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Moshe Kantor Database for the Study of Contemporary  
Antisemitism and Racism

Antisemitism Worldwide  
2017

General Analysis  
Draft



The Program for the Study of Jews in Arab Lands  
Stephen Roth Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism and Racism

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*These country reports and other reports will be available in full on the Kantor Center's website: <http://kantorcenter.tau.ac.il/>. Any references to citations and sources that appeared in the text may be found on our website.*

## **Worldwide Tendencies and Developments in Antisemitism, 2017**

"En 2017, on a dû déménager parce qu'on est juif" <sup>1</sup>

Several tens of thousands of Jews have relocated, inside France, during recent years, thus performing an "internal Exodus". Their words – "we had to relocate because we are Jews" - open our 2017 report.

***A.** The report is based on the ongoing Kantor Center for the study of Contemporary European Jewry and the Moshe Kantor Database team's work, and on the various reports and data sent to us by organizations and contact persons in about 40 countries – a network we established during more than 25 years of activity. It should be noted that The Kantor Center and database is the only center, in Israel and abroad, that monitors and analyzes antisemitic manifestations worldwide, according to the same criteria, over such a long period of time that make a multi-year comparison possible. Nevertheless, we are aware of the possibility that not all the relevant data on antisemitic manifestations has reached us, because in many countries monitoring is not consistent or systematic, or because their databases are restricted to free public study because of States' rules, and because – as all monitoring agencies agree – not all manifestations are reported. Still, we do believe that information about the major manifestations has reached us.*

*The data and numbers presented herein on violent antisemitic cases are the result of a specific monitoring and analysis system developed by the Kantor Center team, using specific criteria: proven antisemitic motivation; counting a multi-event as one case; no exaggeration or diminishing the severity of the situation; distinguishing between violent, verbal and visual manifestations. Differences might occur between our published data on the number of violent incidents and those released by other monitoring communities and institutes. Monitoring communities and agencies present numbers of all types of antisemitic manifestations put together, violent, verbal and visual.*

*We are aware of the necessity to analyze antisemitism in a broad context. Therefore there can be no understanding of antisemitism without a solid background knowledge of the political, economic and social developments in any given country and in the international arena.*

### **B. Abstract of Main Developments in 2017**

The most disturbing finding, as in 2016, is the prevalent ominous feeling of insecurity among Jews in Europe, recently intensified by the murder of two women in their homes in Paris. The antisemitism atmosphere has become a public arena issue, intensively dealt with vi-a-vis a triangle made of the constant rise of the extreme right, a heated anti- Zionist discourse in the left, accompanied by harsh

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.20minutes.fr/paris/2184191-20171213-antisemitisme-2017-demenager-parce-juif>.

antisemitic expressions, and radical Islamism. In 2017, there was a moderate worldwide average decrease in antisemitic violent incidents of about 9% (327 cases compared to 361 in 2016, according to the Kantor Center criteria). It does not include yet the numbers of violent cases in France, that the Jewish security body is still elaborating. During the years 2006 to 2014, the violent cases worldwide numbered between 600 to 700 per year, while during recent year they number between 300 to 400. But it should be emphasized that some of the recent violent cases have been perpetrated more brutally, causing more harm. And most important - this decrease is overshadowed by what is seen by the Jewish communities as a dramatic increase in all other manifestations, many of which are not even reported, most notably harassment in schools (some Jewish pupils moved to Catholic schools) and in the social media. There are no common worldwide criteria to measure antisemitic events, and the communities' data differs from ours, despite very close cooperation. A certain corrosion of Jewish communal life has been noticed, and Jews suspect that antisemitism has entered a new phase: expressions of classic traditional antisemitism are back, and for example, the term "Jew" has become a swear word; there is still no clear cut answer to the questions, whether the rise of rightist anti-EU and anti-immigrant parties is causing more antisemitism, and whether the 2016 newcomers to Europe have raised the level of crime and antisemitism in 2017. Nevertheless, there were achievements in the struggle against Antisemitism, and we suggest adding three measures which we define as 3Cs – Cooperation, Coalitions and Combatting.

**C. Main trends: The last weeks of the year 2017** (and the first months of 2018) were characterized by a large number of antisemitic incidents worldwide. President Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, issued in the beginning of December 2017, was often used as a pretext for stormy demonstrations accompanied by attacks on Jews, by antisemitic slogans including calls for murder, and by the burning of the Israeli flag. These incidents do not necessarily originate in Muslim and Arab circles and countries but rather come from a variety of groups and circles, from most of the political spectrum, left wing groups included; and that manifestations of antisemitism are connected to a host of additional developments.

