

# Q&A – Eurobarometer survey on Antisemitism in Europe

## **How is Antisemitism defined?**

Antisemitism appears in many different forms and is not always easy to define. In 2016 the [International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance](#) adopted a [legally non-binding working definition](#) of Antisemitism, which states: *“Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”*

The European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council all recognise this definition, as a useful guiding tool for civil society, law enforcement authorities and education facilities to effectively recognise and fight all forms of Antisemitism. The European Commission, in line with other international organisations, is actively using this definition in its work, in particular for education and training purposes.

## **What has the Commission done to tackle Antisemitism?**

In 2015, the first Fundamental Rights Colloquium was dedicated to combating Antisemitism and Anti-Muslim hatred and other forms of racism and intolerance. The Commission also appointed of the first [European Commission Coordinator on combatting Antisemitism](#), as well as a [Coordinator on Anti-Muslim Hatred](#). The key tasks of the coordinator have been to bring the concerns of the Jewish communities to the attention of the political level of the Commission, and help coordinate efforts across services in the context of the Commission’s overarching policy on racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance.

The increase of Antisemitism in Europe is particularly worrying in the online sphere, as today’s study shows. Since 2016 the Commission has worked intensively to tackle this challenge with the [Code of Conduct](#) on illegal online hate speech. (see more details below)

In June 2016, the European Commission also launched the [High Level Group on combating Racism, Xenophobia and other forms of Intolerance](#) to step up cooperation and coordination, to better prevent and combat hate crime and hate speech. It brings together all 28 EU Member States, international organisations and civil society organisations. Through this network, the Commission is working on addressing the underreporting issue by improving standards for recording hate crime.

Quarterly roundtables with Jewish umbrella organisations and visits to the EU Member States have strengthened the collaboration with Jewish communities, international organisations, Member states authorities and NGOs.

On 29 November 2018, the EU [acquired a Permanent International Partnership with the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance](#). The participation of the EU in this international body will allow for closer cooperation on combating Holocaust denial and preventing racism, xenophobia and Antisemitism.

Holocaust remembrance, research and education are key to understanding the history of the founding of the EU. Through **Horizon 2020**, the EU has set-up the [European Holocaust Research Infrastructure \(EHRI\)](#) in the Netherlands. Its goal is to strengthen the network of European research on the Holocaust and contribute to a European perspective on the Holocaust.

Through funding of the **Europe for citizens' programme** (annually EUR 3.5 million), remembrance of the Holocaust and Antisemitism during the 20th century, is kept alive. The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the antisemitic purges by the Communist regime in Poland was a priority among the funding priorities for 2018. This project shed light on antisemitism under the guise of Antizionism that led to the expulsion of thousands of Polish Jews in 1968, many of them Holocaust survivors. Through operational grants the EU supported also the structures of Holocaust Memorials in the EU such as the Memorial de la Shoah in Paris. Further support is given through EU Structural Funds to support the Memorial site Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Jewish heritage in Europe is in need of protection in places where Jewish communities have been destroyed during the Holocaust. In the framework of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018, EUR 1 million are spent to protect 1600 Jewish cemeteries in Central and Eastern Europe.

Under the Rights, Equality and citizenship programme, tackling Antisemitism is a key funding ground. For instance, the European Commission funded the project ["Facing all the facts"](#) to tackle hate crime and hate speech online and develop training for law enforcement and improve hate crime monitoring.

### **What were the key European policy achievements in the fight against Antisemitism in the last years?**

A milestone was the endorsement by the European Commission of the non-legally binding [International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance \(IHRA\) working definition of antisemitism](#). Several EU Member States (7 to date), cities, student organisations and education institutions have adopted and made use of the definition. Jewish communities and organisations fighting Antisemitism regard the endorsement and use of the definition as a key benchmark.

On 1 June 2017, the **European Parliament adopted a resolution** on combating Antisemitism including the call for national special envoys, adopting the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition of Antisemitism and increased efforts on local, national and European level.

Member States significantly scaled up their commitment to curbing rising Antisemitism. On 6 December 2018, Justice and Home Affairs Ministers of all 28 EU Member States adopted an **"EU Council Declaration on the fight against antisemitism** and the development of a common security approach to better

protect Jewish communities and institutions in Europe” (see [Commission statement](#)). The declaration covers a wide range of areas in which action is needed. This includes calling on Member States to:

- adopt national strategies to prevent and fight all forms of Antisemitism within their general strategies against racism;
- adopt the IHRA definition;
- ensure security of Jewish communities and to provide the necessary financing;
- implement fully existing [European legislation on racism and xenophobia](#);
- promote education on the Holocaust and Jewish life today, including in integration courses for newcomers, and ensuring adequate training for teachers.

### **What are the main findings from the Eurobarometer survey on Antisemitism?**

Today, the European Commission is publishing the results of a [Eurobarometer survey on Antisemitism](#). Interviews were carried out face-to-face with 27,643 people in 28 Member States and respondents were asked about their perception of Antisemitism.

One of the most striking findings from the Eurobarometer is that perceptions among Europeans on Antisemitism are very divided. While every other European considers Antisemitism to be a problem in their country, 4 in 10 Europeans actually do not consider it to be an issue in their country.

The results of the survey show that there is a perception gap on Antisemitism: while [89% of Jews](#) say that Antisemitism has significantly increased over the past 5 years, only 36% of the general public consider it has increased.

