

Published: 10 April 2014

Countries: Greece, Hungary, Italy



Giant puppets, satirical cartoons, radio shows, and positive stories are the tools that the Media Diversity Institute's project ["Our Elections, Our Europe"](#) (OEOE) is using to counter racism in the run up of the European parliament elections in Hungary, Greece and Italy.

Started in February, OEOE has spotted several incidents of xenophobic discourse by politicians. Whether it is the [Northern League's rhetoric](#) against refugees who "live in luxurious hotel while Italians starve", or the [Jobbik party's refusal](#)

to dismiss the words "criminal Gypsies", or the [Golden Dawn's Nazi salutes](#)

and symbols, the far-right party are alarmingly on the rise in Europe. Many fear that the next European parliament will have a majority of Eurosceptic extreme-right MEPs. Being young people particularly exposed to the negative effect of the crisis, the risk of their political radicalization towards right-wing parties, which use "the other" as a scapegoat for the lack of opportunities, is very high. OEOE engages young people in the importance of rejecting xenophobia, and the positive attitudes around migration and around people of different background, through a social media campaign on twitter and Facebook (#OEOE). People are invited to contribute by spotting and reporting to us racist content by politicians.



[MEDIA MONITORING](#) – Some specific trends have emerged from the media monitoring on the search for xenophobic discourse in politics. In Hungary – whose national elections on 6 April saw the right-wing Fidesz party win for the second consecutive term and the far-right Jobbik party gain 21 percent – an exclusive attitude in the political sphere is common, though often very subtle. The most discriminated groups are Jews, Roma people, and the homeless. Sexism is also rampant. In Italy, the Northern League party presents itself as anti-EU party – its symbol says “Anti Euro”. But its campaign also revolves around anti-immigration laws (warding off of boats in the Mediterranean Sea, and the exclusion of immigrants from public service jobs) and the defence of Italian traditions against those “who cannot share our values” like Muslim people. The discrimination against Roma people is on a chronic level and very much ingrained in the Italian society. In Greece – where the local elections will be on the same day as the European ones – racism is alarmingly high within the institutional level. For example, the government led by New Democracy has submitted to parliament an amendment to the country’s Immigration Code that force the deportation of immigrants who accuse state employees of using violence against them, in case their claims are officially rejected. In this grim situation, the Nazi ideology of nationalism and paramilitary methods are reviving in the Golden Dawn party’s propaganda.

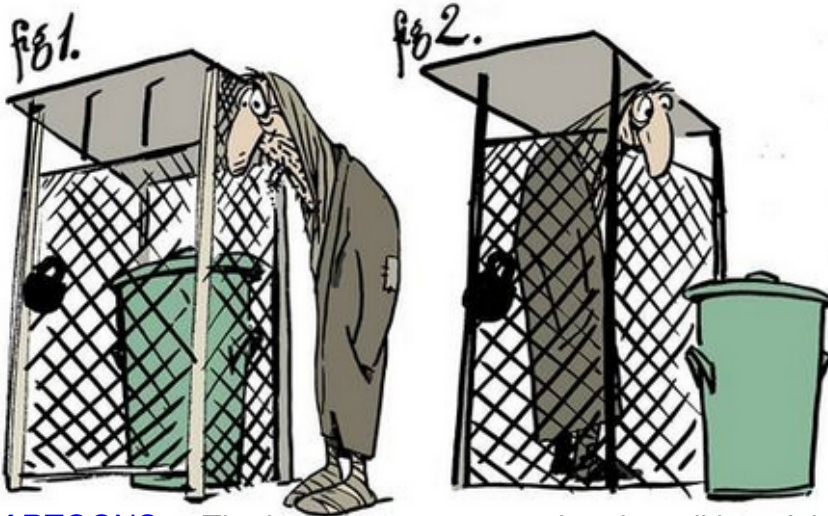
[PUPPETS](#) – A group of young people from different ethnic background have attended [Il Razzismo è una brutta storia](#)

’s labs in Milan. Taught by an experienced puppeteer, they crafted [puppets of different size and colours](#)

by using recycled materials to develop street theatre performances. The first drama being on 12 April, they will invade the city, break stereotypes, and speak out against discrimination. It will make you laugh, but most of all it will make you think. Watch

[here](#)

the video of the puppets coming to town, with the next dates and locations.



[CARTOONS](#) [Tumblr](#) [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [@Razismobs](#)