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DIRECTORATE-GENERAL JUSTICE and CONSUMERS

Directorate C: Fundamental rights and rule of law
Unit C.2 : Fundamental rights policy
Coordinator on combating Antisemitism

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Antisemitism remains a serious threat for Europe based on data of antisemitic incidents and crimes, including terrorist attacks, and the experiences of Jewish communities in Europe.¹ It is a Europe-wide problem that plays out in different forms and expressions in Member States. Antisemitism did not begin or end with the Shoah (Holocaust), the culmination of hundreds of years of anti-Jewish discrimination and hatred in Europe, but is a widespread and rising expression of hatred and discrimination against Jews that stems in particular from right-wing, left-wing and Islamist extremists as well as increasingly from mainstream society. Antisemitism is an integral part of conspiracy theories blaming Jews or "Jewish power" for "what goes wrong" in the world and can sometimes be disguised as Antizionism. There is still a lack of recognition of the problem from society and a growing divide between the experience of Jewish communities and the view of the general population.

The European Commission is taking the fears of Jewish communities in Europe seriously and is deeply concerned by the impact of Antisemitism on Jewish daily life. On the initiative of First Vice-President Frans Timmermans and Commissioner for Justice Věra Jourová, a [Coordinator on combating Antisemitism](#) was appointed in December 2015 to bring to their attention the concerns of Jewish communities and act as a contact point, while contributing to the development of the Commission's overarching strategy to prevent and combat racism, antisemitism, intolerance and discrimination.

The European Commission has stepped up its efforts to ensure correct transposition and implementation of [European legislation combating, racism and xenophobia, including Antisemitism, which criminalises incitement to hatred or violence](#) and put in place measures to support national authorities in effectively implementing the legislation and to address hate speech and hate crime, including funding and guidance to national authorities on hate crime training, [data recording](#) and victims' support.² It is necessary that Member States, transposing European legislation on hate crime and speech, also ensure effective hate crime investigation and prosecution. We must ensure that the competent authorities are sensitive to the importance of identifying a criminal act as a hate crime, and are capable and able to promptly investigate and prosecute it as such.

Security for Jewish premises, e.g. synagogues, schools and community centres, has highest priority for Jewish communities. EU Member States are fully responsible for guaranteeing the security of all citizens and several scaled up security measures on the backdrop of recent terrorist attacks. However Jewish communities are struggling with increasing security expenditures which impact core tasks of community-based organisations to provide services for its members. The Commission made available

¹ <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2013/discrimination-and-hate-crime-against-jews-eu-member-states-experiences-and>

² *EU High Level Group on combating racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance:*
http://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/item-detail.cfm?item_id=51025

additional funds for security of public spaces including places of worship under its [Action Plan for security of public spaces](#).

To better **recognise manifestations of Antisemitism**, Commissioner Věra Jourová endorsed in 2017 the non-legally binding [International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance \(IHRA\) working definition of Antisemitism](#) and recommended it as a guidance tool, in particular for education and training purposes for teachers, NGOs, state authorities and the media. In June 2017 the European Parliament adopted the definition as part of its [resolution on combating Antisemitism](#). Several EU Member States, cities, student organisations and education institutions already make use of the definition. The Commission, in line with other international organisations, is actively using this definition in its work.

A particular concern has been the explosion of **illegal hate speech online**. The European Commission concluded in May 2016 a [Code of Conduct with main IT-Companies](#) in which they agreed to review illegal hate speech flagged to them within 24 hours and remove it where necessary. The 3rd monitoring exercise carried out in 2017 showed that companies removed 70% of the illegal hate speech notified to them and reviewed 81% of notifications within 24 hours. A further [recommendation on measures to tackle effectively illegal content online](#) was published in March 2018. Moreover, the European Commission is supporting civil society and Member States' authorities to better [prevent and counter racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance](#), including Antisemitism with EUR 7 million EUR in 2018.

It remains the strong need to **improve recording and collection of data on hate crimes**, including antisemitic crimes, at national level. Several Member states do not collect any data on antisemitism which hinders efforts to combat it.³ Furthermore, antisemitic incidents, which fall below the threshold of a criminal offence, often remain unrecorded although they can have an equally severe impact on Jewish daily life and feeling of security. In some Member States NGOs, as part or in close contact with the Jewish community, are collecting valuable data to better understanding the gravity of antisemitism. Furthermore **research on the diffusion of anti-Jewish stereotypes** in society can help to fine tune preventive education tools. The perspective of the affected community is crucial thus Commissioner Jourová has tasked the Fundamental Rights Agency to conduct a survey on the [experiences of the Jewish community with Antisemitism](#), covering 13 EU Member States with the majority of Jewish communities living in the EU. Results will be presented in December 2018.

Education remains the key tool and should address Antisemitism in a holistic way. Holocaust education is a central piece in building up resilience against all forms of hatred, including Antisemitism, in multicultural societies. The Commission supports through its "[Europe for Citizens](#)" [Programme](#) initiatives that raise awareness about the lessons from the Holocaust with around EUR 3.5 million annually. The EU-funded [European Holocaust Research Infrastructure](#) supports and connects international Holocaust research, education and memorial institutes. But education should also include lessons about Jewish life in the respective countries, including culture and history as well as ensuring that curricula and schoolbooks are free of stereotypical depictions of Judaism and Jewish life. In January 2018, the Commission proposed a [Council Recommendation on promoting EU values through inclusive education](#).

³ <http://fra.europa.eu/en/news/2016/data-collection-lack-progress-impedes-antisemitism-fight>