Research Report

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Forum: *General Assembly Third Committee: Social, Cultural and Humanitarian*

Issue: *Growing intolerance in Europe*

Position: *Deputy Chair*

Introduction

Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) states that everyone has the freedom of opinion and expression. This right is fundamental for a proper functioning democratic society, but is also very easily abused. When do opinions turn into hatred towards someone with different beliefs? Where does freedom of speech end and intolerance start? Intolerance in Europe has become more and more apparent. Xenophobia is arising in the once so tolerant European society, causing hatred towards minorities. Article 1 of the UDHR states that every person is entitled to rights and dignity and that we ""should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood" . In Europe, the two articles tend to collide. Freedom of speech can be abused, causing violation to the first article of the declaration. The recently growing amount of terrorist attacks have, for example, caused a growing intolerance towards Muslims. However, not only Muslims are victim of the growing intolerance, also immigrants, homosexuals, Jews, Christians, and many more foreigners or so-called strangers are being discriminated and rejected. There is a growth in radical right-winged parties and even various neo-Nazi parties are active throughout the world. Intolerance is a rising problem and results into separation, hatred, and radicalisation.

Definition of Key Terms

Xenophobia
The irrational fear and aggression towards foreigners (or strangers).

Discrimination
According to the Cambridge English Dictionary: "Treating a person or particular group of people differently, especially in a worse way from the way in which you would treat other people, because of their skin colour, sex, sexuality, etc."

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)
The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948 and describes the basic human rights to which every human being is entitled. It is still the international moral and judicial standard, and most human right activists depend upon the declaration as it was set up in 1948.

Europe
The continent surrounded by the Arctic ocean, Mediterranean sea and the Atlantic ocean, situated above Africa. The list of countries in Europe can be found amongst the useful documents.

European Union (EU)
An association of European nations joined together to establish economic and political integration. The EU was formed in 1993. The list of member states can be found amongst the useful documents.

Council of Europe
The Council of Europe is an intergovernmental organisation, established in 1949 and consisting of 47 member states, that promotes human rights, democracy and rule of law. It is not to be confused with the European Union and it cannot make binding laws. A list of member states can be found amongst the useful documents.

European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR)
"The European Court of Human Rights is an international court set up in 1959. It rules on individual or state applications alleging violations of the civil and political rights set out in the European Convention on Human Rights. Since 1998 it has sat as a full-time court and individuals can apply to it directly."[1]

European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)
The ECHR was drafted by the Council of Europe in 1950 and is an international treaty to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms. The full document can be found amongst the useful documents.

General Overview

Opposition towards immigration comes mainly from right-winged parties, who have now taken up a great part in for example French politics. However also Austria, Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland and Slovakia have radical right winged parties in their governments. Xenophobia might be a result of the instable economy in Europe. Some right-winged parties respond to the fear and insecurities of the people by blaming certain minorities, for example immigrants who are said to take away the native inhabitants' jobs. The massive influx of refugees from for example Syria is being rejected by many who fear to lose their jobs, and in the failing economy jobs are precious.

According to statistics, the crime rate in Europe correlates with the amount of immigrants. A good example is Greece, where immigrants are responsible for fifty percent of all law violations. In other countries as well statistics show that immigrants

[1] http://www.coe.int/t/democracy/migration/bodies/echr_en.asp

cause a significant percentage of criminal activity. This results in rejection by population and governments, which instigates the problem even more. To be able to understand the issue we have to look at how the correlation of crime and immigration, came to be. Immigration is, in most cases, a result of an unbearable situation in the home country. War, political instability, failing economies or famine can be traumatising and damaging for psychological wellbeing. When coming to Europe the immigrants receive a semi-friendly welcome: they are given the basic human needs, such as shelter and food, but not being warmly welcomed by the population. The mixing of cultures conflicts, which leads to separation and rejection from both sides. Especially the 'second generation of refugees' will have great difficulty with this. On the one side they have their home with their native traditions and norms and values, but on the other side they are to function within the European society, with European traditions, norms and values. This confusing psychological state of being is often an invitation towards violence. It has become a vicious circle of rejection on the one hand and desperation to fit in on the other hand.

Another group who has been victimised by intolerance are homosexuals. LGBT rights have been legislated in most European countries, although not in all of them. Besides, the LGBT rights might be officially and legally validate, the population is not always so accepting towards homosexuals. Progress has been made, although in many European countries homosexuality is still a controversial subject with the gay community often being intolerated.

Another minority is the Roma, or gypsies. According to Amnesty International Roma people still endure violations of their human rights in Europe. They have trouble receiving services, basic goods, health care, housing and jobs. They are also poorly represented in governments around Europe. About 80% of the Roma people live in Europe. Europeans often show intolerance towards gypsies because their life style differs from what they are used to.

