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**Hate speech and political rethoric:
in search for hatred content in the tweets of Members
of the European Parliament**

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MA Programme Euroculture Declaration

I, Agnese Olmati, hereby declare that this thesis, entitled “Hate speech and political rethoric: in search for hatred content in the tweets of Members of the European Parliament” submitted as partial requirement for the MA Programme Euroculture, is my own original work and expressed in my own words. Any use made within this text of works of other authors in any form (e.g. ideas, figures, texts, tables, etc.) are properly acknowledged in the text as well as in the bibliography.

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Abstract

During the past decades the political debate has experienced a rise in messages of hate and discrimination. This thesis considers the current issue of hate speech in the specific context of the European political debate.

Given the increasing relevance of online communication and the role social media have acquired, this research aims at analysing tweets posted by MEPs and their political groups in order to detect the eventual presence of hatred content. Due to the complexity of the concept of hate speech, it has been decided not to consider any legal nor academic definition of hate speech and to adopt a linguistic-based approach. Critical discourse analysis, together with the definition of soft hate speech, have been chosen to identify implicit forms of hate speech through the application of linguistic tools.

Data collected in the aftermath of the Strasbourg and Christchurch attacks have been analysed to understand whether and how MEPs contribute to spreading hate messages through their Twitter communication. Findings reveal that some politicians actually express hate through their tweets, conveying mainly discriminatory and Islamophobic sentiments.

The research thus brings evidence of the presence of hate speech in one of the main EU institutions, highlighting a problem which undermines the values at the core of the European project. In doing so, it aims at stressing the need for a more complete definition of hate speech and it emphasizes the relevance of linguistic-based approach to detect subtle forms of the phenomenon.

Keywords: hate speech, Twitter, MEPs, critical discourse analysis, Islamophobia.

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List of Abbreviations

Alde = Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe

CDA = Critical Discourse Analysis

CJEU = Court of Justice of the European Union

ECHR = European Convention on Human Rights

ECR = European Conservatives and Reformists

ECRI = European Commission against Racism and Intolerance

ECtHR = European Court of Human Rights

EFDD = Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy

ENF = Europe of Nations and Freedom

EPP = European People's Party

Greens/EFA = Greens/European Free Alliance

GUE-NGL = European United Left – Nordic Green Left

ICCPR = International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

MEP = Member of the European Parliament

S&D = Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats

UDHR = Universal Declaration of Human Rights

1. Introduction

“Too often, the lines of freedom of speech are very deliberately being tested, and taboos are carelessly being breached and used as a political instrument. (...) It’s not banter, rather it’s playing with fire. Because whoever sows violence with words, risks reaping violence.”¹

On May 29th, 2018, the German Chancellor Angela Merkel met the members of the country’s Turkish community to mark the 25th anniversary of the Nazi-inspired attack in Solingen, which saw the murder of five people of a Turkish-German family. On this occasion, Merkel openly criticised politicians who use hate speech in their discourses and warned against the use of racist rhetoric, with reference to the narratives of anti-immigrant and far-right parties. The problem highlighted by Merkel is hate speech, which has become a widespread phenomenon in Europe during the past years. According to different studies, a great number of hate speech incidents has been registered across the continent.² Today the problem is of great concern, as it damages not only vulnerable individuals and groups, but also the entire society. Moreover, it contributes to the development of a climate of discrimination and hatred and even if it does not directly lead to hate crime, the latter can be encouraged in an environment where hatred is expressed through words. The complexity and potential harm of hate speech result in the need to tackle it urgently and with a comprehensive approach.

In contemporary Europe, what appears particularly alarming is the use of intolerant and inflammatory language made by politicians and public figures, who usually target migrants, the European Union and minorities.³ Yet, the presence of hate speech is far from being a new or isolated phenomenon in the political context. Indeed, it has been reported several times amongst politicians at the national and European levels. One of the most outstanding examples involves Janusz Korwin-Mikke, a far-right Polish

¹ R. Alkousaa, “Merkel says political hate speech is ‘playing with fire’,” *Reuters*, 29 May 2018, accessed January 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-germany-turkey-commemoration/merkel-says-political-hate-speech-is-playing-with-fire-idUSKCN1IU22C>.

² For example, ECRI, “Annual Report on ECRI’s activities covering the period from 1 January to 31 December 2017” (Strasbourg, June 2018), 8, accessed February 2019, <https://rm.coe.int/annual-report-on-ecri-s-activities-covering-the-period-from-1-january-/16808c168b>; Charlotte Devinat and Tamás Berecz, “INACH annual report 2017-2018,” December 2018, 2, accessed March 2019, <http://www.inach.net/wp-content/uploads/Annual-Report-2018-1.pdf>; Article 19, “Responding to ‘hate speech’: Comparative overview of six EU countries,” 5, accessed January 2019, https://www.article19.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/ECA-hate-speech-compilation-report_March-2018.pdf; Amnesty International Italia, “Conta fino a 10, barometro dell’odio in campagna elettorale”, (2018), accessed February 2019, <https://d21zrvtkxt6ae.cloudfront.net/public/uploads/2018/02/16105254/report-barometro-odio.pdf>.

³ Article 19, “Responding to ‘hate speech’,” 5.

Member of the European Parliament [MEP] who expressed sexist and racist views in different occasions. During a plenary session of the European Parliament in Strasbourg he affirmed that women must earn less than their male counterparts as they are weaker, smaller and less intelligent. For his words, Korwin-Mikke was punished with unprecedented penalties and was strongly criticised for having abhorred the values of the European Union.⁴

Besides this episode, 42 hate speech incidents committed by politicians have been detected during the 2014 European Parliament election campaign, with 5 of these being realized by MEPs,⁵ demonstrating once again that hate speech is a recurring problem in the communication of EU representants. In the following chapters, I will investigate the problem of hate speech in contemporary Europe with a focus on the online political debate and I will observe its presence in one of the main EU institutions - the European Parliament.

1.1 Background information

Nowadays, hate speech is amplified by new technologies. During the past decades, characterised by the consolidation of the digital revolution, messages of hatred have started to be spread also through new media and especially through the Internet. LaShel Shaw explains that since its appearance, the Internet has been a medium to communicate hate speech, and more it became popular, more the presence and harms of hate speech have become frequent.⁶ New media and the Internet present a more emotional discourse if compared to old ones, because the protection guaranteed by anonymity makes Internet users inhibited and thus aggressive, to the point that many participants of the online debate use violence and are victim of abusive language at the same time.⁷

Hate speech, with its ever-growing presence on the Internet, poses many problems

⁴ J. Rankin, "Polish MEP punished for saying women are less intelligent than men", *The Guardian*, 14 March 2017, accessed January 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/14/polish-mep-janusz-korwin-mikke-punished-saying-women-less-intelligent-men>.

⁵ ILGA Europe, "Final report: hate speech in the #EP2014 campaign," 2014, accessed March 2019, <https://ilga-europe.org/what-we-do/our-advocacy-work/campaigns/nohateep2014/final-report>.

⁶ LaShel Shaw, "Hate Speech in Cyberspace: bitterness without boundaries," *Notre Dame Journal of Law, Ethics & Public Policy* 25, (2012), 279, accessed February 2019, <https://scholarship.law.nd.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1049&context=ndjlepp>

⁷ Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska and Jan Garlicki, "The impact of new technologies on political communication. Western patterns and the case of Poland," in *Political Communication in the Era of New Technologies*, ed. Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska and Jan Garlicki (Frankfurt Am Main: Peter Lang GmbH, 2013), 23.

especially regarding its regulation and thus the role of states and corporations. Moreover, it questions the concept of freedom of speech and its potential limits, consequently affecting the principle of democracy and the domain of political communication. Notions such as cyberdemocracy and the idea of the Internet as a space for citizenship, as defined by Françoise Tulkens,⁸ have become part of the debate around the relation between democracy, the Internet and hate speech.

Hate speech and its presence in the Internet are one of the dark sides of freedom of speech. However, the digital revolution resulted in the simplification of communication and interaction, therefore bringing positive changes in our society and our democracy. Even if new media often duplicate facts spread by traditional media,⁹ it is now clear that social media platforms have acquired significance in the disclosure of information and for this reason they deserve special attention. Twitter and Facebook have changed the way we discuss about politics and have become important tools for leaders, parties and institutions to communicate about their work, to the point that “nowadays, political communication cannot exist without technological tools.”¹⁰

At the same time, they changed the way citizens engage with politics. Indeed, they facilitate access to information and dialogue with politicians, media and other citizens, while also making this process faster and easily available. Interactivity, which is one of the characteristics of new media, can have the positive effect of stimulating democracy, as it strengthens citizens’ participation in the online public sphere. Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska and Jan Garlicki suggest that the use of social media, in particular in the area of political communication, led to the empowerment of citizens, who are not passive and restrained in a form of top-down communication anymore, but who can now take part in a two-way communication, as they receive information but they also produce and publish content.¹¹ Additionally, new media meet the challenge of transnationality, as they contribute to cross-border flows of political communication.¹² This aspect appears

⁸ Françoise Tulkens, “The hate factor in political speech, Where do responsibilities lie?,” 8, accessed January 2019, <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000016800c170e>

⁹ Łukasz Wojciechowski, Peter Mikuláš and Katarina Fichnová, “Billboards in Municipal Elections in Slovakia: Unexpected Contexts,” in *Political Communication in the Era of New Technologies*, ed. Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska and Jan Garlicki (Frankfurt Am Main: Peter Lang GmbH, 2013), 236.

¹⁰ Dobek-Ostrowska and Garlicki, “The impact of new technologies on political communication,” 12.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹² Michael Bossetta, Anamaria Dutceac Segesten and Hans-Jörg Trenz, “Engaging with European Politics Through Twitter and Facebook: Participation Beyond the National?,” in *Social Media and European Politics – Rethinking Power and Legitimacy in the Digital Era*, ed. Mauro Barisone and Asimina

particularly relevant in the European public sphere, which is characterised by the convergence of several national flows coming from the different corners of Europe.

1.2 Research problem

Communication plays an important role in the process of European integration and helps in supporting and spreading European values which are at the core of the European project, such as democracy, equality, tolerance and solidarity. However, the example mentioned at the beginning of this chapter demonstrates that the presence of hate speech in the European institutions and in the communication of their representatives is undeniable. Such presence contradicts European principles and risks undermining the European project. Consequently, the EU itself is committed to combating hate speech and has undertaken different initiatives in order to pursue this goal – mainly legal actions, as those presented later in this work, but also campaigns, projects and the creation organisations like the International Network Against Cyber Hate, for instance.

What is clear is that the EU and its representatives are aware of the problem and willing to fight against it. European leaders have recognised the role of media in shaping public perceptions and opinions, as demonstrated by a recent resolution of the European Parliament. According to the text, MEPs agree that social media are often used as platforms to spread hate speech and they condemn the normalization of hate speech in the use made by authorities and politicians.¹³ The relevance and newness of the problem was at the heart of the conference “The hate factor in political speech,” held in Warsaw in September 2013. The event pointed to the emergence of hate speech in public and political debates, where it is used to strengthen identity and express intolerance. According to the final report of the meeting, hate speech is not only used by far-right parties, as many could expect. Indeed, it is also common in the narratives of mainstream parties and especially populist parties, which trivialize it and use it as a mean to increase their electorate.¹⁴ The Internet was identified as an accelerator of the phenomenon, but the responsibilities of the problem cannot be connected only to it and, more generally,

Michailidou (Palgarve Studies in European Political Sociology, 2017), 54.

¹³ European Parliament, “Fundamental rights in the EU: tackling hate speech and upholding the rule of law,” 2018, accessed in January 2019, www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20180226IPR98625/fundamental-rights-in-the-eu-tackling-hate-speech-and-upholding-the-rule-of-law.

¹⁴ Tulkens, “The hate factor in political speech, Where do responsibilities lie?,” 4.

to media - responsibilities lie everywhere, and everybody is involved, in the political as well as in the public spheres.¹⁵

In particular, the role of politicians and public figures was highlighted, as they should set the example for the entire society by promoting diversity and tolerance¹⁶ and should avoid using words of hatred also because they are more likely to be emulated by citizens and they have a wide audience who can assimilate intolerance.¹⁷ Therefore, the question becomes whether European politicians communicate hate speech through their online activity, thus disregarding the EU's values and commitment to equality and non-discrimination. In order to answer this question, it can be useful to analyse their Twitter communication.

1.3 Research aims

This work aims at testing whether the political groups in the European Parliament and their members use hateful rhetoric as part of their political discourse or whether they embrace tolerance and diversity in their communication – or prefer to adopt a neutral stance on certain topics. Therefore, the research question at the core of my thesis is:

Do MEPs contribute to the spreading of hateful messages while commenting specific events on Twitter?

My two sub-questions aim at detecting the presence of hatred content in the Twitter communication of MEPs and can be summed up as follows:

What do MEPs highlight in a specific event?

How do they name and describe the Other?

In order to conduct this research, I will present an extensive overview about hate speech in the EU and then I will observe the Twitter communication of the political groups in the European Parliament and of their MEPs, in order to determine if they disseminate words of hatred through this channel of political communication. Even if hate speech is a matter of inquiry in the academic world and in the field of empirical research, and despite the presence of several studies in Europe and its member states, research has overlooked the problem of hate speech in the political communication of the European Union. No data have been collected in order to monitor the phenomenon, even if much attention is given to the problem both in the EU institutions and in the academic world.

¹⁵ Ibid., 1.

¹⁶ Ibid., 7.

¹⁷ Ibid., 4.

Thus, it would be of interest to widen the research on hate speech focusing on political communication and especially on the communication of the EU and its representatives. This thesis would complement the existing field of knowledge on hate speech in Europe and give a new perspective on the problem, as it will focus on the supranational level which has never been considered before.

In the current political and social context, it is relevant to observe the presence of hate speech in a European institution like the Parliament. In this way, this work wants to trigger further reflection on the actual fulfilment of European core values - including non-discrimination, tolerance and equality - which are defended by treaties, but which are not always put into the everyday practice of European institutions and actors. Such reflection can develop additional thinking around the actual realization of the European project.

1.4 Organization of the thesis

This thesis is divided into seven chapters that will help answering the research questions. Chapter Two provides a theoretical framework on hate speech with the aim of giving a definition of the concept to be applied to the research and to the Twitter analysis. First, definitions realized by international bodies will be considered through a review of different legal texts, focusing on interpretations realized by the Council of Europe and the European Court of Human Rights [ECtHR]. Then the different standpoints of several scholars are analysed, thus concentrating on the concept of hate speech as it is described in the literature. Primary and secondary sources pertaining to the concept of hate speech and its many facets will be reviewed in this part. The aim of this chapter is to discuss the difficulties that arise when attempting to establish a definition of the term *hate speech*, as the concept is far from being easily described, and to determine whether a comprehensive definition is available.

Chapter Three connects hate speech to the right to freedom of expression and briefly explains why this freedom needs to be regulated - especially in the EU, which promotes values of tolerance, respect and equality. Thereafter, the chapter explains how freedom of speech is regulated in the European Union by considering restrictions imposed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights [UDHR] and the European Convention of Human Rights [ECHR]. As this work focuses on online hate speech in the political discourse, the legislation regulating freedom of expression online and in the political

debate is considered. The last paragraph explains which limitations are set to free speech in the European Parliament.

Chapter Four summarizes the role of Twitter in the political communication of MEPs. This section first explores the connection between new technologies and democracy, and then delves into the communicative tools used by politicians - and especially MEPs - to interact with their audience. The relevance of Twitter is here highlighted to motivate its centrality to this research. Twitter is briefly presented and the concept of self-branding of MEPs is introduced. This part also provides a brief explanation of the context of the research, illustrating the different stances of MEPs and their political groups, while also defining the actors involved in the research.

Chapter Five presents the methodology applied to the Twitter analysis. The first paragraph provides details on Critical Discourse Analysis [CDA] while also motivating the choice of this method. The theory is explained focusing on the aspects that are relevant to this research. The second paragraph describes the definition of hate speech applied in the following Twitter analysis, i.e. the concept of soft hate speech. Thereafter, the politolinguistic approach is presented, together with the operationalization of the concept of hate speech.

Chapter Six concerns data analysis. The outcomes of the research are here presented. The analysis is divided in two parts, one for each event. The last part of this section compares the findings and the tweets posted after the Strasbourg attack with those posted after the Christchurch attack.

Chapter Seven summarises the results and discusses the outcomes in the context of previous research. It draws conclusions from the analysis, also considering the implications of its findings. To conclude, limitations of the study and possible suggestion for further research on the topic are presented.

2. What is hate speech?

One of the critical aspects that arises when discussing hate speech lies in its definition. Indeed, even if the term is widely used in the legal, political and academic frameworks, there is no agreement on its meaning and scope. Both international law and scholarship have failed in defining hate speech in an incontestable way, probably because many aspects need to be addressed when dealing with this topic.

The following paragraphs will consider the concept of hate speech through two perspectives. First, the definitions made and used by international bodies will be considered. Secondly, definitions realized by scholars will be analysed in order to deeply examine the concept of hate speech by taking into account the many elements that are there intertwined.

This chapter will show that interpreting the concept of hate speech is particularly challenging and that consequently a debate around the necessity of having an accepted definition has arisen both in the legal and the academic contexts. At the end of the chapter, I will establish whether the interpretations considered in this section can be applied in my research and I will motivate my choice.

2.1. Hate Speech in the Council of Europe

For a long time, hate speech has not found any definition in international and European case-law. Indeed, the term has always been used in its broad meaning, indicating a discourse which is negative and is considered a threat to social peace. The first international body adopting an official definition of hate speech is the Council of Europe.¹⁸ This international intergovernmental institution is deeply involved in the fight against hate speech, which is carried out through a far-reaching strategy including a variety of initiatives that pursue the objectives of the various treaties and that aim at monitoring the phenomenon and setting standards.¹⁹ Additionally, charters and recommendations have been adopted in order to provide guidance to member states in countering hate speech and dealing with its victims.

¹⁸ Council of Europe, *Council of Europe's work on hate speech*, accessed January 2019, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/no-hate-campaign/coe-work-on-hate-speech>.

¹⁹ Tarlach McGonagle, "The Council of Europe against online hate speech: Conundrums and challenges," accessed January 2019, 6, <https://rm.coe.int/16800c170f>.

The Council's battle against hate speech has started decades ago, as demonstrated by documents such as the European Convention on Transfrontier Television (1989) and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1995). These texts, however, address the problem of hate speech from very peculiar angles and do not include any interpretation of the concept. It was only in 1997 that a first definition was set by the Council of Europe. Recommendation 97 (20) on hate speech describes it with the following words:

the term "hate speech" shall be understood as covering 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.²⁰

An exhaustive definition of hate speech can be found only in the Recommendation n. 15 on combating hate speech, published in 2015 by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance [ECRI]. The text was adopted in a moment when member states were increasingly concerned about the spread of hate speech in Europe and were realizing the negative effects it has on society, as proved by many incidents of discrimination, harm and hostility. The Recommendation defines hate speech as following:

Hate speech for the purpose of the Recommendation entails the use of one or more particular forms of expression – namely, the advocacy, promotion or incitement of the denigration, hatred or vilification of a person or group of persons, as well any harassment, insult, negative stereotyping, stigmatization or threat of such person or persons and any justification of all these forms of expression – that is based on a non-exhaustive list of personal characteristics or status that includes “race”, colour, language, religion or belief, nationality or national or ethnic origin, as well as descent, age, disability, sex, gender, gender identity and sexual orientation.²¹

The document is particularly relevant as not only it gives a detailed definition of the term, but also because it provides elucidation concerning different aspects related to it. First, the Recommendation understands hate speech in all its manifestations, including stigmatisation, negative stereotyping, insult and denigration and recognizes that it can be based on elements that are not listed there, thus broadening the cases to which the

²⁰ Council of Europe, *Recommendation No. R (97) 20 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on "Hate Speech"* (Committee of Ministers, 1997), 107, accessed February 2019, <https://rm.coe.int/1680505d5b>.

²¹ ECRI, *ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 15 on combating hate speech* (Strasbourg: ECRI, Council of Europe, 2016), 16, accessed February 2019, <https://rm.coe.int/ecri-general-policy-recommendation-no-15-on-combating-hate-speech/16808b5b01>.

concept can be applied. What is particularly relevant in the context of this thesis is the clarification made concerning the term “expression” as used in the definition. It is specified that the term “expression” includes all forms of speech, thus also speech through electronic media. In this way, the recommendation recognizes and highlights the use of new technologies as possible conductors of extremely negative messages.²² Moreover, the Recommendation includes in the scope of the definition

(...) the public denial, trivialisation, justification or condonation of crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes which have been found by courts to have occurred and the glorification of persons for having committed such crimes.²³

With such statement, ECRI condemns these kinds of expressions, thus recognizing that they play a role in disseminating narratives of hatred and can result in horrific violence and crimes, as it has already happened in the European history.²⁴ Finally, the document highlights that satire, as well as objective reporting and analysis, cannot be regarded as hate speech, even if they are cause of offence and hurt. However, it is also underlined that even if these forms of expression are protected by article 10 European Convention on Human Rights [ECHR], they can fall under the definition of hate speech if the form of expression is irresponsible.²⁵ Other important features highlighted are the element of incitement, which is here largely described, and the fact that hate speech goes beyond the public sphere, which also includes “any electronic form of communication to which the general public have access.”²⁶

All the above-mentioned aspects are proper of the phenomenon of hate speech and are clearly addressed by the Recommendation, which thus becomes a relevant tool to understand the concept at the core of this thesis.

2.2. Hate Speech in the European Court of Human Rights

This paragraph will continue to consider the legal definition of hate speech by focusing on another international body, the European Court of Human Rights. Its benchmark, the ECHR, does not provide any clarification concerning the meaning and margins of the term. Consequently, the Court has never had a clear reference point on this subject.

²² Ibid., 4.

²³ Ibid., 17.

²⁴ Ibid., 3.

²⁵ Ibid., 17.

²⁶ Ibid., 19.

While pursuing its aim of protecting human rights and political freedoms, the Court has been dealing with the problem of hate speech in several moments. The term was first adopted by the ECtHR in 1999,²⁷ when it was described as “all forms of expression which spread, incite, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism or other forms of hatred based on intolerance.”²⁸ Through these words, the ECtHR reiterated the definition of hate speech made by the Council of Europe in the Recommendation No. R (97) 20. However, the Court has preferred to refrain from giving its own definition of the term and to consider each case in its singularity, as a definition could limit the Court’s action in future cases.²⁹

A peculiarity of the concept of hate speech used by the Court is its autonomy.³⁰ Indeed, it has no relation with the definitions made by domestic courts. Consequently, the concept applied in one country could be rejected by the ECtHR and vice-versa.³¹ At the same time, the Court reviews the decisions made at the national level under the margin of appreciation doctrine – thus it considers the broader circumstances of the case and decides if the restriction to article 10 made by national authorities is fitting to the interpretation of the Convention. McGonagle and Sottiaux criticize this lack of clarity in the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights, as it results in a lack of consistency which leaves the debate open and which can be interpreted as unsatisfactory for both the juridical interpretation and the doctrinal development.³² The need for a re-evaluation of the concept by the Court is therefore needed in order to better define and regulate hate speech, as the current use made by the ECtHR is too ambiguous.³³

The controversial absence of a legal definition of hate speech has been debated also

²⁷ McGonagle, “The Council of Europe against online hate speech,” 10.

²⁸ Council of Europe, European Court of Human Rights, *Case of Gündüz v. Turkey* (Strasbourg: 2004), para. 22, accessed March 2019, <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#%7B%22tabview%22:%5B%22document%22%5D%2C%22itemid%22:%5B%22001-61522%22%5D%7D>.

²⁹ Françoise Tulkens, “When to say is to do: Freedom of expression and hate speech in the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights”, (2012), 3, accessed March 2019, http://www.ejtn.eu/Documents/About%20EJTN/Independent%20Seminars/TULKENS_Francoise_Presentation_When_to_Say_is_To_Do_Freedom_of_Expression_and_Hate_Speech_in_the_Case_Law_of_the_ECtHR_October_2012.pdf.

³⁰ Anne Weber, *Manual on hate speech* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing, 2009), 3.

³¹ See Council of Europe, European Court of Human Rights, *Case of Sürek v. Turkey* (Strasbourg: 1999), accessed March 2019, <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#%7B%22tabview%22:%5B%22document%22%5D%2C%22itemid%22:%5B%22001-58279%22%5D%7D>.

³² McGonagle, “The Council of Europe against online hate speech,” 10.

³³ Stefan Sottiaux, “‘Bad Tendencies’ in the ECtHR’s ‘Hate Speech’ Jurisprudence,” *European Constitutional Law Review* Volume 7, Issue 1 (2011), 57, accessed March 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1574019611100048>.

during the Warsaw Conference.³⁴ In this occasion, the hypothesis of having a legally-binding definition of hate speech at the European level was discussed, resulting in two different perspectives. On one hand, it was argued that hate speech has nebulous boundaries, also because its definition changes from one country to another. On the other hand, it was affirmed that hate speech has always a common denominator, that is the intention to attack a person or a group because of its race, gender, religion and other characteristics.³⁵ The discussion resulted in preferring to keep a flexible framework that can be more easily adapted to the evolution of the phenomenon.³⁶ However, the lack of a common interpretation does not solve some of the problems connected to hate speech, including monitoring the phenomenon, an activity for which a definition is indispensable.³⁷

2.3 The characteristics of hate speech

As the concept of hate speech cannot be analysed only from the legal perspective and given its widespread presence in the political, social and cultural areas, this section will consider the definitions realized by scholars. Because of the complexity of the concept of hate speech, they also encountered many difficulties in interpreting the term. This paragraph will review the interpretations of the concept made by academics working in different fields, from politology to social sciences and humanities and who have shaped the debate around hate speech. Such conceptualizations are not connected to any linguistic-based approach, which will be used in the Twitter analysis. However, their definitions are useful in understanding some aspects of the phenomenon which should be considered also when adopting a linguistic perspective. Therefore, the features here described need to be taken into account when choosing the definition which will be applied to this research.

Following McGonagle,³⁸ Jong,³⁹ and Brown,⁴⁰ a comprehensive definition of the

³⁴ The Conference "The hate factor in political speech – Where do responsibilities lie?" was held in Warsaw, 18-19 September 2013, and was organized by the Polish Ministry of Administration and Digitization and the Council of Europe, with the support of the EEA Grants and Norway Grants.

³⁵ Françoise Tulkens, "The hate factor in political speech, Where do responsibilities lie?," 3, accessed January 2019, <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000016800c170e>

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.

³⁸ McGonagle, "The Council of Europe against online hate speech," 4.

³⁹ Caleb Jong, "Does Freedom of Speech Include Hate Speech?," *Res Publica* (2011), 386, accessed

concept seems unlikely to be found. These authors stress the intricacy of hate speech and prefer to analyse it by recognizing different types or categories. However, extant literature also identifies several characteristics that constitute hate speech. The first part of this section will consider separately some features of the phenomenon.