In most of the countries we have monitored the number of reported violent incidents was lower than 10 in each country, especially where small Jewish communities reside, for the same reasons we noted in 2016: Better security and intelligence, allocation of government budgets, less Jews with identifying signs on the street, the immigrants diverting right wingers' attention. But – and this is a major point – **this situation is not necessarily perceived in Jewish communities as a sufficient positive development**, because the presence of security measures means that they are a necessity, and mainly because it is overshadowed by the many verbal and visual expressions, some on the verge of violence, such as direct threats, harassments, hateful expressions and insults. These take place in working places, schools, universities, playgrounds, near Jewish homes and institutes, on football/soccer fields, during demonstrations in the streets, and all the more so in the social networks.

**Atmosphere:** The recent strengthening of the extreme right in a number of European countries was accompanied by **slogans and symbols which remind, not only the Jewish population, of the 1930s**, despite the significant differences

between the two periods. The electoral and political achievements of the extreme right should not distract attention from the fact that they are coupled with the rise in leftist antisemitism, that supports radical Muslim anti-Israeli attitudes expressed in antisemitic terms such as in the BDS and Antifa movements, and certainly in the UK Labor party led by Jeremy Corbin. The more time passes by, and World War Two and the Holocaust turn to be a distant past, the more the **commitment towards Israel and Jewish security** weakens, especially among the post-war generations.

**The main damage that antisemitism has recently caused is a certain corrosion of Jewish life:** once there are Jews who do not participate in Jewish traditional gatherings, or do not appear in the public sphere identified as Jews - the ability to live a full Jewish communal and individual life is jeopardized, and so is Jewish identity. A feeling of not belonging is also connected to the trust – or its absence - in the state's authorities, especially the police – which is of utmost importance. This corrosion is especially apparent in **schools:** Jewish schools limit youth activities, close or face severe security and budgetary problems. As a result, some Jewish pupils moved to Catholic schools, where the fees are lower and there are no Muslims.

**The gradual return of classic traditional antisemitism**, which has been mentioned in our former reports, is noticeable in the use of expressions and symbols, and contradicts the Catholic Church's efforts to abate antisemitism. It is noticeable as well in Muslim radical and theologically based antisemitism that adopted traditional and even Christian classic religious anti-Jewish themes. For example, **abusive language**, as used in insults, threats and open calls to harm Jews, has turned the term "Jew" in many languages and forms, into a negative adjective, in ways typical of former periods in history. "Jew" has become a swearword. The pejorative use of the words "Jew", "Jude", "Juif", "Feuj" and "Yahudi" is inseparable from antisemitic perceptions of Jews".<sup>2</sup>

**The Rise of the Extreme Right:** The Charlottesville, Virginia, events of August 2017 were followed by the elections in Germany in September and in Austria in October. Extreme right parties in Europe have declared their intention to distance themselves from their past and their former public image, and their **leaders publicly emphasize their positive attitude towards Israel, and their commitment to fight antisemitism**. But such public declarations do not yet correlate with reality. The rightist parties that declare pro-Israel and pro-Jewish stances hope for an alliance with Israel and the Jews against the immigrants, most of whom are Muslims, suspected of raising the level of antisemitism, violence and even terrorism. However, most of the Muslim immigrants are moderates, who are considered as potential allies by Israel and the Jewish communities in the fight against Islamism and the attempts to limit religious ritual rights.

**Achievements:** An increasing number of governmental agencies and others have adopted the **Working Definition of Antisemitism** in 2017, following its adoption by the IHRA (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance) that called upon its 31 member states to adopt it, each by its national institutes. To date, it has been

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.cco.regener-online.de/2010\\_1/pdf/jikeli.pdf](http://www.cco.regener-online.de/2010_1/pdf/jikeli.pdf).

adopted by Romania, Germany, Austria, the UK, Bulgaria, Israel, and most recently Macedonia as well as by the European Parliament.

The international movement to boycott Israel, **the BDS**, is increasingly encountering legal and financial limitations, on the ground that it violates laws of commercial equality and laws against discrimination. Decision makers of the major European countries are aware of the delegitimization trends and their implications, as can be seen from their statements that reflect a rejection of the movement to boycott Israel.

And finally, **a suggestion for a mode of operation** that might enhance achievements: **Cooperation** among Jewish bodies and organizations that deal each in its own way with antisemitism; **Coalitions** with groups and circles that suffer and struggle against discrimination and lack of civil protection; and **Combatting** antisemitism, once the first two Cs are achieved.

