



Working Group on Antisemitism

4TH MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COUNCIL DECLARATION ON THE FIGHT AGAINST ANTISEMITISM

VIA VIDEO-CONFERENCE
8 December 2020, 09:00 – 16:30

BACKGROUND

Introduction

Following the unanimous adoption of the "[Council Declaration on the fight against antisemitism and the development of a common security approach to better protect Jewish communities and institutions in Europe](#)" on 6 December 2018, the European Commission has created a working group on antisemitism within the existing High-level Member States expert group on Racism and Xenophobia to implement the declaration. In line with the declaration the aim is to support Member States to adopt "a holistic strategy to prevent and fight all forms of antisemitism as part of their strategies on preventing racism, xenophobia, radicalisation and violent extremism". Through the working group, the Commission aims to address all topics raised in the declaration. To further strengthen this work and given the rise in antisemitic violence and hate crime, the Commission will present a comprehensive strategy on combating antisemitism, to complement and support Member States' efforts in 2021. The 4th meeting of the working group will focus on the development of national strategies, guidance for the practical use of the IHRA definition of antisemitism, and fighting antisemitic prejudices as part of civic orientation measures.

Session 1: National strategies on the fight against antisemitism

The Council Declaration on the fight against antisemitism and the development of a common security approach to better protect Jewish communities and institutions in Europe invites the Member States to adopt and implement a holistic strategy to prevent and fight all forms of antisemitism. According to the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency seven Member States are in the process of adopting a stand-alone strategy on antisemitism or have adopted one (AT, BG, DK, EE, FR, HU, RO) while the other seven integrated/will integrate combating antisemitism in general strategies on combating extremism, racism and discrimination (CZ, DE, FI, HR, PL, SE, SK). The session will explore good practices by the Member States to develop strategies to fight antisemitism. It will specifically focus on how Member States mainstream antisemitism in different policy fields ranging from education to security.

Presentation on the “Handbook for the practical use of the IHRA definition of antisemitism”

In 2016, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s Committee on Antisemitism and Holocaust Denial developed a working definition of antisemitism, which was adopted by its Member Countries. By doing so, the IHRA provided an important tool with practical applicability for the Member States. The definition can serve as a guidance tool in education and training, and help identify and investigate antisemitic hate crimes and hate speech more effectively. The European Commission and IHRA commissioned RIAS to develop a handbook on how the IHRA definition can be used in order to support Member States in their efforts to combat antisemitism. During this session initial findings will be presented. The handbook is expected to become available for use before the end of the year.

Session 2: Fighting antisemitic prejudices as part of civic orientation measures for newcomers

In the Council Declaration, Member States agreed, “to introduce training about all forms of intolerance, racism and hate crime, in particular antisemitic prejudices and hate crime, into the curricula of integration courses”. Antisemitism, and racism in general, have deep historical roots that shape the perspectives of migrants arriving to the EU and of their host societies. Civic orientation measures should focus on the right for migrants not to be discriminated against and their responsibility not to discriminate others in society. They should resonate with the experiences of newcomers arriving in Europe, in order to have the desired inclusionary effect and build trust between newcomers and existing communities. The Commission EU action plan on integration and inclusion of 24 November 2020 aims to strengthen its support to integration policies. This session’s goal is to inform about EU integration policies and explore best practices on how information on Jewish life and history, and on the Holocaust as the European abyss that shaped Europe’s understanding of human rights and non-discrimination, can help foster newcomer’s inclusion in society and address possible antisemitic prejudices.

“Discussion under six eyes” between representatives of Member States and representatives of national Jewish communities

Member States are invited to develop a holistic approach to combat antisemitism. The final session before the closing will provide Member State representatives and representatives of national Jewish communities from the same country the possibility to discuss what a holistic approach at national level should look like, and how (if such an approach already exists) it can be effectively implemented. Participants are kindly requested to prepare ideas that could advance the drafting of national strategies, or specific actions to prevent and address antisemitism, including the specific aspect of integration measures.