When looking at the term “hate speech”, one of the first elements that can be noticed is the reference to the emotional sphere and especially to the feeling of hatred. Post reflects on the definition made by the Oxford English Dictionary and interprets hate speech as “expression of ‘extreme’ intolerance or ‘extreme’ dislike”.⁴¹ However, it is necessary to determine when such emotions become extreme and therefore need to be legally restricted. Indeed, forms of dislike and disagreement are proper of human beings and cannot be eradicated from society, but they must be differentiated from expressions of hate.⁴²

Brown considers negatively the connection of the concept with the emotive aspect of human life. In his view, attempts to regulate hate speech are perceived as ways to regulate people’s feelings and emotions, and this is considered as an interference of the state in the citizens’ private lives.⁴³ Moreover, this kind of speech not only expresses hatred, but also performs actions of hatred, and it can thus be described through the idea of performativity.⁴⁴ A consequence of performativity is the fact that words of hatred can incite other people and be for them a stimulus to use hate speech⁴⁵ and to implement actions of violence that can be defined as hate crimes. However, hate speech is not only about hatred and emotions. Weber and Brown argue that it can be conveyed also implicitly, for instance through expressions that seem normal and rational or through subtle and tacit forms which at a first glance might be not included in the scope of hate narratives.⁴⁶

An element that must be considered at this point of the analysis is symbolism. Symbols

March 2019, doi: 10.1007/s11158-011-9158-y.

⁴⁰ Alexander Brown, “What is hate speech? Part 2: Family Resemblances,” *Law and Philosophy* 36 (2017), 562-565.

⁴¹ Robert Post, “Hate Speech,” in *Extreme Speech and Democracy*, ed. Ivan Hare and James Weinstein (Oxford University Press, 2009), 123.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 123.

⁴³ Alexander Brown, “What is hate speech? Part 1: the Myth of Hate,” *Law and Philosophy* 36 (2017), 458.

⁴⁴ Jean-Luc Nancy, “La Haine, le Sens Coagulé,” (2013), 9, accessed March 2019, <https://www.coe.int/documents/16695/1433458/Jean-Luc+Nancy+LA+HAINE.pdf/75a2feef-af9d-4942-8d16-1f602f6ab992>.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁴⁶ See Anne Weber, *Manual on hate speech* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing, 2009), 5, and Alexander Brown, “What is hate speech? Part 1”, 450.

and signs can communicate hatred⁴⁷ and their use makes the potential risks and harm of hate speech even greater.⁴⁸ For instance, swastikas and burning crosses⁴⁹, together with slogans and manifestations as Nazi marches⁵⁰ are expressions of hate speech which contributed to vilification and to the incitement of violence in different historical periods, becoming tools to develop hate narratives and ideologies and thus gaining historical relevance. Tsesis argues that symbols can also reinforce stereotypes, another element on which hate speech is based on.⁵¹ Indeed, stereotypes represent members of a group as “objects of hatred (...) against whom acts of aggression are either normal or expected,”⁵² with the result of dehumanizing them. Stereotypes help in presenting some people and groups as outsiders of society because of some characteristics.⁵³ The repetition of hate messages can lead to the internalization of this kind of speech, with the result of affecting the habitual perceptions and behaviours towards certain groups.⁵⁴ Thus, hate speech appears to be intertwined with the culture, daily practices and social history of a people. Stereotypes and symbols are part of the phenomenon, as well as the language, with its syntax, semantic values and usage.

Another element to be considered is the potential harm that hate speech can cause in the form of violence or discrimination.⁵⁵ It is evident that not all the speech that might cause damage is labelled as hate speech – for instance, rational and decent communication is usually not considered hate speech even if it has the tendency to cause discrimination and conveys prejudiced messages. However, these expressions can be regarded as hate speech in some cases because, even if they do not express hatred, they abase the target person or group,⁵⁶ thus provoking hurt.

As far as the intent of hate speech is concerned, its aims can be various. Generally, it is argued that “the very purpose of intimidating hate speech is to perpetuate and augment existing inequalities,”⁵⁷ which can have different results. On the one hand, it can diminish a group’s political and social standing, while on the other hand it sets the

⁴⁷ Alexander Brown, “What is hate speech? Part 1,” 444.

⁴⁸ Alexander Tsesis, “Dignity and Speech: The Regulation of Hate Speech in a Democracy,” *Wake Forest Law Review* 42 (2009): 508.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Jong, “Does Freedom of Speech Include Hate Speech?,” 396.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 505.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 517.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 518.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 519.

⁵⁵ Jong, “Does Freedom of Speech Include Hate Speech?,” 127, and Alexander Brown, “What is hate speech? Part 2: Family Resemblances,” *Law and Philosophy* 36 (2017), 579.

⁵⁶ Brown, “What is hate speech? Part 1,” 451.

⁵⁷ Tsesis, “Dignity and Speech,” 505.

ground for acts of violence towards a specific group.⁵⁸

The complexity of the phenomenon is highlighted by Klein, one of the scholars who concentrate on the connection between hate speech and the cyberspace. In this context, he defines hate speech

(...) as a tactical employment of words, images, and symbols, as well as links, downloads, news threads, conspiracy theories, politics, and even pop culture, all of which have become the complex machinery of effective inflammatory rhetoric.⁵⁹

Through the theory of information laundering he explains another characteristic of modern hate speech, which is legitimacy. Indeed, he demonstrated how hateful rhetoric can now easily cycle through the cyberspace – especially through search engines, political blogs and social network – and result in a more legitimized hate speech.⁶⁰

As it was emphasized at the beginning of this section, scholars did not address the concept of hate speech only through its different characteristics. Some also considered it as a set of categories or types. Descriptions as “speech which attacks others on grounds of their race, nationality, religious identity, gender, sexual orientation or other group membership, where this group membership is a morally arbitrary distinguishing characteristic”⁶¹ are considered unsatisfactory by the authors themselves. For instance, Jong prefers to describe hate speech through a disjunctive definition.⁶² He distinguishes between different categories of hate speech having different characteristics: hate speech can be directed to a specific person or group, such as immediate and face-to-face hate speech, but it can also be directed to a wider audience and be indirect and more generalised.⁶³ Types of hate speech can also differ according to the speaker’s aim and the tone of its discourse, which are important elements to take into account when considering the harms provoked by hate speech and the regulatory responses to the phenomenon.⁶⁴

Brown admits the impossibility of providing a comprehensive definition of the concept and argues that in order to consider the cultural and linguistic facets of hate, it is better

⁵⁸ Ibid., 505.

⁵⁹ Adam Klein, “Slipping Racism into the Mainstream: a Theory of Information Laundering,” *Communication Theory* 22 (2012): 428.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 445.

⁶¹ Jong, “Does Freedom of Speech Include Hate Speech?,” 386.

⁶² Ibid., 386.

⁶³ Ibid., 394-396.

⁶⁴ McGonagle, “The Council of Europe against online hate speech,” 4.

to consider the concept in its complexity.⁶⁵ He underlines that given the variety of uses of the term in the political, social and cultural fields, it has to be considered as an ordinary concept that is constructed by the everyday use people make of it,⁶⁶ reflecting “ordinary people’s sense of what is acceptable and unacceptable speech in relation to groups or classes of persons identified by protected characteristics, based on ordinary people’s moral values and principles.”⁶⁷ Brown admits the impossibility of defining hate speech but, at the same time, he considers it as a compositional concept which is formed by three simpler concepts.⁶⁸ He affirms that

something is hate speech only if it (1) is speech or expressive conduct, (2) concerns any members of groups or classes of persons identified by protected characteristics, and (3) involves or is intimately connected with emotions, feelings, or attitudes of hate or hatred.⁶⁹

Brown’s approach considers hate speech through the use made by people in their daily discourses,⁷⁰ and in this aspect is similar to the approach of critical discourse analysis, that will be described later in this work and which regards speech as a social practice which is both “socially constituted and socially constitutive.”⁷¹

Even if many scholars have addressed the topic of hate speech and its meaning, their definitions appear narrow and non-exhaustive, as in the case of the legal definitions realized until now. Consequently, it would be inappropriate to apply one of the definitions examined in the current chapter to this thesis. Another approach is needed in order to detect hate speech in all the forms it can be manifested.

⁶⁵ Alexander Brown, “What is hate speech? Part 2,” 602.

⁶⁶ Alexander Brown, “What is hate speech? Part 1,” 422-428.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 428.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 441.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 446.

⁷⁰ Brown, “What is hate speech? Part 2,” 567.

⁷¹ Monika Kopytowska, “Discourse of hate and radicalism in action,” *Journal of Language Aggression and Conflict* 3:1 (2015), 1, accessed April 2019, doi 10.1075/jlac.3.1.001ed.

3. Freedom of expression and its limits

Hate speech, as a form of expression, inevitably clashes with one of the main rights on which democratic societies, and thus the European Union, are built on - the right to freedom of expression. Not only - it also contradicts the European values of respect and tolerance by steering towards discrimination and violence. Consequently, the EU openly condemns hate speech and sets different tools in order to counter the problem both in the juridical framework and in the everyday life of its citizens and institutions.

The current chapter will illustrate the relevance of the problem of hate speech in connection to the rights of European citizens. First, freedom of expression will be considered as it is acknowledged by the most important documents on human rights: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the European Convention of Human Rights, which have a referential value for all other treaties and legal instruments. The interaction between freedom of expression and hate speech will be discussed through the analysis of EU regulations and of the restrictions which are set to hate speech, with emphasis on the political and online contexts. Thereafter, the limitations to freedom of speech in the European Parliament will be analysed. Even if this institution constitutes the heart of European democracy, some restraints are set in order to prevent and counter hate speech.

3.1. Hate speech and the limits to freedom of expression

According to international human rights standards and to the core values of the European Union, all people are entitled to the right to freedom of expression as well as the principle of non-discrimination.⁷² Evidence shows that free speech often results in hateful speech, which damages other people's right by discriminating them and harming their human dignity. A sensitive conflict thus arises in the debate around hate speech, which sees the rights of the individual against the same rights of the others. ECRI responds to this ambiguity affirming that the exercise of freedom of expression and opinion is assured when consistent with the rights of other people.⁷³ In this setting, the

⁷² The principle of non-discrimination is defined by the HR Committee, General Comment No. 18, 1989, para 7, as "any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference which is based on any ground such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, and which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by all persons, on an equal footing, of all rights and freedoms."

⁷³ ECRI, *Recommendation No. 15 on combating hate speech*, 3.

duty of states is to assure the enjoyment of all rights for all citizens, therefore leading to the application of some restrictions to freedom of expression in order to guarantee the respect of human dignity. This process, which is not always effortless,⁷⁴ is particularly important in democratic societies, where the above-mentioned rights are fundamental and where freedom of expression is necessary for the public debate, with the possible result of discriminating or outraging people or groups who are protected by the right to freedom of expression.⁷⁵

In order to respect all individuals, free speech needs to be harmonized with other fundamental rights, e.g. freedom of thought and religion. The following paragraphs will explain how freedom of speech is addressed in the European context and how it is restrained in order to be harmonized with the other fundamental rights.

The United Nations and the Council of Europe have been active in defining freedom of expression and developing legal tools which aim at punishing hate speech. Therefore, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights will be considered in order to identify the connection between freedom of expression and hate speech. The UDHR [Universal Declaration of Human Rights] defines freedom of expression in article 19, stating that

everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.⁷⁶

Following this statement, it seems that freedom of expression does not encounter any restriction. However, freedom of expression is far from being an absolute right. Some limitations are set out in article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights [ICCPR], which underlines the duties and responsibilities that are carried by the exercise of this right. It states that freedom of expression

may therefore be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall only be such as are provided by law and are necessary: (a) for respect of the rights or reputations of others; (b) for the protection of national security or of public order (ordre public), or of public health or morals.⁷⁷

Moreover, in article 20, the ICCPR explicitly outlaws “any advocacy of national, racial

⁷⁴ Weber, *Manual on hate speech*, 1.

⁷⁵ McGonagle, “The Council of Europe against online hate speech,” 4.

⁷⁶ United Nations General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (Paris: 1948), Article 19, accessed March 2019, <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>.

⁷⁷ United Nations General Assembly, *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (1966), Article 19, accessed March 2019, <https://treaties.un.org/doc/publication/unts/volume%20999/volume-999-i-14668-english.pdf>.

or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence,”⁷⁸ and thus reinforces the limits imposed by article 19. Many international instruments contain provisions on hate speech,⁷⁹ but it is important to recall especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which was also ratified by the European member states, and which requires the criminalization of hate speech.⁸⁰

Considering the European context, it is necessary to take into account the European Convention of Human Rights. Being the milestone of the Council of Europe and its Court, this is the most relevant document addressing freedom of speech in the Council of Europe and in the European Union. The right to freedom of expression is here acknowledged in article 10. According to the Convention, as this right implies duties and responsibilities, it is subject to conditions and penalties that are necessary in a democracy. Such formulation appears very consistent to the one set in the ICCPR. The similarity among these landmark documents indicates the relevance of the problem of hate speech and suggest that its relationship with freedom of expression needs to be addressed at the international level.

The democratic aspect underlined by the ECHR appears particularly relevant in the debate around free speech in the EU and its institutions, as a genuine democracy requires a pluralistic public debate. Obviously, this implies the presence of disagreement, negative narratives and words, which can therefore be protected by article 10 in order to assure a pluralistic debate.⁸¹

It is important to distinguish between expressions which are covered by article 10 and accepted in a democratic society and those which, on the contrary, are not justified by the ECHR and therefore must be considered as forms of hate speech. Post highlights the complexity of such distinction: legal attempts to limit freedom of expression, for example by suppressing hatred narratives, are delicate because extreme disagreement is

⁷⁸ Ibid., Article 21.

⁷⁹ See United Nations General Assembly, *The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* (1948), accessed May 2019, <https://treaties.un.org/doc/publication/unts/volume%2078/volume-78-i-1021-english.pdf>; Human Rights Committee, *Human Rights Committee's General Comment No. 34 on the right to freedom of expression* (Geneva: July 2011), accessed May 2019; Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, *Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination's General Recommendation No. 35 on combating racist hate speech* (2013), accessed March 2019, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/53f457db4.html>.

⁸⁰ United Nations General Assembly, *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination* (1965), Article 4, accessed March 2019, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cedr.aspx>.

⁸¹ McGonagle, “The Council of Europe against online hate speech,” 9.

the “lifeblood of politics”⁸² and thus of a democracy, but at the same time it might be similar to hate speech and could be misinterpreted.

In order to differentiate words of dislike and disagreement from hate speech, Weber recommends considering the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights, which provides some parameters that can help in distinguishing hate speech.⁸³

When ruling on cases concerning hate speech in connection with article 10 ECHR, the Court can adopt two different approaches. When it considers that the discourse in question conveys hate speech and disregards the core values of the Convention, the approach of exclusion from the Convention is applied. Article 17, which covers exclusion of abuse of right, is used as a safety mechanism and is usually invoked to ensure that the protection enshrined by article 10 is not applied to racist, xenophobic or anti-Semitic discourses, denying of the Holocaust, (neo-)Nazi speech, which are therefore not considered as under the scope of article 10.⁸⁴ On the contrary, if hate speech is recognized in the discourse in question but it does not endanger the ECHR’s values, the approach of setting restrictions on protection is applied. This is provided by article 10.2, which considers restrictions necessary when in the interest of national security, public safety and the prevention of disorder or crime, amongst the others.⁸⁵

The ECtHR, in order to find the right balance between article 10 and the rights of the others, has adopted a case-by-case approach. The framework applied to freedom of expression thus appears flexible and mutable. However, this is not necessarily negative: it shows that not only the society changes, for instance with the use of new technologies, but also that freedom of expression is not a static right and that in order to be interpreted efficiently, the ECHR needs to be used as a living, dynamic instrument.⁸⁶ Obviously, article 10 ECHR represents the main reference point in the legislative framework applied in the European Union, which has also been active in addressing hate speech and has undertaken some measures reflecting the ECHR. Indeed, in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union both freedom of expression and the right to non-discrimination are recognized, respectively in Article 11 and Article 21.

⁸² Robert Post, “Hate Speech,” in *Extreme Speech and Democracy*, 125.

⁸³ Weber, *Manual on hate speech*, 5.

⁸⁴ McGonagle, “The Council of Europe against online hate speech,” 9.

⁸⁵ European Court of Human Rights, “Factsheet – Hate Speech”, 2019, 1, accessed March 2019, https://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/FS_Hate_speech_ENG.pdf.

⁸⁶ Tarlach McGonagle, “Freedom of expression: still a precondition for democracy? Conference report,” 3, accessed March 2019, <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000016805aa8be>

However, there are other non-binding texts and documents that have been embraced by the Council of Europe and by the EU to address hate speech and its various forms.⁸⁷ The following paragraphs will thus concentrate on other non-legally binding instruments which emphasize provisions concerning online hate speech and the political debate.

3.2. The regulation of online hate speech

The regulation of hatred content in the cyberspace encounters many obstacles, particularly because of the transnationality of the internet⁸⁸ and the anonymity of its users. Additionally, the role and power of states and supranational organisations is usually limited in this field, as Internet Service Providers and Web-Hosting Services have a key responsibility in keeping their platforms safe.⁸⁹ When looking at texts focusing on the public and political debate in the cybersphere, the first which needs to be addressed is the Recommendation (97)20 on hate speech, which has already been mentioned in the previous chapter as it provides a first definition of hate speech and condemns expressions which incite racial hatred and all forms of intolerance. The document underlines that forms of expression conveying hate speech can have a more damaging impact when disseminating through media.⁹⁰

This document goes hand in hand with Recommendation 97(21) on the media and the promotion of a culture of tolerance. Together, they serve as an important point of reference among standard-setting texts adopted by the Council of Europe. The latter especially focuses on the positive contribution media can make in the fight against hate speech, as they can be powerful instruments in the promotion of a culture of tolerance and inclusion and in the development of mutual understanding and diversity in the society.⁹¹

⁸⁷ See also Council of Europe, *Recommendation 1805 (2007) on Blasphemy, religious insults and hate speech against persons on grounds of their religion* (Parliamentary Assembly, 2007), accessed February 2019, [http://www.assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-EN.asp?fileid=17569&lang=en](http://www.assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-EN.asp?fileid=17569&lang=en;); *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities* (1995), accessed February 2019, <https://rm.coe.int/16800c10cf>; *ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 7 on national legislation to combat racism and racial discrimination* (ECRI, 2002), accessed February 2019, <https://rm.coe.int/ecri-general-policy-recommendation-no-7-revised-on-national-legislatio/16808b5aae>.

⁸⁸ Raphael Cohen-Almagor, "Balancing Freedom of Expression and Social Responsibility on the Internet," *Philosophia* 45, (2017), 973, accessed April 2019, doi: 10.1007/s11406-017-9856-6.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 973-975.

⁹⁰ Council of Europe, *Recommendation No. R (97) 20*, 106.

⁹¹ Council of Europe, *Recommendation No. R (97) 21 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on the media and the promotion of a culture of tolerance* (Committee of Ministers, 1997), 109, accessed February 2019, <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000016>

In the Recommendation CM/Rec(2011)7 on a new notion of media, the Committee of Ministers affirms that

media should refrain from conveying hate speech and other content that incites violence or discrimination for whatever reason. Special attention is needed on the part of actors operating collective online shared spaces which are designed to facilitate interactive mass communication (or mass communication in aggregate). They should be attentive to the use of, and editorial response to, expressions motivated by racist, xenophobic, anti-Semitic, misogynist, sexist (including as regards LGBT people) or other bias.⁹²

Also the Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime focuses on the dissemination of hate speech through the internet. Indeed, it obliges states to adopt legislative measures to criminalize racist expressions or public insults conveyed through computer to people or groups on the base of race, colour, national or ethnic origin and religion.⁹³

The Audiovisual Media Services Directive asks members states to ensure that this kind of services does not “contain any incitement to hatred based on race, sex, religion or nationality”⁹⁴ and that they respect human dignity without discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, nationality, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.⁹⁵

More recently, the European Commission has decided to address the problem through the code of conduct to counter illegal hate speech online. The Code was realized with some of the major IT companies including Facebook, Twitter, Youtube and Microsoft and it set their commitment to create a “clear and effective processes to review notifications regarding illegal hate speech on their services so they can remove or disable access to such content.”⁹⁶ Another goal of the code is to strengthen cooperation and support to civil society organisations, national governments other social media

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⁹² Council of Europe, *Recommendation CM/Rec(2011)7 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on a new notion of media* (Committee of Ministers, 2011), para 91, accessed March 2019, https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016805cc2c0.

⁹³ Council of Europe, *Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime, concerning the criminalisation of acts of a racist and xenophobic nature committed through computer systems* (2003), accessed March 2019, <https://rm.coe.int/168008160f>.

⁹⁴ European Parliament and Council of the European Union, *Directive 2010/13/EU of the European parliament and of the Council of 10 March 2010 on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the provision of audiovisual media services (Audiovisual Media Services Directive)* (Official Journal of the European Union, 2010), Article 6, accessed March 2018, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32010L0013&from=EN#d1e1597-1-1>.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, Article 9.

⁹⁶ *Code of Conduct on Countering Illegal Speech Online* (2016), accessed March 2019, ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/files/hate_speech_code_of_conduct_en.pdf.

companies in order to share best practices, exchange information and promote positive narratives against hate speech. The implementation of the document is producing positive results, as IT companies now manage to review most of the hate speech notifications within 24 hours and delete most of it from their platforms.⁹⁷

The European Commission has also issued a Recommendation on measures to effectively tackle illegal content online, informing online platforms about the processes they should adopt to identify illegal content online – including hate speech – and accelerate their clearing.⁹⁸ This approach is aligned with the previous recommendations.

3.3. The regulation of hate speech in the political debate

Despite the continuous debate around the possible limitation of freedom of speech in the political discourse, there are several documents which address the regulation of free speech in this context and thus the problem of hate speech. In its Principle 1, the above-mentioned Recommendation (97)²⁰ especially refers to governments, public authorities, institutional and officials, stating that they should avoid using hate speech especially when addressing the media.⁹⁹

With the Resolution on Freedom of expression and respect for religious beliefs, the Council declares that while political speech and the public debate are not likely to be restricted, limits should not be imposed to freedom of expression to meet religious sensitivity.¹⁰⁰ The Declaration of the Committee of Ministers on freedom of political debate in media recalls that freedom of expression should be exercised in respect of other people's dignity and fundamental rights. Additionally, it emphasizes that words of hatred are not covered by freedom of political debate and that protection of speech concerning institutions should be very limited in order not to limit the possibility to

⁹⁷ European Commission, *Fourth monitoring exercise on the implementation of the Code of Conduct* (European Commission, Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, 2019), accessed March 2019, https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/code_of_conduct_factsheet_7_web.pdf.

⁹⁸ European Commission, *Commission Recommendation of 1.3.2018 on measures to effectively tackle illegal content online* (European Commission, 2018), accessed March 2019, ec.europa.eu/newsroom/dae/document.cfm?doc_id=50095.

⁹⁹ Council of Europe, *Recommendation No. R (97) 20*, 107.

¹⁰⁰ Council of Europe, *Resolution 1510 (2006) on Freedom of expression and respect for religious beliefs* (Parliamentary Assembly, 2006), 2, accessed March 2019, <http://semantic-pace.net/tools/pdf.aspx?doc=aHR0cDovL2Fzc2VtYmx5LmNvZS5pbmQvbnVhcnVhG1sL1hSZWYvWDJILURXLWV4dHIuYXNwP2ZpbGVpZD0xNzQ1NyZsYW5nPUVO&xsl=aHR0cDovL3NlbWFudGljcGFjZS5uZXQvWHNsdc9QZGYvWFJIZi1XRClBVC1YTUwyUERGLnhzbA==&xslparams=ZmlsZWlkPT E3NDU3>.

criticize.¹⁰¹

The Declaration on the use of racist, antisemitic and xenophobic elements in political discourse is the result of the increase of racist speech in the previous years and of the awareness that the phenomenon is particularly present in political discourse. The declaration points to the fact that using hate speech in political discourse is ethically unacceptable, as it can have consequences on the public opinion, and thus condemns such use. In particular, it points to the fact that hate speech is not only used by extremist parties, but also from mainstream political groups and therefore risks being legitimized in the public debate. Its frequent use against foreign people and those belonging to minorities is of concern especially in debates around migration and Islam, as hate speech in these narratives communicate wrong images and stereotypes.¹⁰²

3.3. The regulation of hate speech in the European Parliament

The previous paragraphs clarified the legal approach of the European Union towards hateful speech through the accomplishments of the two main institutions operating on its territory, the Council of Europe and the European Union, and have demonstrated that the EU is seriously concerned about hate speech and is tackling it through a consistent and multifaceted strategy touching all contexts of the phenomenon.

However, the heart of the EU and of its decision-making process is not excluded by this far-reaching approach. Indeed, the EU has been active in fighting hate speech also inside its institutions. Staff regulations and guidelines provide rules covering hate speech which are applicable to EU officials, commissioners and MEPs. As these rules do not contain any explicit reference to hate speech, the framework on discrimination and harassment is employed.

Special rules are applied to MEPs as they enjoy immunity. Absolute immunity, which is assured by EU law, is granted for votes cast and opinions expressed in the performance of their duties. It also ensures freedom of expression for MEPs and protects them during and after their mandate. On the contrary, relative immunity is granted during the sessions of the European Parliament but only for the duration of the mandate and partly

¹⁰¹ Council of Europe, *Declaration on freedom of political debate in the media* (Committee of Ministers, 2004), accessed March 2019, https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016805ddd8.

¹⁰² ECRI, *ECRI Declaration on the use of racist, antisemitic and xenophobic elements in political discourse* (ECRI, 2005), accessed March 2019, <https://rm.coe.int/ecri-declaration-on-the-use-of-racist-antisemitic-and-xenophobic-eleme/16808c1f02>.

depends on national law.¹⁰³ The Court of Justice of the European Union [CJEU] has specified which expressions are considered as affirmed in performance of their duties and are thus covered by immunity. These expressions include those made in the precincts of the Parliament and outside of them in case “they are assertions amounting to subjective appraisal which present a direct and obvious link with a general interest of concern to citizens.”¹⁰⁴ Even if members of the parliament enjoy immunity, penalties can be applied when hate speech is committed during institutional sittings.

Also the Committee on Legal Affairs of the European Parliament has expressed its view on this subject, stating that expressions which go against Article 21 on Non-discrimination of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights are not covered by immunity as the MEPs’ freedom of expression must not incite to hatred or question other people’s dignity. It must be underlined that the European Parliament’s political groups have no instrument regulating hate speech incidents committed by their politicians.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ *Protocol No. 7 on the privileges and immunities of the European Union* (Official Journal of the European Union, 2012), Articles 9 and 10, accessed March 2019, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:12012E/PRO/07&from=EN#d1e123-266-1>.

¹⁰⁴ European Parliament, *The European legal framework on hate speech*, 122.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 127.

4. Twitter and politics: the self-branding of MEPs

4.1 Twitter

Twitter is a social networking site allowing users to communicate through short messages called tweets which can have a maximum length of 140 characters. The main trigger of Twitter communication is the default question “What’s happening?” which encourages users to tweet. Twitter users can write, like, comment and retweet posts, which can also include pictures, links, GIFs and polls. Choosing to retweet a message implies the possibility to republish it and adding a comment – therefore personalizing its content. In this way, the platform allows a two-way communication and therefore enables interaction between users.