#### **D. General Analysis of the Main Trends**

**The last weeks of the year 2017** (and the first months of 2018) were characterized by a large number of antisemitic incidents worldwide, the majority of which were verbal and visual expressions. The general feeling shared by Jews, as individuals and as members of their respective communities, is that antisemitism has entered a new phase, and is rampant in most parts of the world, in many forms that are a cause for concern. The impression this accumulation of incidents left on the public at large and on Jewish communities in particular is, as reflected in many media channels, that president Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, issued in the beginning of December 2017, was used as a pretext for stormy demonstrations accompanied by attacks on Jews, by antisemitic slogans including calls to kill them off and by the burning of the Israeli flag. It should be noted, however, that these incidents do not necessarily originate in Muslim and Arab circles and countries that are concerned about this recognition, but rather come from a variety of groups and circles, from most of the political spectrum; and that manifestations of antisemitism are connected to a host of additional developments.

**The course of 2017** was more complicated and it would be worthwhile to distinguish between the first 10 months of the year and the two last ones, and evaluate them separately: A decrease in violent incidents, already registered in 2015-2016, continued along the year, though in a lower percentage. In most of the countries we have monitored the number of violent incidents was lower than 10 in each country, for the same reasons we noted in 2016: Better security and intelligence, more protective measures, allocation of government budgets, less Jews with identifying signs on the street, the immigrants diverting right wingers' attention. But – and this is a major point – **this situation is not perceived in Jewish communities as a sufficient development per se**, because it is overshadowed by the many verbal and visual expressions, some on the verge of violence, such as direct threats, harassments, insults, calls to attack Jews and even kill them en masse. These take place in working places, schools, universities, playgrounds, near Jewish homes and institutes, on football fields, demonstrations in the streets, and all the more so in the social networks. For instance: following a year (2009) with nine violent cases in Hungary, 90% of its Jews said antisemitism is a very grave problem,

an answer which indicates that the so-called non-violent manifestations of antisemitism determine their feeling of insecurity.

### **Numbers and their tendencies**

According to the Kantor Center findings, based on our criteria, a worldwide average 9% decrease in violent antisemitic cases was registered, from 361 in 2016 to 327 in 2017. (For their detailed breakdown please see the appendices).

The following are numbers and tendencies as monitored and published by Jewish communities and official governmental agencies. Most of them register all types of cases put together (including expressions on mail, social media, verbal insults, harassment, and violent incidents.)

- **Australia:** During the twelve month period, from 1 October 2016 to 30 September 2017 (the Jewish year), there were 230 antisemitic incidents logged by volunteer Community Security Groups (CSGs), official Jewish state roof bodies, and the ECAJ (Executive Council of Australian Jewry). There was thus a 9.5% increase in the overall number of antisemitic incidents over the previous year. Of note, from 2016 to 2017, assault, harassment, and vandalism decreased, but there were large increases in the number of incidents of graffiti and of posters and stickers.
- In the **U.K.**, 1382 antisemitic incidents of all types were recorded by the CST in 2017, a 3% increase on the 1346 incidents recorded in 2016.
- According to a report of the National Public Prosecutor's Office in **Poland**, which is available online, in the first half of 2017, and its data is not on antisemitism per se, there were 947 legal proceedings, related to racist, antisemitic or xenophobic incidents (for comparison: in the first half of 2016 – 863 proceedings, in the first half of 2015 – 848). The data indicate an overall increase of the number of all hate crimes.<sup>3</sup>
- Increase in the **Ukraine**, both in violence and all other types: our estimation is that the actual number of cases is higher, because Jews refrain from reporting. In the other post-soviet areas, the situation is equal to that of last year: a low average of cases, yet the attempts to exonerate and glorify nationalist leaders who actively cooperated with the German anti-Jewish policies of persecutions and murder during WWII, intensify due to the renewed nationalist aspirations in Eastern Europe.
- In **France**, according to a summary published by the Interior Ministry, antisemitic manifestations on the whole decreased by 7.2% from 355 in 2016 to 311 in 2017, but there was a rise in violent incidents in antisemitic manifestations (97 in 2017 against 77 in 2016) while violence against persons decreased from 42 in 2016 to 30 in 2017). We couldn't verify this information according to our criteria. According to Jewish community estimates, several tens of thousands, have changed their

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<sup>3</sup>The data concern all hate crimes including antisemitic incidents.



location inside France - an "internal Exodus" – In France and in Belgium it is hard to find a Jewish child in a public school, despite the heavy budgets that the governments in both countries have invested in security and educational programs.