Since the uprising of Islamic State (IS) and the growing threat of Islamic terrorist attacks in Europe, Islamophobia has been increasing significantly. According to the UDHR one shall not discriminate based on religion, however intolerance is plainly visible and is causing severe separation and innocent Muslims to feel unaccepted, discriminated and victimised. However, Islamophobia has been apparent for a long time, due to different cultures, habits, appearance and beliefs. Muslims face challenges in for example employment. Employers in Belgium, France, the Netherlands and Switzerland have implemented restrictions on wearing religious and cultural clothing or symbols, causing especially Muslim women to feel uncomfortable, and restricting them to find employment where religious clothing is allowed. Their freedom of expression has also been limited. Some countries in Europe (e.g. France, Belgium) have implemented bans on carrying religious symbols in public schools and Spain has implemented a ban on wearing headwear in schools, so that Muslim students can no

longer wear a head scarf.[2]

Not only Muslims are discriminated based on their religion, also Jews have suffered from intolerance for a long time. During the Second World War, Jews suffered horribly, however in the past few years there has been a startling uprising of anti-Semitism again. Jews are victims to murder and attacks. European leaders are worried by the rising amount of Jewish deaths caused by violence. The ongoing and increasing rivalry between Muslims and Jews is something that needs our attention. A lot of Jews are not feeling safe in Europe anymore and are moving away to Israel in large numbers.[3]

Major Parties Involved

All European Union member states
Since the issue concerns intolerance in Europe, all European countries are involved, and should do their very best to resolve the issue.
9.3% of the total population of Europe was not born in the country in which they live, and 6.3% was born outside the European Union. Germany has the most immigrants, followed by France and the United Kingdom. Ireland has however the highest percentage, 20%, of immigrants compared to their population.

Timeline of Events

1976	Equal Treatment Directive was set up to create equality between men and women on the field of employment, promotion, working conditions, etc.
1993	Council of Europe Commission against Racism and Intolerance was set up.
2000	Racial Equality Directive was set up, by the EU, to create equality between all races or ethnic groups.
2004	Gender Directive was set up, by the EU, to create equality between men and women on the field of receiving goods and services.

[2] https://www.aivl.be/sites/default/files/bijlagen/Rapportchoiceandprejudice.pdf
[3] http://www.ibtimes.com/attacks-frances-jews-surge-amid-concerns-rising-anti-semitism-europe-2006003

2006	Equal Treatment Directive is an update of the Equal Treatment Directive of 1976 and creates equality between men and women in EU labour law.
2009	Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union provides fundamental rights to all European inhabitants. Article 21 is specific on non-discrimination.[4,5]

Previous Attempts to solve the issue

European Union has taken quite some measures to try and combat discrimination. All the acts can be found in the timeline of key events.
The Council of Europe has set up a special commission against racism and intolerance.

Possible Solutions

In order to come up with a solution for this problem, delegates should not forget fundamental reasons for certain human behaviour. A logical response to the crime rate in combination with immigration could be to upgrade police support. However, a better solution might be to provide psychological assistance to immigrants and refugees and to provide help to immigrants who do not feel accepted. In the end Europe will have to live with different ethnic groups in one country.
Another possibility could come from countries outside of Europe. Non-European countries might want to assist in the immigration problems in Europe. Europe does not have enough space for all the immigrants. A programme could be set up to transfer these immigrants to other parts of the world where they might have a larger chance of receiving asylum and integrating successfully. By solving the problem of intolerance, more peace might come to Europe, Europeans will feel less fearful and there will be more hospitality.

Useful documents

The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union:
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text_en.pdf

Universal Declaration of Human Rights:
http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/

[4] http://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text_en.pdf
[5] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_anti-discrimination_acts#.C2.A0European_Union

Opposition to Immigration in Europe:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opposition_to_immigration

Explanation on the refugees in the Mediterranean sea, and explanation of the Dublin regulation: http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-24583286

List of all resolutions adapted by the UN GA:
http://www.un.org/documents/resga.htm

Overview chart on rising levels of intolerance in Western Europe:
http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/infographics/IG100/IG117/intolerance-1000.png

Website UN CoE commission against racism and intolerance:
http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/default_en.asp

List of countries in Europe:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_European_countries_by_area

List of EU member states:
http://europa.eu/about-eu/countries/index_en.htm

List of Council of Europe members:
http://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/47-members-states

European convention on human rights:
http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention_ENG.pdf

Amnesty International on Islamophobia:
https://www.aivl.be/sites/default/files/bijlagen/Rapportchoiceandprejudice.pdf

Appendix/Appendices

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immigration_to_Europe#Statistic_data_on_immigrant_populations

http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-24583286

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text_en.pdf

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_antidiscrimination_acts#.C2.A0European_Union

https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dublin-conventie