One of the features which makes Twitter particularly popular is the fact that it is very easy to use. The shortness of tweets, together with the simple language used, makes it very user-friendly as its content can be scanned very quickly. As it is possible to filter the content by hashtags, it is easier to find tweets and users with similar interests. This social media is used for recreational reasons, to share personal opinions, stay in touch with friends or influence the digital debate, but it is also widely used to share information, for instant messaging and for marketing purposes - especially by brands, companies, politicians and celebrities.

Today many researches study Twitter and its uses from several perspectives. But why is it important to focus specifically on this social media? The first reason lies in the role it has acquired in contemporary society. With 100 million daily active users and 500 million tweets sent per day,¹⁰⁶ Twitter ranks as one of the principal social networks worldwide. It has become a communicative medium widely used by common people as wells as businesses and public figures, with the result of influencing our daily life and the public debate. Indeed, it is argued that

Twitter’s embeddedness in everyday social and communicative interactions across so many nations of the developed world, and its role as a very public, global, real-time communications channel highlight the fact that it—alongside other major social media, like Facebook or YouTube—provides a window on contemporary society as such, at national and global levels¹⁰⁷.

¹⁰⁶ Omnicore, “Twitter by the Numbers: Stats, Demographics & Fun Facts,” 2019, accessed April 2019, <https://www.omnicoreagency.com/twitter-statistics/>

¹⁰⁷ Cornelius Puschmann, Axel Bruns, Merja Mahrt, Katrin Weller, and Jean Burgess, “Epilogue: Why Study Twitter?,” in *Twitter and society*, ed. Katrin Weller, Axel Bruns, Jean Burgess, Merja Mahrt and Cornelius Puschmann (New York: Peter Lang, 2014), 426.

For this reason, Twitter has become object of research in many fields. Hundreds of studies have been conducted to examine a wide variety of phenomena which develop on this platform. However, the main reason why Twitter is at the core of this work consists in the relevance it has gained in the sphere of political communication. Some scholars go so far as to argue that “nowadays, it is possible to say that without the new media there is no politics.”¹⁰⁸ Following the development of new technologies, social media – and especially Twitter – have expanded their role in political communication, for instance replacing email lists and websites in the process of interaction between politicians and citizens.¹⁰⁹ In contemporary democracies, communicating with constituencies has become an important task for politicians, which is carried out mainly through the Internet. Even if Facebook and other websites are important tools of political communication, it is affirmed that Twitter is the most relevant social media in EU politics because users who take part in the online political debate are themselves policy-makers or are involved in politics because of their interest or profession.¹¹⁰

Considering the importance of Twitter in the European political sphere, academics and researchers have scrutinized its use in different political contexts, particularly focusing on periods of electoral campaign. However, it is relevant to consider its usage also in the everyday communication of politicians. Moreover, studying the online political discourse of EU figures and their use of social media can be interesting also in relation to the problem of democratic deficit in the European Union and the decrease of citizens’ engagement in politics.

4.2 Twitter in the political context

This paragraph will summarize the role Twitter has assumed in the field of political communication and its connection with the concepts of cyber-democracy and e-participation. Later it will focus on the role it acquires in the context of European political communication and in the construction of the European public sphere.

¹⁰⁸ Bartłomiej Machnik, “The Place of Twitter in the Process of Political Communication,” *Kwartalnik Naukowy OAP UW "e-Politikon"*, no. 9 (2014), 96, accessed April 2019, <http://oapuw.pl/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Machnik-B.-The-Place-of-Twitter-in-the-Process-of-Political-Communication.pdf>.

¹⁰⁹ Leticia Bode and Kajsia E. Dalrymple, “Politics in 140 Characters or Less: Campaign Communication, Network Interaction, and Political Participation on Twitter,” *Journal of Political Marketing*, (2014), 1, accessed April 2019, doi: 10.1080/15377857.2014.959686.

¹¹⁰ Lucia Vesnic-Alujevic, “Members of the European Parliament Online: The Use of Social Media in Political Marketing,” *European View* 12(1) (2013), 29, accessed April 2019, doi:10.1007/s12290-013-0258-2.

First, it is necessary to briefly explain how social media have impacted political communication. As it was previously mentioned, they have replaced conventional tools of interactivity between politicians and citizens. However, this is not completely true. Indeed, it is recognized that “at present new media (of which Twitter is an example) and traditional channels of communication complement each other in the context of the process of political communication.”¹¹¹ As they offer different communicative approaches, new and old media integrate each other - for instance Twitter has become a source of information for traditional media¹¹² and, together with the other social media, it has become an intermediary between public figures and citizens as it makes communication between them bidirectional,¹¹³ which is not possible in the case of newspapers or television.

Twitter influences the habits and behaviours of both politicians and citizens. On one hand, politicians use it to rapidly express their opinions, construct their image, influence the online discussion and inform their followers. On the other hand, citizens employ it as a source of information but also as a medium for political expression and for grass-root organization. For both categories, Twitter allows the creation of networks, for instance connecting politicians with their colleagues or groups of citizens who are politically engaged.¹¹⁴ These aspects demonstrate how social relations and constructions are built using Twitter, which therefore is an important part the online public sphere. Indeed, it is widely recognized that this platform has the potential to involve people in the political debate and can have an impact on citizens’ political engagement and thus on their democratic participation.

The benefits and the limits of e-participation are a matter of debate in today’s academic discussion around the role of the Internet and social networks in contemporary democracy¹¹⁵. Despite the huge potential social media and Twitter can have for the political engagement of citizens in a democratic society, there is a lot of criticism concerning the actual results on democratic participation. Indeed, the use of social media is deemed to be far from contributing to the creation of the Habermassian public sphere or to improve electoral participation and thus strengthening democracy, as the

¹¹¹ Machnik, “The Place of Twitter in the Process of Political Communication,” 88.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 97-104.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 89-90.

¹¹⁴ Axel Maireder & Julian Ausserhofer, “Political Discourses on Twitter: Networking Topics, Objects, and People,” in *Twitter and society*, ed. Katrin Weller, Axel Bruns, Jean Burgess, Merja Mahrt and Cornelius Puschmann (New York: Peter Lang, 2014), 313.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 306.

online world reproduces some of the problems which are present already in the offline public sphere.¹¹⁶

The very first issue that limits the creation of a democratic public sphere is access to the internet, which is not as free and easy for everybody as it might seem.¹¹⁷ Additionally, social media are used for political purposes only by a restricted and privileged number of citizens who are interested in politics¹¹⁸ and their participation is usually connected to their level of education.¹¹⁹ Many use Twitter passively or are already politically engaged in the real world;¹²⁰ consequently,

the information to which Tweeters are exposed may or may not be retained for future use in political discussion or activities, thereby limiting their ability to participate in democratic processes.¹²¹

The use of social media in the domain of politics could make citizens feel more involved and thus result in higher rates of participation in elections. This could be true especially for younger generations, as they are the main users of online platforms and because there is usually a low turnout of young adults.¹²² However, until now no connection has been demonstrated between online political engagement and participation in elections and thus in the democratic process.

To sum up, Twitter might show the signs of a participatory culture, giving users the idea of participating to a debate and having a political or social impact - which actually they do not have.¹²³ It is far from presenting the benefits of a face-to-face exchange¹²⁴ in the offline political context and therefore it cannot be affirmed that it is beneficial for democracy and that other instruments should be used to strengthen democratic participation.¹²⁵

Expectations on e-democracy were not met in the EU either, where e-participation was considered as a possible solution to the problem of scarce political participation.¹²⁶

¹¹⁶ Bart Cammaerts, "Radical pluralism and free speech in online public spaces. The case of North Belgian extreme right discourses," *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 12(6), (2009), 557-558, accessed April 2019, doi: 10.1177/1367877909342479.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 557.

¹¹⁸ Bode and Dalrymple, "Politics in 140 Characters or Less," 25.

¹¹⁹ Peter John Chen, *Australian Politics in a Digital Age*, (Canberra: ANU E Press, 2013): 77-82.

¹²⁰ Cammaerts, "Radical pluralism and free speech in online public spaces," 557.

¹²¹ Bode and Dalrymple, "Politics in 140 Characters or Less," 24.

¹²² Vesnic-Alujevic, "Members of the European Parliament Online," 26.

¹²³ Chen, *Australian Politics in a Digital Age*, 77-82.

¹²⁴ Ruth Page, "The linguistics of self-branding and micro-celebrity in Twitter: The role of hashtags," *Discourse & Communication*, 6(2) (2012), 199, accessed April 2019, doi: 10.1177/1750481312437441.

¹²⁵ Eva Majewski, "Online politics for citizens in the twenty-first century," *European View* 14, (2015), 82, accessed March 2019, doi:10.1007/s12290-015-0351-9.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 78.

However, the use of social media surely resulted in the development of a more efficient communication between institutions and citizens,¹²⁷ even if there is no conclusion on the impact of social media on democratic participation. In the European context, social networks - and especially the microblogging platform Twitter - have become more and more relevant in the political sphere, where they are used by institutions and politicians mainly as means to inform the public. Twitter is used also for political campaigning, broadcasting information and live reporting, while also allowing immediate communication with other users.¹²⁸

Social media can have a positive impact in the European context and their relevance in the EU's communication is not expected to diminish.¹²⁹ Indeed, it can be argued that they allow the creation of a digital public sphere and might contribute in bringing European politics closer to EU citizens.¹³⁰ Such media have a great potential in this as they can meet some of the challenges of the European public sphere, such as the large scale, linguistic diversity and trans-nationality.

Online activity is regarded as a potential mean to increase the legitimization of European institutions and for this reason online interaction between institutions and citizens has been promoted. This is also the case for the European Parliament, where MEPs are in a peculiar situation as they are geographically distant from their voters and parties and they have to represent their nation as well as the EU in its whole.¹³¹ Especially Twitter can have the effect of developing the supranational feature of European politics, because in their tweets EU politicians often indicate explicitly the European political alliance they belong to. Indeed, they usually retweet posts of other members of their party, reproducing online their political network and affiliations.¹³² This is important because supranational alliances are often unknown, as citizens use

¹²⁷ Iris Korthagen, Ira van Keulen, Leonhard Hennen, Georg Aichholzer, Gloria Rose, Ralf Lindner, Kerstin Goos and Rasmus Øjvind Nielsen, "Prospects of e-democracy in Europe," (2018), 5, accessed March 2019, https://www.rathenau.nl/sites/default/files/2018-05/EPRS_STU%282018%29603213_EN_0.pdf.

¹²⁸ Caja Thimm, Jessica Einspänner-Pflock and Mario Anastasiadis, "Twitter during the 2014 European Elections in Germany – Analyzing politicians' campaigning strategies," in *Tweets from the campaign trail*, ed. Alex Frame, Arnaud Mercier, Gilles Brachotte and Caja Thimm (Peter Lang AG, 2016), 199-206

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 218.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 198.

¹³¹ Darren G. Lilleker and Karolina Koc Michalska, "MEPs online: Understanding communication strategies for remote representatives" (paper presented at the European Consortium of Political Researchers Conference, Reykjavik, Iceland, September 2011).

¹³² Johannes Paßmann, Thomas Boeschoten, and Mirko Tobias Schäfer, "The Gift of the Gab: Retweet Cartels and Gift Economies on Twitter," in *Twitter and society*, ed. Katrin Weller, Axel Bruns, Jean Burgess, Merja Mahrt and Cornelius Puschmann (New York: Peter Lang, 2014), 336.

national parties as points of reference.¹³³

4.3 MEPs on Twitter: the online public sphere as a place for self-branding

As already mentioned, communication is an essential aspect of today's political activity. If in the past tools of political communication were limited to tv emissions, radio podcasts and newspapers, the advent of the Internet has radically changed the way politicians communicate and interact with their constituencies. Indeed, the Web 1.0 and later 2.0 brought the appearance of a new communicative space and of a new type of publicness, characterized by the fact that users can share content according to criteria of personal relevance.¹³⁴ Consequently, politicians – including MEPs – now adopt also official websites, blogs, newsletters and social media for their communication.

Looking at the tools used by MEPs, it can be noticed that websites are mainly exploited to provide information on EU institutions and their work, while they offer few opportunities for interaction, especially for journalists and supporters.¹³⁵ However, interaction is more present on social media. Indeed, social networking has been more and more integrated in the communicative strategy of MEPs, to the point where today most of them have a profile on one or several social media. Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and Flickr are the most used, but also LinkedIn has recently emerged.

According to a survey on the digital trends of MEPs realized by the digital strategist Brett Kobie, Twitter is the second preferred online communication channel after Facebook. The results demonstrate that for MEPs the greatest benefits of using Twitter are the possibility to learn about stakeholders' views and to express their own opinions, even if they still value face-to-face meetings and events where communication is regarded as more effective.¹³⁶ Focusing on Twitter, this platform has become a place where people tend to perform their professional status¹³⁷ and for this reason it is practical for MEPs to influence their followers who are also citizens - and thus voters.

As this research will confirm, MEPs benefit from the usage of Twitter, as they use it not

¹³³ Thimm, Einspänner-Pflock and Anastasiadis, "Twitter during the 2014 European Elections," 215.

¹³⁴ Jan-Hinrik Schmidt, "Twitter and the Rise of Personal Publics," in *Twitter and society*, ed. Katrin Weller, Axel Bruns, Jean Burgess, Merja Mahrt and Cornelius Puschmann (New York: Peter Lang, 2014), 4.

¹³⁵ Lilleker and Michalska, "MEPs online".

¹³⁶ "The 2015 EP digital trends survey," Fleishmanhillard, accessed April 2019, http://www.epdigitaltrends.eu/assets/ep-digital-trends-survey_full_results.pdf.

¹³⁷ Page, "The linguistics of self-branding," 183.

only to promote their agenda, but also as tool of official communication¹³⁸ and of crisis communication,¹³⁹ for example when they disseminate breaking news. However, one of the main goals MEPs pursue using Twitter is self-promotion, not only during electoral campaigns but also as part of strategy of continuous marketing, which can also result in a social advantage.¹⁴⁰ This is made easier by the fact that it is possible for them to know which kind of audience they are addressing, as they know how many followers they have and could check their profiles.¹⁴¹ Not only - this platform provides an immeasurable potential, as tweets can be seen also by users who do not follow you and people who are not registered as Twitter users.

As Twitter enables users to benefit from high visibility,¹⁴² politicians mainly use Twitter as a campaigning tool, as they know that “social media visibility nowadays is one key factor to electoral success.”¹⁴³ Indeed, the presence of politicians on social media has become fundamental for them to shape their image and influence the political debate.¹⁴⁴ However, being registered on online platforms is not enough: in order to fully benefit from these tools, they must be active and interact with other users.¹⁴⁵ On one hand, they mainly use it to spread information and opinions, but, on the other, they try to build their image and to present themselves as normal citizens, for example by sharing moments of their private and daily life¹⁴⁶ bypassing traditional media.¹⁴⁷ In this sense, Twitter is regarded as the social media where the private life becomes public.¹⁴⁸

Twitter can be considered also as a linguistic marketplace where hashtags are used as a method to amplify the potential attention of the other users, thus being part of a real marketing strategy.¹⁴⁹ However, it is argued that self-branding leads to the creation of a special relation between the politician and its followers, who are considered as an audience of fan to impact in order to reach visibility and consensus also in the real

¹³⁸ Axel Bruns and Jean Burgess, “Crisis Communication in Natural Disasters: The Queensland Floods and Christchurch Earthquakes,” in *Twitter and society*, ed. Katrin Weller, Axel Bruns, Jean Burgess, Merja Mahrt and Cornelius Puschmann (New York: Peter Lang, 2014), 373.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 380.

¹⁴⁰ Page, “The linguistics of self-branding,” 182-183.

¹⁴¹ Schmidt, “Twitter and the Rise of Personal Publics,” 8.

¹⁴² Chen, *Australian Politics in a Digital Age*, 90-91.

¹⁴³ Thimm, Einspänner-Pflock and Anastasiadis, “Twitter during the 2014 European Elections,” 199.

¹⁴⁴ Machnik, “The Place of Twitter in the Process of Political Communication,” 99.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 91

¹⁴⁶ Thimm, Einspänner-Pflock and Anastasiadis, “Twitter during the 2014 European Elections,” 208.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 217.

¹⁴⁸ Schmidt, “Twitter and the Rise of Personal Publics,” 12.

¹⁴⁹ Page, “The linguistics of self-branding,” 198.

world.¹⁵⁰ On the contrary, some scholars argue that Twitter allows only public figures who are already popular in the offline space to enhance their visibility, thus acting like a sounding board.¹⁵¹ However, the use of Twitter for political promotion is still a quite recent phenomenon. Indeed, MEPs have started to use social media systematically only since the 2009 elections¹⁵² as an innovative strategy for electoral campaigning.

4.4 Context of the research

As mentioned before, the analysis takes into account the eight principal political groups of the European Parliament. This section provides a short presentation of their different political ideologies and their views concerning certain topics which are address during the data analysis. It is important to acknowledge their different political positions and values to understand whether and how these are mirrored in their Twitter communication.

Following the seat distribution in the plenary chamber of the European Parliament, we can find that the groups sitting on the right are Europe of Nations and Freedoms [ENF] and Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy [EFDD]. These two share a nationalist perspective and strengthen the role of the nation and identity, thus rejecting further integration at the European level as well as the creation of a supra-national European state. When describing their priorities, they both stress the need for member states to regulate migration and control their borders.¹⁵³

The European Conservatives and Reformist group [ECR] defines itself as a centre-right group grounded on Euro-realism, conservatism and economic liberalism. It adopts a critical perspective towards the EU, e.g. criticizing the costs of its institutions, but it supports the idea of a reformed Union which should be more integrated in certain areas.¹⁵⁴ Also the ECR stresses the need to strengthen border controls and to have an efficient European migration system.¹⁵⁵ Similarly, the European People's Party [EPP] is a centre-right group which promotes conservatism and Christian democracy. It focuses

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 182.

¹⁵¹ Nanta Novello Paglianti, "Twitter et la politique: stratégies de communication de candidats et espace public," in *Tweets from the Campaign Trail*, ed. Alex Frame, Arnaud Mercier, Gilles Brachotte and Caja Thimm (Peter Lang AG., 2016), 95.

¹⁵² Vesnic-Alujevic, "Members of the European Parliament Online," 23.

¹⁵³ EFDD group, "About us," accessed June 2019, <http://www.efddgroup.eu/about-us/our-charter>; ENF, "Home," accessed June 2019, <https://www.enf.eu/>.

¹⁵⁴ ECR group, "About," accessed June 2019, <https://ecrgroup.eu/about>.

¹⁵⁵ ECR group, "Vision for Europe," accessed June 2019, https://ecrgroup.eu/vision_for_europe_

on the protection of Christian values and identity of Europe while also promoting European lifestyle and the role of families in European society.¹⁵⁶ The Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe [Alde] supports liberal democrat values and promotes the creation of a constitutional foundation for the EU.¹⁵⁷

Moving to the left we find the Greens/European Free Alliance [Greens/EFA], pursuing a green politics with a focus on the environment, climate and minorities.¹⁵⁸ The Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats [S&D] is a centre-left group promoting social democracy and pro-Europeanism. It supports the involvement of civil society in the democratic process and has a progressive approach towards migration, based on solidarity.¹⁵⁹ Finally, the Confederal Group of the European United Left/Nordic Green [GUE-NGL] is the only left-wing group, with an ideology based on confederalism with soft Euroscepticism. Its priorities include civil rights, social solidarity and sustainable economic development together with the fight against fascism and racism.¹⁶⁰

After having briefly reviewed the stances of the eight political groups, it is important to highlight two other aspects that also need to be considered to understand the context of the analysis. First, it is necessary to look at how the different groups deal with migration and the consequent presence of Muslims in Europe, as this is the main topic emerging from the data collected. As previously mentioned, some political groups take a clear position towards this issue, especially focusing on border controls and security. However, the regulation of migration is not a priority for all of them. Previous research has demonstrated that “the positions of MEPs on immigration in the context of the migration crisis were broadly aligned to the left-right spectrum.”¹⁶¹ Indeed, rightist MEPs from ENF, EFDD and ECR have adopted an hostile attitude towards migrants and have called for the restriction of migration flows into the EU. On the contrary, leftist groups like GUE-NGL, the Greens, S&D and also Alde have shown solidarity towards migrants and adopted a rhetoric which supported the welcoming of refugees. Between these two positions lies the European People’s Party group, which has been

¹⁵⁶ EPP, “EPP manifesto 2019,” accessed June 2019, <https://www.epp.eu/files/uploads/2019/05/EPP-MANIFESTO-2019.pdf>.

¹⁵⁷ Alde, “About,” accessed June 2019, <https://www.aldeparty.eu/about/the-alde-party>.

¹⁵⁸ Greens-Efa, “Our priorities,” accessed June 2019, <https://www.greens-efa.eu/en/our-priorities/>.

¹⁵⁹ Socialists and democrats, “What we stand for,” accessed June 2019, <https://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu/what-we-stand-for/our-priorities>.

¹⁶⁰ GUE-NGL, “About the group,” accessed June 2019, <https://www.guengl.eu/about-the-group/>.

¹⁶¹ Anna-Lena Högenauer, “The European Parliament in Times of Crisis: Transnationalism under Pressure?,” *Journal of Contemporary European Research* 13 (2017): 1100.

sympathetic towards refugees but would have set restrictions to economic migrants.¹⁶² Secondly, it is necessary to determine which categories the research focuses on. With regard to the European Union and the processes of inclusion and exclusion as described by Ruth Wodak, it is possible to affirm that foreigners and migrants are regarded as outsiders of the EU,¹⁶³ as well as Muslims, who are often associated with migration and whose culture and traditions are not shared by European citizens. I will thus consider Muslims, foreigners and migrants as the Other as a result of the practices of exclusion which tend to exclude these minorities.¹⁶⁴ On the other hand, non-Muslims in general and non-Muslims Europeans will be considered as the dominant group, whose views are represented in the Parliament thanks to the elected MEPs. It is necessary to recall that groups in the European Parliament and their MEPs give voice to the opinions of European citizens through the position they hold in the institution. In some ways, the variety of MEPs in the institution mirrors its constituency, as some minorities are not much represented in the Parliament. Indeed, there were only seven Muslims MEPs between 2014 and 2019,¹⁶⁵ meaning that the Muslim minority was poorly represented in the Parliament. This research has taken into account one of these seven, the British Syed Kamall, who used to seat as representant of the ECR group.

¹⁶² Ibid., 1100.

¹⁶³ Ruth Wodak, "Discourses in European Union organizations: Aspects of access, participation, and exclusion," *Text & Talk* 27–5/6 (2007), 670, accessed June 2019, doi: 10.1515/TEXT.2007.030.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 669.

¹⁶⁵ Reporting the EU, "Who represents Muslims in the European Parliament?," 2017, accessed May 2019, <http://eureporting2017.mediajungle.dk/2017/10/17/who-represents-muslims-in-the-european-parliament/>.

5. Methodology

5.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

The following paragraph will describe the role of critical discourse analysis in the identification and definition of hate speech, as this method will be used for the research on the Twitter communication of the political groups in the European Parliament in order to detect hatred content. The use of this approach first poses the question of what critical discourse analysis is. It has been described as

a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context. With such dissident research, critical discourse analysts take explicit position, and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality.¹⁶⁶

Critical research on speech should therefore address political or social issues and examine how discourse is related to relations of power and dominance in a society.¹⁶⁷

As CDA [Critical Discourse Analysis] relates discourse and narratives with representations, society and culture,¹⁶⁸ many aspects are intertwined in a study carried out using this method. This paragraph will describe some aspects that need to be considered when practically applying CDA to the analysis of a text or a speech. At the same time, it will explain why CDA has been chosen for the Twitter analysis that will be presented in the following chapter.

Critical discourse analysis appears to be the most effective method to pinpoint the implicit presence of hate speech in the discourse of MEPs for several reasons. Firstly, political discourse is at the heart of the Twitter analysis that will be realized in this work and CDA is one of the communicative theories studying political discourse. From a CDA perspective, it is possible to consider

political discourse as the use of words and phrases, syntactic processes, and discursive positioning, to either hide or distribute responsibility in certain ways, or designate specific individuals or groups as belonging to categories that serve particular political purposes.¹⁶⁹

Such definition highlights how political discourse provokes the creation of power

¹⁶⁶ Teun A. van Dijk, "Critical discourse analysis," in *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, ed. Deborah Schiffrin, Deborah Tannen, and Heidi E. Hamilton (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 2001), 352.

¹⁶⁷ Van Dijk, "Critical discourse analysis," 353.

¹⁶⁸ Teun A. van Dijk, "Principles of critical discourse analysis," *Discourse and society* vol.4, issue 2 (1993), 253, accessed April 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926593004002006>.

¹⁶⁹ John Wilson, "Political Discourse," in *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis 2*, ed. Deborah Tannen, Heidi E. Hamilton and Deborah Schiffrin (John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2015), 782.

relations through responsibility and designation. The connections between discourse and power in the social and political contexts are at the core of CDA, which examines how discourse structures reproduce and legitimate dominance and relations of hegemony in a society. As political expression enacts power relations, CDA is used for research in the field of political discourse and, more generally, to analyse discourses that reproduce inequality¹⁷⁰ and therefore is pertinent to this research.

However, the analysis of political discourse is intricate, as here linguistic aspects such as lexis and grammar are often manipulated in order to reach specific political effects and to establish the dominance of a certain group – and, in some cases, of its ideology. CDA recognizes that modern power consists in the ability to shape other people’s mind through verbal or written expressions, while also influencing perceptions and social representations. Indeed, discourse structures influence and contribute to the development of specific social representations.¹⁷¹ For instance, choices concerning semantic, terminology, intonation, rhetorical figures and politeness phenomena, amongst the others,¹⁷² are used to exercise power and to construct certain representations. These aspects are analysed by CDA and can help in identifying hate speech in a discourse, while they are neglected by legal definitions of hate speech.

More specifically, critical discourse analysis is recommended for Twitter analysis in order to examine small samples of tweets and to highlight connections between texts and ideologies.¹⁷³ These connections are made evident by the use of specific linguistic devices. Indeed, CDA focuses on the linguistic aspects of communication. Considering the linguistic feature of Twitter communication is interesting because it reproduces oral conversations.¹⁷⁴ Tweets present peculiar traits - for instance abbreviations, acronyms, hashtags, slangs, spelling or grammar mistakes, and strategies like eliminating articles, using interjections or repeating letters to transmit feelings - because users must respect the limit of the 140 characters.¹⁷⁵ This makes Twitter communication peculiar and studying how linguistic structures and properties are used in tweets can be useful in

¹⁷⁰ Teun A. Van Dijk, “Critical Discourse Analysis,” in *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis 2*, ed. Deborah Tannen, Heidi E. Hamilton and Deborah Schiffrin (John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2015), 360.

¹⁷¹ Van Dijk, “Critical discourse analysis,” 254-260.

¹⁷² Van Dijk, “Principles of critical discourse analysis,” 261.

¹⁷³ Alice E. Marwick, “Ethnographic and Qualitative Research on Twitter,” in *Twitter and society*, ed. Katrin Weller, Axel Bruns, Jean Burgess, Merja Mahrt and Cornelius Puschmann (New York: Peter Lang, 2014), 118.