- There was a decrease in violent incidents in **Norway**, (the Jewish community estimates there was an increase in overall types of events but they haven't published data), and in **Sweden**, where the level of violent antisemitism is generally low. A few severe cases, such as a call to slaughter Jews in Malmo, or a Molotov cocktail thrown at a synagogue in Hanukkah, lowered drastically the number of Jews carrying identifying signs.
- In **Italy**, reported antisemitic incidents in 2017 numbered 109 which includes 17 acts of Graffiti and visual material, a decrease from 130-140 in 2016. Antisemitic manifestations were displayed once again in Italian stadiums and streets by football fans, mainly supporters of Lazio team in Rome and Juventus team in Turin. In September a bill to ban fascist propaganda proposed by Jewish MP Emanuelle Fiano of the Democratic Party (PD) was introduced in the Italian Senate and a wave of antisemitic remarks and threats against Fiano consequently appeared on Italian social networks.
- According to official information released by the **German** government, an increase of all types of violent antisemitic events was registered from 644 antisemitic incidents in 2016 to 707 in 2017. Among them, 24 violent cases in 2017 compared to 15 in 2016. These numbers do not include incitement cases which bring the total number to 1435. Out of 1200 cases regarded as terror, 1000 were attributed to Muslim perpetrators.
- In the **U.S.**, according to the ADL report there was an overall increase in antisemitic manifestations from 1267 in 2016 to 1986 in 2017 although a sharp decrease was recorded in violent assaults on persons, from 36 in 2016 to 19 in 2017. According to the FBI, incidents on a religious basis rose most notably. The ADL audit reveals a 57% rise with 1,986 antisemitic incidents (compared to 1,267 incidents in 2016). The total included 1,015 incidents of harassment (41% increase compared to 721 in 2016), 952 incidents of vandalism (86% increase compared to 510 in 2016), and 19 physical assaults (a decline of 47% compared to 36 in 2016). The incidents of harassment included 163 bomb threats against Jewish centers (JCC's) which came mainly from an American Jewish teenager living in Israel who was later arrested. Discounting the [JCC bomb threats](#), reported incidents still increased by 43 % over 2016. Antisemitic incidents on schools and college campuses, mostly verbal incidents, doubled in 2017 for the second year in a row with 457 incidents, (compared to 235 in 2016 and 114 in 2015).
- Increase in **Canada**, for the fifth year now, of all types put together. The official final audit is still to be released.

**The public discourse** is increasingly found on social media, which magnifies and distributes every utterance and event in a matter of seconds. An ever-growing number of people actually run their lives according to them, and may become the recipients of hateful messages, even if a group on the social network consists of a small number of initiators: social media may create a violent atmosphere without being actually and physically violent. Extremist groups are activated by ever-changing manners of recruitment, **offered by cellular** communication: immediate gatherings in the streets, easily accessible information on getting weapons and ammunition, and about the groups' members and their plans. Yet the social networks are a source of radical stances, such as xenophobia and terrorism, spread through the cellular as if individually, directly to each person, not necessarily the extremists.

**The atmosphere** created by all these factors brings about a feeling of distress that prevails among Jewish communities and individuals, especially in Central and Western Europe, and recently in the US as well. However Jews consider violence as a part of the variety of antisemitic incidents in general, and they are seen to them all as one threatening reality. The security measures taken by police and army agencies do not lower the anxiety level among Jews, because their very presence signifies their necessity, and because they are further evidence that Jews are different than the rest of the population. Considering the special security measures for them as a kind of "positive legitimate discrimination" offers no consolation.

A major factor that raises this level of anxiety is the recent strengthening of the extreme right in a number of European countries, accompanied by **slogans and symbols reminiscent of the 1930s** that may signal a new rise of Fascism and of history repeating itself. It is the possibility of this continuity that frightens, as well as the intensity of the anti-Jewish sentiments expressed in a variety of ways, and especially on street demonstrations. This situation poses a question for the researcher, whether it is worthwhile – and possible - to check if there is a discrepancy between the feelings and reactions of Jews, and the actual amount of incidents. Benjamin Steinitz, Head of the Research and Information Center Antisemitism (RIAS) in Berlin said that there was a "discrepancy between the perception of the victims of antisemitic attacks, insults and the police statistics," citing the report of the "Independent Experts Antisemitism", which had been submitted by renowned scientists at the suggestion of the Federal Government in April.<sup>4</sup> The political achievements of the extreme right should not distract attention from the fact that they are coupled by the rise in leftist antisemitism, that supports the Muslim anti-Israeli attitudes expressed in antisemitic terms.

The question, how many Jews who did not attend synagogues on the High Holidays points to a wider problem: Once some Jews do not participate in Jewish traditional gatherings, do not appear in the public sphere identified as Jews, avoid mentioning their real name on the internet, do not openly support Israel, if communities run out of the financial resources given heavy security costs and not much is left for culture and education activities – the ability to live a full Jewish communal and individual life is jeopardized, and so is Jewish identity. Many Jews in the UK, for instance, are losing their traditional political home, because of the change the Labor party has

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.dw.com/en/anti-semitism-in-germany-jewish-life-under-threat-says-charlotte-knobloch/a-41967491>.

undergone, to which they feel they cannot be partners. As researcher David Rich has assessed, Jews regard the present stances of the labor party as no less than betrayal. Whether or not Jewish reaction to recent antisemitism is more intense than it could have been, given the circumstances – **the main damage that antisemitism has recently caused is a certain corrosion of Jewish life**, and the awareness of still not belonging to the local population.

