the above and other improvements, but also recommends including "*first, grounds of colour, language, citizenship and gender identity in all relevant provisions, two, criminalise the support for groups that promote racism and, three, criminalise all racial discrimination in the exercise of one's public office or occupation*".

Regarding civil and administrative law, Spanish frameworks work under several anti-discrimination provisions which are contemplated in the Spanish Constitution. However,



the Spanish Parliament has not adopted new legislation since 2016 such as the most recent UN recommendations presented in the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (even though several Spanish regional executives have adopted these recommendations on regional level).

With regards to cyber-hate, a new figure of “online police officers” has been adopted in Spain; however, according to ECRI’s report, this figure has difficulties to access social networks “private” information. Also, standard operation procedures and protocols have not been previously developed.

Furthermore, Spain ratified the “Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime” in 2015 regarding criminalization of xenophobic and racist acts in the cyber-space. A “Network of Centres of Assistance for Victims of Racial or Ethnic Discrimination” was developed with the aim of assisting them and gathering rigorous data collection for statistics on hate speech and hate crimes. However, the information collected by this network so far is still incomplete.

One of the main challenges of national legislations is to regulate the Internet in a globalised world. For instance, Law 34/2002 bans on-line discriminatory content, and the “Sinde Law” authorizes judges to close sites and block access regulating geographic location technology in order to control “information flows”. However, “Sinde Law” generated important controversy for the political instrumentalization and arbitrary use in terms of censorship.

Also, the Council for the Promotion of Equal Treatment (from now on, ‘CERED’), which was set up in 2009, presented a set of recommendations to avoid hate speech in election campaigns, which is a useful tool specially when developing resources to face public hate speech. However, as the ECRI states, CERED is not publishing annual reports since 2012; the institution has not appointed a new president since 2016; and it lacks infrastructure to operate regularly. Therefore, ECRI has shown its concern about the viability and functionality of the CERED, despite this agency being essential for the protection and assessment of anti-discrimination programs.

Besides, the Spanish Ombudsperson constitutes an independent institution that works to ensure equality and to proceed with investigations *ex officio* or on complaints of decisions of the public administration under the Spanish constitutional framework, what makes the Ombudsperson an important agent in terms of anti-discriminatory mechanisms.

Regarding hate speech and media, the “Federation of the Spanish Press” established a Code of Ethics for journalists which explicitly recommends how to deal with content that is “*discriminatory, refrain from referring in a derogatory or prejudiced manner to the race, colour, religion or social origin of a person and not publish such data, unless they have a direct connection with the published information*”. However, even if this Code of Ethics is

clear and straightforward, ECRI considers that it does not work as intended, and that Spanish institutions should encourage independent media through stronger self-regulatory agencies and media organisms, as well as extensive training programs for journalists and ground rules among these professionals.

Furthermore, an important network of prosecutors specialized in hate crime and hate speech was established in 2011 within the “Network of Delegate Prosecutors for the Criminal Protection of Equality and against Discrimination” (Ministerio Fiscal, 2018) for every Spanish region. The network aims to identify specifically hate crimes and their nature, since police investigations may not be able to reveal specific motivations regarding the origin of the criminal action, their categorization or they are not considered under the most suited labels as they should. The network also aims to develop a statistical assessment for early detection of discriminatory behaviours and exploration of quantitative data at state level and its evolution with which identify the most vulnerable groups as well as the intensity and frequency of these types of aggressions.

Furthermore, specific statistical data for monitoring and assessment is not easily accessible by the general public; and this is the reason why aggregated and extensive data for quantitative analysis is hard to obtain.

### 1.3/ Critiques and limitations

There are critiques to and limitations of the Spanish legislative framework. Since specific definitions for hate crime and hate speech do not exist in the Spanish legal system, there is not a common and shared framework, and the development of categories or “items” of discrimination types is a difficult issue for the actors involved (the police, the judges, the organizations and social services). Therefore, in terms of social and comparative research, **the lack of categorization is highly problematic**, and it interferes with comparability and analysis at international and national level (Serra, 2018).

Additionally, due to the lack of a common definition and in absence of international a specific and common legislative framework, **Internet platforms** (mainly social media platforms) **decide their own items and develop their own definitions**, which may have a big impact, in many cases of hate speech can end up being prosecuted through the actual criminal system<sup>3</sup> (Serra, 2018).

Relevant voices (lawyers, activists, NGOs, etc.) agree on the need of finding alternatives to the Criminal Code to fight hate speech and penalize the authors. Another problem highlighted by experts is **the lack of common criteria and understanding** for Spanish prosecutors to assess cases of hate speech. At this respect, a Circular from the General Prosecutor Office aimed to clarify this aspect is expected to be published soon.

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<sup>3</sup> Currently, the Spanish Criminal Code establishes up to four years of jail time for public hatred due to gender, race, religion or other circumstances.

Other legal actors claim the need of **an urgent legislative reform** mainly towards the previously described Article 510 of the Criminal Code that has been deeply questioned – amongst others, this is claimed by Miguel Ángel Aguilar (Prosecutor Coordinator of Hate Crime and Discrimination in the Provincial Prosecutor’s Office in Barcelona).

Finally, an important limitation on the Spanish legislative system is that, even though there seems to be improvements on documents, the practical progress is still far from being achieved, amongst other reasons, due to the **lack of resources, budget and political will to make ‘hate’ a political priority in the agenda.**

## 2/ Political racist hate speech in Spain

Expressions of hate speech in the political sphere have exponentially grown in the recent years, in line with the rise of extreme-right populism. In general terms, political speech often aims to reproduce mental frameworks that cannot be seen nor heard but are integrated in our understanding without even being aware of them, thus responding to historical, political, social and economic circumstances (Lakoff, 2004). Therefore, political hate speech reinforces specific mental frameworks that incite hatred against some vulnerable communities through an extensively articulated discourse with the aim of maintaining or increasing certain power dynamics locally, regionally or globally.

### 2.1/ Available data

On the basis of the information collected and published by the Spanish Ministry of Interior, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) presented a report on Spanish hate crime in 2018, with essential data on the typologies of discriminatory actions that were reported in 2016 and 2017, as “Table 1” shows below. As it is possible to observe, racist/xenophobic actions are the type of discrimination which was mostly reported (32,7% in 2017), followed by disability (20,6% that year) and ideology<sup>4</sup> (20,4%). The number of discrimination acts reported decreased slightly (particularly, reporting on racism/xenophobia decreased by 4%) in comparison to the previous year, but it is still on the lead.

Discrimination	2016	%	2017	%
Antisemitism	6	0,4%	7	0,6%
Aporophobia	11	0,8%	10	0,8%
Religious beliefs or practices	103	7,3%	47	3,7%
Disability	23	1,6%	262	20,6%

<sup>4</sup> It is important to note here that Spanish CC includes “ideology” among the reasons for incitement of hate crimes and discrimination. Any of the previously described legislative frameworks mention “ideology” and that is one of the reasons for misuse and misinterpretation of “hate speech” in Spanish prosecution system.

Sexual orientation or identity	271	19,1%	230	18,1%
<b>Racism/xenophobia</b>	<b>524</b>	<b>36,9%</b>	<b>416</b>	<b>32,7%</b>
Ideology	446	31,4%	259	20,4%
Sex/gender	35	2,5%	41	3,2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.419</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1.272</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 1 (ECRI 2017, pp.11)

According to these available data on hate crimes, men seem to suffer from more racist discrimination than women (ECRI 2017, pp.15). From the 1.272 registered victims of total hate crimes in 2017, more than 30% were committed against non-nationals, more specifically: 17% Africans, 8,2% Americans, 2,9% EU member states, 1,8% Asians and 1,1% other. By country of origin and nationality, most victims were Moroccan (12,5%) (ECRI 2017, pp.16). Regarding territoriality, the autonomous city of Melilla and the regions of Catalonia and the Basque Country appear to have the highest index of hate crimes recorded in 2017 (ECRI 2017, pp.13).

It is here essential to highlight that the number of discriminatory actions are the ones that have been registered; therefore, it cannot be discounted the possibility of an even higher number of actual discrimination actions. According to SOS Racism 2018 annual report, around a **52% of racist and discriminatory situations are not legally prosecuted** (and registered in official data) mainly because the victims' sense of lack of protection and mistrust towards the prosecution system (SOS Racisme, 2018).

The Spanish Observatory of Racism and Xenophobia presented an extensive and detailed report in 2018 analysing judicial sentences regarding hate speech in order to expose the advantages and disadvantages of the current legal system. The results that stem from the 83 cases analysed along 2014, 2015 and 2016 show important structural tendencies. Firstly, hate crimes and hate speech usually take place on the public sphere or on the internet. Secondly, they are mostly present in the administrative regions of Cataluña, Madrid, Castilla-León and Valencia. Thirdly, that they were mostly racist, xenophobic and homophobic expressions (Giménez-Salinas Framis, et al., 2018).

The report also highlights that the accused are usually Spanish (white) adult men and, most importantly, half of them were ascribed in a "political ideology". The victims, in turn, are mostly immigrant men from Africa or Latin America (Morocco, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Senegal and China), who constitute most part of immigrant communities (Giménez-Salinas Framis, et al., 2018).

Therefore, according to these data, racist and xenophobic discrimination is the most frequent, and Africans, and especially Moroccans, seem to be the most vulnerable group, which is not a casual fact.

## 2.2/ Systemic discrimination

Spain, being an "entering door" of migration flows to Europe from Southern borderlands (the autonomous cities of Ceuta, Melilla and the Canary Islands), is considered to be a "selective border", that is, a border which is opened to those who are financially capable of

recruiting the necessary documents or bribes in order to access Europe. Hence, the most vulnerable communities suffer from direct and indirect violent practices (SOS Racismo, 2017).

Just for instance, the situation in Melilla can be described as a humanitarian disaster since basic human rights are being violated systematically, not only in the border fence but also in the so-called Detention Centres for Migrants (CIEs or “Centros de Internamiento de Extranjeros”) where migrants that manage to cross the border end up retained. These detention centres do not attend migrant’s necessities, rights and assessments in order to proceed to a “safe” transition into the hosting society; on the contrary, they mainly end up establishing mechanisms for their deportation. **Interns suffer from traumatic vital experiences, abuses and are deprived from basic freedom and civil rights** as many Spanish civil society and human rights organizations overwhelmingly claim. As a result of these practices, at least three people have died in 2010, 2012 and 2013 only in the Detention Center for Migrants in Barcelona mainly due to medical irregularities (SOS Racismo, 2017).

Even if people do manage to regularize their administrative situation in the Spanish territory, **institutional police violence and ethnic/racial profiling has been normalized** in public spaces, as well as the disproportional force applied, in alleged “security” preventive measures. In this regard, the UN Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent has reported important concerns regarding racist abuses in Spain, and it is affirmed that people of African descent “*are constantly taken by undocumented immigrants and detained much more often than people of other ethnic origin in the controls of public roads and without security problems*” (Europa Press, 2018). It is added that these practices “*not only discriminates against foreigners and Spanish citizens belonging to ethnic minorities but also feeds racism, since those who witness these interpellations take it for granted that the victims develop criminal activities*” (Europa Press, 2018).