¹⁷⁴ Jan-Hinrik Schmidt, “Twitter and the Rise of Personal Publics,” in *Twitter and society*, ed. Katrin Weller, Axel Bruns, Jean Burgess, Merja Mahrt and Cornelius Puschmann (New York: Peter Lang, 2014), 9.

¹⁷⁵ Tao, Hauff, Abel, & Houben, “Information Retrieval for Twitter Data,” 197.

order to identify negative representations and hate speech in this kind of communication.

When addressing a discourse through a critical approach there are several elements which need to be taken into account, including dominance, the communicative context and the strategies and devices used to enact power. The first element to be considered is dominance, as CDA focuses on the relation between discourse and power. Considering dominance as “the exercise of social power by elites, institutions or groups, that results in social inequality, including political, cultural, class, ethnic, racial and gender inequality,”¹⁷⁶ it is possible to argue that discourse is one of the ways through which dominance is exercised and reproduced and therefore that discourse creates inequality. The aim of CDA is therefore to examine the features of a text or speech in order to determine how dominance is recreated to originate disparity.

It is also necessary to highlight that inequality is not only a result of communication but can also be present in the moment when communication is enacted. Indeed, language users who can access and influence the public discourse, as for example politicians and journalists, have more power and can exercise group power through their control on the form and content of their discourse.¹⁷⁷ This is the reason why today social actors try to maximize their access to media in order to have a more effective communication, for example with the contribution of press officers and PR assistants – which is also the case for MEPs, for instance.¹⁷⁸

What Van Dijk argues is that groups which have more control and access on discourse are dominant and more powerful in influencing the opinions of other people:

More control over more properties of text and context, involving more people, is thus generally (though not always) associated with more influence, and hence with hegemony.¹⁷⁹

Similarly, Fairclough highlights that there are power relations in a communicative act, especially if realized through media, because the producers can decide how to present an event and what can be included and excluded in their representation.¹⁸⁰ This dominance in the communicative act results in influencing the audience: indeed, discourse can influence social representation and perceptions, beliefs and shared knowledge of those who are the recipients of the discourse. Here another important

¹⁷⁶ Van Dijk, “The principles of critical discourse analysis,” 249-250.

¹⁷⁷ Van Dijk, “Critical Discourse Analysis,” 355-356.

¹⁷⁸ Van Dijk, “The principles of critical discourse analysis,” 256.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 257.

¹⁸⁰ Norman Fairclough, *Language and power* (New York: Longman Inc., 1989), 50.

aspect arises: discourse not only performs power and dominance, but it can also influence other people's mind. This happens not only through discourses which explicitly convey inequality, e.g. in the forms of sexism or racism. It occurs also through the reproduction of texts which seem tolerable, but which implicitly convey inequality and thus tend to naturalize it.¹⁸¹ CDA looks at the discourse's features to identify these implicit meanings that affect the recipient's view. At the same time, during an analysis conducted with CDA, it is necessary to remember that in some cases explicit acts of discourse impoliteness are incidental and do not reproduce dominance. On the contrary, they do communicate inequality when

such violations are generalized, occur in text and talk directed at, or about, specific dominated groups only, and if there are no contextual justifications other than such group membership. If these, and other conditions, are satisfied, an act of discourse impoliteness may be a more or less subtle form of sexism, ageism, racism or classism, among other forms of group dominance.¹⁸²

As highlighted just above, another element relevant to CDA is the context. In order to interpret the data, it is necessary to look at the social, historical and political context of the information gathered.¹⁸³ Moreover, when carrying out a research using CDA it is important to consider that people engage in a discourse as members of a larger group, e.g. a political group, in which they share some social representations with other members. They have both personal and collective cognition and their actions are part of a social process and of a precise context.¹⁸⁴ Additionally, they have specific representations in their mind, and they convey them through the communicative acts in which they interact. It is thus necessary to examine the representations in the minds of social actors in order to relate discourse and dominance.¹⁸⁵ In the case of members of parliament – including MEPs – understanding the context is fundamental, especially because as they are elected representants in a democratic institution, not only do they represent their constituency and party, but they are also responsible for the Parliament and the entire society.¹⁸⁶ Their opinions and representations therefore reflect the context they are individually involved in and not only the more general societal environment.

¹⁸¹ Van Dijk, "The principles of critical discourse analysis," 254.

¹⁸² Ibid., 261.

¹⁸³ Martin Reisigl, "Analysing political rhetoric," in *Qualitative Discourse Analysis in the Social Sciences*, ed. Ruth Wodak and Michał Krzyżanowski (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 101.

¹⁸⁴ Van Dijk, "Critical Discourse Analysis," 354.

¹⁸⁵ Van Dijk, "The principles of critical discourse analysis," 251.

¹⁸⁶ Maykel Verkuyten and Wybren Nooitgedagt, "Parliamentary identity and the management of the far-right: A discursive analysis of Dutch parliamentary debates," in *British Journal of Social Psychology*, (2018), 3, accessed April 2019, doi: 10.1111/bjso.12300.

There are several structures and strategies on which CDA focuses to understand how discourse conveys representations and dominance. Some of these are strictly connected to the language. Some features of the discourse that need to be considered are related to lexicon: for instance, the use of antonyms can strengthen a message, as well as oppositions and metonymies. Naming plays an important role, as the way a person or a thing is named allows to understand how the producer of the message perceives and considers it. A recurrent problem concerning this aspect involves the terms *Muslims* and *Islam*, because the first is used not only to identify people who are devoted to this religion but also those who are associated with Islam because of their origin, ethnicity, aspect or name, but who do not necessarily practice it.¹⁸⁷ The lexical choice involving these terms made by the producer of a message can therefore help in understanding its perception of Muslims and Islam.

Also grammatic structures must be analysed, focusing on transitivity, the use of connectors, of passive or active verbs, definite articles and of certain modes of verbs.¹⁸⁸ The style and rhetoric used can also convey dominance through the use of metaphors and hyperboles, for example. Other aspects are proper of oral communication, e.g. turn-taking and other interactional conventions, which can also contribute to the imposition of dominance in the communicative act itself because they can be used to limit the interlocutor's contribution to the discourse.¹⁸⁹

Additionally, CDA recognizes some strategies through which a group imposes its dominance. The most important one is the Us vs Them dichotomy, also known as polarization or process of othering. Indeed, social representations are often constructed through dynamics which contribute to the creation of the opposition between Us and Them,¹⁹⁰ the dominant group versus the minority. This is one of the aspects which is more often detected during analysis where CDA is applied. Constructing the Other and categorizing Us and Them is necessary to construct the identity of the Self and is a proper of all societies. When analysing a form of expression, it is important to examine how the Other is constructed through linguistic mechanisms, strategies and devices,¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁷ Jennifer E. Cheng, "Islamophobia, Muslimophobia or racism? Parliamentary discourses on Islam and Muslims in debates on the minaret ban in Switzerland," in *Discourse & Society*, 1-25, (2015), 2, accessed April 2019, doi: 10.1177/0957926515581157.

¹⁸⁸ Fairclough, *Language and power*, 124-133.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 133-37.

¹⁹⁰ Monika Kopytowska, "Discourse of hate and radicalism in action," *Journal of Language Aggression and Conflict* 3:1 (2015), 3, accessed April 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1075/jlac.3.1.001ed>.

¹⁹¹ Monika Kopytowska and Fabienne Baider, "From stereotypes and prejudice to verbal and physical violence: hate speech in context," *Lodz Papers in Pragmatics* 13.2 (2017), 134, accessed April 2019,

because the description of the Other is often charged with negative meaning. The grammatical and lexical elements mentioned above contribute to polarization, but other common ways to categorize Us and Them are scapegoating and the use of stereotypes. These are usually negative and charged with emotions and they often result in justifying hostility towards foreigners, for example.¹⁹² Stereotypes are thus expression of xenophobic attitudes and, as form of verbal aggression, they can degenerate into physical violence – in other words, they contribute to hate speech which can result in hate crimes.¹⁹³ Also the use of pronouns can be an indicator of the polarization process. The use of ‘we’ and ‘us’ results in emphasizing the unity of a certain group – the dominant one – while also underlining its difference from the Other.¹⁹⁴

As already mentioned, the lexicon used in a discourse can also reveal the presence of polarization. This is the case for example for racist vocabulary, which contributes to creating relations amongst members of the dominant group. Indeed, the use of racist terms might indicate that a racist ideology is shared between them and thus reinforces the group’s identity.¹⁹⁵

There are also some strategies that are identified by CDA as tools to reproduce dominance and to construct the otherness. One of them consists in emphasizing that negative social and cultural aspects and actions of the Other who cannot be excused by the dominant group, and in highlighting how the Other is different from what the majority is used at.¹⁹⁶ Another strategy focuses on the idea that the outgroup poses some threats to the ingroup, which for instance might risk losing its privileges.¹⁹⁷ The positive representation of the dominant group, which is accompanied by the negative depiction of the Other, contributes not only to the reproduction of inequality but also to its legitimisation.¹⁹⁸

Looking at today’s discourse, the Us vs Them dichotomy is very present, and its construction is exacerbated by new media, where verbal aggression is both expression and consequence of increasing xenophobia.¹⁹⁹ Indeed, after the September 11th attacks, media coverage has been loaded with the contrast which sees Us, the West, against the

doi:10.1515/lpp-2017-0008.

¹⁹² Ibid., 136-137.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 140.

¹⁹⁴ Fairclough, *Language and power*, 127-128.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 116.

¹⁹⁶ Van Dijk, “Principles of critical discourse analysis,” 264.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 264.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 263.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 145.

Other, the Middle Eastern and Muslim countries from where terrorists might come from. Such representation is the result of a simplified and emotional construction essentially based on stereotypes. Additionally, this contrast is also present in current migration-related discourses, where it is used to fuel negative emotions such as fear against the Other, the foreigner.²⁰⁰ As these examples demonstrate, CDA can be useful to formulate a critique to the discourses that permeate our society by highlighting discursive elements that are in contrast with the principles of democracy and human rights.²⁰¹

After having considered all these aspects, it is possible to affirm that CDA can be relevant in order to identify hate speech in its multiple and complex manifestations. Indeed, CDA recognizes many elements of speech as possible indicators of hatred content, including implicitness and the use of stereotypes and symbols, which were highlighted in the second chapter. Even if CDA does not solve the debate about the absence of an established interpretation of hate speech, and even if it does not provide any concrete definition of the phenomenon, it is the most accurate approach that can be used in this research in order to understand how MEPs describe an event and represent the Other and thus to detect the presence of hate speech in their Twitter communication.

5.2 A linguistic perspective: the definition of hate speech in the context of Critical Discourse Analysis

As demonstrated in chapter two, the available definitions of hate speech are unsatisfactory, as they do not encompass all the features of the phenomenon or are not universally accepted and thus applicable to the EU legislative framework. While scholars tend to highlight only some characteristics of hate speech, the legal framework offers only narrow definitions which regard hate speech as an explicit form of expression.²⁰² However, as several sources point out,²⁰³ hate speech is often implicit and formulated through subtle constructions and apparently inoffensive strategies that are excluded from legal definitions. As Kopytowska affirms, implicitness is often used to communicate hate speech,²⁰⁴ which is also due to a widespread awareness of the

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 135-138.

²⁰¹ Reisigl, "Analysing political rhetoric," 101.

²⁰² See *ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 15 on combating hate speech*.

²⁰³ See Anne Weber, *Manual on hate speech*, and Alexander Brown, "What is hate speech? Part 1."

²⁰⁴ Kopytowska, "Mobilizing against the Other," 61.

regulations that limit the diffusion of hatred messages. Given the complexity of the concept of hate speech and the difficulties that arise in its identification, the legal perspective is limited and leads to the need for a different approach. This is especially true in the case of this research which considers the speech of MEPs who, obviously, are well aware of the legal restrictions concerning freedom of expression. In this intricate context, a linguistic perspective can be adopted to address the presence of hate speech in political communication. More generally, a linguistic approach is useful in detecting the phenomenon in both the legal field and in research.²⁰⁵

The approach chosen in order to detect the presence of hate speech in the communication of MEPs is critical discourse analysis, a type of discourse analytic research which focuses on political discourse. In the context of CDA research, the definition of hate speech which can be used as methodological approach involves what is categorized as soft hate speech. Contrarily to the so-called hard hate speech, which is illegal and described in the legal framework, soft hate speech is “lawful but raises serious concerns in terms of intolerance and discrimination.”²⁰⁶ According to previous research, this definition can be used to focus “on the features of discourse that encompasses a discriminatory attitude as a means of identifying different ways in which hate, broadly construed, is expressed.”²⁰⁷ Following such delineation of the concept, hate speech will be considered in the following chapters as a form of expression which communicates intolerance towards a certain person or group of people and which discriminates them and which can be recognized by analysing discourse characteristics. This approach is suitable for this research as it concentrates on the linguistic aspects involved in communication and allows to highlight subtle forms of hate speech, which, as also Weber and Brown affirmed,²⁰⁸ can be conveyed implicitly. Indeed, this definition in the context of CDA will be useful in understanding how MEPs name and describe the other and it will enable to detect discourse features which convey discrimination and can be regarded as expressions of hatred. Through these steps it will then be possible to answer the research sub-questions and therefore understand whether and how MEPs do spread hate speech after a specific event. As it was previously

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 61.

²⁰⁶ Stavros Assimakopoulos, Fabienne H. Baider and Sharon Millar, “Hate Speech in the EU and the C.O.N.T.A.C.T project,” in *Online Hate Speech in the European Union*, ed. Stavros Assimakopoulos, Fabienne H. Baider and Sharon Millar (Springer Open, 2017), 4.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 5.

²⁰⁸ See Anne Weber, *Manual on hate speech* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing, 2009), and Alexander Brown, “What is hate speech? Part 1.”

mentioned, it is very unlikely to find direct hatred comments in the Twitter communication of MEPs and their political groups; however, the term hate speech is appropriate in the context of this research because, following the definition above mentioned, it includes implicit forms of discrimination and hatred which might be detected in the tweets analysed. In case of absence of hateful content, CDA can anyway be useful to pinpoint the presence of stereotypes and expressions of discrimination which are likely to result in hate speech or crimes. Indeed, also the negative depiction of a group can lead to expressions of hatred in all its forms.²⁰⁹

5.3 The politolinguistic approach and the operationalization of hate speech

The analysis which will be presented in the following chapter will be carried out applying a politolinguistic approach of political rhetoric as it is described by Martin Reisigl.²¹⁰ According to Reisigl, analysing political rhetoric means “analysing the use of rhetorical means of persuasion by professional politicians.”²¹¹ Despite the variety of approaches that are applicable to this type of research, the politolinguistic method has been chosen as it connects rhetoric with social sciences and CDA.²¹²

In order to analyse political rhetoric, he suggests following several steps, some of which – e.g. constructing the context of the research and defining the research questions – have already been realized in the previous chapters, while others – building the corpus of data, for instance – will be achieved later in this work. However, it is still necessary to identify which analytical categories the research will focus on and to explain which analytical tools will be used in order to interpret the data²¹³ by providing the operationalization of hate speech.

First, it is necessary to look at analytical categories. Reisigl affirms that the choice of the categories on which to concentrate depends on the specific context of the research.²¹⁴ In this case, I will focus on nomination, predication and mitigation versus intensification. The first one concentrates on how social actors are named in a discourse, while predication consists in examining the qualities and negative aspects through which they are described. The category of mitigation versus intensification investigates

²⁰⁹ Baider and Kopytowska, “From stereotypes and prejudice to verbal and physical violence,” 138.

²¹⁰ Martin Reisigl, “Analysing Political Rhetoric,” 96-119.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 97.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 96.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 101.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 99.

whether these names and qualities are enhanced throughout the discourse or, contrarily, moderated.²¹⁵ The examination and further reflection on these features can indeed lead to detecting the presence of hate speech in the selected tweets.

As far as hate speech is concerned, it is essential to provide the operationalization of this concept - as it was previously defined – in the context of CDA. Following the definition of soft speech and what has been previously highlighted concerning CDA, this paragraph will explain how concepts of critical discourse analysis can be operationalized in the context of this research. This step connects theoretical components of CDA to behaviours and attitudes present in the sample of data, a process which leaves limited space for different interpretations and thus provides validity to the method²¹⁶.

Examining the definition of soft hate speech, one can assume that the concept focuses on the presence of intolerance and discrimination in a certain form of expression. The analysis will therefore point to elements of the discourse which discriminate or show intolerance towards a certain person or group and which can be identified applying critical discourse analysis, including nomination, stereotyping, the use of metonymies and other features.

Examining the categories and the linguistic features of the discourse, I will identify the topics which dominate the tweets of each political group in order to answer the sub-question *What do MEPs highlight in a specific event?*. After gathering the tweets based on the main issues they address, it will be possible to establish which narratives are developed in a certain political group and which are shared amongst more groups.

The second step of the analysis requires concentrating on the linguistic aspects of the tweets that are addressed through a CDA approach. In order to answer the sub-question *How do they name and describe the Other?*. I will consider the analytical categories previously identified. I will concentrate on the names and lexis used to describe a person or a group of people and discuss whether they present negative or positive attributes. I will also focus on the possible presence of generalisations and stereotypes and establish if they convey intolerance and strengthen hatred attitudes which are present in our society. Additionally, grammar features as adjectives and verbs will be taken into account to establish whether they accentuate the dichotomy or emphasizes

²¹⁵ Ibid., 99.

²¹⁶ Johann Mouton and HC Marais, *Basic Concepts in the Methodology of the Social Sciences* (HSRC Publishers, 1988), 71.

certain characteristics of a person or group. In case such features - or rhetorical means of persuasion - will be present, it will be possible to affirm that the tweet(s) in question implicitly convey discrimination and are thus subtle forms of hate speech.

6. Data analysis

6.1 Data collection

The data of the present analysis is a corpus of tweets posted by MEPs from the eight political groups of the European Parliament. The process of data collection consisted of several steps and was realized through a qualitative methodology. It is affirmed that creating a corpus of tweets does not imply any abuse from the ethical and privacy perspectives, as they are public if posted by a public account²¹⁷ – as in the case of this research.

First of all, I had to choose the timeframe when the tweets were posted by MEPs. Twitter is different from other social networks because it is a news media platform, where posts mainly concern or comment events²¹⁸ and therefore it provides a good source for data related to events. Considering the ease of Twitter use, especially from smartphones, people are encouraged “to act as citizen journalists and immediately report the events they witness.”²¹⁹ While traditional media reporting tends to focus on the event itself, Twitter allows its users to write about their reactions, which makes the political discourse on this platform particularly rich after a certain event.²²⁰ Thus, Twitter data can be very useful to understand someone’s reaction to an event, as they offer information also about sentiments and opinions, giving the idea of the public perception of the event.

I identified two main events which occurred recently and which held a wide appeal with the general public: the Strasbourg attack on 11th December 2018 and the Christchurch attack on 15th March 2019. Indeed, many tweets concerning the two attacks were posted by public figures including MEPs. As mentioned in chapter four, Twitter is used by political actors to react to events and construct their image. Considering the relevance of such events and their impact on the public opinion, as well as on the political debate, I

²¹⁷ Mike Thelwall, “Sentiment Analysis and Time Series with Twitter,” in *Twitter and society*, ed. Katrin Weller, Axel Bruns, Jean Burgess, Merja Mahrt and Cornelius Puschmann (New York: Peter Lang, 2014), 85.

²¹⁸ Ke Tao, Claudia Hauff, Fabian Abel, & Geert-Jan Houben, “Information Retrieval for Twitter Data,” in *Twitter and society*, ed. Katrin Weller, Axel Bruns, Jean Burgess, Merja Mahrt and Cornelius Puschmann (New York: Peter Lang, 2014), 197.

²¹⁹ Thomas Risse, Wim Peters, Pierre Senellart, & Diana Maynard, “Documenting Contemporary Society by Preserving Relevant Information from Twitter,” in *Twitter and society*, ed. Katrin Weller, Axel Bruns, Jean Burgess, Merja Mahrt and Cornelius Puschmann (New York: Peter Lang, 2014), 208.

²²⁰ Axel Maireder & Julian Ausserhofer, “Political Discourses on Twitter: Networking Topics, Objects, and People,” in *Twitter and society*, ed. Katrin Weller, Axel Bruns, Jean Burgess, Merja Mahrt and Cornelius Puschmann (New York: Peter Lang, 2014), 310.

realized that both events have been occasions for politicians and political groups to take a position and express their opinion. Therefore, analysing their communication in these specific contexts could give an insight on the way they use Twitter for both self-promotion and fostering the e-debate.

Additionally, the attacks perpetrated in Strasbourg and Christchurch both present some similarities and differences which make them suitable for a comparison. Both involved Muslims, but while the perpetrator of the attack in Strasbourg was a suspected Islamist extremist, in Christchurch the victims were Muslim. The geographical position of the event is relevant in this context. The attack in Strasbourg was also regarded as an attack to the EU, its values and its politicians, as the French city is the seat of the European Parliament and thus is recognized as one of the capitals of the Union.

Additionally, MEPs were present during the attack because of the ongoing plenary session in the Parliament. Consequently, MEPs felt directly involved in the event from the emotional and political points of view. On the contrary, the Christchurch attack was perceived differently as it occurred on the other side of the world and did not directly affect European politics nor the feelings and mindset of European citizens. Data thus give some insights into the more general approach of MEPs to the attack, which anyway tackles some of the problems present in today's European society and which are related also to the Strasbourg attack: the relation with Islam, extremism and terrorism.

I considered important to collect not only those tweets that immediately reacted to the attack and which can be considered as immediate and emotional, but also those which have a more rational and elaborated approach to the event. For this reason, a timeframe of several days must be considered to collect all the tweets dealing with the attack. A period of two weeks is appropriate to this research as it is argued that the debate around certain events and news is usually more intense in its close aftermath, and rapidly decreases after.²²¹

Because of practicality and the use of a qualitative method, it is not possible to consider the communication of all the 751 MEPs. Before collecting the data, I identified those users who posted the tweets useful for my analysis. First, I decided to collect the tweets produced by the official Twitter account of each political group to take into account the official perspective of the group on the event. Additionally, I chose three MEPs for each

²²¹ Peter Burnap and Matthew L. Williams, "Cyber Hate Speech on Twitter: An Application of Machine Classification and Statistical Modeling for Policy and Decision Making," *Policy and Internet*, vol 7, issue 2, (2015): 226.

group in order to be able to consider more unconventional opinions, which do not necessarily correspond to the view of the MEP's group. In order to select the MEPs, the first criterion I applied is the one of language: as I can fully understand English, French and Italian, I selected politicians who are English, French or Italian speakers. Therefore, all the MEPs I considered for my research represent one of the following countries in the European Parliament: United Kingdom, Ireland, Italy, France or Belgium. In this way, the sample of tweets will present different characteristics that may be connected to the nationality of the MEPs.

The second criterion concerns the position held by the MEPs. Indeed, I first chose those who are presidents, vice-presidents, vice-chairs, co-presidents, co-chairs, or members of the group's bureau, as they should be more representative of their group and should reach a larger audience through Twitter. In case there was no MEP holding a hierarchical position and speaking one of the languages above mentioned, I applied another criterion: the degree of interaction on Twitter. For each group, I checked how active MEPs speaking English, French and Italian were, and I selected those who tweet more by looking at the number of tweets posted until now. Following these criteria and reasoning, I created a list of users from whom to collect the data. The complete list of the twenty-four MEPs can be found in annex I. Including the groups' official accounts, I gathered tweets from thirty-two accounts in total.

In order to collect the data in an efficient and precise manner, I decided to carry out the process using the online tool Twlets. This program consists of an extension applicable to Google Chrome which allows to transfer the tweets, @mentions and retweets of a specific user to an excel document, where the tweets are then listed in a chronological order. Twlets allows not only to gather all the tweets written by a certain user, but also those which have been deleted. I collected the data in two rounds: the first in mid-March, when I gathered the tweets referring to the Strasbourg attack, and at the beginning of April, when I collected those concerning the Christchurch attack. In both occasions, I used the program to transfer the tweets from the social network to excel files.

After having the files with all the tweets from all the groups and all the MEPs, I had to filter those which were produced in the two weeks after the events. Therefore, I used the online advanced search tool of Twitter to check which two tweets were posted by a MEP at the beginning and at the end of the two-week timeframe. After having identified the tweets, I manually found them in the excel file of the same MEP (or political group)

and selected them together with those in-between. In this way, I selected all tweets posted in the two weeks after each attack. Thereafter, I went through the filtered tweets and selected those which were referring to the attacks. I repeated this process for all MEPs and their political groups. In this way, the total number of tweets posted with reference to the Strasbourg attack amounts to 145 while those referring to the one in Christchurch are 64. The entire corpus of data collected and analysed thus consists of 209 tweets.

However, not all the tweets were directly produced by the MEPs chosen for this analysis. Some of them are retweets from other Twitter users, but they will be considered part of the research as the tweets written by the MEPs themselves. Indeed, retweets carry an added value as they have been selected and appreciated by the user, who can also reinforce the message by adding a comment.²²² The corpus therefore presents a variety of standpoints and gives an overview on the reactions of MEPs to the two events, entailing their personal views as well as their perspective as members of a certain political group or country.

6.2 The development of narratives after the Strasbourg attack

The tweets posted in the aftermath of the Strasbourg attack present a variety of topics and facets, mainly depending on the nationality and the political vision of their authors. Indeed, MEPs focused on different aspects related to the terrorist attack according to their personal beliefs and political belonging. However, there are some traits which are recurrent in the Twitter communication of all groups. Many politicians expressed their grief for the victims and their families, as well as solidarity with the entire French nation. Another recurrent topic is the gratitude towards the law enforcement, rescue teams and French authorities which intervened during and after the attack. Additionally, on the night of the attack several MEPs tweeted recommendations useful for citizens in Strasbourg, instructing them about what to do during the emergency in order to be safe. Together with these general trends, there are some issues which are recurrent only in the narrative of MEPs belonging to the same nationality. A theme which was part of the online discussion of Italian representatives is the death of Antonio Megalizzi, a young aspiring journalist who was in Strasbourg to work at the plenary session of the

²²² Nanta Novello Paglianti, "Twitter et la politique: stratégies de communication de candidats et espace public," in *Tweets from the Campaign Trail*, ed. Alex Frame, Arnaud Mercier, Gilles Brachotte and Caja Thimm (New York : Peter Lang, 2016), 78.

European Parliament. Antonio Megalizzi, who was shot during the attack, died three days after. As Italian national aged of twenty-nine with a strong passion for the European project, he became the representant of all young Italians going abroad, especially for the Erasmus program, and thus a symbol for the entire nation. The health conditions and later the death of the young reporter received much media attention in Italy, which was mirrored in the Twitter communication of Italian MEPs. Indeed, they expressed not only their sorrow but also their appreciation for the work of Megalizzi and for his talents.

Similarly, French MEPs show some common patterns in their communication. Firstly, it is necessary to highlight that French MEPs are those who tweeted more on the event and who took stronger positions, as they felt more involved because the attack happened in the country they represent. Some of them connected the attacks to internal matters, e.g. the manifestations of the yellow vests and the problem of Islamic radicalization in France. Especially MEPs belonging to rightist groups have given much emphasis on the issue of S files, a category to which the terrorist Chérif Chekatt belonged to, proposing their solutions to the problem.

