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# DEMOCRACY HACKATHON

HACK THE HATE – RENEW DEMOCRACY

Join a unique initiative to combat online hate speech and innovate for democracy through tech solutions at a critical time. Organised by the Council of Europe under the [New Democratic Pact for Europe](#) and jointly with the [No Hate Speech Week](#), this Hackathon calls on the brightest minds in tech and democracy promotion. The Hackathon is held under the auspices of the Monaco Presidency of the Committee of Ministers. Open to residents of the [46 Council of Europe member states](#).

- **Strasbourg Awaits:** All-expenses-paid trip\* for selected 20 teams.

- **Preparation and post-event implementation support by seasoned mentors** (from the Technical University of Munich, the University of Strasbourg, Democracy Reporting International and the Institute of Strategic Dialogue)

- **A €50,000 Microsoft grant to be shared amongst the winning teams,** and post-event mentoring and implementation support will be provided.

**COUNCIL OF EUROPE,  
STRASBOURG, FRANCE | 17-19  
JUNE 2026**

**APPLY BY 5  
JUNE**



# DEMOCRACY HACKATHON

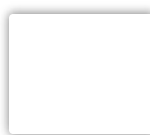
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# HACK THE HATE, RENEW DEMOCRACY!

The **Council of Europe** has initiated a political and strategic consultation for a **New Democratic Pact for Europe** aiming at addressing the current democratic backsliding. The **17-19 June 2026 Democracy Hackathon** will feed directly into this consultation process to strengthen the foundations of democracy, amplify its benefits, restore trust, and innovate its forms to make it tangible and meaningful for all.

By joining forces with the **No Hate Speech Week**, we are creating a unified front against the rising tide of online hostility and disinformation. Together, we are making democracy tangible by building the very tools that will defend it.

# BE THE BEST AT TECH AND AT DEMOCRACY

Maximising Ethics, Human Rights, and Utility, the Council of Europe is calling on multidisciplinary minds to design bold, human-rights-based solutions. Your team's project should focus on one or more of the following four thematic goals:

- **DATA PRIVACY:** Balance the Privacy-Utility Trade-off: Build tools that effectively identify hate speech while remaining agnostic to the personal attributes of users.
- **NO HATE SPEECH:** Neutralise Corrosive Narratives: Detect coordinated inauthentic behaviour or targeted harassment across digital platforms.
- **PREVENT MALICIOUS DOXING:** Ensure that detection mechanisms cannot be weaponised to re-identify or expose anonymous online users.
- **BRIDGE THE GAP TO POLICY:** Create actionable insights that feed directly into the Pact's thematic workstreams and democratic consultations.
- **SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION:** Solutions that transform the social dynamics of online hate by preventing, contextualising, and empowering through an intersectional lens.
- **INSTITUTIONAL ACTION:** Create tech-enabled referral pathways that turn raw reports into structured evidence for electoral commissions and institutional actors to effectively prioritize and escalate online violence.

*Note: These goals form the foundation of our four specific Challenges. You are invited to select the challenge that best matches your team's expertise.*

# HOW TO PARTICIPATE

YOUR JOURNEY TO STRASBOURG



## Form Your Trio (or Quartet)

Assemble a team of at least 3 core personas: a Designer, a Developer, and a Democracy Expert. You can add a 4th member if needed, but diversity of skills is your secret weapon. Gender balance is encouraged within teams.



## Pitch Your Concept

Choose one of our 4 key topics and submit a concise concept note. We aren't looking for finished code yet—we want to see your vision for defending democratic values through tech.



## Warm Up & Fly Out

If selected, you'll join our virtual Warm-up Session to refine your idea. Then, get your bags packed—the Council of Europe provides full travel and accommodation support\* for your team to compete live at the Palais de l'Europe in Strasbourg.

