

Minister of the Interior M.Golubeva submits proposals to introduce penalties for hate speech to the Parliament

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On 22 November Ministry of the Interior submitted proposals for amendments in the legislation on penalties for hate speech on the internet. Proposals regarding the possible amendments to the Law on Administrative Penalties were submitted to the Criminal Law Policy Subcommittee of the Parliament.

☞ Recently, we have seen an increase in aggression, threats and intolerance in our society and specifically towards members of particular professions, such as journalists and doctors. Such activities are committed both, in real as well as virtual environment. Such actions undeniably increase intolerance, contribute to the polarization of society and disturb people's daily lives. We have to find a solution so that people, who are making threats on the internet, could be called to justice," Minister of the Interior Marija Golubeva noted.

Working group that focused on the issue of hate crimes, was established on the initiative of the Minister on 30 June 2021. In its final report group pointed out the need to improve the collection of statistics on hate crimes, the regulatory framework, and the preparedness of law enforcement officers for work with victims of hate crimes.

Considering the current issue of threats and hatred, aggressive communication with medical practitioners, journalists and representatives of other groups, several amendments are envisaged in the Law on Administrative Penalties.

Until now, fines were imposed for disturbing public order, violating generally accepted norms of behavior and disturbing peace of *persons*, thus implying more than one person. It is planned that this penalty in the future could be applied in cases when a single person has been disturbed;

As a large part of hate speech takes place in the digital space, it is planned to supplement the law with a clause on disturbing

public order by using an automated data processing system (internet);

It is planned to supplement the law with a section that will provide for a penalty for the threat of murder or commit another serious crime;

The law would also be supplemented with a section containing a prohibition of discrimination and a section providing for a fine for acts aimed at inciting social hatred or discord based on a person's sex, age, disability or any other characteristics.

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