The following paragraphs will analyse the communication of each political group, focusing on the main themes addressed and on the analytical categories previously identified. The first group to be considered is the ENF, which communication has been very much focused on migration. This topic always has a wide appeal in the public debate after attacks perpetrated by Muslim terrorists, indeed. The following tweet posted by Nicolas Bay, member of the ENF, summarises the vision of his entire group:

Tous ceux qui ont frappé la France sont étrangers ou issus de l'immigration. Ils sont pour l'essentiel tous fichés S et ont un passé de multirécidiviste.²²³

The tweet stresses the alleged connection between migrant presence in France and the terrorist attacks which have been perpetrated in the country during the past years. Regarding nomination, Nicolas Bay here describes terrorists using the terms foreigners, S files and offenders. What emerges from the data analysed is that Nicolas Bay, together with other members of ENF, points especially to foreign S files and identifies the terrorist first as a radicalized Muslim with an immigrant background and therefore as a threat to the nation. The perpetrator of the attack in Strasbourg, Chérif Chekatt, fits in the description made by Bay. However, the tweet above mentioned clearly conveys a

²²³ Nicolas Bay, Twitter post, 13 December 2018, 10:07 a.m., accessed May 2019, https://twitter.com/NicolasBay_.

generalisation, suggesting that terrorists are foreigners and thus the opposite – that foreigners are terrorists. This generalization is formulated through the use of words such as foreigner, immigrant background, s files and multiple offenders, which clearly depict a negative image of immigrants.

Through his tweets, Bay argues that foreign S files must be expelled as they are potential terrorists. He makes a clear nexus between terrorism and foreigners - and consequently migrants - also when he affirms that “L’immigration massive génère le communautarisme et fait le lit de l’islamisme.”²²⁴ Another characteristic of the terrorist which is present in Bay’s narrative appears: Chekatt’s religious faith. The fact that the terrorist act was driven by religious purposes is also highlighted by another MEP of the ENF group, Janice Atkinson. In one of her tweets, she affirms that

The perpetrator of the cowardly attack in #Straatsburg was already known as a radicalized Muslim and heavy criminal. Why could he still roam freely?²²⁵

Another issue that can be detected in the analysed tweets is the way MEPs deal with Chekatt’s death and which words they use to refer to it. Nicolas Bay chooses the term *neutralize* to refer to Chekatt’s murder:

Nos forces de l’ordre ont consacré une énergie considérable en peu de temps pour neutraliser le terroriste. Elles méritent ces applaudissements. C’est un soulagement pour tous les Français.²²⁶

This word implicitly dehumanises the terrorist, as it does not clearly state that he had been killed. The other social actors involved in the discourse, i.e. law enforcement and French and European people, are named in a completely different way which highlights their positive behaviours and merits. Indeed, tweets from ENF convey a strong praise of the police and rescue teams for their work during the emergency.

The way the law enforcement is described throughout the tweets highlights their positive role in the capture of the terrorist, which also results in the creation of an implicit contrast between the perpetrator – Muslim, foreigner, radicalized - and France - wounded, plunged into mourning and finally safe thanks to the work of the police. This opposition is strengthened by the use of personal pronouns and adjectives: the repetition of *we* and *our* is indeed contrasting with *they*, which is used to refer to S files and

²²⁴ Nicolas Bay, Twitter post, 13 December 2018, 10:20 a.m., accessed May 2019, https://twitter.com/NicolasBay_.

²²⁵ Janice Atkinson, Twitter post, 12 December 2018, 1:57 a.m., accessed May 2019, <https://twitter.com/Janice4Brexit>.

²²⁶ Nicolas Bay, Twitter post, 14 December 2018, 10:36 a.m., accessed May 2019, https://twitter.com/NicolasBay_.

radicalized Muslims. These linguistic features result in reinforcing the polarization between Us and Them, between Europeans and the Muslim minority.

This theme is strictly related to the concept of the attack which has been perpetrated against France and Europe. Bay clearly affirms that there is an ongoing battle against Islamic terrorism, and he stresses that not only France is a victim of this war, but also other European countries which were hit in the past:

La France, comme l'ont été d'autres pays européens, a de nouveau été frappée, ensanglantée et endeuillée par le terrorisme hier soir à #Strasbourg.²²⁷

For Bay, European countries are united in this fight against terrorism and therefore against radicalized Muslims. He stresses that the attack is an offence to French identity, values and culture: “À #Strasbourg c'est notre identité qui a été attaquée, nos valeurs de civilisation.”²²⁸ The possessive adjective could actually be interpreted in different ways. Considering that Bay is French, and that France is the primary target of the attack, the first interpretation is obviously that he is referring to French identity, values and culture. However, it can also be understood as referring to European identity, values and culture because of the European dimension of the event. What can be noticed is that Bay uses a passive verb to stress that France has been the victim of the attack, as also in the tweet above mentioned, but he uses the active form when he affirms the need to tackle terrorism:

Le combat contre le terrorisme islamiste doit être une priorité et nous devons nous donner les moyens de mener cette guerre qui nous est faite et de la gagner.²²⁹

It is evident that the way the two groups - Muslims and the dominant group - are named constructs a strong polarization between bad and good, positive and negative, to the detriment of the Muslim minority. Additionally, the repetition of the same words and concepts reinforces the MEPs' argumentation and thus the dichotomy Us and Them. The presence of such discourse features results in the promotion of feelings of hatred towards the terrorist and of intolerance and discrimination towards the Muslim minority. Therefore, it can be affirmed that tweets posted by the ENF implicitly convey hate speech.

Hate speech has been detected also in the tweets posted by MEPs from EFDD group,

²²⁷ Nicolas Bay, Twitter post, 12 December 2018, 2:28 a.m., accessed May 2019, https://twitter.com/NicolasBay_.

²²⁸ Nicolas Bay, Twitter post, 13 December 2018, 10:45 p.m., accessed May 2019, https://twitter.com/NicolasBay_.”

²²⁹ Nicolas Bay, Twitter post, 12 December 2018, 02:29 a.m., accessed May 2019, https://twitter.com/NicolasBay_.

whose rhetoric and discourse features are very similar to those of the ENF. The French Bernard Monot and Aymeric Chauprade highlight that there is an ongoing fight against Islamic terrorism and stress the fact that terrorists are usually radicalised Muslims and S files. Also the EFDD expresses gratitude to the law enforcement and admiration for the French attitude in front of the tragic event:

Hier soir au coeur de #Strasbourg j'ai pu constater, une fois de plus, la solidité de notre peuple face à l'épreuve, ces jeunes faisant le service au restaurant avec beaucoup de calme pendant qu'un tireur errait, les personnels du @PE_FRANCE fidèles au poste la nuit. La France²³⁰.

MEPs from the EFDD reproduce the discourse on identity and values while also introducing a topic which was absent in Bay's narrative, i.e. the need to protect France and its people from Islamism through the reintroduction of border controls. Indeed, the concept of the attack to France and to Europe is mainly interpreted as an attack to values and culture. For instance, the Italian Raffaele Fitto writes that *our* culture, values and religion must be protected. He affirms that the terrorist attack hit the heart of Europe and Christmas – and therefore Christianity - at the same time. Stefano Maullu affirms in two videos posted on Twitter that the identity of Italians and Europeans must be protected and that stopping uncontrolled migration is necessary to defend it. He emphasizes the need to protect Europe from migrants but also from those who were born in Europe and became its enemies, therefore criticising past migration and integration policies and the global compact. Again, the repetition of the adjective *our* stresses the contrast between Europeans and Muslims and creates a stronger opposition between the two cultures, which is more evident in the tweets of MEPs focusing on the Christian identity of Europe. Fitto and Maullu strengthen the positive image of the dominant group with the use of these adjectives, thus intensifying the process of polarization as well.

If compared to the tweets previously analysed, MEPs from the EPP adopted a milder tone, even if the French ones still put forward the debate around the problem of S files. However, contrarily to rightist groups, they do not support the rhetoric about the expulsion of S files, rather they propose the implementation of a security retention system and they stress the need for a more effective judicial system and for more safety. At the same time, they do not put any emphasis on Chekatt's origin and religion, and they only highlight the problem of Islamic radicalisation in general, thus maintaining a

²³⁰ Aymeric Chauprade, Twitter post, 11 December 2018, 11:59 p.m., accessed May 2019, https://twitter.com/a_chauprade.”

rather neutral attitude. EPP members also stress the association between Europe and the values of peace, freedom and democracy, which were attacked, and which must be defended, but they do not use any particular name nor description of the social actors. No feature concerning nomination, predication and mitigation versus intensification has been detected in tweets from the EPP and therefore we can say that they did not communicate hate speech on this occasion. However, their tweets assume a negative tone when dealing with Checkatt's death. Nadine Morano re-tweets "Un terroriste en moins. Merci aux forces de l'ordre."²³¹ Another EPP member, Françoise Grossetete, affirms that the perpetrator has been "found and put in the condition of not being able to harm."²³² Such forms of expression might be interpreted as expressions of relief and almost contentment for Checkatt's death and do not express any feeling of sorrow as it usually happens in case of someone's death. Even if implicitly, these tweets convey a feeling of hostility towards the terrorist as human being and thus contributes to the creation of an atmosphere of intolerance.

Moving to the left, it appears that the chosen analytical categories are not as present as in the tweets from rightist MEPs. Looking at the communication of the S&D group, we find that they also express the need to tackle terrorism. However, their arguments are very neutral: they never use terms belonging to the semantic sphere of war and fight, as it was the case in the tweets from rightist MEPs analysed before. On the contrary, the words they use convey positivity:

In the shadow of the #Strasbourg attacks, today we voted on a report that will aim to improve the EU's capability to tackle terrorism.²³³

As far as Chekatt's death, a neutral stance can be found in the tweet from Elly Schlein, who posted "Il killer di #Strasburgo ucciso dalla polizia".²³⁴ She chooses the verb *killed* which highlights the death of Chekatt, and even if the tweet remains unbiased and provides an objective information, it also presents Chekatt as a person and does not provide any judgement. The categories of nomination, predication and mitigation versus intensification are not present in the tweets from S&D and it is thus possible to affirm that they do not communicate hate speech.

²³¹ Nadine Morano, Twitter post, 14 December 2018, 1:47 p.m., accessed May 2019, https://twitter.com/nadine__morano.

²³² Françoise Grossetête, Twitter post, 14 December 2018, 7:17 a.m., accessed May 2019, <https://twitter.com/grossetetef>.

²³³ The Progressives, Twitter post, 12 December 2018, 9:28 a.m., accessed May 2019, <https://twitter.com/TheProgressives>.

²³⁴ Elly Schlein, Twitter post, 13 December 2018, 12:40 p.m. accessed May 2019, <https://twitter.com/ellyesse..>

It is evident that the approach of MEPs from S&D, as well as from GUE-NGL, is completely different to those previously considered. In general, it can be noticed that their discourse lightly touches the topic of migration and it does so from a completely different angle. For instance, tweets from GUE-NGL name migrants as the victims and not the perpetrators. For instance, this post strongly criticizes those who expressed happiness for the death of the killer:

Qualcuno informi @lucamorisis che l'inferno dopo la morte non esiste. L'inferno è in terra, creato anche da chi respinge i migranti in mare e gioisce per l'uccisione di un uomo, cosa infame anche quando di tratta di un assassino. di cristiano vi resta solo il presepe #Strasbourg²³⁵

Special attention is given by this group to nomination. Indeed, Eleonora Forenza, from GUE-NGL, replies to a tweet from the Italian newspaper La Repubblica which affirms that Chekatt had been neutralized. Forenza therefore tweets “@repubblica neutralizzato??? è stato ucciso, non ‘neutralizzato’ #restiamoumani”²³⁶. She openly criticizes the lexical choice made by arguing that the terrorist has been killed and that the word *neutralized* deletes the human aspect of this context. It can be noticed that this is the same word that has been used by Bay and that consequently the perspectives of the two MEPs are completely opposite. In this case, the lexical choice made by Forenza aims at highlighting empathy and humanity, thus opposing to hate speech.

6.3 A change of perspective: radicalisation in the case of the Christchurch attacks

As in the case of the Strasbourg attack, narratives and positions vary amongst the different political groups, but there are some aspects which are repeated by MEPs regardless of their affiliation. The most recurrent theme is the expression of sorrow for the victims and closeness to the people of New Zealand. Also in this case, a word which is very much iterated is *solidarity*, which is directed to the victims of the attacks and their families, as well as the entire country. As in the previous analysis, MEPs stress the need to fight against extremism and that more commitment is needed in order to seriously tackle the problem:

Completely heartbroken & horrified to hear of the tragic #NewZealandMosqueShooting. We stand by the victims, their families & the

²³⁵ Eleonora Forenza, Twitter post, 13 December 2018, 2:12 p.m., accessed May 2019, <https://twitter.com/eleonoraforenza>.”

²³⁶ Eleonora Forenza, Twitter post, 13 December 2018, 2:31 p.m., accessed May 2019, <https://twitter.com/eleonoraforenza>..

people of New Zealand. Together we must condemn all forms of extremism & terror. #PrayForNewZealand²³⁷

Moreover, some MEPs specifically address their thoughts to Muslims and their communities:

Horrifying news of the mosque attacks in #Christchurch
As PM Jacinda Adern says: 'This is not who we are'
We extend our compassion to the Muslim communities in New Zealand
And solidarity to British Muslim communities²³⁸

The data collected concerning the Christchurch attack clearly show that rightist and centrist MEPs tweeted less than leftist ones on this topic. Indeed, amongst the tweets collected, those posted by the ENF, EFDD, ECR and EPP are very few and do not develop any specific narrative. MEPs from these groups limited their posts to the general topics above-mentioned, thus adopting a neutral stance. For this reason, the following paragraphs will concentrate on the analysis of tweets from leftist groups, mainly the S&D and GUE-NGL. Amongst the other groups, it is important to highlight only the following tweet by the EFDD member Chauprade, who retweeted a post inviting people in New Zealand to wear a scarf as symbol of support towards the Muslim community:

La vraie compassion n'a pas besoin de travestissement. Nouvel exemple de la faiblesse de certains dirigeants devant la tyrannie de l'émotion. J'ai de la peine pour les victimes, partout, j'ai des amis en terre d'islam, mais je sais où j'habite et qui je suis #Christchurch²³⁹

Chauprade affirms the strength of his identity and his words can be interpreted as a critique towards such act of compassion towards Muslim. In this way, he makes a clear distinction between the dominant group and the Muslim minority and he puts some distance between the two while apparently expressing compassion and closeness to the victims. Even if this tweet does not convey any form of hate speech, it highlights the distinction between the dominant group and the Muslim minority and thus strengthens feelings of discrimination.

Considering tweets posted by S&D, nomination emerges especially in the words of Julie Ward:

We have to do something. We have to build and educate. We have to come

²³⁷ ECR Group, Twitter post, 15 March 2019, 3:03 a.m., accessed May 2019, <https://twitter.com/ecrgroup>.

²³⁸ Molly Scatt Cato, Twitter post, 14 March 2019, 11:48 p.m., accessed May 2019, <https://twitter.com/MollyMEP>.

²³⁹ Aymeric Chauprade, Twitter post, 21 March 2019, 2:24 p.m., accessed May 2019, https://twitter.com/a_chauprade..

together. Our children deserve better. I am so sorry. I love my Muslim friends. Kia Kaha. #KiaKahaChristchurch²⁴⁰

With this tweet, Ward affirms that the dominant group must act in order to find a remedy against the culture of hatred. The solution proposed is education, even if also multiculturalism and diversity are positively presented in the tweets as solutions against hatred and racism. The use of the pronoun *we* strengthens a feeling of closeness with the Muslim minority, which is intensified by the anti-racist rhetoric present in tweets from S&D:

@JRLAFC1886 @angelsforeurope Islamophobia is a global phenomenon stirred up by right wing anti-EU politicians & media. In a connected world an ordinary white guy in NZ reads racist bile in anti-EU online media like Daily Mail, The Sun, Express & HE makes the link with Brexit not me!²⁴¹

Muslims are described as victims not only of the terrorist attack, but also of anti-Islamic narratives which are spread by the far-right through media and which convey negative and stereotyped images of them. In their tweets, MEPs affirm that media dehumanise Muslims and depict them as violent while spreading a culture of hate against them, instead of using sensitivity also when reporting about the attack itself. According to this view, pictures are used to spread hatred narratives too, as many news networks spread stereotyped images of Muslims, e.g. veiled women.

In the tweets from GUE-NGL, the main topic to be analysed is the way the victims and the killer are named and described. The perpetrator is presented as a far-rightist fascist who was inspired by anti-Muslims and racist ideologies and figures. Muslims are presented as the victims of white supremacism, which must be fought as all extremisms. The issue lying behind the attack, and which became the heart of the debate, is indeed islamophobia:

On a le droit de critiquer l’Islam. Mais le présenter comme un danger ou les musulmans comme une menace c’est de l’islamophobie. Ainsi qu’agresser une femme voilée ou tirer sur des croyants dans une mosquée²⁴²

Another trend which emerges is the connection between the attack and rightist beliefs. Indeed, MEPs accuse the right of disseminating hatred and racist ideologies, a process which results in generalisations and in blending migration and extremism:

²⁴⁰ Julie Ward, Twitter post, 15 March 2019, 8:33 p.m., accessed May 2019, <https://twitter.com/julie4nw>.

²⁴¹ Julie Ward, Twitter post, 16 March 2019, 10:49 a.m., accessed May 2019, <https://twitter.com/julie4nw>.

²⁴² Marie-Christine Vergiat, Twitter post, 16 March 2019, 12 :46 a.m., accessed May 2019, <https://twitter.com/mcvergiat>.”

La haine des musulmans est le moteur de l'attaque terroriste de Christchurch. L'extrême droite alimente en permanence par ses fake news et amalgames sur l'immigration la radicalisation. Tout les extrémismes se combattent. Ne rien banaliser, jamais.²⁴³

As in the tweets following the Strasbourg attack, Muslims are here described as the minority and thus the *Other*. However, the category of nomination shows that in this case they are presented as victims and a feeling of closeness emerges from the tweets. Indeed, Muslims are called *friends* and defined as *innocent* and *peaceful*. No hate speech is detected in the analysed tweets, rather an intensification of feelings of closeness and empathy towards Muslims.

6.4 Comparison

Considering the many aspects which characterised the two events, it is possible to draw a comparison between the online debate following the Strasbourg and Christchurch attacks. First of all, it is important to remember that they developed in completely different contexts and this obviously influenced the narratives which appeared in the online and offline discussions. The communication following the Strasbourg attack has been generally more intense and has involved more topics and forms of expression. This is due to several reasons. First, the Strasbourg attack had a wide appeal in the European public sphere especially because it hit one of the seats of EU institutions during the week when the December plenary session of the European Parliament was held. As it was tweeted by the Greens, “Strasbourg is a symbol of peace and European unity”²⁴⁴ and is “at the heart of the European peace project.”²⁴⁵ The fact that this city was targeted by a terrorist act acquired a strong symbolic meaning. Also the fact that terrorism has been a matter of concern for the entire EU during the past decades contributed to making the event particularly relevant. The attack was therefore a peculiar and emotional moment for EU citizens and for EU politicians. On the contrary, the event of Christchurch did not have the same repercussions on the public debate, as it did not directly touch European citizens and was distant also from the geographical point of view. Additionally, it directly involved Muslims and not the dominant group, which, on

²⁴³ Marie-Christine Vergiat, Twitter post, 15 March 2019, 11 :25 p.m., accessed May 2019, <https://twitter.com/mcvergiat>.

²⁴⁴ GreensEP, Twitter post, 11 December 2018, 10:17 p.m., accessed May 2019, <https://twitter.com/GreensEP>.

²⁴⁵ Molly Scatt Cato, Twitter post, 12 December 2018, 2:37 a.m., accessed May 2019, <https://twitter.com/MollyMEP>.

the contrary, was targeted by the attack in Strasbourg.

With respect to the research sub-questions, we can conclude that MEPs highlight different aspects of each event and that these aspects influence the way in which the Other is described, together with the linguistic choices made by the authors of the tweets. Looking at the differences which emerged from the analysis, it is evident that MEPs adopt different approaches according to their political perspective. Considering the Strasbourg attack, it was found that while rightist groups tend to emphasize the role migration has in the spread of Islamic terrorism, leftist ones prefer to ignore aspects such as the origin or faith of the terrorist. For this reason, tweets posted by rightist groups after the Strasbourg attack are more numerous and very critical, as MEPs exploited the event to support their political ideology. This approach led to the use of hate speech, especially in aspects like nomination and intensification. On the contrary, the left is more silent and on this occasion it used Twitter more as a tool to report news and inform their followers about what was happening in Strasbourg at the moment of the attack. In the case of Christchurch, the left intensified the number of tweets and assumed a very judgmental view, criticizing specifically right-wing movements. Oppositely, rightist MEPs maintained a neutral tone and tweeted much less than after the Strasbourg attack. While in the first case hate speech against Muslims has been clearly detected, in the second case there was no evidence of hatred content. On the contrary, feelings of empathy and solidarity towards the Muslim communities have been highlighted during the analysis.

Another difference lays in the approach to the theme of diversity. If in the case of Strasbourg diversity was blamed for being a factor leading to radicalisation and thus terrorism, after the attack Christchurch diversity was enhanced as a positive value of society which must be defended. However, the main aspects which arise following the data analysis is the total overturning of the narrative concerning the dichotomy Us-Them. In Strasbourg *Us* includes French people and more generally Europeans, who have been victims of hatred and protected by efficient law enforcement and whose culture and values have been attacked. *Them* is the number of S files and radicalized Muslims present on the French territory and broadly speaking foreigners who pose potential threat to France and its citizens. On the contrary, in Christchurch Muslims are the victims, as they have been targeted during the slaughter but also because they are continuously attacked by racist narratives spread by media. Muslims, who according to some generalisations made by few MEPs, are the category to which the perpetrators of

terrorist acts belong to, are in this case the victims of the same kind of violence and fear. Evidence shows that while tweets after the Strasbourg attack were depicting Muslims with negative attributes, after Christchurch they expressed closeness and solidarity towards this minority. If words like extremism and terror would have referred to Islamic terrorism in the first case, in Christchurch they refer to racist extremism against Muslims. From Strasbourg to Christchurch, the focus has changed from Islamic terrorism to Islamophobic terrorism. This appears also from the way the word barbarity is used: if in Strasbourg Monot described the event using the words “Islamic barbarity,”²⁴⁶ in Christchurch barbarity takes a more general appearance:

Encore l’horreur avec cette double attaque à @Christchurch_NZ : un crime odieux dans deux lieux de prière, des victimes d’un terrorisme aveugle ! Nous devons continuer à lutter ensemble contre cette barbarie qui tue et cherche à nous faire vivre dans la peur et la division.²⁴⁷

Similarly, Monot uses again this word, but in very general terms, after the Christchurch attack, affirming that barbarity and extremism must be fought all over the world. This difference highlights that the presence of the adjective “Islamic” aims at emphasizing certain aspects of the Strasbourg attack which are relevant for his narrative. This appears remarkable because it demonstrates that the term Islam is used as a metonymy for Muslim, but it is charged with negative meaning and used to convey a negative perception of this group. On the contrary, the term Muslim is used as a politically correct form of expression which does not sound racist, and it is indeed used after the Christchurch attack.

Following a CDA perspective, it was possible to detect the presence of power relations in the Twitter communication following the two events and to identify implicit forms of intolerance and discrimination. It is evident that MEPs, who represent European citizens and their opinions, convey a condition of hegemony upon the Muslim minority and thus propagate inequality in the society. Through their tweets, MEPs target specifically the Muslim group, highlighting its diversity and presenting it as a threat, while also offering a positive representation of the dominant group. By the use of specific names and lexical choices, verbs and oppositions, they contribute to reinforcing the dichotomy Us and Them and thus to spreading discriminating narratives and discourses of hatred towards the Muslim minority. This emerges also from the way Chekatt has been named:

²⁴⁶ Bernard Monot, Twitter post, 11 December 2018, 11:54 p.m., accessed May 2019, https://twitter.com/bernard_monot.

²⁴⁷ François Decoster, Twitter post, 15 March 2019, 5:27 a.m., accessed May 2019, <https://twitter.com/fdecoster>.

if the word *terrorist* itself is not much used, some MEPs tend to employ S files, foreign S files, radicalized Muslims, radicalized Islamist, radicalized foreigner, heavy criminal, Islamic terrorist. Choosing these words clearly stresses aspects which go beyond the terrorist act itself, including Islam, migration and radicalization. If words like *terrorist* or *perpetrator* would sound neutral, the lexical choices made by some MEPs voluntarily stress aspects that strengthen their anti-migration and anti-Islam narratives, thus discriminating foreigners and Muslims.

To conclude, CDA was useful to identify power relations between the dominant and minority groups and to understand that the first one uses expressions which implicitly or explicitly discriminate the latter based on its members' religion and origin and which can therefore be considered as subtle forms of hate speech. Moreover, it can be noticed that the generalisations made by some MEPs after the Strasbourg attack are exactly the forms of expressions which are condemned in the tweets referring to the Christchurch slaughter. This indicates that MEPs are aware of the influence they have on the public discourse and that the narratives they build can impact the developments of society and its groups.

The analytical categories of nomination, predication and mitigation versus intensification have helped in detecting the presence of implicit expressions of hatred.

Ultimately, what can be noticed is that groups belonging to the same part of the political spectrum have shared some patterns. Indeed, the ENF and EFDD adopted messages of hatred, while leftist MEPs did not use hate speech.

7. Discussion and conclusions

7.1 Discussion

In this paragraph I will discuss the results of the previous analysis in its broader research context, focusing on the presence of hate speech and on the process of othering. Furthermore, I will describe the limits of this work and suggest areas for further research. The data collected have demonstrated that the tweets posted by MEPs in the aftermath of the Strasbourg and Christchurch attacks develop narratives of hatred and discrimination towards the Muslim minority, with some cases in which evidence of hate speech was found.

The outcomes suggest that generally politicians belonging to rightist parties tend to communicate hate messages more than others while promoting their political views and agenda. It is important to note that these conclusions are limited to a specific type of communication and context, thus different attitudes and sentiments could emerge in debates on other topics or on different media. However, they confirm what previous studies have also pointed out. First, the analysis has demonstrated that through their communication, MEPs usually mirror their political position. The study *The European Parliament in Times of Crisis: Transnationalism under Pressure?* had already shown that in the context of debates on migration S&D and GUE-NGL promote solidarity towards migrants, while ENF and EFDD adopt stricter positions and the EPP takes a moderate stance.²⁴⁸ The same study affirms that the communication of ENF conveys negative generalisations on migrants.²⁴⁹

The results of the analysis bolster such statements and correspond to the political orientation of MEPs which has been presented in chapter four. The fact that MEPs openly and personally use hate speech confirms that they use Twitter as a self-promotional tool to communicate features of their political agenda and promote their views - e.g. MEPs belonging to rightist parties adopt Islamophobic discourses supporting their anti-immigration and nationalist stance, while leftist MEPs spread rhetoric of inclusion and solidarity. This strengthens the relevance Twitter has assumed as political mean of communication in current debates at the European level and brings the evidence that online hate speech is not always conveyed by users hidden behind the veil of anonymity.

²⁴⁸ Högenauer, "The European Parliament in Times of Crisis," 1100.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 1100.