With regards to unaccompanied foreign minors (MENAs or “Menores Extranjeros No Acompañados”), according to the latest available data in October 2018, the number of unaccompanied minors in Spain were up to 12.500, mainly coming from Morocco, Algeria, Guinea, Ivory Coast and Niger (La Vanguardia, 2019). Many youngsters decide to undertake a journey to the European coasts only to find lack of resources, assessment or/and legal protection. Only **one of every four of them end up regularizing their situation** –whilst others wind up in situations of **social and economic exclusion or they are forced to homelessness** (SOS Racismo, 2017).

According to the Spanish Organic Law of Minor Judicial Protection, “age tests” are accepted as tools in order to determine the minor’s ages when official identity documentation is missing, or it is under suspect of falsehood. Under those assumptions, which have been highly controversial, there has been a misuse of medical reports, since too many reports were issued in order to dismiss their applications. Hence, when their

asylum applications are (mostly) revoked, the minors end up **completely unattended and marginalized from the education system, health or housing**. Besides, some minors can even end up in Detention Centers (CIEs) and, therefore, exposed to Children's Rights violations (SOS Racismo, 2017).

Thus, the commonly named "unaccompanied foreign minors" are not treated as what they are -children- but as "foreign", and as a consequence they end up suffering from the same racist and discriminatory dynamics as an adult migrant in an irregular or regular administrative situation and have to face many structural difficulties but with even less resources.

In this sense, the so-called Spanish "Aliens Act" (Ley Orgánica de Extranjería, 4/2000) allegedly regulates "rights and liberties" of immigrants in Spain. However, it has been described as the **architectural support of institutional racism**, increase inequality and even violates Human Rights. From this legislative framework, migrants are conceived purely as a labour force, since a residency permit is only related to a working permit. Yet, in order to find a job with basic conditions it is required an official residency permit, which creates a regulatory gap that many have to precariously manage and suffer its consequences. Any attempt to regularize one's administrative situation in Spain becomes a –not casual– bureaucratic odyssey (Mazkarian, 2013).

Also, the asylum system in Spain is not exemplary either. In 2018 only 12000 applications were resolved; **only three of every four asylum applications were positive**, and the waiting period can last around two years in the best-case scenario (Martín, 2019).

All things considered, the aim with these previous insights is to show that racism and xenophobia in Spain are **not occasional: they are institutional, structural and systematic**. Migrants and most vulnerable communities are constant object of hate speech, used and misused for political interests without accountability. As far as this report is concerned, the concept "political racist hate speech" is used since it is understood that some social minorities and racialized people are important political targets of a growing social phenomenon.

### **2.3/ From historic roots to the main targets**

Even though it is not the aim of this report, it is here considered highly relevant to acknowledge that hate speech come from a deeply rooted colonial history. 1492 is the year of the so-called "discovery of America" by Cristobal Colón, but it is considered the beginning of Spanish imperialist expansion in South-America, north-Africa and some parts of Asia to impose a new colonial -political, social and economic- hegemony, the consequences of which last until today; this presumably civilizing mission established a long last supremacist order expressions translated into today's structures (Mignolo, 2006).



For instance, the expulsion of Jewish population from Spain through the Alhambra Decree in 1492 characterized a clear **anti-semitic** tendency which reproduces a jew-hate in common language, expressions, media and social networks; also marks the clear anti-jewish history in Europe as well. Furthermore, what anti-Semitism provoked during the 20<sup>th</sup> century is one of the worst genocides of European contemporary history. That is why anti-Semitism and The Holocaust are covered in scholar curricula, deeply studied and regulated through Spanish Education Law as an indispensable knowledge in public schools; even if this does not totally prevent from anti-Semite practices to be found in public discourse. (Mignolo, 2006); (SOS Racismo, 2017).

Also, **anti-moors** (“*anti-moro*”) discrimination is closely related to stereotypes about the “*moros*” (pejorative term for people from the Maghreb), based on perceptions according to politic-historical views -from Al-Andalus era until today- as barbaric, non-civilised Arabs/Muslims who are allegedly ontologically incompatible with the Spanish/catholic nature of the “empire” (Bourekba, 2018).

Thus, Muslims do not seem to be conceived apart from a “religious identity” that **puts in danger Western Christian civilization**, which therefore causes Islamic practices -such as a headscarf or even a mosque- to be categorized as “problems”. In addition to this, because of a developing a “jihadist threat”, Muslim communities are used by political figures and the media in order to highlight a **fundamentalist nature of Islam** that fits in centuries of reproduction and development of stereotypes in several historic contexts of the Iberian Peninsula (Bourekba, 2018).

But these (racist) frameworks are also put in practice in institutional spheres, causing important harm to vulnerable groups. This prejudices and stereotypes take part in bureaucratic and institutional discrimination and they are reproduced in social, political and economic exclusion. Political and public authorities disapprove Islamic-religious practices or the supposedly “islamization” of Western society, and not only in the extreme right but also in many segments of the Spanish left (through paternalism or cultural relativism).

For instance, the construction of **mosques** has been highly problematic in many points of the country due to lack of knowledge of Islam. According to a survey in 2001, 41% of Spaniards thought Muslim supported extremist ideologies and another survey in 2006 showed that 83% of surveyed people perceived Muslims as fanatics (SOS-Racisme Annual Report 2007).

‘Gender islamophobia’ is also an important form of discrimination that affects **Muslim women**, who are affected not only by racist discourses but also by white paternalistic hegemonic feminisms which consider the hijab a symbol for women’s oppression and subordination. In this regard, for instance, around 70% of pieces of news regarding Muslim women in Spanish mainstream media in 2017 were Islamophobic (Khair Allah, 2018).

Furthermore, **migrant women** are an important vulnerable group that remain in the intersection of many discriminations; because of their gender and foreign origin, but also often coming from a low socioeconomic position and from another “culture” or “religion”. For instance, in Spain, domestic workers are mostly women, foreign and lack social protection and/or legal documentation and, consequently, suffer from precariousness (long and intense working journeys, lower salaries, abuses and gender violence). Important grassroots organizations and unions such as “*las Kellys*”, “*Sindillar*” (among many others) claim rights for domestic workers establishing a national labour agreement (SOS Racismo, 2017) and demand the repeal of the Spanish “Aliens Act” -as mentioned before- which is the main obstacle to regularize their situation.

Moreover, discrimination to **Roma population** is present in every European country and it is considered the first ethnic minority. In Spain, Andalusia (southern Spain) is the region where Roma population is mostly present. The community suffers important negative prejudices and rejection by the non-Roma Spanish population –similarly to the Muslim community- and they are systematically excluded from social and economic resources (SOS Racismo, 2017).

All in all, the identified main targets of racist discrimination and hatred are the Muslim communities –and, more specifically, of Moroccan origin-, being Muslim women vulnerable to an extensive intersection of discriminations (due to gender, origin, culture or religion and low socioeconomic background); communities of Jewish confession; the Roma population; immigrants, including unaccompanied foreign minors –who face significant discriminations through bureaucratic dissuasions and socioeconomic marginalization- and including also refugees and asylum seekers.

## 2.4/ Political actors

Looking at the public sphere, it is important to recognize that hate speech is being incrementally normalized in Spain, since far right parties have extended their influence across Europe and Spain is no exception. In 2015 European Elections, the extreme-right political party VOX started to agglutinate wider support based on a clear anti-immigration discourse. Also, the extreme-right party National Democracy (“*Democracia Nacional*”) got the media attention in 2016 when they decided to join far-right political organizations (in Spanish, *Plataforma por Cataluña*, *España 2000* and *Partido por la Libertad*) in 2016 in order to establish a Spanish National Front (imitating Le Pen’s National Front) called “*Respeto*”, the development of which is still unclear. In their foundational congress, Tatjana Festerling (leader of the German far-right party *Pegida*) attended the event.

Furthermore, the organization ‘Social Home Madrid’ (*Hogar Social Madrid*, in Spanish) is also a prominent far-right organization, inspired in the Greek far right party “*Golden Dawn*”. They are known for strong anti-Muslim claims, anti-immigration and ultra-nationalist propaganda (SOS Racismo, 2017).

But racism in public discourse is not only present in the extreme-right organizations, since it is not unusual for some Spanish politicians to use racist and xenophobic discourses. The major right-wing party, the Popular Party (Partido Popular), has been subject of important controversies. For example, as it will be explained later on in more detail, Javier Maroto (PP politician in the Basque Country) publicly stated that immigrants do not want to work or integrate but live off social benefits or, in Catalonia, Xavier Garcia-Albiol who has delivered racist, xenophobic and “islamophobic” expressions in different occasions.

Therefore, the following chapters will describe and analyze political hate speech in Spain, not only from the extreme right political figures but also the conventional or traditional Spanish parties, from left and right spectrum. Hence, it is important to take into account all these particular legislative, historical, social and political insights in order to understand the dimensions of political hate speech in the Spanish context, as well as the active counter-narratives and ‘alternatives’ that the diversity of social and political movements are articulating in Spain.

### **3/ Examples of political racist hate speech in Spain and main narratives identified**

Methodologically, for the purposes of this report, a small selection of sixteen cases of political hate speech has been made as somehow representative or paradigmatic, out of a bigger pool of cases occurred in 2018. Although these few cases below cannot be representative of all political racist hate speech occurred in 2018, they show the terms and conditions in which hate speech occurred, and thus illustrate how certain racist narratives (re)emerge, are produced and reproduced over time by political actors.

As far as political racist hate speech is concerned, **five main narratives have been identified** after the 2018 case analysis, namely: narratives on the immigrant invasion; narratives on the economic costs associated to immigrants and refugees; narratives on insecurity and crime linked to migrant and non-white ethnic groups; narratives on the threat of Islamist terrorism; and also narratives on cultural and/or civilizational incompatibility. These narratives are represented as follows:

- #Invasion
- #EconomicCosts
- #Insecurity
- #IslamistTerrorism
- #Incompatibility

Each case of political racist hate speech is explained below in relation to the main narrative that it illustrates. After the cases highlighted, the analysis of each narrative is presented.

#### **3.1 Narratives on invasion**

## Pablo Casado's first declarations on immigration

Narratives on: #Invasion

Timeline: 29 and 30-July-2018

The 2018 elected president of the Popular Party and leader of the opposition in the Spanish Parliament, Pablo Casado, pronounced himself on immigration issues. By alleging “political incorrectness”, Casado resorted to hoaxing, like in the following Tweet:

“It is not possible that there are [residence] papers for all, nor is a Welfare state sustainable to absorb the millions of Africans who want to come to Europe and we have to say it, even if it is politically incorrect. Let us be honest and responsible with this issue.” (Pablo Casado’s Tweet on 29-07-2018).