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# DEMOCRACY HACKATHON CHALLENGES



## The Privacy-preserving Hate Speech Detection Challenge (PrivHSD)

***Mentored by a researcher from the Technical University of Munich***

- **The Problem:** The challenge operates at the intersection of Hate Speech Detection (HSD) and privacy protection, particularly with the ultimate goal of maximizing the “privacy-HSD” trade-off, where the optimal scenario maximizes HSD performance while minimizing loss to personal privacy protections. Using state-of-the-art techniques and metrics from both research fields, we challenge participants to innovate ways in which HSD can continue to function as urgently needed, but not at the cost of creating harmful re-identification tools. The team that can achieve the best trade-off wins!
- **The Objective:** Innovate a new HSD method that operates **agnostically** to the author’s identity. The goal is to maximise the “Privacy-HSD trade-off”—achieving high detection performance while minimising the loss of personal privacy protections.
- **Potential Output:** A Demonstrable Concept or working prototype accompanied by a research note articulating its rights-based architecture and privacy-preserving features. The winning team should expect to share their full results and take part in publishing their results in a scientific publication.



## Coordinated Inauthentic Behaviour (CIB) Identification

***Mentored by a senior fellow from the Institute for Strategic Dialogue***

- **The Problem:** Hate-based narratives are increasingly driven by “smarter” coordinated networks rather than organic user behaviour.
- **The Objective:** Build a tool that detects when hate-based narratives emerge across platforms and accounts in a short window of time. LLM enabled semantic clustering can be used instead of being limited to keyword-based queries to group mentions by intention and meaning rather than simply by identical language. Participants should include at least one gendered campaign (e.g. coordinated harassment of women politicians or activists) among their test cases, as these are among the most documented forms of CIB and provide a concrete benchmark for the tool’s real-world relevance. An important threshold is determining the line between coordination and organic behavior from many authentic users.
- **Potential Output:** Visualized summary of narrative clusters in a dashboard designed for use by analysts or journalists. The dashboard should allow filtering by targeted identity group, including gender.



## From reporting to response: Addressing online hate and gender-based violence

***Mentored by a researcher of Democracy Reporting International***

- **The Problem:** The challenge responds to a practical implementation gap during electoral periods, when harmful content is often encountered online but remains difficult for institutional actors to document, assess, and escalate. While legal frameworks and multi-stakeholder mechanisms already exist, reporting pathways are often fragmented, unevenly accessible, or not designed around gender-sensitive and electoral-risk criteria. The goal is to support timely, proportionate, and rights-respecting responses without undermining legitimate political debate or freedom of expression.
- **The Objective:** DRI invites teams to design a tech-enabled reporting and referral solution aimed primarily at institutional actors, including but not limited to electoral commissions, trusted flaggers, and platform integrity teams. Rather than focusing only on the reporting interface, the solution should help turn user-submitted reports of suspected online hate speech and gender-based violence (OGBV) against women and gender-diverse candidates into structured evidence that can support classification, assessment, prioritisation, and clear escalation or referral logic.
- **Potential Output:** Teams are expected to present a prototype/MVP, wireframe, or proof of concept that shows how reports of suspected online hate speech and OGBV would be collected, structured, classified, prioritised, and referred to relevant institutional actors. The output should include a proposed user flow, key data fields, classification criteria, and referral/escalation logic.



## Think out of the box

***Mentored by an academic researcher and lecturer from the University of Strasbourg***

- **The Problem:** What if tackling hate speech was not only about removing harmful content—but about transforming the social dynamics that produce it? Hate speech online is a growing and complex societal issue, affecting social cohesion, mental health, and democratic discourse. While current solutions focus largely on detection and content removal, they often fail to capture context, address bias, or empower users. This challenge invites participants to think out of the box and go beyond traditional moderation approaches. Rather than focusing solely on detection, teams are encouraged to explore new ways to prevent, contextualize, counter, and transform hate speech in digital environments.
- **The Objective:** Design a solution that prevents, contextualises, counters, or transforms hate speech rather than simply moderating it. Teams are encouraged to combine technology, design, policy, and creative approaches, targeting any relevant group from social media users and platform moderators to educators, NGOs, or policymakers. An intersectional approach to the work, including gender, age, origin and/or other grounds of discrimination is encouraged.
- **Potential Output:** A functional prototype or MVP in any form (web or mobile application, moderation support interface, educational experience, policy framework, or creative concept with social impact), accompanied by a 5-minute pitch and a short concept paper outlining design choices, methodology, and ethical considerations.