The analysis pointed to the recurrent presence of discriminatory and racist discourses like Islamophobia in the political debate, a problem that has already been highlighted by different legal provisions of the Council of Europe, as well as previous research.²⁵⁰ If we consider the definition of Islamophobia made by Cheng, it is possible to affirm that this sentiment has been detected in the tweets analysed, as there were expressions where

Islam is considered a religion with only troubling aspects that has caused problems in Western society or will cause problems in the future if not tightly restricted and prevented from ‘spreading’.²⁵¹

Not only Islamophobia is present in the communication of MEPs, but also Muslimophobia, as Muslims are implicitly presented as performers of violence and backwardness.²⁵² If we consider the concepts of Islamophobia and Muslimophobia as interpreted by Cheng,²⁵³ it is possible to affirm that they are both present in the data analysed. Islam is indeed presented by some MEPs as a religion which endangers Western values and culture and is not compatible with them. Its opposition to Christianity further reinforces negative sentiments and the idea of inferiority of Islam. At the same time, Muslims are described as terrorists and extremists and thus as threats to Europe because of their religion. Such representations of Muslims are aligned with the results of other studies. For instance, ECRI affirmed that anti-Muslim narratives, which are often connected to the issue of migration and tend to give stereotyped images of this minority, have become widespread in the European public debate, to the point that they are now generally accepted by the public.²⁵⁴ In this way, the Other is constructed through discursive practices which, according to Wodak, tend to make the process of exclusion of minorities normal²⁵⁵ and which can be considered threatening to social peace and to values such as equality and inclusion.

Additionally, findings have confirmed that hate speech is often implicit and cannot be easily detected, as previously argued by many scholars, including Weber and Brown.²⁵⁶ The widespread presence of discriminatory and racist narratives in the Twitter communication of MEPs has also confirmed theories claiming that these kinds of rhetoric are easily transmittable through the Internet because of its peculiarity as a

²⁵⁰ See, Cheng, “Islamophobia, Muslimophobia or racism,” 1 –25.

²⁵¹ Ibid., 21.

²⁵² Ibid., 21.

²⁵³ Ibid., 12-20.

²⁵⁴ ECRI, “Annual Report on ECRI’s activities,” 12.

²⁵⁵ Wodak, “Discourses in European Union organizations,” 659.

²⁵⁶ See Weber, *Manual on hate speech*, 5, and Alexander Brown, “What is hate speech? Part 1”, 450.

medium.²⁵⁷

Concerning the process of Othering, the analysis has highlighted how the Other is constructed through the politicians' narratives and words. The attitudes which emerged in the research indicate that MEPs' discourses support the construction of the process of othering and categorization which, according Kopytowska and Baider, contributes to the development of hate speech.²⁵⁸ CDA has proved to be fundamental in detecting the linguistic aspects which allow the identification of the dichotomy Us and Them. Additionally, analytical categories – especially nomination – have highlighted the presence of hate speech in some of the analysed tweets.

However, this study has not only complemented but also enriched the existing research on the topic of hate speech, with a particular focus on its presence in the online debate of national representants in the European Parliament and on the linguistic aspect of their communication. Despite the clear results, it must be recognized that the analysis is restricted, as it considers only one of the media MEPs use to communicate and because it takes into account only the tweets of a limited number of MEPs and during two delimited periods of time.

Further research should therefore analyse the communication of a larger number of MEPs and on a wider range of media, in order to provide more validity to the results and a broader view over the topic. A qualitative method like CDA would not be suitable for a quantitative research – another strategy should therefore be chosen in order to combine a more extensive amount of data with a linguistic-based approach. Whatever method is adopted, a more complete inquiry should examine the attitude of MEPs, especially online, and whether they communicate hate speech in order to offer the European Parliament and its members precise figures concerning their use of discriminatory narratives, an action which could lead to the implementation of stricter rules concerning hate speech in the institutions.

Research should also include the analysis of the perception of hate speech amongst the audience in the specific context of the study. Indeed, the analysis of the content of hateful messages is the first step to identify hate speech, but it is also relevant to examine how the phenomenon is perceived by the public in order to understand which implications it might have - e.g. hate crimes - because of its performativity. This

²⁵⁷ Klein, "Slipping Racism into the Mainstream," 445.

²⁵⁸ Kopytowska and Baider, "From stereotypes and prejudice to verbal and physical violence," 133–152.

perspective, which has already been adopted by some researchers,²⁵⁹ would provide a broader comprehension of hate speech in a specific situation.

Additionally, it can be argued that further developments on the concept of hate speech should be realized. As it has been demonstrated in the theoretical framework, hate speech is far from being easily conceptualized and a more comprehensive definition of the concept is needed in order to carry out well-grounded research. Especially in the field of linguistics, a complete definition of hate speech is needed in order to allow researchers to approach the topic in similar ways.

7.2 Conclusions

This research has proved that MEPs have spread discriminatory narratives and hate speech through their Twitter communication following the terrorist attacks perpetrated in Strasbourg and in Christchurch. Through an analysis realized with the critical discourse method, I have explained what they highlight after each event in terms of content, focusing on the different topics tackled in the online discussion. I examined different analytical categories and analysed how they construct and reinforce the dichotomy Us and Them by taking into account the linguistic aspects of their tweets. In this way, I answered the sub-questions of the thesis and the main research question, as results clearly demonstrate that MEPs conveyed hate speech through Twitter after these two events.

Despite the limits of the analysis, which have already been enumerated, I demonstrated that applying CDA together with the definition of soft hate speech realized by Assimakopoulos, Baider and Millar enables to detect the presence of hate speech also when it is communicated through implicit forms of expression. Applying such method can therefore be useful for further research with similar aims.

Additionally, I argue that this research provides an insight on the presence of hate speech in the online parliamentary debate of one of the principal European institutions. The outcomes have practical implications, as they suggest that MEPs do use a kind of communication which is outlawed when used in a more explicit and direct way. Such statement has two implications. First, I claim that current definitions of hate speech used

²⁵⁹ See Stavros Assimakopoulos, Fabienne H. Baider and Sharon Millar, "The C.O.N.T.A.C.T. methodological approach," in *Online Hate Speech in the European Union*, ed. Stavros Assimakopoulos, Fabienne H. Baider and Sharon Millar (Springer Open, 2017), 20.

in the legal and academic framework are incomplete and cannot be used to identify hate speech in its daily and implicit forms nor in the field of empirical research. Consequently, a more complete definition of this concept should be provided in order to allow legal bodies, as well as researchers, to easily detect hate speech in all its manifestations.

Secondly, the ways MEPs describe Muslim and construct the Other have consequences on how Europe is built. The process of othering examined in the tweets results in narratives and attitudes of exclusion towards certain minorities – migrants, Muslims – and consequently it has repercussions on the construction of the dominant group. The analysis thus leads to reflections over the construction of Europeanness and European identity, especially in terms of values. Indeed, the presence of hate speech in the communication of MEPs suggests that they do not embrace the principles of tolerance and equality which are at the core of the European project and that they are supposed to embody when holding such position. On the contrary, the research has shown that some MEPs spread messages of hatred and discrimination, thus going against the principles of the European Union. Considering the values defended by the treaties on which the EU is based, this thesis has raised questions about the actual fulfilment of the European values, which should be put not only on paper but also realized through the everyday practice of its representatives. The outcomes thus trigger further reasoning about the accomplishment of the European project, which is undermined by discriminatory attitudes as those examined in this research.

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Annex I – Twitter accounts used for the Twitter analysis

Table 1: Official accounts of the political groups

Political group	Username
EFDD	@EFDgroup
ECR	@ecrgroup
ENF	@ENF_EP
EPP	@EPP
ALDE	@ALDEgroup
Greens/EFA	@GreensEP
S&D	@TheProgressives
GUE-NGL	@GUENGL

Table 2: MEP's accounts divided per political group

Name	Country	Position	Username
EFDD			
Chauprade Aymeric	France	Vice-chair	@a_chauprade
Farage Nigel	United Kingdom	President	@Nigel_Farage
Monot Bernard	France	Vice-chair	@Bernard_Monot
ECR			
Fitto Raffaele	Italy	Vice-chair	@RaffaeleFitto
Kamall Syed	United Kingdom	Co-chair	@SyedKamall
Maullu Stefano	Italy		@stefanomaullu
ENF			
Atkinson Janice	United Kingdom	Vice-chair	@Janice4Brexit
Bay Nicolas	France	Co-chair	@NicolasBay_
Zanni Marco	Italy		@Marcozanni86
EPP			
Comi Lara	Italy	Vice-chair	@comilara
Grossetête Françoise	France	Vice-chair	@GrosseteteF
Morano Nadine	France		@nadine__morano
ALDE			
Decoster François	France	Vice-chair	@fdecoster
Michel Louis	Belgium		@LouisMichel
Verhofstadt Guy	Belgium	President	@guyverhofstadt
Greens/EFA			
Durand Pascal	France	Vice-president	@PDurandOfficiel
Lamberts Philippe	Belgium	Co-president	@ph_lamberts
Scott Cato Molly	United Kingdom		@MollyMEP
S&D			
Bresso Mercedes	Italy	Vice-president	@mercedesbresso
Schlein Elly	Italy		@ellyesse
Ward Julie	United Kingdom		@julie4nw
GUE-NGL			
Anderson Martina	Ireland	Member of the Bureau	@M_AndersonSF

Forenza Eleonora	Italy	Member of the Bureau	@eleonoraforenza
Vergiat Marie-Christine	France	Member of the Bureau	@MCVergiat







Annex II – Tweets following the Strasbourg attack

The following annexes present the sample of tweets analysed in this research. Each table displays the tweets of one political group, divided into sub-categories according to the accounts from which they were posted. Original tweets can be found in the left column, while tweets translated from French or Italian into English are in the right column²⁶⁰. Original tweets preceded by an asterisk are retweets from other accounts.







ENF	
Nicolas Bay	
<p>* ✍ « Après l'attentat de #Strasbourg, l'amorce d'une prise de conscience »</p> <p>Retrouvez le dernier édito de @NicolasBay_ !</p> <p>✉ Toute notre actualité, en vous inscrivant à notre newsletter ➦ https://t.co/h6rtGy5XQ9</p> <p>https://t.co/padcBoWbww</p>	<p>✍ « After the attack in #Strasbourg, the beginning of a new awareness »</p> <p>Find the latest editorial by @NicolasBay!</p> <p>✉ Subscribe to our newsletter to receive all our news ➦ https://t.co/h6rtGy5XQ9</p> <p>https://t.co/padcBoWbww</p>
<p>* @NicolasBay_ : "Si [le tueur de Strasbourg] avait été sanctionné comme le prévoit le code pénal, à la hauteur de ce que prévoit le code pénal, il n'aurait pas tué des innocents" #QuestionsPol https://t.co/ZCQGZdC2Tq</p>	<p>@NicolasBay: "If [the killer in Strasbourg] had been sanctioned as established by the penal code, with the measures imposed by the penal code, he would have not killed those innocents" #QuestionsPol https://t.co/ZCQGZdC2Tq</p>
<p>"Si on expulsait les détenus étrangers hors du territoire français grâce à des accords bilatéraux pour qu'ils purgent leur peine dans leur pays d'origine, on réglerait en grande partie le problème de la surpopulation carcérale." #BalanceTonPost</p>	<p>"If we expel the foreign detainees from the French territory through bilateral agreements to make them serve their sentences in their countries of origin we would partly solve the problem of prison overcrowding." #BalanceTonPost</p>
<p>"Celui qui a assassiné le père #Hamel était sous bracelet électronique. Assigner à résidence des Fichés S, ce n'est pas une solution." #BalanceTonPost #BTP</p>	<p>"The one who killed father #Hamel had an electronic bracelet. Confining S files²⁶¹ is not a solution." #BalanceTonPost #BTP</p>
<p>"Le laxisme est à tous les étages. Le Code pénal n'est pas appliqué. #CherifChekatt</p>	<p>"Laxity is at all levels. The penal code is not applied. #CherifChekatt had been</p>

²⁶⁰ Translation realized by the author.

²⁶¹ "S file" translates the French denomination "fiché S", which stands for a category of people who are of interest of the French state for several reasons and whose names are thus inserted in a database. In this specific case, S refers to Sécurité de l'État, the security of the state. S files are those people who might pose a security threat to the French nation.

a été condamné à 27 reprises et n'a fait que 4 ans de prison !" #BalanceTonPost #BTP	condemned 27 times and spent only 4 years in prison!" #BalanceTonPost #BTP
"Après chaque attentat, on nous dit qu'il ne faut surtout pas toucher aux fichés S. C'est cela qui est insupportable." #BalanceTonPost #BTP	"After every attack, we are told that we must not mess with S files above all. This is what is unbearable." #BalanceTonPost #BTP
"Les fichés S de nationalité étrangère, on peut leur demander de quitter le territoire national par simple décision administrative. Les binationaux peuvent être déchus de leur nationalité, et ceux qui sont Français peuvent être inculpés pour intelligence avec l'ennemi." #BTP	"We can ask foreign S files to leave the national territory through a simple administrative act. People with dual citizenship can be deprived of their citizenship and those who are French can be accused of contact with the enemy." #BTP
"Nos forces de l'ordre ont consacré une énergie considérable en peu de temps pour neutraliser le terroriste. Elles méritent ces applaudissements. C'est un soulagement pour tous les Français." #CàVous #Strasbourg	"Our law enforcement has dedicated a lot of energy and short time to neutralise the terrorist. They deserve this applause. This is a relief for all French people." #CàVous #Strasbourg
"Le gouvernement essaie d'utiliser #Strasbourg comme un argument pour empêcher une nouvelle mobilisation des #GiletsJaunes. Le droit de manifester est fondamental, c'est un droit constitutionnel." #CàVous	"The government tries to use #Strasbourg as an argument to obstacle the new mobilisation of the #YellowVests. The right to protest is fundamental, it is a constitutional right." #CàVous
*  Faut-il manifester demain ? @NicolasBay_ sera face à @Djebbari_JB pour répondre. Au sommaire également, le récit de l'attentat de Strasbourg et le point sur les théories du complot par @SamuelLaurent. ✨ Enfin, @JeniferOfficiel est notre invitée du dîner ! - 🕒 19h 📺 France 5 - https://t.co/s0JRpm8cGO	 Should we protest tomorrow? @NicolasBay_ will answer to @Djebbari_JB. Also in this programme, the account of the Strasbourg attack and an update on the conspiracy theories by @SamuelLaurent. ✨ Finally, @JeniferOfficiel is our dinner guest! - 🕒 19h 📺 France 5 - https://t.co/s0JRpm8cGO
 "L'attentat à #Strasbourg ne doit pas être un prétexte pour le gouvernement d'interdire les manifestations des #GiletsJaunes." https://t.co/E1LHtMT7zS	 "The attack in #Strasbourg must not be used by the government as an excuse to forbid the protests of the #YellowVests." https://t.co/E1LHtMT7zS
 "Tous ceux qui ont commis des actes terroristes contre la France sont étrangers ou issus de l'immigration. Ils ont la plupart du temps déjà été condamnés par la justice et ont un profil de radicalisé." #Strasbourg https://t.co/MY1zrkKZQB	 "All those who perpetrated terrorist acts against France are foreigners or have an immigrant background. In most cases they have already been condemned and have a radicalized profile." #Strasbourg https://t.co/MY1zrkKZQB

<p>📺 "En attaquant le marché de Noël, on attaque notre identité, nos valeurs de civilisation. Le problème de fond, c'est l'autorité de l'Etat. Nos lois républicaines ne sont pas appliquées." #Strasbourg https://t.co/RNdLAVgxPh</p>	<p>📺 "An attack to the Christmas market is an attack to our identity, our values and our culture. The heart of the problem is the authority of the State. Our republican laws are not applied." #Strasbourg https://t.co/RNdLAVgxPh</p>
<p>📺 "Tout cet édifice de laxisme construit méthodiquement par la droite et par la gauche depuis 30 ans aboutit à ces actes terroristes." #Strasbourg #Chekatt https://t.co/rWOX4gcFrN</p>	<p>📺 "This entire structure of laxity, which was methodically built by the right and the left in the last 30 years, results in these terrorist acts." #Strasbourg #Chekatt https://t.co/rWOX4gcFrN</p>
<p>« #RédoineFaïd mettait une burka pour être sûr de ne pas être interpellé : les lois de la République ne sont pas appliquées ! » @CNEWS</p>	<p>« #RédoineFaïd used to wear a burka to be sure not to be questioned: the laws of the Republic are not applied! » @CNEWS</p>
<p>« À #Strasbourg c'est notre identité qui a été attaquée, nos valeurs de civilisation. » @CNEWS</p>	<p>« In #Strasbourg it's our identity which has been attacked, the values of our culture. » @CNEWS</p>
<p>« Malheureusement on s'habitue à vivre avec le terrorisme. Ce n'est pas pour cela qu'il faut l'accepter, il faut mener une lutte impitoyable. » @CNEWS</p>	<p>« Unfortunately we get used to living with terrorism. This is not the reason why we should accept it, we must wage a relentless battle. » @CNEWS</p>
<p>« Il faut passer des accords bilatéraux pour que les 15 000 détenus étrangers purgent leur peine dans leur pays d'origine. » @CNEWS</p>	<p>« We must adopt bilateral agreements to make the 15 000 foreign prisoners serve their sentences in their countries of origin. » @CNEWS</p>
<p>« L'immigration massive génère le communautarisme et fait le lit de l'islamisme. » @CNEWS</p>	<p>« Mass immigration leads to communitarism and paves the way to Islamism. » @CNEWS</p>
<p>« Le laxisme judiciaire est en cause. Le terroriste a été condamné à 27 reprises. Le code pénal n'est pas appliqué ! » @CNEWS</p>	<p>« Judicial laxity is at stake. The terrorist had been condemned 27 times. The penal code is not applied ! » @CNEWS</p>
<p>« Il faut expulser les étrangers radicalisés. Pour ceux qui ont la double nationalité, on a les outils juridiques pour les déchoir de leur nationalité française lorsqu'ils sont en contact avec les filières djihadistes. » @CNEWS</p>	<p>« it is necessary to expel radicalized foreigners. For those who have dual citizenship we have the juridical tools to deprive them of their French citizenship in case they are in contact with jihadist networks. » @CNEWS</p>
<p>« Tous ceux qui ont frappé la France sont étrangers ou issus de l'immigration. Ils sont pour l'essentiel tous fichés S et ont un passé de multirécidiviste. »</p>	<p>« All those who attacked France are foreigners or have an immigrant background. They are basically all S files and have been multiple offenders. »</p>

@CNEWS #Strasbourg	@CNEWS #Strasbourg
*Strasbourg: Nicolas Bay estime que "tout n'a pas été fait par les pouvoirs publics pour enrayer cette menace" https://t.co/UQXIPcH45k	Strasbourg: Nicolas Bay argues that "public authorities have not done everything possible to limit this threat" https://t.co/UQXIPcH45k
 "Il y a des milliers d'étrangers fichés S et ils ne sont pas expulsés. Ceux qui sont de nationalité française, il faut les inculper et les mettre derrière les barreaux sur le fondement de l'article 411-4 du code pénal pour intelligence avec l'ennemi." #Strasbourg @BFMTV https://t.co/pF0L5862yU	 " There are thousands of foreign S files and they have not been expelled. Those who are French citizens must be accused and sent to prison following article 411-4 of the penal code for contact with the enemy." #Strasbourg @BFMTV https://t.co/pF0L5862yU
« Nous avons des milliers de personnes fichées pour radicalisation. Ceux qui sont étrangers doivent être expulsés du territoire national ! » @BFMTV	« We have thousands of people catalogued for radicalization. Those who are foreigners must be expelled from the national territory! » @BFMTV
« Le terroriste islamiste a bénéficié du laxisme judiciaire. Il n'a pas été condamné à hauteur de ce que prévoit le code pénal. » @BFMTV	« Islamic terrorism has benefitted from judicial laxity. He has not been condemned as imposed by the penal code. » @BFMTV
« La menace reste très prégnante. Tout n'a pas été fait par les pouvoirs publics pour l'enrayer. » @BFMTV	« The threat remains very significant. Not everything has been done by public authorities to limit it. » @BFMTV
"Derrière le vernis artistique se cache un propagandiste, capable par ses chansons mais aussi par son exemple de toucher de nombreux jeunes. #Médine est le parfait exemple d'une idéologie islamiste se déployant dans notre pays par tous les moyens, à travers tous les supports." https://t.co/xolCQ7KMPE	"A propagandist hides behind his artistic cover. He can reach many young people through his songs and his example. #Médine is the perfect example of an Islamist ideology which is spreading in our country through all the means, through all media." https://t.co/xolCQ7KMPE
Décence : le rappeur islamiste #Médine doit annuler son concert vendredi à #Strasbourg !  Mon communiqué : https://t.co/bfoVOt7yLM	Decency: the Islamist rapper #Médine must cancel his concert on Friday in #Strasbourg!  My public statement: https://t.co/bfoVOt7yLM
*  "C'est chaque fois une blessure pour le peuple français de se réveiller avec ce type de nouvelle. On a toujours ce sentiment que tout n'est pas fait dans la lutte contre le terrorisme, bras armé de l'idéologie mortifère qu'est le fondamentalisme islamiste." #Strasbourg #Les4V https://t.co/Y7c3SK9d7L	*  "Every time, waking up with this kind of news is a wound for the French people. We always have the feeling that not everything is done in the fight against terrorism, armed wind of the deadly ideology which Islamic fundamentalism is." #Strasbourg #Les4V https://t.co/Y7c3SK9d7L

<p>● Comment un homme condamné à 27 reprises et signalé depuis 10 ans pour radicalisation, n'a pu faire que 5 ans de prison pour finir par se promener librement dans la nature ?!</p> <p>Ce laxisme est insupportable car il est meurtrier ! #Strasbourg #Attentat</p>	<p>● How is it possible that a man who has been condemned 27 times and reported as radicalized since 10 years has spent only 5 years in prison to end up walking freely in the nature ?!</p> <p>This laxity is unbearable because it brings death! #Strasbourg #Attack</p>
<p>"Le combat contre le terrorisme islamiste doit être une priorité et nous devons nous donner les moyens de mener cette guerre qui nous est faite et de la gagner." #PlenPE #Strasbourg</p>	<p>"The battle against Islamic terrorism must be a priority and we must provide ourselves with the tools to fight this war which is done against us and to win it." #PlenPE #Strasbourg</p>
<p>"Au nom de notre groupe Europe des nations et des libertés, je souhaite adresser mes condoléances et exprimer ma solidarité à l'égard des victimes, de leurs familles et de leurs proches." #PlenPE #Strasbourg</p>	<p>"On behalf of our group Europe of nations and freedoms, I want to express my condolences and my solidarity to the victims, their families and their loved ones." #PlenPE #Strasbourg</p>
<p>"La France, comme l'ont été d'autres pays européens, a de nouveau été frappée, ensanglantée et endeuillée par le terrorisme hier soir à #Strasbourg." #PlenPE</p>	<p>"France, as other European countries in the past, has been once again hit, wounded and plunged into mourning by terrorism last night in #Strasbourg." #PlenPE</p>
<p>*"Il faut le savoir, #Strasbourg est une place forte du fondamentalisme islamiste. Dans notre pays, des quartiers entiers, voire des départements entiers comme le 93, si l'on en croit les journalistes du Monde MM. Davet et Lhomme, sont aux mains des fondamentalistes..." #Les4V</p>	<p>"We must recognize it, #Strasbourg is a stronghold of Islamic fundamentalism. In our country, entire neighbourhoods, even entire departments as n.93, are in the hands of fundamentalists, if we believe the journalist of Le Monde Mr Davet and Mr Lhomme..." #Les4V</p>
<p>La France est à nouveau ensanglantée et endeuillée par le terrorisme islamiste. Mes pensées vont vers les familles des victimes. Hommage à nos forces de l'ordre et aux équipes de secours mobilisées sur place. #Strasbourg #attentat</p>	<p>France is again wounded and grieving by Islamist terrorism. My thoughts go to the families of the victims. Homage to our law enforcement and the rescue teams mobilized. #Strasbourg #attack</p>
<p>Janice Atkinson</p>	
<p>I've been going to Strasbourg for 4.5 yrs now. Every year we were warned about attacks at the Xmas market, even more so when the Parliament was sitting. They bided their time, they struck lucky. More to come. https://t.co/YbKAmA9xdk</p>	
<p>"The perpetrator of the cowardly attack in #Straatsburg was already known as a radicalized Muslim and heavy criminal. Why could he still roam freely?"</p>	

https://t.co/fdUQZ7mUh0	
@DVATW Very comforting, just like being in Strasbourg.	
The French nation's saviour. All our thoughts go to the victims of the Islamist massacre of #Strasbourg and their loved ones, as well as to the law enforcement and rescue teams. A radical change must take place, since the policy against terrorism is clearly flawed. Mlp https://t.co/sNGCHYI91K	

EFDD	
Aymeric Chauprade	
Le soir de l'attaque de Strasbourg, j'ai moi-même été témoin du comportement de policiers municipaux insultant gratuitement, là un jeune homme, là une vieille dame, qui demandaient seulement à rentrer chez eux. La police a un problème que l'armée n'a pas. https://t.co/RHYeZOO641	In the evening of the Strasbourg attack I have witnessed the behaviour of the town policemen, who were gratuitously insulting a man here, an old lady there, who were only asking to go back home. The police have a problem which the army does not have. https://t.co/RHYeZOO641
Justice est faite #Strasbourg Félicitations à nos forces de l'ordre.	Justice is served #Strasbourg Congratulations to our law enforcement.
*"La motivation terroriste n'est pas encore établie" @NunezLaurent ! Il tue des civils au hasard #MarcheDeNoel, cal sur le front, fiché S pour radicalisation! #attentat #Strasbourg Que vous faut-il de plus ? #retentionadministrative d'urgence! https://t.co/QqD5Ly2RWI	"The terrorist aim has not been proved yet" @NunezLaurent! He randomly kills civilians #Christmasmarkets, stuck in the front, S file for radicalisation! #attack #Strasbourg What else do you need? #administrativeretention urgently! https://t.co/QqD5Ly2RWI
*M @CCastaner, pourquoi n'avoir pas dit ce que vous savez : l'auteur #attentat #Strasbourg est #FicheS pour #radicalisation et non pour ses faits de droit commun. Les #terroristes qui passent à l'acte sont ET idéologues ET délinquants. @Opinion_Inter @Benedetti65 @valerie_expert https://t.co/416ekrdACM	Mr @CCastaner, why do not say what you know: the author of #attack #Strasbourg is #SFile for #radicalisation and not for ordinary offences. #terrorists who come to action are BOTH ideologists AND criminals. @Opinion_Inter @Benedetti65 @valerie_expert https://t.co/416ekrdACM
Hier soir au coeur de #Strasbourg j'ai pu constater, une fois de plus, la solidité de notre peuple face à l'épreuve, ces jeunes faisant le service au restaurant avec beaucoup de calme pendant qu'un tireur errait, les personnels du @PE_FRANCE fidèles au poste la nuit. La France.	Last night in the heart of #Strasbourg I realized once again the strength of our people in front of the challenge, those young people calmly working in the restaurant while a shooter was around, the staff of @PE_FRANCE committed to their work during the night. France.
*Les premières images de l'attentat de	The first images of the attack in