There are also significant differences in perception among Member States. People saying that Antisemitism is a problem is highest in countries with significant Jewish communities, and where physical attacks against the Jewish community have taken place, including Sweden, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, UK, and Belgium. Swedish (81%) and French (72%) respondents are the most likely to say that Antisemitism is a problem in their country. Both countries stand out with heightened perception throughout the survey.

Europeans with Jewish friends and acquaintances are more likely to be aware of the issues as well as increase in Antisemitism, as well as those who belong to a minority themselves.

Only 3% of Europeans feel ‘very well informed’ about Jewish history, customs and practices, and 68% say they are ‘not informed’.

The majority of Europeans (61%) know that there is a legislation

criminalising incitement to violence or hatred against Jewish people in their country. Significantly less are aware of legislation criminalising Holocaust denial (42%). Holocaust denial is perceived as being a problem in their country by about half of Europeans (53%). On average, only 4 in 10 Europeans think the Holocaust is sufficiently taught in schools. Among people who finished their education earlier, this is only 3 in 10. The shorter the formal education, the more people feel it is not sufficiently taught.

### **How do these results compare to the 2018 Fundamental Rights Agency's survey on the perception and experience of Antisemitism among European Jews?**

The Eurobarometer survey results show a significant discrepancy between the general public's perceptions of Antisemitism compared with that of the Jewish community as shown by the December 2018 EU [Fundamental Rights Agency's survey](#) on the perception and experiences of the Jewish community. Over 16,300 people responded to the Fundamental Rights Agency's survey, which makes it the largest survey ever among Jewish communities on antisemitism, covering 12 countries which are home to 95% of European Jewish people.

Nine in 10 (89 %) Jews consider that antisemitism has increased in their country, with more than eight in 10 (85 %) considering it to be a serious problem. Jews around Europe rate Antisemitism as the biggest social or political problem where they live. Antisemitism hinders people's ability to display freely their Jewish identity and live free from concerns for security and well-being.

The Eurobarometer results published today shows that there is clear perception gap of the problem of Antisemitism, with only 36% of the general public saying they think antisemitism has increased in the past five years.

### **What does the European Union do to combat Antisemitism outside the EU?**

Antisemitism also needs to be countered outside the European Union and the EU is committed to address it also in multilateral frameworks. In a joint initiative the EU, the United States, Canada and Israel organised the first **United Nations (UN) High-Level seminar on combating antisemitism** in 2016 and joint events have been taking place throughout the UN General Assembly. This initiative was followed-up in the 2018 United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), when the EU together with the three countries co-organised a Campaign against Antisemitism in the UNGA. In 2018, the EU presented also a **resolution on Freedom of Religion or Belief** at the UN General Assembly and at the Human Rights Council (March Session).

The annual **High-level seminar on combating racism, xenophobia and antisemitism between the European Commission and the State of Israel** is a unique forum that brings together civil servants, policymakers, academics and civil society to discuss best practices in addressing these problems.

The Commission has been working closely with the **Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and its Human Rights office (ODIHR)**, participating in two conferences on Antisemitism. The Commission presented together with the OSCE/ODIHR in 2017 in Brussels a policy guide which

addresses the security needs of the Jewish communities.

### **What does the European Commission do internally to promote combatting Antisemitism?**

One of the key prevention tools is **training**. The Commission organises every year a dedicated training on unmasking modern anti-Semitism, which gives EU officials the possibility to confront conscious and unconscious biases in the institutions and daily work.

On the occasion of Holocaust Remembrance Day, the European Commission holds annual staff trainings on the role of civil servants in bringing about the Holocaust. On that day, an exhibition highlighting certain aspects of the Holocaust is presented in Commission buildings, for instance on the Terezín concentration camp or on the Roma genocide, funded by the **Europe for Citizens** programme.

To celebrate Jewish life, for 13 years the Commission has been hosting an annual **EuroChanukkah** celebration in the Berlaymont, the European Commission headquarters.

### **What are the broader initiatives taken by the European Commission to tackle online hate speech and other forms of intolerance?**

According to the 2018 Fundamental Rights Agency survey, Jews encounter antisemitic hate speech most often online. To counter illegal hate speech online, the European Commission concluded on 31 May 2016 a [Code of Conduct](#) with main IT-Companies (Twitter, YouTube, Facebook and Microsoft) in which they agreed to revise all relevant illegal hate speech flagged to them within 24 hours and remove it where necessary. Our third implementation report proved that significant progress has been made with a removal rate of 70% of illegal content and several more platforms joining the Code of Conduct (i.e. Instagram, Snapchat, Daily motion).

The Commission has stepped up efforts to ensure correct transposition of the [Framework decision on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia](#) by means of criminal law. Under this legislation incitement to hatred or violence and publicly condoning, denying or grossly trivialising the Holocaust, constitutes a punishable offence.

To support Member States' and civil society's efforts, the European Commission created the EU the **High-Level Group on racism, xenophobia and related intolerance** which helps to counter hate crime, including antisemitic hate crime by developing tools: i) improving recording of hate crimes, ii) ensuring support for hate crime victims and iii) hate crime training for law enforcement.

On 12 September 2018, the Commission proposed [new rules](#) to **remove terrorist content** from the web within one hour of order by a competent authority.

An [action plan](#) to **protect public spaces** was presented by the Commission in October 2017 with a focus on religious premises. Collaboration between Jewish community security and Commission services including the EU Counter-terrorism

Coordinator and Europol has been strengthened.