This corrosion is especially apparent in **schools**: Jewish schools limit youth activity or close. “In the Paris region, there are virtually no more Jewish pupils attending public schools,”[ because] “a bad atmosphere of harassment, insults and assaults” has become a daily routine. In Belgium too, the Belgian League Against Antisemitism has documented multiple incidents that it said were rapidly making Belgian public schools “Jew-free.”<sup>5</sup> Antisemitic stereotypes, many of which are related to the Israeli-Arab conflict, are also heard in Netherlands' schools. Teachers report difficulties in teaching the Holocaust in some schools, being confronted with comparisons with the situation of the Palestinians, particularly in the Gaza strip. So it is in Sweden, where Jewish parents hesitate whether to leave their children in kindergartens.<sup>6</sup> Still, it should be mentioned that lack of sufficient budgets is also a reason for closing down Jewish schools, and that non-Jewish, and even Jewish middle-class parents send their children to Catholic schools, because of the number of Muslims in the public schools

In Germany antisemitic harassment of a 14 years old Jewish student in Germany forced his parents to pull him son from the Friedenauer Community School in March 2017 after four months of verbal and physical harassment, culminating in a brutal attack. The parents had chosen the school because of its multicultural student body, and the harassment came from students of Arab and Turkish background.<sup>7</sup>

**The gradual return** of traditional classic expressions of antisemitism, which has been noticed in recent years (and mentioned in our former reports), is one more source for concern. It is noticeable in Muslim radical antisemitism, where Christian traditional religious anti-Jewish elements are being adopted. A survey conducted by the AJC in Germany, for instance, showed that the religious dimension is on the rise even in schools, while another research found that 43% of abusive letters sent to the Israeli embassy in Berlin in the wake of the 2014 Gaza War contained classic antisemitic elements. It is of utmost importance to monitor and understand this return, first and foremost because religious beliefs are intertwined with **the cultural memory of antisemitism**. Such memory, deeply rooted since early centuries and the formation of Christianity in Western culture, is transferred from one generation to another, as part of local and universal traditions, and is therefore an underlying basic factor. Also, **abusive language**, used in insults, threats and open calls to harm Jews, has turned the term "Jew" in many languages and forms, into a pejorative one, in ways typical of former periods in history. “Jew” has become a swearword. “The pejorative use of the words for "Jew", "Jude" "Juif" or "Feuj", trivializes open

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.jta.org/2016/08/23/news-opinion/world/how-paris-public-schools-became-no-go-zones-for-jews>.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/>.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.timesofisrael.com/jewish-parents-pull-son-from-berlin-school-over-anti-semitic-harassment/>.

antisemitism, and “leads to negative and therefore antisemitic connotations in the terms for "Jews" which are inseparable of antisemitic perceptions of Jews”.<sup>8</sup>

**The increase in antisemitism disguised as anti-Zionism** and anti-Israelism is reflected in the media and in political utterances. The more time passes by, and World War Two and the Holocaust turn into a distant past, the more the **commitment towards Israel and Jewish security** weakens: former generations, who shared such a commitment on the grounds of their political and national convictions and of feeling indebted following WWII and the Holocaust, are aging or already off the public stage, not only in Germany and Austria. New generations are less committed and more critical and even hostile towards the Jewish communities and Israel, and are more open to listen to ideas, theories and ideologies, that accompanied the War period, being less aware of its consequences and lessons.

### **The Rise of the Extreme Right**

It still remains to be seen, whether the extreme right has gained strength in the USA, that will be manifested in the long run. **The Charlottesville events of August 2017** were characterized by the Heil Hitler salute, the swastikas on flags and badges, torches at night, slogans such as "Jews are Satan's children", "Blood and Soil" (reminding of Blut und Boden), "Jews will not replace us" (another Third Reich slogan), ugly caricatures in journals tellingly titled *The Daily Stormer* and the like, and so on. The new phenomenon in the American right, the Alt-Right, rightists who wish to be an alternative, added more anxiety. The Alt-Right members are not made of one cloth, and this is the underlying reason for their slogan "Unite the Right", yet the fanatics among them depict the US government as ZOG – Zionist Occupied Government; they dream of a pure race, and see the Jews as the ultimate other. But their threat that there would soon be many more Charlottesvillees has not materialized and no similar events took place in their wake. The demonstrations and marches did not carry anti-Israel signs, but rather had outright classical and religious antisemitic contents, as mentioned before, coming from circles within American society at large and not only from Muslim circles that joined groups in the radical left, Antifa and the Black Churches.

