



ΒΟΥΛΗ ΤΩΝ ΕΛΛΗΝΩΝ

ΙΩΑΝΝΕΤΑ ΚΑΒΒΑΔΙΑ

Βουλευτής Β' Αθηνών – ΣΥ.ΡΙΖ.Α.

Athens, 13 March 2019

Dear Secretary General,

I am addressing you in my capacity as Head of the Greek Delegation to PACE, as a Member of the Hellenic Parliament, but also as a journalist by profession. My letter concerns the extremely disturbing material published by a Greek tabloid, of extreme far right orientation, titled "Makeleio", which literally translates as "Slaughter". For far too long this newspaper -if one might call it that- has taken advantage of the liberal Greek legislation protecting freedom of the Press and of the solid commitment of the Greek State to the constitutionally protected freedom of expression, in order to promote the most vulgar and vitriolic form of hate speech.

The latest example concerns the front-page publication of photos of all female members of the Greek Government, Prime Minister's wife included, with unspeakably vulgar profanities of the most extreme sexist nature under the title "the whores of the traitor". This only comes as a follow-up to a long list of hateful publications, targeting leftist and other progressive politicians and public figures, LGBT people, feminists and, of course, immigrants. Obviously, this sort of thing is the very definition of hate speech, going way beyond any legitimate margin of free speech in a modern, democratic society. With my letter, I wish to bring the matter to your attention and to the attention of the Council of Europe, knowing full well your own work in promoting human rights and freedoms, as well as the extensive work already undertaken by the Council, concerning hate speech.

I am referring, among other things, to the ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 15 on Combatting Hate Speech, the adoption by the Council's political bodies, the Assembly, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and the Committee of Ministers, of numerous charters, resolutions and recommendations, setting standards and providing guidelines to the Member States to help them deal with hate speech, the relevant jurisprudence of the Court and, last but not least, the CoE "No Hate Speech" and "Not In My Parliament" Movements.

Taking account of all the above, I propose that the Council of Europe issues an official statement condemning such abuse of freedom of speech, aiming to promote hate, racist and sexist speech. As European politicians, we must take up this sad occasion, in order to re-affirm our commitment to open and democratic European societies, respecting the rights and freedoms of all and to call for decisive action against those who would wish to poison our societies with their hatred.

Sincerely yours,

Anneta Kavvadia

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several overlapping, fluid strokes that form a stylized, abstract shape.

MP for Athens B – SYRIZA
Head of the Greek Delegation of the
Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
Vice President of the European Affairs Committee
Of the Hellenic Parliament