# IDEAL TEAM

We are seeking multidisciplinary teams of **3 to 4 members** to move beyond a simple technical tool and create a **Human-Rights Centred Innovation**. Here is how they work together.



## **The Technologist / Back-end Developer**

Determines which AI capabilities (like semantic clustering or LLM-enabled identification) can address the problem without creating harmful re-identification tools.



## **The Democracy / Policy Expert**

Help identify needs and identify innovative methodologies and policy solutions to address the challenge in line with human rights and democratic principles.



## **The Designer / Idea Innovator**

UX/UI Front-end developer will translate complex data into “actionable insights” for end-users and demonstrate the “Impactful Initiative” through a working prototype that judges and the audience can visualise and comprehend.



# CONCEPT SUMMARY SUBMISSION

## THE FIRST STEP TO PARTICIPATE

To be considered for the **New Democratic Pact for Europe Democracy Hackathon**, pre-formed teams must submit a Concept

Summary (2 pages maximum) covering. **Your Summary must include:**

- **Problem & Solution Fit:** A clear description of how your solution addresses the hate speech while balancing technical effectiveness with human rights (such as privacy, freedom of expression, and institutional transparency).
- **Integrated Innovation:** An overview of the technical engine (AI/NLP), the human rights guardrails (Policy/Law), and the user experience (UX/UI).
- **Impact:** how your solution translates the principles of the New Democratic Pact into a tool that helps real people and protects democratic debate.

**TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

**PRIVACY POLICY**

**CODE OF CONDUCT**



DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS: 5 JUNE

# REGISTER YOUR TEAM TODAY!

Add teammates' names and emails (at least one required; you can complete later):

Teammate Full Name

Teammate Email

Teammate Full Name (optional)

Teammate Email (optional)

Please upload your Concept Summary (Max 2 pages)

No file chosen

- I confirm that I have read and agree to the Terms & Conditions, Privacy Policy and Code of Conduct
- I consent to the processing of my personal data

I agree that the organisers may process my personal data for application review, participants' administrative travel/accommodation assistance (if applicable), and related communications before, during, and after the Hackathon, in accordance with the privacy notice, which I have read and understood.

- I consent to photo and video recording and use

I agree that photos and videos taken during the hackathon may be used by the organisers for communication and promotional purposes, without compensation, in accordance with the privacy notice. I understand that I can withdraw my consent at any time. In this case, the organisers are only expected to take reasonable steps to stop processing I have agreed to. Specifically, I accept that the organisers can only ensure that photos and video recordings will no longer be published or promoted by them in media they effectively control. The organisers are not responsible for the use of photos and video recordings by third parties or in media beyond their control.

**REGISTER**

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# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**DO I NEED TO KNOW HOW TO CODE TO BE PART OF A HACKATHON TEAM?**



**HOW DO I APPLY?**



**WHERE IS THE EVENT GOING TO TAKE PLACE?**



**DO I HAVE TO PAY FOR THIS EVENT?**



**SHOULD I BRING MY LAPTOP?**



**WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT WILL MENTORS PROVIDE DURING THE HACKATHON?**



**WHAT IS THE DURATION OF THE HACKATHON?**



**WHAT ARE THE PRIZES FOR THE WINNERS?**



# LEARN MORE ON THE NEW DEMOCRATIC PACT WEBSITE

VISIT THE OFFICIAL WEBSITE



# GET READY FOR THE HACKATHON IN JUNE!

- Date: 17–19 June 2026
- Location: Palais de l'Europe, Strasbourg, France
- Costs: Travel and accommodation covered for all selected teams
- Eligibility: Open to residents of any of the 46 Council of Europe member states
- Language: English
- A €50,000 Microsoft grant to be shared amongst the winning teams, and post-event mentoring and implementation support will be provided.

**Come to the heart of Europe and build the tools that will protect democracy!**



## Organized by

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



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