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RADAR

Regulating Anti Discrimination and Anti Racism

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Kick off meeting of the EU-funded project RADAR-Regulating AntiDiscrimination and AntiRacism

The kick-off meeting of the RADAR Consortium on “Regulating Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Racism” took place on 16-20 February in Kraków, Poland.

The RADAR Consortium is led by the University of Perugia in Italy and consists of nine partners from six European

countries (Finland, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Poland and the United Kingdom). Its main objective is to provide law enforcement officials and legal professionals with the necessary tools, mainly through open training activities, to facilitate the identification of ‘racial’-motivated hate communication. It will produce a publication with concrete tools, recommendations and best practice examples to facilitate anti-discrimination and anti-racist actions and regulations. The combination of academic institutions with



departments specialising in intercultural communication and online learning, NGOs and non-profit organisations working with victims of xenophobia and ‘racial’ discrimination, is one of the major strengths of the RADAR project.

It is hard to recognize racism at first glance. This is because stereotypes, biased attitudes against minorities as well as certain offensive words and pictures have become ingrained into society, both on a personal and institutional level, to such an extent that they are at risk of becoming normalised (e.g. “you’re a foreigner, you don’t understand”, “do you have roads in Africa?”).



The need to increase social awareness on such attitudes, on racism and xenophobia, is imperative, otherwise nothing meaningful can be achieved at institutional level. For this reason, one of the project’s objectives is to increase the understanding of the language and general communication practices of social classification that pervade both everyday and institutional life in contemporary European societies. There are procedures through which such categories are produced, which may seem harmless on the outset, but they may implicitly lead to ‘racial’ contempt and ultimately hate crime. In particular, it is important to investigate the use of ordinary classifications and recognition of the use of such classifications in a racist way (hate speech). This would provide useful tools for journalists, politicians and legal professionals who work with migrants, minorities, ethnic and religious groups etc. This would help to prevent an unconscious racism fuelled by the institutions themselves, without endangering freedom of expression.

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Ongoing project activities

The project started on 1st November 2014 and during Workstream 1 the partners collected empirical data on hate-oriented discourse, such as debates about discrimination from newspapers and social media, and identified laws and judgements about discrimination for each country. Significant legal judgements related to hate communication practices were collected and relevant texts and videos were also identified and catalogued. The partners also conducted interviews with victims of discrimination and/or with their representatives (NGOs).

Kick-off meeting

The kick-off in Kraków was attended by Aleksander Schejbal and Łukasz Putyra (PL-EST, host), Gabriella B. Klein (IT-UNIPG, transnational coordinator), Veronica Gelfgren and Julia Bazyukina (FI-LM), Eleni-Kalliopi Bimpiri (GR-ANCE), Enrico Caniglia and Maria Rita Cerbini (IT-UNIPG), Koffi M. Dossou and Tiziana Muzi (IT-KEY&KEY), Zohra Rouah (NL- VeW), Anna Szczepaniak-Kozak (PL-UAM/AMU), Katerina Strani (UK-HWU), and Nikolaos Floratos as external evaluator (GR-NSF).



The outcomes of the meeting were: establishment of the steering committee; agreement on all management and implementation plans and agreement on a common language and understanding of the project’s main issue: racism and how it is communicatively constructed through the four communication resources: words (verbal message), voice (paraverbal message), body (non-verbal message) and visual elements (visual message).

The partners agreed to work on a well-defined schedule, using specific analytical tools.

Analytical tools

All partners agreed that mixed research methods were better suited to the project’s purposes, using Conversation Analysis, Multimodal Analysis and Membership Categorisation Analysis. However, as suggested by the external evaluator, Nikolaos Floratos, the leading researchers will translate the academic tools and methodologies used, which are at the core of the project, into non-academic language.

Sensitive concepts

In order to achieve a comparison between the different national contexts, the partners discussed the need to define a shared vocabulary of sensitive concepts and words. This should form a common basis for the RADAR research and training activities.



Fact: Africans are more genetically diverse than the inhabitants of the rest of the world combined.

As a central concept, the Coordinator, Gabriella B. Klein, stressed the controversial – although commonly used – term “race” reminding that, despite the existence of genetic and phenotypic variation, human beings form only one race: the human race without any differentiation in human ‘races’ (cf. Goodman, Alan H. / Moses, Yolanda T and Jones, Joseph L., Race: Are We So Different?, Wiley Blackwell, 2013. Also: <http://www.aaanet.org/resources/Race-and-Racism/index.cfm>). If we continue to use the word “race”, we just perpetuate the false perception that there *are* different human races. Even assuming the term as a social construction, it is not justifiable; it masks a willingness to create discrimination and a hierarchy of domination between individuals. Thus the term is “used as a legitimising ideological tool to oppress and exploit specific social groups and to deny them access to material, cultural and political resources, to work, welfare services, housing and political rights.” (Reisigl, Martin & Wodak, Ruth. Discourse and Discrimination. London: Routledge, 2001: p.2). It is therefore essential to carry out a critical language and discourse analysis in order to propose a socially conscious language use for such terms without being “colourblind”, denying diversity or indeed the existence of racism. (This discussion will be developed in a specific paper).

Project evaluation

Finally, to improve the quality of the collective strategies and research/training work, the partners agreed with Floratos’s suggestion to constitute an Advisory Board for the project, consisting of external members – such as NGO members, academics and other stakeholders. Furthermore, Floratos presented the quality strategy for EU projects explaining the importance of milestones. He pointed out the importance of sustainability and impact of a project after its completion and stressed the need for stakeholders to be actively involved in the project through the Advisory Board to accomplish a good dissemination strategy.

Photo © Thiri Mariah Boucher
From: “The Real Africa: Fight the Stereotype” anti-racist campaign
“Africans do not need to be saved”.
African Students Association of New York’s Ithaca College

>> Next stages

Under Workstream 2, partners will be collecting videos, texts from social media, articles from **newspapers, advertising images** and videos as well as talk-shows with subtle or explicit racist content. These items will be analysed using the methodologies mentioned above, to identify the communicative practices (based on words, voice, body, and visual messages) through which hate-motivated and hate-producing communication occurs.

Next meeting

The next partners' meeting will be held in Athens, Greece, on 25-26 May 2015. It will present the findings of Workstream 1 and discuss the preliminary results of Workstream 2.

More information about the project can be found on its website:
<http://win.radar.communicationproject.eu/web/>

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