Firstly, saying “millions of Africans” not only is it false, but it is recurring to the ‘**migratory crisis’ alarmism**, by magnifying the numbers and scale of the would-be problem. Secondly, saying that African immigrants would need to be “absorbed” by the Welfare State, is a rhetoric mechanism that transforms persons into numbers (that is, costs). The phrase implies the hoax that immigrants would mean **costs rather than benefits** for the State.

Casado’s declarations and position on immigration continued those days, also with the politician’s visit to the autonomous city of Ceuta on 01-08-2018, where he shook hands with black African immigrants who had recently crossed the border.

Right before Casado, another conservative leader visited the city of Ceuta on 30-07-2018, and that was Albert Rivera, president of the right-wing party Ciudadanos. In Ceuta, Rivera visited the fence in accompanied by José Luis Gómez Salto, the chief colonel of the local command of the Civil Guard, and ultimate responsible for the border control in Ceuta.

Rivera made declarations in which he commented that the Aquarius vessel (recently arrived in Valencian shore, which was made possible by the Spanish president, Pedro Sánchez) supposed a “**call effect**” of immigrants.

Rivera also mentioned that the current government was inattentive to the phenomenon of immigrant flows arriving to the Southern border –and he situated **migratory fluxes** as currently being **one of the main problems** in Spain. The politician also asked for more resources and technology in order to control the border where, according to his declarations, “continuous assaults with virulence” take place.

In addition, Albert Rivera stated that he considered **legal and legitimate the practice of “hot deportations”** at the border within the 2015 Citizen Security Act. This law foresees the “rejection or return on the border” as one of the actions that the security forces can perform. Nevertheless, this practice taking place in Spain was condemned in 2015 by the European Court on Human Rights for being considered a flagrant violation of human rights. Also in 2018, the European Council denounced that “hot deportations” contradicted the European directives on the matter.



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Rivera and Casado's visit to Ceuta and their respective declarations showed efforts to deslegitimize the government actions of who was at that time the new president, Pedro Sánchez (PSOE), whom had previously facilitated the disembark of the Aquarius vessel on 17-07-2018 in Valencia (Spain), after the unwillingness of the Italian government to take the vessel with hundreds of immigrants aboard.

#### Pablo Casado on illegal immigration and "incompatibilities"

Narratives on: #Invasion #Incompatibility

Timeline: November 2018, pre-electoral campaign in Andalucia, with the emergence of VOX. Declarations made by Casado on 24-11-2018 in Granada.

On 02-12-2018, regional elections took place in Andalucia, a traditional PSOE-governed region. Besides the concurrence of the extreme-right party VOX in this election, right-wing parties namely PP and C's made the immigration issue very present in their pre-electoral campaigns.

The weeks before the elections, several meetings and declarations were made by the president of the Popular Party, Pablo Casado, from Andalusian cities such as Huelva or Granada.

Casado criticized the 'papers for all' "in which everybody can come, without having any responsibility and without agreeing with the values of the Spanish Constitution". The PP president used an informal expression with the metaphor of the **strainer** ("coladero") (ABC, 19-11-18 in Isla Cristina, Huelva).

Casado also stated that "there is no room for everybody who wants to come to Spain", and that **the space in Spain "is not unlimited"** (24-11-2018 in Granada).

Casado emphasized that it is "absolutely obligatory to respect the principles and values of the Spanish legislation". "And if not, I am very sorry... But **it is not compatible that some unbearable practices**, such as ablation, or some beliefs that end in violent radicalisation, have a place in Spain." (Isla Cristina, Huelva, on 19-11-2018).

Pablo Casado stated that either immigrants respect "Western customs, or they have come to the wrong country". Immigrants who want to "enjoy the social benefits without respecting" the Spanish customs, the law or the Constitution are in the wrong country, and specified: "There is **no clitoris ablation here, there is no killing of the rams at home** and here there is no problem of citizen security", Casado stated (24-11-2018 in Granada).

#### VOX's emergence in Andalucia: playing with fear

Narratives on: #Invasion

Timeline: 2018 (pre-electoral campaign in Andalucia for the 02-12-2018 regional elections)

The extreme-right wing party VOX was founded in 2013 after a scission from the Popular Party (PP). Santiago Abascal Conde has been its president since 2014. VOX achieves important visibility due to its active role against the Catalan pro-independence struggle, especially by being the popular accusation in the trial against the former Catalan executive and the Bureau of the Catalan Parliament after the Catalan referendum for independence celebrated on 1st October 2017.



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VOX emerges in the Spanish region of Andalusia, a region which goes through elections on 02-12-2018. Before, the party barely had representation in few Spanish municipalities. In this elections, VOX achieves 12 seats in the Andalusian Parliament and the party will govern together with the two big right-wing parties, namely PP and Cs, that is it becomes part of the regional executive.

The party stands out for its populist discourse, its nationalism/patriotism, Euro-skepticism, anti-immigration discourse, anti-Catalanism, authoritarianism, anti-feminism (and defense of the values of the traditional family; and pro-Christian positions. These can be distilled from the party's document "100 measures" (as well as declarations and communications in the social media, as in the Tweets below).

Immigrants, Muslims and racialized peoples have been VOX's clear targets. Amongst the measures proposed by VOX, we can find the following:

- >Deportations: hard measures against irregular entries and irregular stays of immigrants, leading to deportations.
- >Persecution of street vendors.
- >Higher demands for nationalization processes.
- >Immigration subordinated to economical needs; immigration quota favouring cultural proximity/relations (eg. "nations of the hispanic historical community").
- >Measures against "fundamentalist" mosques.
- >Construction of border walls in Ceuta and Melilla.
- >Law and order measures, also in the border regions, and protection of public order forces and authority.
- >Suspension of the Schengen Area.
- >Strengthening the national justice system (over European courts).
- >Strengthening the national legislative power (over European policy).

The following are two examples of tweets by the party and its president:

"VOX is currently travelling to Ceuta to support the Civil Guard and the Police in defending our borders and to **demand the immediate expulsion of illegal immigrants** and the construction of a wall that makes their assault impossible. #UsefulVOX #SecureBorders" (VOX Tweet on 26-07-2018)

"NO to the migratory invasion:

- Secure Borders.** Wall in Ceuta and Melilla
- Borders defended. Anti-riot material for CG [Civil Guard] and Police
- End of social help** to those who illegally enter Spain. **Immediate deportation**
- Illegalization of NGOs accomplice to human trafficking" (Santiago Abascal Tweet on 10-08-2018)

'España 2000' calls for a demonstration in Valencia against the vessel Aquarius

Narratives of: #Invasion

Timeline: June, July, August 2018

'España 2000' is an extreme right-wing Spanish party with very little political presence in the Valencian Community and the community of Madrid. Due to the arrival of the vessel



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Aquarius on 17-August-2018, this neofascist party called for a demonstration in the port of the city of Valencia against the reception of the refugees. The call received the attention of the mainstream media. The call to the demonstration did not succeed, since only about 100 people took part of it –although it needed a large security device. However, this failure was not picked up by the media subsequently.

During the demonstration, the leader and founder of the party José Luis Roberto made declarations in which he said: "the NGOs are **criminal accomplices, doing like taxis**"; "they are not drowning there"; "**fags** ["mariquitas"] do not know that **people like them** stone them or throw them by the window"; or "on the Aquarius ship, these have proceeded to **rape** women every time they wanted, and these [rapists] are the ones that are going to be brought here"; and he asked for "social help only for nationals". He spoke of "**invasion**", referring to the people aboard the Aquarius as "negritos" or "moritos" ("we demonstrate against this invasion, against these *moritos* that come").

During the two months following the arrival of the Aquarius vessel in Valencia, a minimum of eight xenophobic attacks were recorded. These attacks occurred against entities and groups that defend the immigrants' rights, as well as against the Great Mosque of Valencia.

These attacks did not achieve public visibility in the press until mid-October when around 60 social and civil entities of the Valencian Community launched a campaign of collective denunciation, which was reported in the regional press only.

#### Invasion through substitution

Narratives on: #Invasion

Timeline: 2018

Closely related to the idea of an invasion, narratives of '**substitution**' of the population have happened. The following examples, which are declarations from VOX's leader Santiago Abascal and tweets by the Andalusian leader Francisco Serrano-Castro, are explicit in this terms.

"We don't want Spain to be like the rest of Europe. **We do not want that 4% of Muslims in Spain, whom may be a friendly minority for some, to become a problem.**

We don't want it to happen to us what happens to France, [a country] which, according to the current demographic growth of Muslims and of those who are not, will have **more than 50% Muslim** population in the year 2049. It is possible that our countries of the north and the south are countries of Muslim majority in 20 years." (Santiago Abascal declarations on 14-04-2018 in Gran Canaria)

"The birth rate of the Spaniards is located at 1.1%. The minimum rate for generational replacement is 2.5, and **the worst is that Muslims have a rate of 8.4%**. In addition, in the face of massive immigration which is being promoted, the index [i.e. the Muslim birth rate] will increase, so **Spain will no longer be Spain** in a short time." (Francisco Serrano Tweet on 02-09-2018)



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“A Europe where children are not born and which **doubles its demographics by substitution** of immigrants and refugees, in 30 years will **lose its identity**.”  
(Francisco Serrano Tweet on 21-09-2018)

### #Invasion

Hate speech narratives on the invasion by (black) African immigrants have used many natural metaphors in order to convey the **urgency** to deal with something **massive, uncontrolled** and even uncontrollable –the so-called migratory **crisis**. Expressions such as waves, tides, avalanches or tsunamis have been used, as well as «mass arrivals», to refer to the immigrant political resistance to Fortress Europe and the EU deadly (necro)politics over its land and sea borders.

The humanitarian actions of sea rescue boats and NGO assistance in the border regions has been **criminalized** by the extreme right and right-wing parties such as Cs, PP and VOX, all of which have shown their **support to the army** and the police forces in the Spanish enclaves in the African continent in their task to protect or shield the Spanish/Moroccan border.

Closely related to the idea of a foreign invasion, conspiracy **theories of “re-Islamization”** of society, or the ‘**substitution**’ of the population by demographic (generational) replacement, have also spread, leading towards a ‘progressive extinction’ –especially in extreme right wing circles such as VOX, DN or HSM.

## 3.2 Narratives on economic costs

### Anti-gypsyism and the denial of social rights

Narratives on: #EconomicCosts

Timeline: December 2017

In autumn 2018, recordings of the politician from the Popular Party Manuel González Capón were made public, in which he had expressed racist comments towards the **gypsy community**. These statements had happened in December 2017, time when the politician was a provincial deputy for the Popular Party and the mayor of the small town named Baralla (situated in Galicia).

González Capón said that "low social classes are the ones who have children **since they do not care for them**," adding that "Without despising them, **gypsies do not care whether they have six or seven** [children]", and "if they could, every three months it was born one".

