

We will describe what online hate speech is and how to defend yourself against it. We will point out the need to secure evidence and describe how to do it. We will clarify whether and how the ombudsman might help.



What is hate speech?

It is usually a **verbal attack that incites, promotes, or spreads hatred against a person or a group of people. It often originates in prejudices and fixed ideas** about people of specific skin colour, nationality, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, belief, or age.



Can I write anything on the internet?

The freedom of expression has its limits even on the internet. It ends where rights and freedoms of others begin. Hate speech usually **interferes with personal rights of the person concerned** – with his or her dignity, reputation, or honour.

Hate speech may amount to a **misdemeanour** and sometimes even a **criminal offence**.



Why is it important to combat hate speech?

We have to protect and promote **mutual respect and dignified life for everyone without distinction** because these **contribute to peaceful coexistence**.

In democratic society such as ours it is unacceptable to grossly insult others or to call for their destruction because of their characteristics beyond their control. Such conduct can reinforce existing prejudices and strengthen hatred in society.



What exactly can I do when I spot hate speech?

Request the operator of the website to delete the online hateful post. Some operators (like Facebook or some online news services with comments under their articles) already provide options to report such posts (using a button or a form).

If you suspect that **an offence against peaceful coexistence** occurred, alert the local municipal authority.

If you suspect a **hate crime** occurred, report it to [the Police](#) or [a public prosecutor](#).

Always request the authorities to inform you in writing on how they dealt with your report.



Should I secure evidence? How?

Absolutely. Preserve any evidence about online hate speech carefully.

Save a print screen, video, or communication with the author of the hateful comments and any information you have about them.

You can save a printscreen by pushing the PrtScr button on the keyboard (top right of F12). Then open the Microsoft Paint or any other similar tool and paste the printscreen there by pressing Ctrl and V at the same time. You can then save this image on your computer.



What if the hate speech touches me personally?

Under the civil code, you can file **an action for the protection of the personality rights with a court**. These disputes are quite complicated, so there might be a need to consult with a lawyer (try the Czech Bar Association [search tool](#) or the [Legal aid](#) leaflet).

If you are a victim of crime and need legal assistance, counselling or social services, you can also use the [register of providers of assistance to victims of crime](#), which is maintained by the Ministry of Justice. Registered lawyers, NGOs and the Probation and Mediation Service provide services partly free of charge.



I do not agree with how the police/the prosecutor proceeds in the criminal proceedings.

If you think that the police do not deal with your criminal complaint, **turn to the prosecutor's office**.

If you disagree with the **supervising prosecutor's assessment** of the case, contact the **superior prosecutor's office** (district → regional → high → Supreme Prosecutor's Office).



Can the Ombudsman help me?



The Ombudsman may not deal with the practices of the police and prosecutors in criminal proceedings. Therefore, he cannot assess their assessment of whether or not a criminal offence has been committed. However, it does examine other police activities and investigates the actions of the prosecutorial authorities. More on that in the [Ombudsman](#) and [Police](#) leaflets.



He can examine how the municipal or regional authority dealt with **the offence**.



The Ombudsman advises victims of discrimination. He assesses whether hate speech is discrimination (in the form of harassment) and recommends appropriate action. More on that in the [Discrimination](#) leaflet.



He issues recommendations on issues related to discrimination. **He can suggest changes in practice** - for example, recommending that a website operator withdraw objectionable content.

You can find all of the ombudsman's leaflets in English on <https://www.ochrance.cz/en/> in the [I am not sure how to deal with a difficult life situation](#) section.

Do you know of people who could use the Ombudsman's help? Tell them about us.