The extreme right in Europe has recently gained political power: following Charlottesville in August came the **elections in Germany in September and in Austria in October**, and raised still more reasons for concern. In Germany, Angela Merkel's coalition parties weakened, and the *Alternative fuer Deutschland*, again rightists who wish to be an alternative to the existing order, won a substantial number of the votes – 13% - and its representatives entered the Bundestag. In October the right-center party reached a smashing victory in Austria, and towards the end of the year managed to form a government together with the *Freiheitliche Partei Oesterreich*, the Freedom Party, formerly led by Joerg Haider – founded in 1956 by former SS members - a party with evident neo-Nazi roots, especially within its student fraternities. The election campaigns provide these parties with opportunities to present their ideological platform to the public, and the debates between their leaders and their opponents placed the racist and antisemitic discourse

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<sup>8</sup> [http://www.cco.regener-online.de/2010\\_1/pdf/jikeli.pdf](http://www.cco.regener-online.de/2010_1/pdf/jikeli.pdf).

in center stage - and antisemitic cases multiplied since the forming of the coalition in Austria.

These two parties, and other extreme right parties in Europe, have declared **their efforts to distance themselves from their past** and their former public image, and their leaders publicly emphasize their positive attitude towards Israel, and their commitment to fight antisemitism. But such public declarations do not correlate with reality: antisemitism is still a central factor on the popular level, under the level of the leadership, among students' fraternities and workers unions, in home gatherings and country side activists, who are these parties' voters. The director of the Mauthausen memorial site, where tens of thousands of high school students visit annually, concluded that today's youngsters would rather follow an authoritative leader and his principles, and not democratic ideas and personal freedom. Yet antisemitic sentiments are not restricted to popular strata: a large scope research conducted in Germany by Prof. Monika Schwartz- Friesel, showed how such feelings are deeply embedded in intelligentsia, media and even among decision makers. It should be noted that while left and center leaders in Europe have sharply denounced the Charlottesville events, right wing leaders did not, a fact that speaks for itself.

The anti-immigration agenda **coupled by national anti-European Union stances** were the key factors in the electoral success of extreme right and populist right parties. The immigrants that reached Europe during 2014-2015 in large numbers, coming mainly from the Middle East and Afghanistan via Greece and Turkey, come now, in lesser numbers, from central and northern Africa, via Italy and Spain. Therefore the questions now at the forefront are how to best absorb those who have already arrived, and how to check whether their arrival may have caused an increase in antisemitism and in escalating the tensions between immigrants and the local population, accusations made that they have raised the level of violence and crime. This question was answered negatively during 2016, since it seemed that the newcomers were busy being absorbed in their new surroundings, yet new surveys and research, such as the one recently conducted by the German government, pointed at rising levels of antisemitism, violence and even terrorism, among the newcomers, and the term "immigration resistance" is still in use. The public discourse concerning the presence of immigrants brings to the forefront expressions connected to xenophobia and racism, voiced especially by the opponents of immigration, most notably on the political right, not necessarily by the immigrants themselves. The rightist parties that declare pro-Israel and pro-Jewish stances, hope for an alliance with the Jewish communities and Israel against the immigrants, most of whom are Muslims, but such an alliance cannot materialize: most of the Muslims are moderates, against whom no ill wish is being harbored: on the contrary, they are considered by Israel and the Jewish communities as potential allies.

Antisemitic activity is generally perceived as originating in groups with an ideological agenda, that directs their members and dictates their way. Yet recently an increasing number of perpetrators can be described as **young hooligans**, bored and devoid of any ideology, frustrated because of unemployment, living at the margins of society despite the welfare policies of democratic states. Within the ranks of the elder generation of these groups, especially on the right side of the political map, ideologies seem to be less deep seated than in former decades, and more

characterized by shallow and repetitive slogans. Also, members of radical groups are not necessarily focused solely on antisemitism; they are rather against any "other", anyone who does not belong in their ranks ethnically, religiously or politically: their underlying principle is "**Group-based Hostility**", a term used by sociologists.

The recent strengthening of the Right cannot distract us from the antisemitism spread by the Islamists, the radical Muslims, an antisemitism mired in acute anti-Zionism and anti-Israel expressions, but with a distinction between the reality in Europe and that existing in the Arab and Muslim countries. In the Arab and Muslim world the situation is similar to that of last year, with upwards peaks whenever a Zionist/Israeli issue comes to center stage such as the Temple Mount, the Balfour declaration, UNESCO decisions, and President Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. There are new and surprising voices in the Arab and Muslim world, who publicly oppose antisemitism, conspiracy theories and libels against Jews and Israel, especially in the anti-Iran countries. Those who voice them are convinced that such antisemitic opinions are not only wrong, but that they are detrimental to the Arab/ Muslim cause.