These statements by Gonzalez Capón were made during the discussion on the enlargement of **social help for families** with new-borns, a measure that did not move forward, during the approval of the 2018 budget (a municipal plenary session that took place on December 2017).



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These statements went unnoticed in the Spanish press until October 2018. The Socialist Party (PSOE), the opposition leader party of the town, had recorded these comments and then made them public in order to denounce on-going irregularities of the minutes of the municipal plenary sessions in the town. With this event, the mayor's declarations achieved a broader audience.

It can be added that, in 2013, Manuel Gonzalez Capon himself being the mayor of Baralla had made declarations in favor of Franco's dictatorship, and showing his support with the murders committed during the dictatorship –a glimpse of how fascist and anti-gypsy narratives intersect.

This case shows the absence of local counter-narratives in rural contexts where the municipal government is in the hands of conservative parties –in this case, the Popular Party. In contexts like the small town of Baralla, racist hate speech is left unpunished.

The consequences of this **anti-Gypsy discourse** at a local level are those of **denying access to the welfare state** to the Gypsy collective, which is **considered dependent on the welfare system**. In short, by using this discourse and narrative, a **denial of legitimate social rights** to the Gypsy community is put into practice.

#### Limited Welfare system

Narratives on: #EconomicCosts

Timeline: 19-November-2018 in Cartaya (Huelva)

In November 2018, Pablo Casado advocated for an immigration model linked to (temporary) work contracts, and criticized Sanchez's "papers to all" -an argument which would "be used by the human beings exploitation mafias". Casado went on: "While the Government recognises that it has to apply the Citizen Security law so that there can be devolutions on the border, or not to remove the protection elements in the fences of Ceuta and Melilla, at the same time they want to repeal the 2012 PP law that precisely does guarantee universal health in emergencies or in gynecology for issues such as childbirth". Besides, Casado said to be "**impossible to open the entire Spanish health system to irregular immigration** or sanitary tourism", which "has cost more than one billion euros per year" to Spanish public coffers. "The [Spanish] **Welfare system is not unlimited**", said Casado (declarations on 19-11-2018 in Cartaya, Huelva -*El Periódico*).

These declarations go further in providing fake data and an erroneous relation of ideas, as it has been proved that the expenses on the health system (the so-called "sanitary tourism") are related to EU immigrants instead of the non-EU or irregular immigrants.

#### Political hoax on who receives social benefits

Narratives on: #EconomicCosts

Timeline: 16-December-2018

In a TV interview on December 2018, the PPC local candidate for Badalona Xavier Garcia-Albiol (and already ex-president of the Catalan Popular Party) claimed the following:



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"There is a part of the population that has suffered with the economic crisis, and that part has seen how they could not access social help and **a person in an irregular situation in Spain did access social help.**" (Xavier Garcia-Albiol declarations on 16-12-2018 –*Salvados-La Sexta TV*).

The politician insisted on the idea that irregular immigrants can access state benefits, causing a **grievance to Spanish nationals** –and claimed to know the truth after his position as a city mayor.

This issue has been recurrent amongst right-wing and extreme right-wing politicians. VOX is the party that has especially linked immigration to the **use and abuse of social benefits at the expense of Spanish citizens** and the Spanish Welfare state very recurrently.

In multiple declarations, VOX's members have referred to social help with an informal term for "**payment**" or "**payout**" ("la paguita", in Spanish). Also VOX's leader Abascal has **questioned the legitimacy of asylum claims** (by declaring in a newspaper interview that "VOX is not in favor of hosting thousands of alleged refugees" (11-04-2018 on 'Sol del Sur Tenerife'). Different claims and proposals have been made in this regard (for instance VOX has demanded the "end of social help to those who illegally enter Spain" –Abascal's Tweet on 10-08-2018).

Within the Popular Party, the Organization vice-secretary and ex-city mayor of the Basque capital city of Vitoria, Javier Maroto, made the following declarations:

**"There is nothing more unsupportive** in social policies or social help [**than the fact**] **that there are abuses** in this social help, and that [issue] affects everyone, have they the skin color that they have, have they the accent in Spanish that they have, or even be they Spanish or not." (J.Maroto's declarations, 03-12-2018 –interviewed in *Espejo Público-Antena3TV*)

For more legitimacy, the politician added to "have lived it in first person" in the city that he governed in the Basque country. As well as Garcia-Albiol, Javier Maroto was directly pointed by the ECRI for previous racist declarations on the radio in 2014 in which the politician claimed that "Algerians and Moroccans register as residents in the city for the sole purpose of claiming social benefits" (ECRI 2018, pp.19), and added that immigrants from the Maghreb are not interested in working nor integrating –declarations which were made while being the city mayor in Vitoria.

In the above case, after being asked further on irregular immigrants, Garcia-Albiol defended that they should be made return to their origin countries, meaning that **they should be deported.**

### #EconomicCosts

Hate speech narratives on the **public monetary costs** associated to immigrants and refugees avoid that their contributions to the economy are higher than the costs (not to



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mention other kinds of 'contributions') to present them as doing a regular use (or sometimes an **over-use**) of public services, and as receiving **regular public benefits** (sometimes at the expenses of the rest of the population).

This refers to the areas such as: work and unemployment; education; housing; healthcare; minors, children, family, elder and other social care issues. As it is exemplified by the above cases, immigrants or gypsies may be criticized for having what is considered to be “too many” children; and to take advantage of healthcare by doing “sanitary tourism” –these last accusations were made by the Popular Party leader while, up until July 2018, the law was not changed to correct the actual structural discrimination established on 2012 of no universal healthcare to everyone, depending again on people’s legal status. That is, after many years of sanitary exclusion, this hate speech narrative transforms irregular immigrants into “sanitary tourists”.

Besides the areas mentioned, the issue of economic costs has often been linked to people’s **administrative or legal situation or status**. In this regard, irregular immigrants have recurrently been associated as beneficiaries of social help. Also the validity of the **status of refugees** has been questioned (“alleged” refugees), as it is shown by some of the above cases.

### 3.3 Narratives on insecurity

#### Gypsies and Romanians as thieves

Narratives on: #Insecurity

Timeline: 08-July-2018

“I want to inform every gypsy/Romanian: the DGT traffic radars contain 2 kg of copper. Just saying.” (08-July-2018, posted by Castaño on Facebook)

The above post was made by Maria José Castaño, a city councillor for PSOE in the small city of Marinaleda (Andalusia), on the politician’s Facebook’s account. It makes a clear association of the **Roma/gypsies and Romanian immigrants with burglary or theft**, in line of suggesting that they may steal copper for a living, as a result reinforcing the stigmatization that these groups already suffer in the common imaginary.

The post was denounced by a Gypsy organization, FAKALI, which asked the politician to amend it and apologize to every person affected by her words. The post was deleted on the same day. The PSOE regional General Secretary Verónica Pérez tweeted that “To be a public office requires to live up to the citizens who are represented. We have zero-tolerance against anti-gypsist attitudes.” Castaño, who was going to be expelled after this incident, left her position and the center-left wing party that she had represented.

#### Street vendors targeted by the right-wing parties in Madrid

Narratives on: #Insecurity

Timeline: August 2018



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“The carelessness of Carmena allows the mafias to make their particular August in Madrid. At stake are citizen security and the businesses’ economy of those who do pay their taxes. #callesOkupadas” (Ignacio Aguado’s Tweet on 09-August-2018).

The right-wing party Ciudadanos (Cs) in the capital city of Madrid has recurrently made declarations and posts on street vendors, criminalizing their activity, and criticizing the city mayor Manuela Carmena’s leftist politics on the issue. On mid-August, the local deputy Ignacio Aguado (Cs) made a Tweet using the hashtag “#CallesOkupadas”, meaning ‘**StreetsAreOccupied**’, doing a pun with the “k”, which in Spanish links the term occupation to **(illegal) squatting**. #CallesOkupadas, which became trending topic that day, was announced by Cs to be the name of a political initiative against street vending.

Similar accusations against street vendors have been made by the Popular Party (PP) in Madrid. Ignacio Cosidó, PP’s senate spokesperson at the time, also claimed that street vendors “**are not good for coexistence**” and linked them to an alleged significant **rise of insecurity and crime** in Madrid –even though, according to city council, there have not been records of higher crime rates. Cosidó also publicly claimed that “the issue is not only related to irregular immigration, but also affects intellectual property” because, according to the politician, “there are **mafias** dedicated to the sale of counterfeit products”.

Hence, the discourse of both Cs’ and PP’s aims to relate to one single group of people elements of insecurity, incivility, difficult coexistence, irregular immigration, unfair competition, falsifications, tax evasions and even accusations of belonging to mafias. Therefore, **street vendors were** (and continue to be) **used as tools for political interests** in order to establish a perception of insecurity and violence amongst the electorate.

The criminalization of undocumented, unaccompanied foreign minors from the Maghreb  
Narratives on: #Insecurity  
Timeline: 13-November-2018

“What happened in Sta. Coloma de Gramenet with the sexual assault of a girl by Maghrebi youth **is a consequence of the immigration policy** of this country consisting in **giving all rights and not requiring any obligation**” (Garcia-Albiol’s Tweet, 13-11-2018).

Garcia-Albiol refers to a **sexual assault** that took place early on Sunday 11-11-2018 in his neighbouring city: a group of immigrants assaulted a woman on a metro station and elevator by perpetrating sexual touches and vexations. Afterwards, part of the group assaulted her partner by stabbing him with a white weapon outside the metro station. From the 15 people arrested by the police, 5 were charged with prison for the sexual assault and 3 of them for stabbing.

A demonstration against machist violence, racism and xenophobia was organized on Tuesday 13-11-2018, which was attended by over 500 people, local organizations and the local government.

Garcia-Albiol’s post that morning, which has achieved over 4.500 likes and over 2.000 retweets, had different reactions on Twitter -some of which denounced that Garcia-Albiol

shows his **racism through criminalization** of the group, while the politician is not actually worried about machist sexual assault or rape.

A week after the assault, another demonstration attended by a hundred neighbours in the city was organized in order to show their **rejection towards immigration** and to ask for the expelling of unaccompanied foreign minors from the neighborhoods. At the end of the march, an anti-racist counter-demonstration was also set.

### #Insecurity

Hate speech narratives on insecurity and crime are linked to **certain migrant and non-white ethnic groups** such as: gypsies (mostly Spanish gypsies, but also Romanian gypsies or other); black African immigrants working as street vendors; and unaccompanied foreign minors (who are mostly from the Maghreb, especially from Morocco) and may be undocumented.

In different ways, each of these racialized groups is **criminalized** –by being associated with burglary, theft, forgery or other forms of delinquency and crime- in an attempt to generate a state of opinion and a general **social climate of insecurity, fear** and other negative feelings that in last terms **leads to rejection** towards these groups.

