



National Coordinator on Combating
Antisemitism
Ministry of Justice and Security



FINAL REPORT

3RD MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EU STRATEGY ON COMBATING ANTISEMITISM AND FOSTERING JEWISH LIFE

THE HAGUE
6-7 December 2022

The 3rd meeting of the European Commission Working Group on the implementation of the EU Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life was organised by the Dutch National Coordinator on Combating Antisemitism and hosted by the Netherlands Ministry of Justice and Security.

On 5 October 2021 the European Commission adopted the first-ever [EU Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life](#). In full respect of national competences, the strategy sets out the policy framework for the Commission for the period 2021-2030. The strategy includes close to 100 actions of which 55 have already been set in motion in cooperation with Member States, civil society organisations, and local and international partners. In line with the EU Strategy, the Member States, in the [Council Conclusions on combating racism and antisemitism](#) of 4 March 2022, committed to developing national strategies against antisemitism, and endeavour to do so by the end of 2022.

The working group aims to support the implementation of the EU Strategy and the development and implementation of national strategies by the Member States. The third meeting of the working group addressed the following topics:

- 1. Updates on national strategies**
- 2. Countering online antisemitism**
- 3. Moving forward on fostering Jewish Life**
- 4. Governance of the Working Group and monitoring of the national strategies**



TUESDAY, 6 DECEMBER 2022

Opening Session

Dilan Yesilgöz-Zegerius, Minister of Justice and Security of the Netherlands

Minister Yesilgöz-Zegerius warned for a decline in social cohesion in many European countries and the development of an 'us and them' mentality. Statistics show that antisemitism is on the rise in almost all countries in Europe. She expressed the need to join together and delight that many countries have appointed special coordinators. The minister welcomed the Vice-President's and the Commission's commitment to combat antisemitism. On 6 October she sent the work plan of the National Coordinator for Combating Antisemitism to the Dutch parliament. In 2023, the Netherlands will present its first national strategy on combating antisemitism.

Margaritis Schinas, Vice-President, European Commission

Vice-President Schinas warned that the public discourse can take a dark turn as is happening across the Atlantic Ocean. Celebrities seem to glorify Hitler and be openly antisemitic, and President Biden was forced to set the record straight, by stating that the Holocaust happened. The Vice-President called on everyone to call out antisemitism, wherever it hides. Also in Europe, antisemitism is not something of the past and it violates the European way of life. He welcomed the commitment of the Dutch Minister to combat antisemitism and the preparations towards a strategy in the Netherlands. On Friday, 9 December, he indicated that Ministers of Justice in the Justice and Home Affairs Council will be addressing the fight against antisemitism. He specifically welcomed the German strategy against antisemitism that was presented the week before the working group, and stated that he counts on strong strategies from all Member States. The Commission will publish an implementation report on the EU Strategy before the end of its mandate.

Eddo Verdoner National Coordinator on combating antisemitism of the Netherlands

National Coordinator Verdoner warned that although in time the Holocaust is further and further away, it is also coming closer again due to the rise in antisemitism. Incidents are growing offline and online, and these worlds interact. Antisemitism is no longer hiding in dark corners, but we see it in public debate, in politics, among celebrities. When people with so much power say antisemitic things, action is really needed. He presented his workplan on combating antisemitism, which is based on three pillars: 1). Monitor and follow-up, 2) Education and prevention, and 3) Commemorate and celebrate. He specifically mentioned the importance of fostering Jewish life and knowledge about it to prevent antisemitism.

Katharina von Schnurbein, European Commission Coordinator on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life

European Commission Coordinator von Schnurbein welcomed the progress made in recent years. Exactly on this date, in 2018, the first Council Declaration on the fight against antisemitism was adopted. The progress is amazing and the Commission looks forward to receive the national strategies the Member States are developing. She welcomed the commitment of the Netherlands to fight antisemitism, and especially highlighted the memorandum of understanding concerning religious slaughter that can be seen as a potential best-practice for other Member States. The EU Strategy includes close to 100 actions, of which for 55 implementation has started. She highlighted a number of upcoming actions, such as a Holocaust remembrance conference on 23 January, an EU-wide awareness raising campaign on Jewish life, an EU-wide survey on antisemitic attitudes and the EU Fundamental Rights Agency's upcoming third survey on antisemitism and discrimination experienced by Jewish people.



Session I: Updates on national strategies

In line with the EU Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life, Member States committed in the Council Conclusions on combating racism and antisemitism, adopted on 4 March 2022, to develop national strategies on combating antisemitism by end 2022. The latest annual overview from the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) shows that 14 Member States have adopted a national strategy against antisemitism, and another 8 indicate a strategy is under development. During this session Member States were invited to give an update on the developments of national strategies and other measures taken in their country to combat antisemitism. Germany presented its new strategy against antisemitism that was adopted on 30 November 2022. The Netherlands presented the work programme that was adopted on 6 October 2022 that will serve as a basis to develop a national strategy in the first half of 2023. Slovakia gave an update on the measures it will take to combat antisemitism as part of a broader strategy to tackle racism. On 12 October, an attack in Bratislava on an LGBTIQ-establishment took place which was based on an antisemitic manifesto. Overall the number of Member States that report to be adopting a stand-alone strategy against antisemitism or measures as part of strategies against antisemitism is growing. Jewish communities specifically highlighted the need to also include measures for security in the national strategies and to address the problem of fringe websites outside the areas of jurisdiction. The Commission will present in 2024 an implementation report on the EU Strategy, which will include the monitoring of progress made on national level. FRA in its annual overview will keep monitoring the adoption of national strategies against antisemitism. The next annual overview is expected in Q4 2023.