## **Achievements and their Limits**

### **The Working Definition of Antisemitism 2017**

An increasing number of governmental agencies and others have adopted the Working Definition of Antisemitism in 2017, following its adoption by the IHRA, the international Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, that called upon its 31 member states to adopt it each by its national institutes. To date, it has been adopted by Romania, Germany, Austria, the UK, Bulgaria, Israel, and most recently Macedonia as well as by the European Parliament.

The adoption was accompanied by acts or statements underlining its importance: A Downing Street statement explained, at the end of December 2016, that the intention of such a definition was to "ensure that culprits will not be able to get away with being antisemitic because the term is ill-defined, or because different organizations or bodies have different interpretations of it".<sup>9</sup>

On 20 September 2017, the German Government unanimously adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition of antisemitism (WDA) during its last cabinet meeting before the general elections. The cabinet recommended that law-enforcement and other public officials use the official definition, in line with the recommendations of an independent group of experts. The directive states inter alia that "the state of Israel, which is understood as a Jewish collective, can also be the target of such attacks. "We Germans are particularly vigilant when our country is threatened by an increase in antisemitism,"

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<sup>9</sup> [http://uk.businessinsider.com/britain-new-anti-semitism-definition-2016-12?utm\\_source=feedburner&%3Butm\\_medium=referral&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+businessinsider+\(Business+Insider\)&r=US&IR=T](http://uk.businessinsider.com/britain-new-anti-semitism-definition-2016-12?utm_source=feedburner&%3Butm_medium=referral&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+businessinsider+(Business+Insider)&r=US&IR=T).

said Minister of the Interior, Thomas de Maizière, "History made clear to us, in the most terrible way, the horrors to which antisemitism can lead."

The Bulgarian government has appointed, following the adoption, a national coordinator on combatting antisemitism.

### **The Struggle against the BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions) Movement**

The BDS movement is still leaving its traces by fuelling an anti-Israel rhetoric, which dominates many media outlets, thus finding their way into the minds of the uncritically consumer of news outlets. The weakening of the "old" politics and the rise of new parties that lack any historic commitment to Israel help spread the BDS ideas.<sup>10</sup>

However, the international protest movement to boycott Israel is increasingly encountering legal and financial limitations, on the ground that it violates laws of commercial equality and laws against discrimination. Decision makers of the major European countries – Germany, the UK, France, the Netherlands and Spain, are aware of the delegitimization trends and their implications, as can be seen from their statements that reflect a rejection of the movement to boycott Israel.

In a number of Germany's major cities, such as Frankfurt, Berlin and Munich, it has been said that BDS uses language from the Nazi era: The deputy mayor of Frankfurt, Uwe Becker (CDU), submitted a bill that would ban municipal funds and space from being used for activities that aim to boycott Israel or to finance terror. Becker, a leading German political voice against antisemitism, said on August 9th, 2017, "The BDS campaign with its messages uses the same language as the National Socialists once used to express: 'Don't buy from Jews!' The boycott movement targeting Israel is "deeply antisemitic and should have no place in Frankfurt," he said.

European Parliament lawmaker from Italy, Fulvio Martusciello, included a stance opposing boycotts in the European Report on Competition Policy for 2016. This new anti- boycott stance could help fight against 'unfair collective boycotts' and according to Martusciello mark a clear opposition in European commercial policy to boycotts such as the BDS Campaign.

The congress of Norway's largest trade union, LO, voted in May to boycott Israel in order to bring about a Palestinian state. The vote was criticized by the newly elected chairman of LO, Hans-Christian Gabrielsen, as well as the chairman of the Norwegian Labor Party, Jonas Gahr Støre, and Norway's Foreign Minister Børge Brende.

As in previous years, the BDS movement was very active in Spain during 2017 and was supported by various local authorities. According to ACOM, a Spanish organization fighting antisemitism and xenophobia, more than 65 municipalities and public authorities have joined the boycott campaign so far. Spanish funding has been transferred to non-governmental organizations active in political campaigns against

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.inss.org.il/publication/bds-movement-european-leaders-mixed-trends-questions-future/>.

Israel, some of which are linked to terrorist organizations, promote antisemitism, incite to violence, and are involved in BDS. At the same time, however, the movement suffered defeats in Spanish courts which this year ruled against BDS decisions in more than a dozen municipalities, approved a criminal investigation into possible discrimination by organisers of a music festival who sought to bar the Jewish American singer, Matisyahu, and opposed “imposed unconstitutional restrictions on the freedom to hold personal beliefs and opinions.”

In Canada, the Judicial Board of McGill University also declared BDS to be a discriminatory and unconstitutional political program.