While calling for more police control, these narratives can have consequences such as: perpetuating **historical stigma** towards Spanish gypsies; (re)producing **rejection** towards the 'subsistence' activity of street vendors; treating foreign **children as (dangerous) adults**, so they can be judged or deported to their origin countries independently of their age and legal rights; and, opposed to the actual data on criminality, they may attempt to legitimate **racial/ethnic profiling** on certain groups by the police forces.

Insecurity and fear are also frequently used resources when it comes to the apparent need to **protect (white) women from sexual assaults**, violence and aggressiveness coming from certain (non-white) groups who may even, individually or in group, rape them, according to these hate speech narratives.

### 3.4 Narratives on Islamist terrorism

#### HSM action against a mosque

Narratives on: #IslamistTerrorism

Timeline: 22-03-2018

On 22-03-2018, the far right neo-fascist organization 'Hogar Social' (HSM) carried out an anti-Muslim action outside the "Islamic Cultural Center of Madrid", a mosque also known as the "M30 mosque". Several persons used **smoke bombs** and hung a banner with the message "*Today it's Brussels. Tomorrow it's Madrid? Terrorists Welcome*" while shouting "moors out, mosque down, you're bastards". In this action and in the social networks, HSM



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showed their rejection with the 'Brussels bombings' and also protested against the M30 mosque, claiming that it is a niche for radical Islamist terrorism.

HSM claimed their attack on the social networks Twitter and Facebook, and the organization published a video in which showed the action –mixed with images of the Brussels bombings and the chaos which generated in the Brussels airport. HSM's on-line publications have **high repercussion** on the net -the Youtube video, which is still on-line, reaches today **27 millions** of visits.

This episode on March 2018 was reported by a Spanish NGO (the 'Spanish Network of Immigration' or 'Red Española de Inmigración') to the provincial responsible ('Fiscalía Provincial de Madrid') and it was brought to court. The results of the case, in April 2018, were the hate crime accusation of the group leader Melisa Dominguez. The other eleven persons with 'pre-trial proceedings' did not receive any charges. In September 2018, the NGO went against this decision to the court. In 2019, the case is still to be solved.

### The ex-mayor's initiative against a new mosque

Narratives on: #IslamistTerrorism

Timeline: mid May-2018

Garcia-Albiol's PPC in Badalona has been active in **hindering the opening of new mosques** since 2009. On this occasion, the Fezan-e-Madina group sought to open a new mosque for the Paquistani community, which would be the second mosque in the neighbourhood of Artigues.

Garcia-Albiol's PPC distributed flyers against the opening of the mosque. The flyers, with a picture of Garcia-Albiol, were signed directly by the ex-mayor, who provided his number (and Whatsapp). That is, strategically, the flyer was not signed by the party. It did use the party colour, which is dark blue. The title of the flyer claimed: "Artigues **cannot take in another house of worship** for 240 people". The flyer continued as follows:

"Dear neighbours:

I contact you to inform you that we have already requested the City Council to paralyze immediately the works that are being carried out for the opening of a new house of worship for 240 people.

A few days ago, I met with a representation of you (photo) and you transmitted me the great concern that you have. When I was Mayor, we banned this type of facility for two years. But the mayor of the CUP [political party] has not renewed this ban and, therefore, now they have been able to apply for the license to open.

I'm sure that [the neighbourhood of] **Artigues does not need another house of worship. I am going to fight by your side to stop it.**"

From 2011 to 2015, Xavier Garcia-Albiol was the city mayor in Badalona, which is the third biggest city in Catalonia. Garcia-Albiol was also the president of the Catalan Popular Party from 2017 to November 2018, that is, in the period when the flyers were distributed.

The politician has an important **trajectory of racist hate** in Badalona towards Romanians, Muslims, and immigrants in general terms. In 2009, Garcia-Albiol was responsible of racist



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political propaganda claiming the “cleaning” of the city from Romanian Roma. Garcia-Albiol is one of the two politicians pointed by the 2018 ECRI report on Spain for this case of racist speech <sup>5</sup>.

### #IslamistTerrorism

Hate speech narratives on the threat of Islamist terrorism are based on profound distortions that seem to **reduce Islam to Islamism**, and Islamism is at the same time equated to **Islamist terrorism**, generating feelings of threat, as actually being in danger.

These narratives of Anti-Muslim racism have been differentiated from previous narratives on insecurity because of the somehow stronger tone or means used, that may even accept **de-humanization rhetoric** and defend unconstitutional measures often **targeting Muslims** in broad terms.

**Mosques** have become clear targets of anti-Muslim action. As in the above examples, right and extreme right actors have made accusations that link these sacred spaces to “radical Islamist terrorism”, finally affecting on people’s rights to freedom of belief, religion and worship.

### 3.5 Narratives on incompatibility

#### Freedom of religion and the Valencian education counselor

Narratives on: #Incompatibility

Timeline: July-2018

During summer term in 2018, the Ministry of Education of the Autonomous Government of the Valencian Community announced the implementation of a **pilot project** in which **Evangelical and Islamic religion** would be offered in four public schools as optional subjects (further than the subjects of Catholic religion and Ethics). This policy responded to the mandate of the LOMCE or state education law in relation to the right of every child to attend lessons on the religion believed/practiced. The project was announced to start in four municipalities in the following school year 2018-19 –concretely, two schools in the

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<sup>5</sup> “While open hate speech is not common in the Spanish mainstream political discourse, anti-immigrant and anti-Roma discourse nourishes fears and thus fuels xenophobic and racist sentiments. In particular during the economic crises, which hit Spain in 2008 and reached a peak in 2012, some politicians resorted to xenophobic statements. In this context, the statements of the mayor and local leader of the Popular Party in Badalona, a city close to Barcelona, need to be mentioned, which openly associated Romanian and Roma migrants with criminality. He also linked poverty, unemployment and lack of security with the arrival of migrants and Islamic terrorism. During a 2015 election campaign in the same region, the Islamophobic rhetoric of politicians from different groups promising, among others, the closing of mosques led to the posting of comments on gassing Muslims and references to the showers of Nazi death camps. The Muslim population in this region still suffers from the xenophobia which was sparked by this and other racist politicians and the Barcelona hate crime prosecutor registered increasing numbers of Islamophobic incidents.” (ECRI 2018, pp.18-19)



province of Castellón, one in province of Valencia and another one in the province of Alicante.

From the 17 Spanish 'autonomous communities', only in 12 of them the optional subjects on these spiritual confessions are offered, while the subject on Catholic religion has a common place in the school curriculum nowadays, and it has been offered since decades in the public school.

The announcement of this project by the Ministry of Education in the Valencian Community was answered on social networks, where racist and xenophobic discourses were disseminated, and they led to the on-line convocation of an apparent 'grass-roots' or popular demonstration as a sign of rejection. The demonstrations were held in two of the municipalities chosen in the mentioned pilot project (specifically, the two in the province of Castellón, called Altura and Sergorbe). In one of the demonstrations, in Altura, **virulent verbal aggressions** against the Muslim community were made.

The on-line call to the demonstration was: "After **the imposition of the Islamic religion in the public school** by the Ministry of Education of the Valencian government, a concentration is called for everyone who wishes to attend. The education of our children **is not imposed**". As it can be observed, the text uses strong vocabulary, using the term "imposition" in relation to an optional subject; it is emotional and thus effective as a call to action. The text is **focused on Islam**, avoiding the Evangelical religion that was also part of the project.

After the demonstrations, with the beginning of the school year in September 2018, the Parents' Association in the school in Altura showed their rejection through written statements and the social networks. Due to these events, the Ministry of Education was pressured to abandon the project in both municipalities, which was offer only in the other two municipalities.

It is known that the Valencian Popular Party was linked to the messages disseminated on social networks and to the call of the popular demonstration, with provincial councillors and deputies involved. To start with, days before the call for the demonstration, Teresa Máñez (PP) showed her disagreement with the project for not counting on "those affected", and the politician announced "future actions".

The deputy of Castellón Miguel Barrachina took it even further. This politician said that such an initiative would **provoke a "call effect"**, and he also said that it was an **aggression against the Spanish Christian culture**. He added that the Islamic religion "denigrated the woman" and that it was therefore **inappropriate for a progressive school**. Finally, Isabel Bonig, the general secretary of the Popular Party of the province of Castellón, expressed that "the religious reality of Spain is what it is, and it is **based on agreements with the Holy See**", on July 2018.

In November, after the consequences of the protests, a piece of **fake news** on the obligation to study Islam in the public schools of Valencia was still circulating in the social networks. A **manipulated video** was also spread. In the video, Muslim people appeared praying as if they were Valencian children forced to profess the Islamic religion. In fact, those were Muslim people praying in a mosque in Belgium. It is known that a sub-



inspector of the national police and a deputy from the Popular Party of Valencia participated in the on-line spread of this video.

This set of anti-Islam racist discourses had a far greater reach than the local reality of two municipalities, changing the direction of a pilot project at national level that aimed to put into practice in educational and civic rights -in particular, to make reality the right of children to attend school lessons on their own religion.

Every expression of the Islamic faith is situated and represented as a **threat in itself to the own culture**, which is linked to Catholicism, having an underlying **national-Catholic ideology that persists** nowadays, after decades of the end of the Franco dictatorship.

**'Hispanic brother countries' versus 'Islamic countries'**

Narratives on: #Incompatibility

Timeline: VOX on 14-04-2018 in Gran Canaria; PP on 03-12-2018 in Madrid.

Differentiation between groups of immigrants has been expressed by different political groups, as a result setting a **hierarchy of preference** amongst immigrants, in which Hispano-americans have happened to be praised.

In this regard, VOX's president Santiago Abascal's declared the following:

"Immigration has to occur based on **the ability of immigrants to adapt**: it is not the same an immigrant from a **Hispanic brother country, with the same culture, with the same language, with the same worldview**, that immigration from Islamic countries." (Santiago Abascal declarations on 14-04-2018 in Gran Canaria)

Abascal's speech on April in the island of Gran Canaria (Canary Islands), which was attended by over 70 people, shows explicit differentiation between groups of immigrants, what sets a hierarchy of preference. In this logic, while Muslims are portrayed as unable to adapt or integrate (what makes them "incompatible"), immigrants from the ex-colonies, specifically from Hispano-american countries, would have not only the same language but also a shared culture and worldview with Spaniards, what would make them (more) 'desirable' or perhaps 'deserving' of living in Spain.

Note that the usage of the expression "brother countries" is used to evocate and reinforce a strong tie. In VOX's "100 measures", the Hispanic countries are called the "nations of the hispanic historical community", and a selective immigration quota is defended.

The differentiation of groups of immigrants for being **compatible/incompatible**, or either deserving/undeserving, appears to be based on their origin, but also language, religion, 'culture' and cosmovisions, and perhaps other underlying social markers of difference such as social class, ethnicity or race.