Session II: Countering online antisemitism

Representatives of the Dutch online retail webshop Bol.com highlighted the decision of the webshop of 8 November 2022 to take part in the Dutch National Coordinator's initiative and to share their way of working to tackle antisemitic content. Bol.com is one of the main online webshops in the Netherlands and it cooperates with organisations such as Artikel 1, Meldpunt Discriminatie and organises roundtables with legal experts, philosophers and journalists to further strengthen its policies. Early 2023, the Dutch National Coordinator will organise a roundtable with bol.com and companies that deal with similar issues, so they can exchange their best practices on these policies. The Czech Presidency put the fight against antisemitism high on its agenda. Amongst others, it organised on 24 November an expert meeting on 'Nazi memorabilia and their misuse to antisemitic ends'. Experts highlighted the complexity of defining Nazi memorabilia and the differences between the legal systems regulating the displaying and selling of such items. As part of EU Strategy the Commission will cooperate with industry and IT companies to prevent the illegal display and sale of Nazi-related symbols, memorabilia and literature online. To prepare this action, the Commission will next year launch a study to get more insights into the current displaying and selling of Nazi symbols and memorabilia in the EU. The Center for Information and Documentation Israel presented a research into Dutch online antisemitism. Of nearly two million messages related to Judaism, more than 200 000 of these (about 11%) were recognised as antisemitic. The study shows the importance of following organizations, groups, and political movements that spread antisemitic ideas. A qualitative study of retweets by FVD politicians and a quantitative analysis of 100,000 tweets, retweets and likes by dozens of politicians (at the local, provincial and national level) from seven Dutch political parties: FVD, BIJ1, D66, DENK, GL, PVV and SGP was also presented. In contrast to politicians from other parties, politicians from FVD routinely retweet accounts that spread antisemitic messages.



WEDNESDAY, 7 DECEMBER 2022

Session III: Moving forward on fostering Jewish life

A representative of the Liberal Jewish Community of Amsterdam presented the European Neighbours project. The initiative invites people from other communities for a morning or an afternoon of learning. The aim is for Muslims, Christians, Jews, and others to learn about each other in a relaxed and personal way and to confront prejudices and stereotypes. The Representative Council of Jewish Institutions in France (Crif), which represents 73 Jewish organisations made a presentation. France has the largest Jewish community in Europe, of which many live in Paris, but also in smaller cities. Specific for the community is the strong French political tradition of secularism. The danger of antisemitism from the entire political spectrum was emphasized. The special envoy in France works not only on combating antisemitism, but also on fighting racism and promoting LGBTIQ-equality. The European Union of Jewish Students highlighted the big differences in lived experiences of Jewish students across the Europe from Brussels to Poland and from Norway to Portugal. Being a Jewish student at campus is not fun. A rise in antizionist related antisemitism is taking place and Jewish students are scared of going to university during apartheid week. EUJS promotes a European Jewish campus week to bring Jewish life to the campus, and will be able to re-grant EU funding, to local student initiatives. National strategies need dedicated measures on combating antisemitism on universities and for campus life. Other issues raised during the session included how to foster Jewish life in smaller cities and among smaller communities, and how to engage non-Jewish organisations in this?

Updates from the 'European Conference on Antisemitism' and from the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

The Task Force Austrian-Jewish Cultural Heritage gave an update on the European Conference on Antisemitism and the implementation of the Vienna Declaration. The long-term goal is to reach comparability of data on antisemitic incidents across the EU. So far Austria, Germany, Czech Republic, Spain, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Romania and Slovakia have signed the Vienna Declaration. The informal group reports to the Working Group and the Council. The second meeting of the European Conference on Antisemitism (ECA) will take place on 17-18 April 2023 in Vienna, and will primarily be dedicated to the implementation of the Vienna Declaration. Recent developments will be discussed and good practices in recording antisemitic incidents will be exchanged.

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights presented the annual overview on antisemitic incidents and the forthcoming FRA survey on experiences of discrimination and antisemitism by Jewish people. The overview showed that data on antisemitic incidents remains difficult to compare between Member States, thereby highlighting the importance to improve comparability. FRA's purpose is to create the most informed and evidence-based portrait of perceptions of antisemitism and life as a Jew as it is experienced by European Jews. The survey will be live at www.eujews.eu beginning 25 January 2023. The survey is open to all self-identifying Jews aged 16+ living in Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Spain, and Sweden.

Session IV: Governance of the Working Group and monitoring of the national strategies

The first Working Group meeting took place in June 2019 with the objective to support the implementation of the first Council Declaration on combating antisemitism adopted in 2018. The pandemic resulted in the Working Group being held successfully online four times. Since the adoption of the EU Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life, the objective of the Working Group is to support the implementation of the strategy as well as the development and implementation of national strategies by the Member States. Participants reflected on how the Working Group can further support their work.

There was overall agreement about the usefulness and success of the format of the Working Group, bringing together two representatives from Member States and one from the respective Jewish community. This setting allows for conversations 'under-six-eyes' in which communities and Member State representatives directly discuss



topics relevant to them, based on the agenda of the working group. Participants requested to learn more about concrete actions of the EU Strategy, possibly in smaller workshops.

The Commission will present at the FREMP meeting at 23 February and the next Working Group meeting (2-4 May in Bucharest) how it intends to monitor the development and implementation of national strategies. All Member States are requested to also ensure an English translation of their strategies.