<p>Strasbourg. Solidarité avec les Alsaciens, le marché de Noël et les membres du Parlement Européen actuellement en session. @Europarl_FR @MichelTaube #Strasbourg #attentat #MarcheDeNoel https://t.co/hmxaXbuftC</p>	<p>Strasbourg. Solidarity with Alsatians, the Christmas market and the members of the European Parliament now in the plenary. @Europarl_FR @MichelTaube #Strasbourg #attack #Christmasmarket https://t.co/hmxaXbuftC</p>
<p>Je dîne avec mes collaborateurs dans le centre de Strasbourg, nous sommes confinés et ne pouvons sortir. Sommes environ à 100 m du lieu de l'attaque. Mais le calme français est de mise. Nous pensons aux victimes et au fait que les Français restent forts.</p>	<p>I am having dinner with my colleagues in the centre of Strasbourg, we are stuck and cannot go out. We are at around 100 m from the place of the attack. But we have French calmness. We think of the victims and the fact that French people must stay strong.</p>
<p>Bernard Monot</p>	
<p>*Un terroriste islamiste fait un massacre dans les rues de #Strasbourg mais lors de la messe d'hommage, l'archevêque s'inquiète pour... les migrants. https://t.co/RLYPgkWfGb</p>	<p>An Islamist terrorist commits a slaughter in the streets of #Strasbourg but during the homage mass, the archbishop is worried about... migrants. https://t.co/RLYPgkWfGb</p>
<p>*Vendredi, le rappeur #Medine qui appelle à "crucifier les laïcards" veut donner un concert à #Strasbourg.</p> <p>En hommage aux centaines de victimes des attentats islamistes depuis 2015, ne le laissons pas chanter sa haine !</p> <p>Comme pour le Bataclan, #PasDeMedineAStrasbourg ! https://t.co/1Sqlhv7IOY</p>	<p>On Friday the rapper #Medine who asks to "crucify the laic people" wants to make a concert in #Strasbourg.</p> <p>In tribute to the hundreds of victims of Islamist attacks from 2015, we should not allow him to sing his hatred!</p> <p>As for the Bataclan, #NoMedineInStrasbourg! https://t.co/1Sqlhv7IOY</p>
<p>*Réaction de Nicolas Dupont-Aignan au lendemain du tragique attentat à #Strasbourg. La peur doit changer de camp ! https://t.co/EAWW5YwzHf</p>	<p>The reaction of Nicolas Dupont-Aignan on the day after the tragic attack in #Strasbourg. Fear must change its place! https://t.co/EAWW5YwzHf</p>
<p>* 🚫 On nage en plein délire 🚫</p> <p>Le terroriste a été condamné en France & Allemagne, a fait du prosélytisme en prison, a tenté un homicide cet été, est fiché S... mais est encore en liberté !</p> <p>☞ Urgence à contrôler les fichés S et à rétablir nos frontières.</p> <p>#Attentat #Strasbourg</p>	<p>🚫 We are in a situation of full hysteria 🚫</p> <p>The terrorist has been condemned in France & Germany, has been proselytizing in prison, attempted a murder last summer, is a S file... but he is still free!</p> <p>☞ It is urgent to control S files and re-establish our borders.</p> <p>#Attack #Strasbourg</p>
<p>Le gouvernement @EPhilippePM déclare</p>	<p>The government @EPhilippePM</p>

<p>durcir les contrôles aux frontières à la suite de l'attentat de #Strasbourg. C'est donc que nos frontières NATIONALES sont fondamentales pour notre sécurité ! M. @EmmanuelMacron les français doivent être à l'abri de l'#islamisme! @DLF_Officiel</p>	<p>declares hardening controls on the borders after the attack in #Strasbourg. It's thus our NATIONAL border which is fundamental for our security! @EmmanuelMacron French people must be protected from #Islamism! @DLF_Officiel</p>
<p>*Présente à Strasbourg lors de cette nouvelle attaque contre notre pays, mes pensées vont vers les victimes et leurs familles. Un hommage aussi aux forces de police et aux équipes de secours qui sont intervenues pour sécuriser les lieux et aider les victimes #Strasbourg #attentat</p>	<p>Present in Strasbourg during this new attack against our country, my thoughts are for the victims and their families. A homage also to the law enforcement and the rescue teams which intervened to secure the town and to help the victims #Strasbourg #attack</p>
<p>*🚫 Le terrorisme islamiste doit disparaître de notre pays !</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➡ Expulsion des criminels étrangers ➡ Expulsion immédiate des fichés S étrangers ➡ Abrogation des lois Taubira ➡ Déchéance de nationalité pour les terroristes bi-nationaux <p>La peur doit changer de camp ! #Strasbourg https://t.co/UIJ6YovbB8</p>	<p>🚫 Islamic terrorism must disappear from our country !</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➡ Expulsion of foreign criminals ➡ Immediate expulsion of foreign S files ➡ Abrogation of the law Taubira ➡ Deprivation of nationality for binational terrorists <p>Fear must change its place! #Strasbourg https://t.co/UIJ6YovbB8</p>
<p>*#Attentat à #Strasbourg : l'islamiste était un multirécidiviste !</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ 27 condamnations en France et en Allemagne. ✗ Prosélytisme actif. ✗ Tentative d'homicide cet été. ✗ Fiché S. <p>Pourquoi laisse-t-on en liberté des terroristes en puissance !? Il y a urgence à changer de politique.</p>	<p>*#Attack in #Strasbourg: the Islamic terrorist was a recidivist!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ 27 convictions in France and Germany. ✗ Active proselytist. ✗ Attempted murder last summer. ✗ S file. <p>Why do we leave potential terrorists free!?! It is urgent to change our policy.</p>
<p>🕯️ Condoléances aux familles des victimes. Solidarité avec tous les citoyens de #Strasbourg Et maintenant @EPhilippePM va t'il annoncer la restauration de l'#EtatdUrgence permanent ? Cet attentat #islamiste mettra fin aux manifestations publiques des #GiletsJaunes @DLF_Officiel https://t.co/vTXiHHhzNN</p>	<p>🕯️ Condolences to the families of the victims. Solidarity with all the inhabitants of #Strasbourg and now will @EPhilippePM announce the rehabilitation of the permanent #StateOfEmergency? This #Islamic attack will make the public manifestation of the #YellowVests end @DLF_Officiel https://t.co/vTXiHHhzNN</p>
<p>Présent à Strasbourg, bloqué aux</p>	<p>In Strasbourg, stuck in the</p>

<p>#Parlement Européen, nous vivons ce drame et pensons aux victimes tombées pour barbarie #islamique. Nous compatissons à la douleur des familles touchées & sommes de tout coeur avec les Strasbourgeois. @DLF_Officiel https://t.co/jbFQ4iqfDu https://t.co/Lpoze10DrJ</p>	<p>#EuropeanParliament, we live this tragedy and we think of the victims who died because of #Islamic barbarity. We pity the suffering of the families involved & we hare wholeheartedly close to the inhabitants of Strasbourg. @DLF_Officiel https://t.co/jbFQ4iqfDu https://t.co/Lpoze10DrJ</p>
<p>*#Strasbourg #TerrorismeIslamiste : lorsque l'année dernière Nicolas @dupontaignan voulait parquer ou expulser les fichiers S , toute la #BienPensance lui est tombée sur le dos. Il faut en finir avec cette lâcheté suicidaire avec @dupontaignan et #DLF_Officiel https://t.co/DldJBtTS5y</p>	<p>*#Strasbourg #IslamistTerror: when last year Nicolas @dupontaignan wanted to confine or expel S files, all the #Self-RighteousPeople were against him. We must stop with this suicidal cowardice @dupontaignan et #DLF_Officiel https://t.co/DldJBtTS5y</p>
<p>*#Strasbourg : encore un fiché S pour radicalisation ! Cette nouvelle attaque tragique nous rappelle la guerre totale que nous livrent les terroristes islamistes. Quand nous donnerons-nous enfin les moyens de la gagner ?</p>	<p>#Strasbourg: another S file for radicalisation! This new tragic attack reminds us of the full war that Islamic terrorists are fighting against us. When will we provide ourselves with the tools to win?</p>

ECR	
ECR group	
<p>We are incredibly saddened by last night's events in #Strasbourg. Our thoughts & prayers go out to all the victims and their families. We thank security officials for their efforts & all those who provided tireless help during the attack & in the hours that followed. 🙏❤️ https://t.co/MDXzjH7Eac</p>	
<p>*Terrible news from #Strasbourg. Both me and my team are safe. Thinking of all those affected, and to everyone in Strasbourg, please stay safe & follow the instructions of police and authorities.</p>	
<p>*To our friends in #Strasbourg, until we know more:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Remain safe ▶ Don't use telephone networks unless necessary ▶ Don't spread rumours & unconfirmed information ▶ Follow only official & reliable sources, eg @Prefet67 & @VISOV1 	

<p>▶ Don't share sensitive photos</p> <p>#smem #msgu https://t.co/1UmLHgPP5h</p>	
<p>Syed Kamall</p>	
<p>*Toutes mes pensées sont avec les victimes et leurs proches suite à l'attentat à #Strasbourg ce soir. Une si belle ville, connue dans le monde entier pour son marché de Noël. Notre solidarité absolue avec nos amis FR cette nuit, comme toujours</p>	<p>After the attack in #Strasbourg tonight, all my thoughts go to the victims and their loved ones. Such a beautiful city, renowned all around the world for its Christmas market. Full solidarity to our French friends tonight, as always</p>
<p>*Solidarity with #Strasbourg tonight. Its citizens, many visitors, as well as the international and EU institutions and staff.</p>	
<p>Raffaale Fitto</p>	
<p>#AntonioMegalizzi non ce l'ha fatta Appassionato di Studi Internazionali seguiva l'edute del #ParlamentoEuropeo per raccontare ai ragazzi come lui quello che accadeva nella #UE e quali opportunità potevano essere colte dalla sua generazione Sono vicino alla sua famiglia</p>	<p>#AntonioMegalizzi did not survive Passionate about international studies he used to follow the sessions of the #EuropeanParliament to tell his peers what happens in the #EU and which opportunities could be seized by his generation I am close to his family</p>
<p>Oggi non è facile essere qui nell'aula di #Strasburgo dopo ieri sera... siamo stati testimoni diretti di un atto terroristico che ha ancora una volta prodotto morte. Ma abbiamo il dovere di andare avanti per difendere la nostra civiltà, i nostri #valori e la nostra #religione https://t.co/y63bx21W0t</p>	<p>After last night, it is not easy to be here in the plenary in #Strasbourg today... we have directly witnessed a terrorist attack which has once again caused death. But we have the duty to go on to defend our culture, our #values and our #religion https://t.co/y63bx21W0t</p>
<p>Siamo chiusi in un ristorante ma stiamo bene A #Strasburgo avevo voluto portare mia moglie e i miei bambini per fargli vivere l'atmosfera natalizia e invece ci ritroviamo a vivere un incubo: attacco terroristico al cuore dell'Europa Vicinanza alla #Francia ancora una volta ferita</p>	<p>We are shut inside a restaurant, but we are ok I wanted to come to #Strasbourg with my wife and children to let them enjoy the Christmas atmosphere, instead we are living a nightmare: a terrorist attack at the heart of Europe Solidarity to #France wounded again</p>
<p>Stefano Maullu</p>	
<p>Dobbiamo dire #basta! #Strasburgo https://t.co/SXgVjPqU37</p>	<p>We must say #stop! #Strasbourg https://t.co/SXgVjPqU37</p>
<p>In diretta da #Strasburgo Basta accoglienza indiscriminata! Dobbiamo fermare queste persone #noglobalcompact #primalitalia https://t.co/niM6GnUAec</p>	<p>Live from #Strasbourg Stop to indiscriminate migration! We must stop these people #noglobalcompact #Italyfirst https://t.co/niM6GnUAec</p>


In una giornata di profonda tristezza e cordoglio per tutte le vittime e i feriti di Srasburgo, il mio pensiero è vicino ad Antonio e ai suoi famigliari. Coraggio Antonio, non mollare.	On a day of deep sadness and grieving for all the victims and wounded in Strasbourg my thoughts are close to Antonio and his family. You can do it Antonio, do not give up.
Francia: a Strasburgo attacco a nostre radici e al Natale simbolo di cristianita', restiamo compatti	France: in Strasbourg attack to our roots and to Christmas, the symbol of Christianity, we must remain united
#Strasbourg attentato mercatini di Natale vittime e feriti terrorista braccato dalla polizia la città e' bloccata	#Strasbourg terrorist attack at the Christmas market victims and wounded the terrorist hunted by the police the city is blocked

EPP	
EPP Group	
*The day after the terrible events in #Strasbourg reminds us of our peaceful values. We will defend freedom & democracy. We will not let hate prevail. We will stand up against terrorists everywhere in Europe. #EPlenary #JeSuisStrasbourg https://t.co/bymv5vgr98	
 What happened last night in Strasbourg makes it more urgent for us, as policy-makers, to act, and to act fast. Today's Report voted on by the European Parliament is just one step to defend people's security. #TERRCommittee @MHohlmeier @ArnaudDanjean https://t.co/V11CJLepLD	
*My thoughts are with the victims of the attack today in #Strasbourg, who just wanted to have a nice evening in this wonderful city. All our support to the French authorities and police. To everyone in Strasbourg tonight, stay safe.	
Lara Comi	
#AntonioMegalizzi non ce l'ha fatta. Un giovane brillante e di talento, una vita spezzata lontano da casa nei suoi anni migliori, come quella di #ValeriaSolesin. Ciao #Antonio, non ti dimenticheremo! #strasburgo https://t.co/6UzFiWmz9o	#AntonioMegalizzi did not survive. A talented and brilliant youngster, a life cut short far away from home during the best time of his life, as in the case of #ValeriaSolesin. Bye #Antonio, we will not forget you! #strasbourg https://t.co/6UzFiWmz9o
@MediasetTgcom24 #Strasbourg Al dolore per @amegalizzi, che mi tocca personalmente perché ho fortemente sostenuto il progetto @europhonica, bisogna rispondere coi fatti, perché questi	@MediasetTgcom24 #Strasbourg We have to respond concretely to the grief for @amegalizzi, which touches me personally as I strongly supported the project @europhonica, because these

<p>episodi non devono più accadere e perché abbiamo diritto a vivere le nostre vite serenamente https://t.co/CIBK8rqbJ3</p>	<p>episodes must not happen anymore and because we have the right to peacefully live our lives https://t.co/CIBK8rqbJ3</p>
<p>Ieri sera a @MediasetTgcom24 Il #terrorismo islamico è problema da affrontare con + incisività. Non è possibile che #Cherif sia sfuggito per 48 ore alla cattura rifugiandosi nel suo quartiere, come già successe con #Salah, catturato dopo 4 mesi #Strasburgo @forza_italia @PPE_IT https://t.co/YugGqkfHhh</p>	<p>Last night at @MediasetTgcom24 Islamic #terrorism is a problem that must be addressed with more effectiveness. It is not possible that #Cherif has been escaping for 48 hours hiding in his neighbourhood as it already happened with #Salah, arrested after 4 months #Strasbourg @forza_italia @PPE_IT https://t.co/YugGqkfHhh</p>
<p>Forza #AntonioMegalizzi, non mollare!! Ti sono idealmente vicina, stretta attorno alla tua famiglia e ai tuoi amici: vogliamo rivederti in #ParlamentoEuropeo!!! #Strasburgo https://t.co/NpISr6CLf2</p>	<p>Go on #AntonioMegalizzi, do not give up!! I am spiritually close to you and to your family and friends: we want to see you again in the #EuropeanParliament!!! #Strasbourg https://t.co/NpISr6CLf2</p>
<p>@repubblica Forza Antonio!!!!!!!!!! Un grande abbraccio</p>	<p>@repubblica Go on Antonio!!!!!!!!!! A big hug</p>
<p>*Attentato Strasburgo, grave Antonio Megalizzi, il giornalista italiano ferito. Raggiunto da un colpo alla testa https://t.co/W7N36q5Kaz</p>	<p>Attack in Strasbourg, Antonio Megalizzi, the Italian journalist who was wounded, is in severe conditions. Hit by a shot on his head. https://t.co/W7N36q5Kaz</p>
<p>Nadine Morano</p>	
<p>*Un terroriste en moins. Merci aux forces de l'ordre. https://t.co/fpxWfjSy5K</p>	<p>A terrorist less. Thanks to the law enforcement. https://t.co/fpxWfjSy5K</p>
<p>Chérif Chekatt abattu ! Merci aux forces de sécurité de notre pays ! Ça ne ramènera pas les innocents qu'il a assassiné mais le soulagement à Strasbourg ! Plus jamais cela, il faut ouvrir le débat sur la rétention administrative des fichés S radicalisés ! https://t.co/zwXkHR5xTZ</p>	<p>Chérif Chekatt was shot! Thanks to the law enforcement of our country! This won't bring back the innocents he killed but relief in Strasbourg! Never again, we need to open the debate on the administrative retention of radicalized S files! https://t.co/zwXkHR5xTZ</p>
<p>"Tous les parlementaires présents ici @Europarl_FR sont attristés de ce qui s'est produit à Strasbourg" @LCI</p>	<p>"All MEPs present here @Europarl_FR are saddened for what happened in Strasbourg" @LCI</p>
<p>.@laurentwauquiez a totalement raison ! 500 radicalises doivent sortir de prison. Faut il que les Français se confinent chez eux ou faut-il que ce soient eux qui soient mis en rétention de sûreté ? Pour moi le choix est fait ! https://t.co/GtU4r4kDBa</p>	<p>.@laurentwauquiez is completely right! 500 radicalized people must go out of prison. Should French people lock themselves up in their homes or is it them who must be put under security retention? For me the choice is made! https://t.co/GtU4r4kDBa</p>
<p>*500 personnes radicalisées islamistes vont sortir de prison dans l'année. Je réclame la mise en place d'une rétention</p>	<p>500 radicalized Islamists will get out of prison this year. I ask for the implementation of a security retention</p>


de sûreté pour les plus dangereuses. #BourdinDirect #Strasbourg https://t.co/NtP930DWhS	system for the most dangerous ones. #BourdinDirect #Strasbourg https://t.co/NtP930DWhS
*J'exprime toute ma tristesse pour les victimes des attaques de Strasbourg. Ce Parlement ne se laisse pas intimider par des attaques criminelles ou terroristes. Nous continuons à travailler et réagissons avec la force de la liberté et de la démocratie contre la terreur	I express all my sadness for the victims of the attacks in Strasbourg. This Parliament should not let itself become intimidated by criminal or terrorist attacks. We continue to work and react with the strength of freedom and democracy against terror
" Nous sommes tous éprouvés par les événements de Strasbourg. Je pense aux victimes et aux familles. " #NewsAndCo	" We are all saddened by the events in Strasbourg. I think of the victims and their families. " #NewsAndCo
Françoise Grossetete	
Le terroriste de #Strasbourg retrouvé et mis hors d'état de nuire hier soir. Soulagement pour les strasbourgeois. Merci à nos forces de l'ordre, inlassablement mobilisées pour cette traque pendant 2 jours.	The terrorist of #Strasbourg found and put in the condition of not being able to harm last night. Relief for the inhabitants of Strasbourg. Thanks to our law enforcement, tirelessly mobilised for 2 days for this hunt.
* European and French flags at half-mast in Strasbourg and a minute's silence in the Chamber. We stand shoulder to shoulder with the families of the victims. We stand shoulder to shoulder with the wounded, many of them in a serious condition. We stand shoulder to shoulder with France https://t.co/1E63SEnpgB	
Par solidarité avec la France, et en mémoire des victimes de l'attaque de #Strasbourg le @Europarl_FR, uni, respecte une minute de silence. La démocratie européenne ne reculera pas devant la terreur. https://t.co/VIS3goI5zC	For solidarity with France and in the memory of the victims of the attack in #Strasbourg the @Europarl_FR, united, observes a minute of silence. European democracy will not pull back in front of terror. https://t.co/VIS3goI5zC
* Deux élues de la #Loire présentes à #Strasbourg hier soir témoignent. #terrorisme @GrosseteteF @SophieRobertRN https://t.co/27yGz6liWP	Two representants from #Loire who were in #Strasbourg last night witness. #terrorism @GrosseteteF @SophieRobertRN https://t.co/27yGz6liWP
Confinée au Parlement européen de #Strasbourg, mes pensées vont vers les victimes du terrible attentat du Marché de Noël et vers les forces de l'ordre qui démontrent une fois de plus leur courage au service de nos concitoyens.	Confined in the European Parliament in #Strasbourg, my thoughts are for the victims of the horrible attack at the Christmas Market and to the law enforcement who show once again their courage at service of our fellow citizens.
ALDE	
Alde Group	
*Évacuation du centre ville de	Evacuation of @Strasbourg town centre

<p>@Strasbourg Merci de suivre ces instructions: <input type="checkbox"/> Quittez le centre-ville par le Nord. <input type="checkbox"/> Ne prenez pas la direction de Neudorf <input type="checkbox"/> Suivez scrupuleusement les consignes des forces de l'ordre <input type="checkbox"/> Gardez votre sang froid @Prefet67 @Place_Beuvau https://t.co/ryAJE0jYyI</p>	<p>Please follow these instructions: <input type="checkbox"/> Leave the town centre through the north <input type="checkbox"/> Do not take the direction Neudorf <input type="checkbox"/> Follow carefully the recommendations given by the law enforcement <input type="checkbox"/> Keep a cool head @Prefet67 @Place_Beuvau https://t.co/ryAJE0jYyI</p>
<p>Thoughts with all the victims of the horrendous attack in #Strasbourg. Solidarity with France and all those affected.</p>	

GREENS/EFA	
GreensEP	
<p>*Malgré les événements tragiques, l'activité parlementaire ne s'arrête pas à #Strasbourg. Comme à chaque #PlenPE, retrouvez le fil d'actualité de la semaine sur notre site. https://t.co/nqyMirj6ek https://t.co/vpuBTV3IJr</p>	<p>Despite the tragic events, the parliamentary activity in #Strasbourg doesn't stop. As for every #PlenPE you can find this week's feed on our website. https://t.co/nqyMirj6ek https://t.co/vpuBTV3IJr</p>
<p>We mourn the deaths following last night's terrible in #Strasbourg. Our deepest sympathy is with the injured, the relatives and friends of the dead. We thank all the emergency services and people who provided assistance so quickly. We stand together in solidarity. https://t.co/iOgJt0siFA</p>	
<p>Our thoughts are with all the victims, their families and friends of the terrible attack in #Strasbourg. Strasbourg is a symbol of peace and European unity. Nothing will ever change that. </p>	
Philippe Lambert	
<p>We stand together in solidarity with the victims and all the people of Strasbourg.</p>	
<p>We mourn the deaths after last night's terrible attack in #Strasbourg. Our deepest sympathy is with the injured & relatives and friends of the dead. We thank all emergency services & people</p>	

who provided assistance so quickly.	
Molly Scott Cato	
Italian fascist makes shameful speech blaming #StrasbourgAttacks on migrants while waving around a yellow vest. We should be very wary of the #GiletsJaunes and who is hijacking their legitimate concerns	
My full statement in response to #strasbourgshooting Terror struck at the heart of the European peace project. The solidarity and goodwill of our continent is stronger than the hate of a few people who seek to threaten our social cohesion. http://mollymep.org.uk/2018/12/12/strasbourg-attack-statement/ ...	
Strasbourg is always so beautiful at this time of year and the Christmas markets so magical. It's horrifying that this season of goodwill and this city of peace can be violated in this way. My sympathy to the victims and their families.	
You may have heard about the shooting at Strasbourg Christmas market. The situation is still unclear and not contained so far but I wanted to let you know that I am safe. I'll send a further update when things are clearer.	
The situation is unclear at this stage following a shooting incident at Strasbourg Christmas market. I'm safe and well and will update as soon as we know more.	