This hierarchy of preference has also been expressed by right-wing political leaders such as PP's Javier Maroto, the 3rd for PP and the Organization vice-secretary. The day after the already mentioned Andalusian elections, the politician made the following declarations

on TV from Madrid in which, right after accusing ‘certain groups’ of immigrants, the politician praised Hispanic-American immigrants:

“If a person comes to our country **only to collect social help or to put at serious risk our coexistence or our own life**, or [this person] does not accept the laws and Western culture, that person does have a problem, and [he/she] has it in front of the PP.

But, in front of that, we also have to say that, luckily, there are many people (and the Hispano-American collective is a good example of it) who come to Spain in a legal and orderly way, and **respecting the culture and our Western laws**.

The most obvious example is that, for many Hispanic-American people, **the best thing that can happen to them in their life in Spain is for their daughter to marry a Spaniard**. I wish that everyone who comes to our country said that.” (J.Maroto’s declarations, 03-12-2018 – interviewed in *Espejo Público-Antena3TV*)

### VOX on machism and Islam

Narratives on: # Incompatibility

Timeline: 13-December-2018

Days after the Andalusian elections and VOX’s emergence in the Andalusian Parliament, Driouech made an intervention in the Catalan Parliament. Najat Driouech, the first Muslim female deputy in the Catalan Parliament (and the first to wear the headscarf) is the 10th deputy for the Catalan Republican Left group (‘ERC’) in the Catalan Parliament. The party ERC posted a 1:10min video on Facebook and Twitter in which the deputy expressed her concern about VOX’s results and the **racist, sexist and classist threat** that this party presents.

In Catalan language, Driouech declared the following: “If we take a look at the main proposals of the twelve VOX deputies we should worry a lot. My fellows, do you not worry about a party saying that the Gender Violence Law should be repealed? / VOX is falling among the lowest income voters and it is increasing among high incomes. VOX is not a new populist right, it is the same old Francoist right. / VOX presents a danger for his racist, sexist and classist proposals and his 12 seats in the Andalusian parliament are a touch of attention that have to make us democrats reflect (...).”

Santiago Abascal’s response came shortly after:

“And this calls us machists...**she should look at her home first!**” (13-12-2018, Abascal’s Retweet)

Abascal’s response implied that the one to be called machist should be her Muslim husband, as if being a Muslim man or husband directly meant being machist. Abascal’s words and emoji transmit sarcasm and he shows contempt in saying “this” woman, as Driouech is referred to in colloquial terms.

Abascal’s tweet had a big impact, with over 6.400 retweets and about 12.800 likes, and it fueled many more racist anti-Muslim and pro-VOX reactions on Twitter.



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## #Incompatibility

Hate speech narratives on the cultural and/or civilizational incompatibility of certain groups of immigrants are **explicitly based on people's origin**, language, religion, "culture and cosmovisions", but they may also be based on some less explicit underlying social markers of difference such as social **class, ethnicity or race**.

As it has been explained, these narratives set a '**hierarchy of preference**' amongst groups of immigrants according to some "compatibility" scale, in which being **compatible/incompatible relates to "deservingness"**, that is, the construction of the deserving/undeserving immigrant.

In the top of this hierarchical pyramid, the Hispano-americans appear to be praised allegedly due to a shared language, culture and/or worldview that make them (more) 'desirable' or perhaps 'deserving' of living in Spain, according to these narratives.

In the very bottom of the hierarchy, in contrast, Muslim immigrants are situated. According to these narratives, if integration/assimilation have proved impossible, that is because different groups belong to different cultures or civilizations, and a strong cultural distance appears to separate "us" from this group.

This distance which is sometimes used to **reinforce the group identity** though dichotomy, that is, by opposition; identitarian claims that call for the protection and preservation of what is "ours". In this regard, self-glorification or **self-praise relate to what is Western**, civilized, developed, rational, industrial/scientific/technological, humanist/Enlightened, modern.

It is of no surprise that, in terms of gender equality, the right and extreme-right parties have defended conservative positions on **the role of women** within the family and the public sphere, and parties such as VOX or PP have been active in anti-feminist claims in issues such as abortion or gender violence. That is to say that feminism is not part of the patrimony or legacy to be claimed. Said that, what if the warnings of VOX's machism come from a Muslim female MP?

## 4/ Alternatives to racist hatred

### 4.1/ Examples of successful initiatives to counter hatred

A broad range of initiatives of different kind are presented below. What these initiatives have in common is that they **stand out in the purpose of countering hatred** –be it a consequence or effect of their action or, as there are some examples, countering hate is indeed their explicit purpose.

According to the actors involved, the following categories are proposed:

- / Organized anti-racist/anti-discrimination fight
- / Virtual activists



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- / Private companies
- / The media
- / Power and politics

Before moving further, at this point it is important to introduce the idea of “**framing**” in social psychology. The concept of “frame” can be defined as a human mental structure which is used in order to understand reality, or to create what reality is (Lakoff 2017 [2006]; Butler 2018). Be them conscious or else unacknowledged by oneself, the frames that one uses reflect how certain issues are thought and addressed –such as the issue of immigration or the possibilities of the economic system. Moreover, mental frames also indicate certain **limits at the ability to think differently**, as arguments or ideas which do not match the frame tend to be discarded.

The framing issue has **direct implications** on the initiatives to counter hatred, and ultimately on the possibility of alternative or **transformative messages to have an impact**. In this sense, in the fight against hatred we need to differentiate between “counter-narratives” and the so-called ‘alternative narratives’.

On the one hand, “counter-narratives” can be defined as narratives that aim at **dismantling an existing prevailing narrative** –in line with myth-busting strategies, which tend to use data in order to prove correct. Instead, the so-called ‘alternative narratives’ are not necessarily reactive but they manage to **construct and present a different or ‘new’ look** at certain issue, which may oblige to take a step back and revisit one’s mental frames. In short, these narratives put forward ‘alternative’ frames –while “counter-narratives” run the **risk of reinforcing** the mental (racist) frame which they try to attack, therefore resulting counterproductive in their core objectives.

It is not strictly “counter-narratives” but rather **alternative and transformative initiatives** which have been searched for the purpose of this report, and they are presented below.

### **Organized anti-racist/anti-discrimination fight**

The **anti-racist fight** is key in the path of combating racist hate speech, as it provides valuable insights on how racism operates and how it can be combated, often from the own lived experience of racism. It is a referent in terms of **resistance to the racist oppression** and system. All over the Spanish state, many civil society organizations, NGOs, social movements, racialized and mixed activist groups and campaigns, mobilizations, artistic initiatives, and many other, are active nowadays, conforming a diverse **anti-racist and anti-discriminatory scene**.

It is important to note that this political and civic 'mosaic' that conforms the organized anti-racist/anti-discrimination fight is **not necessarily coherent nor connected**. Instead, it is often disconnected, contradictory, and very diverse and plural in its objectives, methods, strategies, impact and results achieved by each of the political entities that form it. Without a macro-coherence, nevertheless, it is rich and diverse.

Some of these political entities, from Barcelona to Madrid to León or Seville, are mentioned and shortly explained below.

-CibeRespect project and support to groups of **cyber-activists**.

The CibeRespect project was carried by 'Ecos do Sur' and the Human Rights Institute of Catalonia (IDHC). It aimed to combat on-line hate speech against immigrants and ethnic minorities through **monitoring** this discourse on-line and **empowering cyber-activists** to combat it. A "Practical guide to on-line intervention for cyber-activists" was published in 2017, elaborated by IDHC, SOS-Racisme and United Explanations (<http://ciberrespect.com/>).

-SOS-Racisme's political analysis and **infographic**.

SOS-Racisme's infographic shows and compares the racist proposals and position of the main political parties **in electoral appointments**. The message of the action is #DoNotVoteForRacism (#MistosElectoral #NoVotisRacisme).

-Activist projects **#AixòésRacisme #EsRacismo**

This is an initiative carried by activists from SOS-Racismo in Barcelona and Madrid in order to combat racism (eg. anti-Muslim or anti-immigration racism) through **participation and empowerment**. The projects have used video/creative strategies (such as testings with hidden cameras or video gags) and the social networks (<http://esracismo.com/>).

-The network "**Unity Against Fascism and Racism**" (UCFR) and the annual initiative "**Social Forum against Islamophobia and every kind of racism**".

UCFR is a decentralized, territorial network of international scale which seeks to fight against fascism and racism locally and regionally, especially in politics and during electoral campaigns. The "Social Forum against Islamophobia and every kind of racism" celebrated its 3rd edition in the spring 2018 in Barcelona (<https://ucfr.cat/fsi2018/>).

-**Antifascist and antiracist popular struggle** against the extreme right in the neighbourhood.

In the district of Nou Barris (Barcelona), NGOs, neighbourhood communities and antifascist groups such as UCFR united and organized in order to combat the racist violent actions of the extreme right, and keep social conviviality in the neighbourhood.

-Civil society campaign **#RefugeesWelcome** ("Casa Nostra, Casa Vostra").

This campaign was launched in 2017 by various actors of the Catalan civil society in order to call on institutions to provide effective tools to improve the reception of refugees and immigrants once established in Catalonia, via specific health, education and housing measures. On 18-02-2017, a massive demonstration (or 'blue wave') took place. A total of 211.562€ were collected by the organization, which were donated to **10 projects on migration and asylum**, specifically dedicated to one of the following three areas of work: reception; sensibilization or awareness and political impact; or international action.

The NGOs and projects funded are: NOVACT, Iríada, FICAT foundation, "Associació Catalana per la Pau", EXIL association, "Associació Benestar i Desenvolupament" (ABD), Entrepobles, CREART, "Comissió Catalana d'Ajuda al Refugiat" (CCAR), and Catalunya-Líban Association (<https://casanostracasavostra.com>).

-**The Immigrant's Place** ("Espacio del inmigrante").

In the centric neighbourhood of Raval, in Barcelona, a squatted space is since 2013 The Immigrant's Place, where immigrants and collectives (such as street vendors) gather, organize, and support each other. It has hosted and also given birth to initiatives such as



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the project of an **Antiracist School** for the youngest (named “la escolita antirracista”), a project launched by the Immigrant’s Place and the Street Vendors Popular Union together on December 2018.

### **-Street Vendors Popular Union.**

This Union was created in Barcelona in 2015 by immigrant street vendors, who organized themselves and put forward a common voice and means of representation in order to **fight institutional racism**. They have used audiovisual tools and statements to explain to a broad audience what it is to be a street vendor, and which living conditions and discrimination they suffer on a daily basis (eg. myth-busting videos in the social networks; [manteros.org](http://manteros.org)).

The Street Vendors Popular Union started with 8 union representatives, and it has grown since, achieving a common and strong voice according to shared goals. Also the group “**Tras La Manta**” was an initiative started in 2015 to give support to the Street Vendors Popular Union in Barcelona.

In 2017, members of the union made a step forward with ‘**Top Manta**’, the launching of their own clothes brand, a professional project with allows ex-street vendors to make a living. They produce ethical clothes with critical messages such as “Fake system, true clothes”. Other initiatives have been developed after the Street Vendors Popular Union, such as the already mentioned anti-racist school (presented in December 2018), a new catering service, or the Diomcoop Cooperative with the Barcelona city council.