“We are opposed to BDS and strongly opposed to antisemitism, we will fight them,” said Dutch Foreign Minister Halbe Zijlstra during a meeting in January 2018 in Jerusalem with Israeli President Reuven Rivlin.<sup>11</sup>

### **Leaders' and Governments' Responses to Antisemitism**

Responses of national and international leaders, that send a strong and clear cut worded message to their audiences, are, needless to say, of utmost importance in the struggle against antisemitism. Some such messages had been issued by the present Pope, by Angela Merkel and Manuel Valls, and 2017 provided more such important examples:

Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven declared that “there is no place for antisemitism in our society,” days after pro-Palestinian demonstrators in the city of Malmo chanted “Slaughter the Jews,” and a Hanukkah celebration at a synagogue in Gothenburg was attacked by a gang throwing Molotov cocktails. Similar condemnation has been heard from political leaders in Germany, after demonstrators burned Israeli flags at a number of rallies: “The conflict is imported directly into the apartments via the internet or television,” Franziska Giffey — the Social Democrat mayor of the Neukölln district — said. “It’s a subject even in schoolyards.”

“Germany is responsible for the murder of at least 6 million Jews during the Holocaust,” Ines Pohl — editor-in-chief of the country’s *DW* broadcaster — wrote. “And no matter how much time has passed since, Germany will always have a unique obligation to fight antisemitism.” Pohl continued: “This is why burning the Israeli flag in Germany is utterly unacceptable. Those who have come to Germany seeking safety and a new place to call home must abide by this fact. There are fundamental values in German society that are non-negotiable.”

“In our country, antisemitism is alive. It is not new, it is ancient. It is not superficial, it is well-rooted. And it hides always behind new masks, attempts to justify itself through diverse reasons. This ideology of hate is pushing some French Jews to make Aliyah,” said Eduard Philippe, France's prime minister, using the Hebrew word for immigration by Jews to Israel. “It should be a spiritual choice but it pains all citizens of the republic when it’s a form of self-exile, made out of insecurity and fear.”

The responses of governments are not restricted to declarations: Budgets are allocated, legislation is encouraged, educational programs are introduced in schools,

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<sup>11</sup> <http://ejpress.org/dutch-fm-zijlstra-israel-opposed-bds-strongly-opposed-anti-semitism-will-fight/>.



conferences and seminars where important decisions are being reached take place. Yet there is an ongoing discrepancy between the well-intended efforts of western governments to contain antisemitism, and their implementation on the ground. An important 2008 framework decision issued to the 28 EU member states was answered by 14 only, to this very day. It seems that these efforts do not reach the perpetrators of antisemitism on the extreme left and right, certainly not on the radical Muslims circles. The way to bridging this gap has not been found yet, and is so far an unanswered challenge.

Therefore, more efforts are being made in new directions, and they began to bear fruits in 2017: the Israeli Ministry of the Diaspora developed an advanced tool to monitor antisemitism on the social media in a number of languages. Moreover, an internet site was launched, where the incitement on the web can be read in real time, updates and information are being provided as well as a possibility to report on antisemitic incidents. There is an attempt to create "a unitary and standardized tool" titled the Antisemitism Measurement Project, aiming at reaching a unified categorization of antisemitic manifestations that will be widely accepted. The Israeli Minister of Justice, Ayelet Shaked and the EU coordinator, Katharina von Schnurbein, continued efforts to control the incitement on the web, by obliging the major servers to take off offensive materials immediately after being identified by the new tools, or else be subject to heavy fines, as a German law now under discussion threatens. Now, at the beginning of 2018, it seems that Facebook is ready to abide by these new laws, says Shaked, while Twitter is not – thereby attracting inciters to leave Facebook and join Twitter.

**Two major conferences** on antisemitism and the proper ways to contain it took place in the beginning of 2018: One in Vienna University, in cooperation with the Tel Aviv and New York universities, and one in Jerusalem sponsored and organized by the Israeli Foreign Ministry. They will be reported on in detail in our next 2018 report, so let us end by quoting the concluding statement of the Vienna “An End to Antisemitism” conference:

"We, the 150 participating scholars of antisemitism from over a dozen countries who have gathered in Vienna in the February 2018 for the conference “An End to Antisemitism”, call upon government and civil society leaders to recognize the urgent need to confront the rise of antisemitism that threatens security and future of the Jews of Europe and the safety of Jews elsewhere. Not only is antisemitism a violation of the basic human rights of Jews, but it poses an acute danger to democracy and the very fabric of society.

Therefore we are offering a series of policy recommendations based on our deliberations and experiences in the hope that they will be used as a strategic guide and road map to confront and combat antisemitism.

We recognize that antisemitism did not begin or end with the Holocaust; but we pledge to continue the effort which began here and to devote ourselves to working together to create a society where “An End to Antisemitism” can finally be envisioned".