S&D	
The Progressives	
The #Strasbourg terror attack claimed another innocent life. We are very saddened to hear about the death of French-Polish citizen Bartosz Niedzielski, only a few days after the passing of his friend Antonio Megalizzi. Our thoughts are with their families and friends @UdoBullmann	
A sorrowful #EPlenary session is coming to an end. As we make our way back to Brussels, we mourn the victims of the horrific	

<p>attack & continue to stand united against violence. Our work didn't stop and here's some of its results @UdoBullmann @paultang @danieleviotti https://t.co/oUnVZT95LM</p>	
<p>In the shadow of the #Strasbourg attacks, today we voted on a report that will aim to improve the EU's capability to tackle terrorism.</p> <p>More from @CaterinaChinnic and @AnaGomesMEP  https://t.co/Ee78hyf2am</p>	
<p>"Our thoughts are with the victims and their families of #Strasbourg attacks", says @UdoBullmann.</p> <p>Thank you to the security services and the staff of European Parliament, and the city's police and rescue workers. https://t.co/51PR3tAyQC</p>	
<p>This morning our thoughts are with the victims of last night's attacks in #Strasbourg and their families.</p> <p>We continue our work in #EPenary. Follow the session live here ↓ https://t.co/HMSWzpa86r</p>	
<p>*The events unfolding in #Strasbourg are tragic and unthinkable. Two dead and eleven injured are reported. Our thoughts and prayers are with them.</p>	
<p>Elly Schlein</p>	
<p>Il killer di #Strasburgo ucciso dalla polizia @LaStampa https://t.co/iUIvBZXVu8</p>	<p>The killer of #Strasbourg killed by the police @LaStampa https://t.co/iUIvBZXVu8</p>
<p>Stiamo bene. Le notizie che arrivano sono drammatiche ma ancora molto frammentate. Seguiamo gli sviluppi, in attesa di indicazioni dalle autorità. #Strasburgo</p>	<p>We are fine. News we receive are dramatic but still very fragmented. We follow what's happening, waiting for the authorities' indications. #Strasbourg</p>
<p>Mercedes Bresso</p>	
<p>Si svolgeranno oggi nel primo pomeriggio i funerali di Antonio Megalizzi, europeo ed europeista https://t.co/r300yEaLMK</p>	<p>Today afternoon the funerals of Antonio Megalizzi, European and Europhile https://t.co/r300yEaLMK</p>
<p>Ricordiamo #AntonioMegalizzi e proponiamo che il #ParlamentoEuropeo</p>	<p>We remember #AntonioMegalizzi and we propose that the</p>

gli intitolò una sala del PE a #STRASBURGO e una borsa di studio per giovani giornalisti che raccontino l'Europa ai giovani come faceva lui @eurodeputatipd @EuphonicaLive	#EuropeanParliament names a room of the EP in #STRASBOUR after him and a scholarship for young journalists who tell about Europe to youngsters, as he was doing @eurodeputatipd @EuphonicaLive
Per battere il terrorismo serve l'unità dell'Europa https://t.co/ozEOff8GJ0	To defeat terrorism, we need the unity of Europe https://t.co/ozEOff8GJ0
#Strasbourg: Unita' di Crisi attivata Numero di emergenza: +390636225 https://t.co/kv1wUqUY6Y https://t.co/efA8bMZVDx	#Strasbourg: emergency unit activated Emergency number: +390636225 https://t.co/kv1wUqUY6Y https://t.co/efA8bMZVDx
#Strasburgo Vi ringrazio per tutti i messaggi che mi state inviando. Sto bene. Il mio pensiero è ai cittadini inermi coinvolti in questo vigliacco attentato	#Strasbourg I am thankful for all the messages you are sending to me. I am fine. My thoughts are for the defenceless citizens involved in this coward attack
Julie Ward	
Safe, well and sad in the ♥ Safe, well and sad in the ♥ of Europe. The fight against hate must be the fight for all of us, not just the EU27	
2am in the European Parliament & we convene in the debating chamber to listen to the President who really cannot tell us anything about the security situation outside - we remain v concerned for our staff & victims of the shootings #Strasbourg	
Heartbroken for the loss of this clever beautiful hardworking committed journalist and European who was a familiar figure in our parliament in Strasbourg	
RIP #AntonioMegalizzi Italian journalist & passionate European who reported on our European Parliament work @europhonica mortally wounded in #Strasbourg shootings "This world is not thy home! And yet my eye rests upon earth again. How beautiful" Longfellow	
Devastated to hear that musician European Parliament guide & @europhonica journalist Barto Pedro Orent-Niedzielski has lost his battle to stay alive following the #Strasbourg shootings. His message to the world "Everyone is my brother"	

GUE-NGL	
GUE NGL	
Our hearts go out to the victims and those who lost loved ones in Strasbourg yesterday. Nos pensées vont aux victimes et à ceux qui ont perdu leurs proches à Strasbourg hier.	Our hearts go out to the victims and those who lost loved ones in Strasbourg yesterday.
Face à la barbarie, notre condamnation de la violence et notre solidarité. https://t.co/pGwmHc0ceO	In front of barbarity, our condemnation of violence and our solidarity. https://t.co/pGwmHc0ceO
*#Strasbourg Reprise des débats après une très, très longue nuit. Appel du Président à poursuivre les travaux comme un moyen de ne pas céder à la peur et à la barbarie. Des mots prononcés dans un silence terrible. Tous pensons aux victimes et à leurs proches. #Solidaires https://t.co/sc7B6WWvjK	#Strasbourg The debate has restarted after a very very long night. Call by the President to continue working as a way not to surrender to fear and barbarity. Words pronounced in a terrible silence. We all think of the victims and their loved ones. #Sympathetic https://t.co/sc7B6WWvjK
*Militaires et policiers ont quadrillé le quartier. Depuis, nous sommes consignés dans l'hôtel, et les affreuses nouvelles affluent. Pensées aux victimes et soutien aux forces de l'ordre mobilisées. 2/2	Armed forces and police are patrolling the neighbourhood. After we have arrived at the hotel and the terrible news have come. Thoughts to the victims and support to the law enforcement involved. 2/2
*Ce soir, #Strasbourg, tout en illuminations, était plus belle que jamais. Le froid était vif mais la rue était gaie. Les premiers coups de feu ont retenti dans nuit, et j'ai vu, depuis la fenêtre de ma chambre d'hôtel, des passants traîner un blessé et des badauds en panique 1/2	Tonight #Strasbourg was more beautiful than ever with all its lights. It was very cold, but streets were lively. The first gunshots have resounded in the night and from my hotel room I saw some bystanders carrying someone wounded and others in panic 1/2
Eleonora Forenza	
Immenso dispiacere per la morte di @amegalizzi . Mi stringo alla famiglia e alle persone che gli hanno voluto bene. Che la terra ti sia lieve, Antonio. #Megalizzi #Strasbourg	Great sorrow for the death of @amegalizzi. I am close to his family and those who loved him. I hope that the earth will be mild for you, Antonio. #Megalizzi #Strasbourg
@repubblica neutralizzato??? è stato ucciso, non 'neutralizzato' #restiamoumani	@repubblica neutralized??? He has been killed, not 'neutralized' #stayhuman
Qualcuno informi @lucamoris che l'inferno dopo la morte non esiste. L'inferno è in terra, creato anche da chi respinge i migranti in mare e gioisce per l'uccisione di un uomo, cosa infame anche quando di tratta di un assassino. di cristiano vi resta solo il presepe #Strasbourg https://t.co/kIOXhmsruY	Someone should tell @lucamoris that hell after death does not exist. Hell is on earth, created by those who reject migrants in the sea and are happy for the death of a man, which is infamous also in the case of a killer. The only Christian thing that remains to you is the nativity scene. #Strasbourg https://t.co/kIOXhmsruY

Spero col cuore che @amegalizzi possa leggere presto i tanti messaggi di solidarietà che gli stanno arrivando in queste ore. Tifiamo per te Antonio! #Strasbourg	I hope with all my heart that @amegalizzi will soon be able to read all the messages of solidarity that are being sent to him in these hours. We support you, Antonio! #Strasbourg
*#Strasburgo, ministro dell'Interno: 'In 350 a caccia del killer, rafforzati i controlli alle frontiere'. Confermati 4 morti e 12 feriti, alcuni in gravi condizioni #ANSA https://t.co/h5HPtxwjns	#Strasbourg, interior minister: '350 are looking for the killer, border controls reinforced'. 4 dead and 12 wounded are confirmed, some of them in critical conditions #ANSA https://t.co/h5HPtxwjns
Siamo stati convocati in emiciclo @Europarl_IT per comunicazioni del Presidente sulle modalità e i tempi di evacuazione dell'edificio del #ParlamentoEuropeo. Notizie ancora incerte su quanto sta accadendo a #Strasburgo #StrasbourgAttack @ansaeuropa @GUENGL @SkyTG24 @politico	We were summoned in the hemicycle @Europarl_IT for communications of the President on the modalities and schedule of the #EuropeanParliament building evacuation. News about what is happening in #Strasbourg are still vague #StrasbourgAttack @ansaeuropa @GUENGL @SkyTG24 @politico
stiamo bene https://t.co/Bs6s5fSBAb	We are fine https://t.co/Bs6s5fSBAb
Marie-Christine Vergiat	
● #Strasbourg La préfecture a précisé le détail du bilan. Sur les treize victimes, on compte donc deux morts et sept blessés graves et quatre blessés légers ✍ https://t.co/OrZjDOd4jP 📎 https://t.co/VCLLBi3aQR https://t.co/mSRUvUKnDg	● #Strasbourg the prefecture has clarified on the details of the tragedy. Amongst the 13 victims, we count two dead and seven seriously injured and four slightly injured ✍ https://t.co/OrZjDOd4jP 📎 https://t.co/VCLLBi3aQR https://t.co/mSRUvUKnDg
Oui tout va bien Nous sommes juste effectivement enfermés au Parlement européen Des pensées pour les familles des victimes https://t.co/mEePmHwIYo	Yes, everything is ok We are actually locked in the European Parliament Thoughts for the families of the victims https://t.co/mEePmHwIYo
Martina Anderson	
*"It was pandemonium and chaos" Sinn Fein MEP @M_AndersonSF describes being caught up on #Strasbourg attacks in iv on #EuroParlRadio https://t.co/5dz58oY7Wd	
My thoughts & prayers are with all those killed and injured last night around the Christmas market area here in Strasbourg Just arrived into the European Parliament - "normal" activity resumes https://t.co/bTDUFs6g2a	

<p>* MEPs being escorted out by armed police.</p> <p>Row erupts in Parliament Chamber as @LiadhNiRiadaMEP demands to know what provisions have been made for staff evacuation https://t.co/q50yQkTFS7</p>	
<p>Ok folks back into the hotel - thinking about all who were murdered and injured tonight in Strasbourg.</p> <p>Prayers are needed for them all and their families at this difficult time. RIP</p>	
<p>* Locked in European Parliament building in Strasbourg.</p> <p>Bunking down for the night. City still on lock down.</p> <p>Thoughts with those caught up in the shooting.</p>	
<p>* BREAKING NEWS: At least one person has died and the gunman is still on the loose. https://t.co/075ujfJSqI</p>	
<p>* Anderson expresses sympathy following Strasbourg shooting incident https://t.co/ZZdra9nr5y https://t.co/ETCKraXP7u</p>	
<p>We were in the centre of #Strasbourg town when gun shots went off</p> <p>No confirmed reports but footage out of people on the ground injuries if not worse -</p> <p>My thoughts & prayers with all who are injured.</p> <p>#StrasbourgMarket</p>	

Annex II – Tweets following the Christchurch attack

ENF	
Janice Atkinson	
Dear Mohammed, we stand with you.	
If you listen to anyone this terrible morning because of the events in Christchurch, listen to the @Imamofpeace https://t.co/Y1A1pTIG14	
EFDD	
Aymeric Chauprade	
La vraie compassion n'a pas besoin de travestissement. Nouvel exemple de la faiblesse de certains dirigeants devant la tyrannie de l'émotion. J'ai de la peine pour les victimes, partout, j'ai des amis en terre d'islam, mais je sais où j'habite et qui je suis #Christchurch https://t.co/MACuuKZuxg	True compassion does not need any disguise. New example of some managers' weakness in front of the tyranny of emotions. I feel pity for the victims, everywhere, I have some friends in Islamic countries, but I know where I live and who I am #Christchurch https://t.co/MACuuKZuxg
Bernard Monot	
Profonde émotion en apprenant l'attaque meurtrière contre deux mosquées de #ChristChurch, en Nouvelle-Zélande. Pensons aux victimes et à leurs familles. Partout dans le monde, l'extrémisme et la barbarie doivent être résolument combattus. https://t.co/3AcY5bJ5gt	Deep feeling when informed about the deadly attack against two mosques in #ChristChurch, New Zealand. Our thoughts to the victims and their families. Everywhere in the world, extremism and barbarity must be firmly fought. https://t.co/3AcY5bJ5gt
ECR group	
*Horrorified & saddened by the New Zealand mosque attacks. My thoughts are with the victims, their families & friends.	
Completely heartbroken & horrified to hear of the tragic #NewZealandMosqueShooting. We stand by the victims, their families & the people of New Zealand. Together we must condemn all forms of extremism & terror. #PrayForNewZealand 🙏 🕌 https://t.co/0fVi6S5CfL	
Raffaele Fitto	
Una forte condanna senza se e senza ma per l'attacco alle due moschee di	Full condemnation without any ifs and buts of the attack to the two mosques in

#Christchurch Un comando armato, soprattutto di odio, contro i fedeli raccolti in preghiera è un atto terroristico che deve farci riflettere Vicinanza profonda al popolo della #nuovazelanda https://t.co/ddr9oyDS8H	#Christchurch A command, armed mainly with hatred, against believers reunited in prayer is a terrorist act which must make us think Very close to the people of #newzealand
Syed Kamall	
Horrorified & saddened by the New Zealand mosque attacks. My thoughts are with the victims, their families & friends.	

EPP	
Lara Comi	
Provo orrore per la strage in #NuovaZelanda. Preghiamo per le vittime ma impegnamoci tutti più a fondo, perché la #violenza va combattuta senza se e senza ma #NewZealandShooting	I am horrified by the slaughter in #NewZealand. We pray for the victims but let's be all more committed, because #violence must be fought without any ifs and buts #NewZealandShooting

ALDE	
Alde Group	
*Horrorified by the sickening developments in #Christchurch. My thoughts are with the people of New Zealand at this difficult time. https://t.co/KIodgHCTNd	
François Decoster	
Encore l'horreur avec cette double attaque à @Christchurch_NZ : un crime odieux dans deux lieux de prière, des victimes d'un terrorisme aveugle ! Nous devons continuer à lutter ensemble contre cette barbarie qui tue et cherche à nous faire vivre dans la peur et la division. https://t.co/fd41zbDs0l	Horror again with this double attack in Christchurch_NZ: a hateful crime in a religious place, victims of a blind terrorism! Me must continue to fight against this barbarity that kills and tries to make us live in an atmosphere of fear and division. https://t.co/fd41zbDs0l
Guy Verhofstadt	
#Christchurch was a horrific terrorist attack. We should tackle white supremacist groups the same way as we do any other extremist organisations coordinating online. We all have a duty to reject this hatred. https://t.co/QyfIPPrYBp	

GREENS/EFA	
Philippe Lamberts	
*« En tant que démocrate, je voudrais	« As a democrat, I want to make a

<p>qu'on fasse une minute de bruit pour rendre hommage aux victimes du terrorisme islamophobe » @ZakiaKhattabi #aucoeurduchangement #elections2019 #ChristchurchTerrorAttack https://t.co/UTTYqUUbxG</p>	<p>minute of noise to pay tribute to the victims of Islamophobic terrorism » @ZakiaKhattabi #attheheartofchange #2019elections #ChristchurchTerrorAttack https://t.co/UTTYqUUbxG</p>
<p>Molly Scatt Cato</p>	
<p>*Neo-Nazi groups allowed to stay on #Facebook because they "do not violate community standards." White supremacist groups remain online, spreading same conspiracy theory that inspired New Zealand attack. How's life in California, @nick_clegg? @MollyMEP https://t.co/Bum6dbWDBI</p>	
<p>*#Exeter @BritishQuakers @GheeBowman response to Christchurch at the city mosque reported below @RCquaker @DRCQuaker @mediaquaker @EarthEconQuaker @MollyMEP @RuthCadbury @CatherineWest1 @Friendmagazine https://t.co/zpzFKUHAXS</p>	
<p>*Outside a mosque in Manchester today... https://t.co/m3CeaBTgEg</p>	
<p>*Our hearts break for the catastrophe in Christchurch. Solidarity with New Zealand's Muslims and our condolences to the families who have lost loved ones.</p>	
<p>*Heartbreaking news from New Zealand this morning where innocent people have been murdered because of their faith. London stands with the people of Christchurch in the face of this horrific terror attack. London will always celebrate the diversity that some seek to destroy.</p>	
<p>Horrible news of the mosque attacks in</p>	

<p>#Christchurch</p> <p>As PM Jacinda Adern says: 'This is not who we are'</p> <p>We extend our compassion to the Muslim communities in New Zealand</p> <p>And solidarity to British Muslim communities</p>	
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S&D	
Julie Ward	
<p>*Murdoch owned newspapers in Australia produced an incredible 2,891 negative stories about Muslims and Islam.</p> <p>This is exactly where global white supremacist terrorism and the Christchurch terrorist were born - right-wing-media-industrial-complex.</p> <p>https://t.co/EiTvPKiteK</p>	
<p>*READ: New Zealand mass shooter's manifesto says he supports Donald Trump 'as a symbol of renewed white identity and common purpose.' His inspirations: Trump, Dylan Roof & @realCandaceO.</p> <p>Quotes by @talbertswan @MiaFarrow @shaunking @JeffreyGuterman</p> <p>https://t.co/CftXZIMCHp</p>	
<p>*Shut up. You have no moral authority on bigotry. You dehumanised and mocked Muslim women who wear the Hijab by comparing them to "letterboxes."</p> <p>I don't want your thoughts or prayers as a British Muslim.</p> <p>https://t.co/FAmKsOSiRK</p>	
<p>*The shooter who killed 40 Muslims at prayer in Christchurch wrote a 70+page manifesto railing against immigration and live-streamed the massacre.</p> <p>And still white men tell me "don't</p>	

politicise this!”.	
<p>*Do you believe a 25k strong call for unity against racism & fascism with leading reps from across society, the day after Christchurch, deserves press coverage?</p> <p>If so, please RT. None of the organisations tagged in these photos have covered so far.</p> <p>#WorldAgainstRacism https://t.co/9PcWIZBttr</p>	
<p>*#NewZealandShooting: Mosque hero Syed Mazharuddin tackled terrorist and grabbed weapon after he opened fire https://t.co/g4c8kr3kId</p>	
<p>*Since several news networks emphasize that the mosques at the Christchurch shootings were #PeacefulMosques, as if most aren't:</p> <p>Hey muslims, tell me something painfully mundane and common at your mosque, whether you visit it five times a day or one time a year.</p> <p>Non-muslims, RT.</p>	
<p>*The attack in #NewZealand has to shatter every human being, it is unbelievable to see what hate can cause.</p> <p>All types of racial discrimination should be condemned and stopped.</p> <p>TTJ is praying for the victims and our hearts go out to our Muslim friends. https://t.co/SOCfQ9nXSu</p>	
<p>@01jacky01 Read the statement I made #NewZealandMosqueAttacks #KiaKaHaChristchurch https://t.co/QoqQulUXKx</p>	
<p>I am @UKLabour MEP for the north west of England, a region of diverse communities who #StandTogether against hate. Here is my statement on the #NewZealandMosqueAttacks #KiaKaHaChristchurch https://t.co/QoqQulUXKx</p>	
<p>🤝 Solidarity with my Muslim friends during these terrible days. Here is my statement on the</p>	

<p>#NewZealandMosqueAttacks #KiaKaHaChristchurch https://t.co/QoqQulUXKx https://t.co/Adz2JtAsOd</p>	
<p>@thedsggroup My respectful statement on the #NewZealandTerroristAttack #KiaKaHaChristchurch https://t.co/QoqQulUXKx</p>	
<p>*We woke up to such sadness today. I am sickened to the pit of my stomach by the events in Christchurch. My thoughts are with all those affected, and all those who feel a bit less safe after today. https://t.co/Tctjhqtmnz</p>	
<p>*We are all deeply shocked and saddened by the terror attack against the Muslim community in #Christchurch . New Zealand has been a model for tolerance and peace for decades. Our thoughts are with the families of the victims.</p>	
<p>@JRLAFC1886 @angelsforeurope Islamophobia is a global phenomenon stirred up by right wing anti-EU politicians & media. In a connected world an ordinary white guy in NZ reads racist bile in anti-EU online media like Daily Mail, The Sun, Express & HE makes the link with Brexit not me!</p>	
<p>Candace Owens was the person most admired by the far-right terrorist who killed 49 people #NewZealandMosqueAttack Most of them were engaged in peaceful prayer https://t.co/7YYr37HLxs</p>	
<p>*"A far-right terrorist has killed 49 people" "I'll write it up" "But - he's white" "I'll focus on how he was a little blonde toddler who went backpacking after his father died of cancer" https://t.co/dJ6h8ucs2z</p>	
<p>*You sent vans saying IMMIGRANTS GO HOME round multi-ethnic neighbourhoods. You rounded up and deported black families who'd been living here legally for decades in order to suck up to white racists.</p>	

<p>You incited hatred and fear and you knew exactly what you were doing. https://t.co/H6sUimzuTn</p>	
<p>*I'm saddened & strongly condemn the shooting of innocent people as they prayed peacefully in mosques in New Zealand. I express my deepest condolences to the victims' families. Today and every day, we must stand united against anti-Muslim hatred, & all forms of bigotry & terror.</p>	
<p>*#Terrorism has no #religion-appalling #NewZealandMosqueAttack - devastating - innocent people killed (children) whilst praying & in 2 places!!! & other form of #Terrorism & #hatred #HopeNotHate Stand up to far right who #JoCox & 100s of #Norwegian youth @WeStandTogether @FN4M https://t.co/uj48Ynkbay</p>	
<p>The racist fascist ordinary white guy who shot 49 people in Christchurch mosques says "he is pro-Brexit and admits to being a fascist, saying he feels an affinity with Oswald Mosley, the leader of the British Union of Fascists" FFS Brexiteers wake up! https://t.co/X5kkPwb0Hp</p>	
<p>*I'm not just devastated, I'm furious. Because I know that the rightwing press who daily fan the flames of hatred against Muslims won't stop publishing pieces arguing that Islamophobia doesn't even exist, no matter how high the body count. https://t.co/CcufMBIsON</p>	
<p>*We have to do something. We have to build and educate. We have to come together. Our children deserve better. I am so sorry. I love my Muslim friends. Kia Kaha. #KiaKahaChristchurch https://t.co/zQgihDD6V6</p>	
<p>#Solidarity https://t.co/kymxAjXCYa</p>	
<p>Horrendous that anyone elected to public office should put out an actual press release stoking the fires of racism & Islamophobia after this morning's terrorist attack on 2 mosques in NZ #FraserAnning needs to be dismissed & go back to school</p>	

https://t.co/zxnfoXzcve	
♡ https://t.co/KRwvincajt	
*Get a grip. When you play idiotic political stunts like comparing Muslim women to “letterboxes” or “bank robbers” you are actively contributing to this culture of hate, driving people apart and culminating in devastating circumstances. https://t.co/mc7bhF0PKg	
*Publicising supremacist hate speech in the aftermath of a tragedy is truly outrageous, where is the press 'regulator' @IpsNews ? https://t.co/QSiiD3cPGH	
*Please follow @MarkDiStef's tweets, tracking which media outlets are posting propaganda footage from the terrorist attack in Christchurch. This footage must be treated with extraordinary levels of caution and sensitivity by the media. https://t.co/oMZhpGX9lk	
*Wholly unsurprising to see people on the far right trying to distance themselves from the shooting in NZ. It's all part of a pattern, though, and they're part of it. Yes, in the UK I mean Farage, Yaxley-Lennon, Katie Hopkins, the Daily Mail and Express. BBCQT. Etc.	
*A timely reminder, given the outrage in New Zealand. #NewZealandShooting https://t.co/RhmoTPIjaS	
@StopFundingHate Refuse to buy the #DailyFail as a mark of respect for the victims of #NewZealandTerroristAttack Let's put this fascist rag out of business https://t.co/LQZM7rjeJj	
All my love & thoughts with the victims and families of the appalling #NZmosqueshooting #TerroristAttack from the multicultural city of #Manchester We stand in solidarity with the PM Jacinda Arden & the people of New Zealand #StandTogether https://t.co/pbjo2eyZYM	

GUE-NGL	
Marie Christine Vergiat	
*Il y a un an, la communauté juive de Pittsburgh, frappée par une attaque	One year ago, the Jewish community of Pittsburgh, hit by a deadly attack, had

<p>meurtrière, avait reçu une donation des musulman.e.s de Pittsburgh. Elle vient à son tour en aide aux musulman.e.s de #Christchurch. La plus belle réponse aux racistes fanatiques. https://t.co/X8GkppRMfM</p>	<p>received a donation from the Muslims of Pittsburgh. Now it takes its turn to help the Muslims in #Christchurch. The best response to fanatic racists. https://t.co/X8GkppRMfM</p>
<p>*La Nouvelle Zélande, ce pays où deux femmes sont à la tête de l'Etat, où la première ministre met un voile pour aller réconforter des Musulmans et où tout le monde l'approuve. Et ils gagnent au rugby. Bref, c'est vraiment les antipodes de chez nous. https://t.co/I9ufkeWNWy</p>	<p>New Zealand, the country where two women are ruling the state, where the prime minister wears the veil to go cheering up Muslims and everybody applauds to her. And they win in rugby. Shortly, it's the antipodes from us. https://t.co/I9ufkeWNWy</p>
<p>*«Nous avons été choisis parce que nous représentons la diversité, la gentillesse, la compassion, un refuge pour ceux qui en ont besoin». Le très fort discours de la Première ministre néo-zélandaise @JacindaArdern sur l'attentat contre des mosquées à Christchurch. https://t.co/r5syIdJWbd</p>	<p>«We have been chosen because we represent diversity, kindness, compassion, a shelter for those who are in need». The very strong speech of the New Zealand prime minister @JacindaArdern on the attack against mosques in Christchurch. https://t.co/r5syIdJWbd</p>
<p>Oui donner des visages, des noms, des histoires aux victimes Humanité face à certains délires https://t.co/WI21OPXWc8</p>	<p>Yes to giving faces, names, histories to the victims Humanity in front of this madness https://t.co/WI21OPXWc8</p>
<p>Parce que ces Une n'existe pas peut-être Elles ne participent pas à la montée de l'#islamophobie en assimilant tous les musulmans à ces images.... https://t.co/O4W1nc4flf</p>	<p>Because these headlines maybe do not exist They do not contribute to the raise of #islamophobia by relating all Muslims to these images.... https://t.co/O4W1nc4flf</p>
<p>Cet extrait d'émission est hallucinant Il y en a un qui ose dire, on ne va pas nous interdire toute critique de l'immigration... Euh il y a plus de 40 morts dont des gosses et il en rajoute un cran dans l'ignoble #StopIslamophobie https://t.co/fdfMIq1HXF</p>	<p>This excerpt from a program is unbelievable There is one who dares to say, we won't be prohibited all critiques to immigration... Euh there are more than 40 dead, including some children and he is making this situation even more disgusting #StopIslamophobia https://t.co/fdfMIq1HXF</p>
<p>Comment peut-on être neo-zélandais et être un "supporter" de la théorie du #GrandRemplacement https://t.co/AXyRwMOXM9</p>	<p>How can we be New Zealanders and be "supporters" of the theory of the #GreatReplacement https://t.co/AXyRwMOXM9</p>
<p>* On a le droit de critiquer l'Islam.Mais le présenter comme un danger ou les musulmans comme une menace c'est de</p>	<p>We have the right to criticize Islam. But presenting it as a danger or Muslims as a threaten is Islamophobia. As it is to</p>

l'islamophobie .Ainsi qu'agresser une femme voilée ou tirer sur des croyants dans une mosquée	assault a veiled woman or to shoot believers in a mosque
* Terrible attentat terroriste en Nouvelle-Zélande contre 2 mosquées,perpétré par un extrémiste de droite et des complices. Au - 40 morts. Refusons la propagation de la haine,luttons contre la banalisation des discours anti-musulmans. Ne diffusons pas l'horrible film du terroriste https://t.co/L0z6qoXRc9	Horrible terrorist attack in New Zealand against 2 mosques. Made by a rightist extremist and his accomplices. At least 40 dead. We refuse the propagation of hatred, we fight against the banalisation of anti-Muslims narratives. Let's not spread the horrible film of the terrorist https://t.co/L0z6qoXRc9
*La peur de l'Islam et la certitude d'une invasion musulmane du tueur de #Christchurch seraient nées lors de son voyage en France. On se demande bien pourquoi ??? #Oupas https://t.co/bnVDmvznww	Fear of Islam and the certainty of a Muslim invasion of the killer of #Christchurch were probably born during his journey in France. Are we really asking why??? #Oupas https://t.co/bnVDmvznww
*Le tueur de Christchurch, 49 morts, se revendique de Renaud Camus (2019). Anders Breivik, 77 morts, se revendique de son ami Alain Finkielkraut (2011) qui l'invite sur la radio publique. Les idéologies criminelles que la France exporte aujourd'hui sont d'extrême-droite. https://t.co/Encz1K8KRM	The killer of Christchurch, 49 dead, claims to be a follower of Renaud Camus (2019). Anders Breivik, 77 dead, claims to be a follower of his friend Alain Finkielkraut (2011) who invites him to the public radio. Criminal ideologies France is exporting today are from the far right. https://t.co/Encz1K8KRM
*La haine des musulmans est le moteur de l'attaque terroriste de Christchurch . L'extrême droite alimente en permanence par ses fakenews et amalgames sur l'immigration la radicalisation .Tout les extrémismes se combattent. Ne rien banaliser , jamais .	Hate against Muslims is the driver of the terrorist attack in Christchurch. The far right continuously fosters radicalisation with its fake news and merges it with migration. Every extremism must be fought. Do not trivialise anything. Never.
*Terribles attentats visant deux mosquées de Christchurch en Nouvelle-Zélande par des terroristes d'extrême droite qui font près de 50 morts. Hommage ému aux victimes, solidarité avec leurs proches.	Horrible attack against two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, by terrorists of the far right who killed around 50 people. Homage to the victims, solidarity with their loved ones.