### **-Migrant Confinements #RacismLocksUs (“#EIRacismeEnsTanca”).**

Migrant Confinements represent a spread initiative all over the country, consisting of the occupation of a space for the political self-reclusion of a group, in this case of a group of migrant and racialized peoples. The **dilated temporality** of the initiative contributes to its visibility and impact.

In the city of Barcelona, **high-rang politicians** (such as the Barcelona city mayor or the president of the Catalan government) have visited the space, which had media and political repercussions. In this city, the Migrant Confinement organized a bottom-up demonstration (27-05-2018) and launched a series of videos with the call #RacismIsKillingUs (“#EIRacismeEnsMata”).

### **-Anti-racist Moro Movement.**

The “uMMA” collective started in 2017 as a political organization of anti-racist ‘moors’ (“moros”) based in Barcelona. In this short time, several public and non-public workshops and round-tables have been organized. Young anti-racist activists such as Fàtima Aatar or Salma Amzian are part of uMMA.

### **-T.I.C.T.A.C.**

T.I.C.T.A.C. is a collective of racialized transfeminist women based in Barcelona, defending an **intersectional, anti-racist and decolonial perspective** which embraces an analysis of today’s conflicts. They promote critical reflection as well as women’s empowerment. They teach **workshops** in themes such as autobiographic writing, decolonial feminisms or white privilege from a decolonial perspective.

### **-Ex-unaccompanied foreign minors gather to speak for themselves.**

The “Ex-MENAs” is an association created by young former unaccompanied foreign minors, a collective who goes through some similar life experiences before and after age



of majority. Since it was formalized in November 2018 in Barcelona, this collective has made statements and videos to express their own voice and views in the political sphere.

#### **-Feminist women against anti-gypsyism.**

'Feminist gypsy/Roma women for diversity' ("Gitanas feminist por la Diversidad") is a Spanish collective of gypsy/Roma activist women. Since its creation in 2013, the collective works to eradicate anti-gypsyism and to create **intersectional narratives within feminism** with which gypsy/Roma women can feel identified.

#### **-"Mujeres pa'lante", from association to cooperative.**

The association "Mujeres pa'lante" was created by racialized immigrant women in Barcelona in 2008. It is focused on providing psychological, labour and juridical assessment. The association developed in the creation of the "Mujeres Pa'lante Cooperative", which is dedicated to cleaning, catering, sewing and education services, in order to continue to **dignify reproductive work**.

#### **-Women's networks: the Ormiga Network.**

Based in León, the Ormiga Network ("Red Ormiga") works for the empowerment of immigrant women since 2010. It provides legal advice and psychosocial attention to women. It depends on the "Isidora Duncan single-parent family Foundation", but it is self-managed by immigrant women. It offers help with first arrival and bureaucratic issues, and networking with other associations around the country.

#### **-SindiHogar/SindiLlar Union.**

This union was created in November 2011 in Barcelona and it has national reach in Spain. It unites **women working as cleaners or doing care work**, being the first union on the matter in the Spanish state. Besides offering mutual support, and offering catering services, the union provides **legal assessment** (on labour and immigration issues, amongst other), in collaboration with the University of Barcelona.

#### **-Kellys union and documentary.**

Kellys is a wordplay which gives name to a Spanish union in the sector of cleaning –a task which is largely carried by immigrant women. The union was born in 2014 through the social networks. In 2018, they produced the documentary 'Exploitation Hotel', which shows the cleaners' bad working conditions to a broad public. The documentary achieved an important visibility and impact.

#### **-Diverse Migrant Women.**

The "Asociación de Mujeres Migrantes Diversas" is an association created in August 2017 by **immigrant women working as cleaners or doing care work**, thus sharing a common fight. Embracing a feminist and LGBTI+ perspective, the association is a platform to give each other support and provide assessment.

#### **-Temporary immigrant workers on the spotlight.**

The campaign 'Fruit With Social Justice' (#frutaambjusticia) was a **denounce and sensibilization** project carried by several organizations in the region of the city of Lérida, situated in western Catalonia, in order to promote advances for the **labour and social rights of temporary immigrants** employed in the fruit picking sector in the region.



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An important output of the campaign was the creation of a **new stamp for ethical fruit**, which is a guarantee for consumers of the fact that fruit has been produced in just working conditions for employees.

**-‘Red Acoge’**’s territorial reach.

‘Red Acoge’ is a network of 18 Spanish NGOs with territorial presence in 11 different autonomous communities in Spain, namely the community of Madrid, Asturias, Catalonia, Castilla-y-León, Cantabria, Andalucía, Galicia, the Valencian Community, Castilla-la-Mancha, Murcia and La Rioja. The network has a manual and campaign against “Inmigracionalism” (the 2018 is the 6<sup>th</sup> report published), with the usage of key hashtags and six tags for the social networks.

**-‘We Are Migrants’ platform** (“Plataforma Somos Migrantes”).

The platform ‘We Are Migrants’ was born in 2014 in Seville (Andalucía) with the aim of **defending the immigrants’ rights**. It is constituted by more than 30 organizations and collectives based in Seville that struggle for the common goal of social justice. The main action of the platform is directed towards achieving a political impact in the issue of universal health as well as the fight against other forms of institutional racism.

**-Mbolo Moy Doole.**

The platform “Mbolo Moy Doole” in Bilbao (the Basque Country) was constituted in 2010 mainly by people of Senegalese origin who work to defend immigrants’ rights in the Basque Country.

**-Platform against borders.**

The platform named ‘Clandestine Railroad’ (“Ferrocarril Clandestino”) was born in 2005 after the return of a Solidarity Caravan from Ceuta to Madrid. The Caravan is an initiative in support of immigrants who try to jump the fence from Morocco to Ceuta (Spain), who are harshly repressed and/or arrested by border police –in this occasion, many of them were sent on buses to the border with Algeria. Upon the return of the Caravan in 2005 from Ceuta to Madrid, this platform and support network of **collective action against borders and in support for immigrants** was set. Amongst other issues, the platform has campaigned **against the “CIEs”** (Internment Centres for Foreigners) in Madrid, a civil movement which has presence in many Spanish cities.

Many different collectives are part of this platform, some of them linked to self-managed social centres such as “Patio Maravillas” or “Seco”, alternative radio channels such as “Sin Fronteras”, or groups such as “Agencias Precarias a la Deriva” or the Integration Center San Lorenzo in the neighbourhood of Lavapiés, in Madrid.

**-The ‘Walking Borders’ collective.**

‘Walking Borders’ (“Caminando Fronteras”) is a social organization defending the immigrants’ rights. Founded in 2002, it works from a transnational perspective, offering support to immigrant communities in their countries of origin, transit and destination. The organization is critical with borderlands, and denounces (European and Spanish) borders as spaces of impunity where multiple violations of basic human rights take place. They claim for the restoration of every person’s human rights.

With presence in the Spanish border with Morocco, ‘Walking Borders’ has direct contact with immigrant communities and they have a role as a direct witness on border. They have a voice in issues of **illegal returns** (eg. carried by the Spanish police forces), **“deaths”**



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**due to institutional violence**, the “disappearances” of thousands of people at sea, the management of **identification processes**, and the **reparation** to the victims of border infrastructure and their families back in origin, as they had in specific cases such as the 'tragedy of the Tarajal' beach in Ceuta.

### **-Southern Border Emergency Action.**

Given the inefficiency of the public services to accommodate newcomers, this network of activists named 'Emergencia Frontera Sur' was created in mid-2018 in order to give response to the needs of **support, accommodation, language and translation, and legal advice** of immigrants and asylum seekers arriving to the region of Barcelona, sometimes after their release from Internment Centres (“CIEs”), bearing a critical message against institutional racism. In other words, this citizen network, which is part of the network 'Hosting with Dignity', tries to cover the deficiencies of the official reception network for immigrants and asylum seekers.

-Amongst many **artistic initiatives** and projects, three initiatives can be highlighted. Firstly, the EnMedio collective has been working with **Photographic Action Workshops** and they have guided the development of many projects with this tool, with interventions in the public space.

Secondly, the 'Migrant micro-stories' is an initiative by the association “Quinta Pata” which is based in Barcelona. In the 'Migrant micro-stories', **cartography and self-representation** are used in order to map discriminations. The initiative has reached its 7<sup>th</sup> edition in 2018-19.

Thirdly, the Sey Sisters are an example of **music with message**. The Sey Sisters is a music group created in 2006 by three afro-Spanish singers. Through their lyrics, they convey critical messages regarding politics, identity, experiences of discrimination, etc, reaching a rather broad and diverse audience.

### **Virtual activists**

Some 'youtubers' and mass influencers in the social media are also part of the **anti-racist and anti-discriminatory scene**. Their on-line activity, which is especially appealing to the youth, plays a role in combating hate virtually on an everyday basis.

Amongst many young **Muslim activists**, there is Fatima Aatar, who has over 6.600 followers on Twitter; or Mohammed El Amrani, with over 5.500 followers on Twitter. Also Desirée Bela Lobedde, a **black anti-racist** woman from Catalonia who has 16.000 followers on Youtube, makes virtual anti-racist activism, as well as other type of on-line publications. Amongst **Roma cyber-activism**, the influencer Ari (@femitana), with over 9.000 followers on Twitter, publically criticized in 2018 some TV programs in which Spanish gypsies participate, due to the biased representation made of the Spanish Gypsy community <sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> On 14 July 2018, the young feminist Roma woman criticized the fake representation of gypsies made in TV programs like 'Gipsy Kings' or 'Palabra de gitano', which in her opinion had the objective of non-gypsies making fun of them. In her posts, Ari criticized that gypsies were represented as uneducated, sexist, less developed, unable to speak or write, and as if they either make a living out of selling on street markets, selling drugs, or stealing. Ari said that those stereotypical representations normalize certain forms of racism

## Private companies

In combating racist hate speech, Internet intermediaries have a clear responsibility to **filter the content** of interactions that take place –from Internet service providers to web hosting companies, search engines or social media platforms.

At a global level, the Internet giant Google launched an initiative through Youtube named **'Creators for change'** in 2016, which was launched in Spain on October 2017 and developed through 2018 in collaboration with the Spanish Government, the Alliance of Women Against Radicalization and Extremism (or Aware network), the federation FeSP UGT and the Spanish NGO "Jóvenes y Desarrollo".

'Creators for change' is a platform which **financially supports young 'youtubers'** and influencers in their task to create videos, to produce contents in the social networks, and also to develop workshops in schools, reaching thousands of children in Spain, always aligned with messages against hate and discrimination in the forms of racism, xenophobia, islamophobia, homophobia or sexism. The core message spread is that "We are more" people against hate, radicalization and extremism –using hashtags like #YoMeSumo #SomosMás #WeAreMore. In Spain, the first creators to join the project were the following: Ramia's Channel (an 'influencer' with over 43.000 followers on Youtube), La Familia TV, OfficialMad4yu, Miss Black Glamour, and also Yellow Mellow, Rayden, Andrea Compton and Arkano. As a result, the initiative **amplifies the message** of these young critical youtubers amongst their (often young) audience, and it supports a **network of cyber-activists** who are aware and active against hateful messages and content.

## The media

In the path of combating racist hate speech, what is the role of the public and private media? What kind of **representations are produced** or reproduced in television programs, radio programs, or in the news? What is their responsibility in terms of representation but also in the fight **against disinformation**?

In terms of fact checking and uncovering of fake news, the key project is '**Maldita.es**', which can be translated as "Damned.es", which applies **data journalism** techniques in order to monitor and analyze the political discourse and information circulating in the social networks, including an area dedicated to Migration (named "Damned Migration"). It started on TV ('La Sexta' channel), it has an on-line platform, and its reach and impact has grown in the last years. The project is part of the International Fact Checking Network.

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and discrimination towards gypsies, when it is actually non-gypsies who are discriminating gypsies in labour or education. In her tweets, Ari demanded for gypsies not to be judged, decided for, nor spoken in their name: "If there is sexism/homophobia/etc in our habits, let US talk about it". These tweets were posted the day after the end of the 4th season of the program named 'Gipsy Kings' (emitted by Cuatro-Mediaset Corporation). Ari's tweets have achieved over 19.000 likes and more than 13.200 retweets.



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In the context of the national election campaign in 2019, Maldita.es together with First Draft launch “Cheked” (in Spanish, 'Comprobado'), a collaborative network formed by up to 16 Spanish media companies **united to fight against disinformation** and hoaxing in the public discourse, the social networks and also on WhatsApp. From 2019, Maldita.es together with the start-up Neutral are contracted as **information verifiers of the Facebook** Fack Checking programme in Spain.

Other initiatives working on **media monitoring** are the “Observatory of discriminatory discourse in the media” ([media.cat/discursosdiscriminatoris](http://media.cat/discursosdiscriminatoris)); the “Observatory of Islamophobia in the media” ([observatorioislamofobia.org](http://observatorioislamofobia.org)); and the “Observatory of diversity in the media” and their complete database ([medios.mugak.eu](http://medios.mugak.eu)). Other initiatives on non-discriminatory **language usage** for journalists also exist.

In the scenario of the increasingly influent **digital press**, 'El Salto Diario' can be highlighted as an alternative center of voice and power; as well as other mixed platforms (that is, not strictly journalistic ones) such as 'Afroféminas', an “online community for afrodescendant/black and racialized women”.

## **Power and politics**

If we look at political parties and **institutional politics** at different levels, what initiatives do stand out in combating racist hate speech? What **laws and policies** have been effective in order to stop hate crimes? In which ways **should the public institutions** such as the police forces, the education, the housing or the health system **be changed** in order to combat racist structures that perpetuate discrimination and hate?

In the field of education, eight schools have participated in the launching of the pilot project 'Internet Without Trolls Mission' (MIST), and over 400 teen students from 12 to 18 years old worked until April 2018 on the development of the **MIST video-game**. Also a **mobile Application** was presented on December 2018. The project, fostered by the Barcelona city council, is still ongoing, and the results are yet to be evaluated.

In non-formal education, a strategy based on “myth busting” has been replicated and consolidated in cities around the country since 2010, namely the **‘Anti-rumor’ strategy and network/s**. Amongst other actions, the strategy educates the civil society on narratives and functioning of myths, prejudices and stereotypes, and it provides training on **how to counter-narrate** them.

Since 2016, also the youth are active participants through the **‘Youth Antirumor Summit’**, an event that gathers teenagers from 13 to 18 years old from different cities with a common goal. In 2018, the 3<sup>rd</sup> ‘Youth Antirumor Summit’ is celebrated in the city of Pamplona (Navarra region), after the 2<sup>nd</sup> summit took place in Getxo (Basque country) and the 1<sup>st</sup> one in Sabadell (Catalonia).

In terms of information and sensibilization campaigns, the local government in Barcelona has developed the **“Barcelona Versus Hate” campaign**, which on March 2017 celebrated an international conference focused on **hate in the social networks**, with the participation of politicians, researchers, activists and testimonies on the issue.

In more artistic terms, the Barcelona city council promoted an artistic initiative, **a massive exhibition** composed of 13 different projects which were exhibited in several **subway stations**. The project, titled “Threshold” ('Umbral', in Spanish), aimed to be a “space for reflection on the phenomenon of migration and racism”. It remained for about 2 months (December 2018 to February 2019).

One of the exhibited projects, “**The list**”, provides “traces information related to the death of more than 35.597 refugees, asylum seekers and migrants who have lost their lives within, or on the borders of Europe since 1993”. The compilation, done by the network United for Intercultural Action, is being exhibited worldwide since 2007, as in Barcelona.

#### **4.2/ Towards possible ‘alternative narratives’**

While equal rights and non-discrimination are not effectively granted by the legislation and the political powers, and structural racism endures being deeply embedded in the system, the racialized and immigrant groups **do organize themselves**. They find their own places and spaces of political participation as means of resistance to (intersectional) oppressions. In line with the lived conditions of structural exclusion, these spaces are indeed in the “margins” or the periphery of socio-economic and political power.

The **pro-active participation** of racialized and immigrant peoples can be seen as an active **exercise of citizenship** –as opposed to passivity, conformity, compliance or resignation. Active participation is an everyday exercise of dignity and self-affirmation, which brings horizons of hope in front of the current ‘organization’ of hate.

As a result, these initiatives form an **ecosystem of resistance(s)** which, rather than being tolerated, it calls to be recognised.

There is a diversity and plurality of initiatives, which are **independent and self-organized** and function with little resources. They exist in multiple forms and shapes, be them initiatives of mutual support, civil society alliances, grass-roots movements, amongst other. They are mostly **local** (from and to the neighbourhood or other small community) **and fragmented** –they do not always benefit from the existing previous experiences or networks. Also in terms of territoriality, it is clear that important cities such as Barcelona or Madrid offer organization facilities in contrast with the difficulties of the rural areas (eg. ‘Fruit with social justice’ initiative).

On the one hand, being far from the centre of political and socio-economic power, these initiatives often face scarce resources, lack of spaces, or limited mechanisms in order to achieve further public visibility and eventually a major impact. On the other hand, precisely because of their **peripheral structural situation** on the “margins”, they have the **transformative potential** and ability to produce the so-called ‘alternative narratives’, that is, narratives that embrace different, valuable ‘frames’.

The success of anti-racist action may require that different narratives emitted from different experiences and positions in the fight against oppression –be it gender, class,

race/ethnicity, or other oppressions- somehow **meet or converge, finding strategic unity** within diversity.

## 5/ Conclusions

In order to conclude, the main findings of this report are reviewed below. In short, the report titled “Racist Hate Speech in Spain: a 2018 case analysis –towards possible ‘alternative narratives’” aims to tackle **racist political discourse** and how to fight it.

While hate may seem an individual action, **it is often an organized expression** intimately related to the history and shape of racism. It has been highlighted that racist discrimination is not occasional: it is institutional, structural and systematic. The concept “political racist hate speech” is used to refer to a **frequent and growing phenomenon**, of which immigrants and racialized people are the political targets.

In terms of political representation in democracy, the emergence of the extreme-right party VOX in 2018 has opened a **new scenario** for the extreme-right in the country -further than the existing extreme-right wing organizations and movements (such as HSM), which reflected and continue to reflect the organization of hate in Spain.

In this new scenario, VOX extremist claims have now a “loud-speaker” in the political arena, and their claims and calls for action have now a **major reach and impact**. The “VOX effect” has also temporarily brought right-wing parties further to the right –a process reflected by different right-wing political leaders’ declarations. But racist hate speech in public discourse is not only present in the right and extreme-right organizations, since it is not unusual for centre or left-wing politicians to use it as well –as the aforementioned case of the anti-Roma PSOE local representative may show.

Secondly, the analysis of examples of political racist hate speech in 2018 in Spain has brought to the identification of **five racist narratives**, namely narratives on the immigrant invasion; on the economic costs associated to immigrants and refugees; on insecurity and crime linked to migrant and non-white ethnic groups; on the threat of Islamist terrorism; and also narratives on cultural and/or civilizational incompatibility. These narratives intersect, overlap and complement each other, being used together politically.

These narratives affect different groups in different ways. With regards to gender, it is important to highlight that **racialized and immigrant men** seem to be more harshly affected by hate narratives in comparison with women –as it can be detected if we take an overall look at the cases of political hate speech and also to the narratives identified <sup>7</sup>. The

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<sup>7</sup> In this report, gender has been a transversal category of analysis, which has proven relevant in the shape of each narrative. Nevertheless, further research on hate and gender is needed, as gender has proved to play an important role in the expression of hate speech. It could be asked: how do racist and patriarchal oppressions intersect, affecting groups differently? How does the perception of threat and competence towards immigrant men and women differ in terms of gender? How do different perceptions relate to the development of productive/reproductive tasks or to the public/private spheres? How differently does anti-moro racist hate affect Muslim man and Muslim women?, amongst other questions which are beyond the scope of this report.

presence or absence of genderized narratives may respond to different factors, one of which may relate to the use of the **public or private space, and labour niches** in the public or the private space. To put an example, while the issue of street vending has been politically recurrent in cities such as Madrid or Barcelona, and it is mostly carried by immigrant men; the situation of cleaning workers or care workers, which are mostly immigrant women, has not had any political presence. This identified “silence” on women can be seen as the **re/production of invisibility**, in front of the claims of many organized women fighting for their labour and social rights. It is to be seen how the situation changes when female politicians, academics, youtubers and influencers progressively make their claims be heard.

In terms of targets of hate speech, it is important to highlight the **preponderance of Anti-Muslim racism** and the level of symbolic violence of the narrative on Islamist Terrorism, which is based on profound distortions. Although only few cases exemplify it here, hate speech narratives on the threat of Islamist terrorism seem to reduce Islam to Islamism, which is at the same time equated to Islamist terrorism, generating feelings of threat and danger as result of intended distortions, even through de-humanizing rhetoric and symbolic strategies.

Lastly, a sample of the civil society collectives that are developing somewhat successful **initiatives to counter hatred** have been presented. The fight against racist hatred may be an explicit purpose or also a consequence or effect of their anti-discrimination or anti-racist action. In any case, these initiatives form an ecosystem of resistance(s) which calls for **recognition**.

There is a diversity and plurality of initiatives, which are **independent and self-organized** and function with little resources. They are **mostly local and fragmented**, concentrated in cities rather than rural areas. They do not always benefit from the existing previous experiences or networks.

The success of anti-racist action may require that different narratives emitted from different experiences and positions in the fight against oppression –be it gender, class, race/ethnicity, or other oppressions- somehow **meet or converge, finding strategic unity** within diversity.

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