

Jewish communities in the European Union

Europe's Jewish population has been diminishing in recent decades, and a growing number of anti-Semitic acts and anti-Jewish violence have been occurring in recent years in the EU. In defence of its values, including respect for minorities, the EU undertakes and funds actions to counter anti-Semitism.

Diminishing Jewish population

The Jewish population in the EU has been declining. It [dropped](#) from around 1.12 million in 2009 to 1.08 million [in 2015](#), though it is difficult to give precise numbers as some countries do not collect ethnic data. The Jewish population in France, the largest in the EU, declined from about 500 000 in [2002](#) to 460 000 in 2015. Emigration, mainly to Israel, is the main factor behind the trend, which has intensified in recent years, among other things due to [harassment](#), discrimination and hate crimes against Jews.

Growing violence against Jews

Centuries ago, Jews were persecuted as a religious minority, while in the last century the belief that Jews were a threat to the state was a driving force behind the Holocaust. Today Jews are targeted mainly because of events in the Middle East, although some anti-Semitic sentiments also revolve around the Holocaust. According to a 2015 [report](#) by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), the main perpetrators of anti-Semitic incidents are neo-Nazis, far-right or far-left sympathisers, Muslim fundamentalists and the younger generation. The report states that anti-Semitic behaviour is mainly characterised by denial and trivialisation of the Holocaust, glorification of the Nazi past, anti-Semitic sentiment due to property-restitution laws and hatred because of Israeli policies. It includes verbal and physical violence; threats; insults of Jews going to synagogues; harassment of rabbis; repeated attacks on Jews wearing symbols of their religion; hate speech; anti-Semitic bullying in schools; and damage to property, including arson.

Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, encouraged [French Jews](#) to come to Israel after the killings of kosher supermarket customers in Paris in January 2015, four years after a deadly attack on a Jewish school in Toulouse. Many Jews have considered following his advice, although some eventually return. According to a [2013 survey](#) on anti-Semitism in eight EU Member States, 21 % of respondents experienced verbal or physical violence or harassment because they were Jews. The numbers may underestimate the reality, since [76 % of victims](#) of anti-Semitic hate crime do not report it.

Legal provisions to combat discrimination and xenophobia on the EU level

Article 2 of the [Treaty on European Union](#) sets human dignity, freedom, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, and the rights of persons from minorities, as EU common founding values. The [Charter of Fundamental Rights](#) of the EU declares in its Article 1 that human dignity is inviolable and must be respected and protected. Its [Article 21](#) prohibits any discrimination in the EU on ethnic or religious grounds.

A Council [Framework Decision](#) on combating certain forms and expression of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law was adopted in 2008, calling upon Member States to ensure that public incitement to violence or hatred on grounds of race, religion, descent, or ethnic or national origin are punishable. The [2013 Council conclusions](#) on combating hate crime in the EU called upon Member States to fully transpose the framework decision into their national legislation and implement it, and the European Commission to assess the measures established by Member States. A 2014 Commission [implementation report](#) pointed to shortcomings in the implementation, and the Commission committed itself to hold dialogues with Member States to ensure full and correct transposition.

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Authors: Magdalena Pasikowska-Schnass, Anja Radjenovic, **Members' Research Service**

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The [Audiovisual Media Services Directive](#) states that Member States shall ensure that audiovisual media services provided by media service-providers under their jurisdiction do not contain any incitement to hatred based on race, sex, religion or nationality. Equally, under the [Directive on Electronic Commerce](#), Member States may take measures to derogate from freedom to provide information society services for reasons of the fight against any incitement to hatred on grounds of race, sex, religion or nationality. Discrimination on the basis of religion is currently forbidden in the field of employment under the [Employment Equality Directive](#). A comprehensive legal framework to address discrimination on the grounds of religion and belief beyond employment ([Equal Treatment Directive](#)) is currently being discussed by the Council of the EU.

Fundamental Rights Agency

The EU's [Fundamental Rights Agency](#) (FRA, Vienna) is tasked with monitoring and researching discrimination and [anti-Semitism](#), and offering evidence-based solutions and suggestions. Its 2015 overview of [data on anti-Semitism](#) points to the lack of comparable data, but confirms that anti-Semitism is still of concern in the EU. In 2018, the FRA will conduct the second survey and gather [data on perceptions of discrimination](#) of Jews in 13 Member States (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom).

EU contribution to combatting anti-Semitism

Through different funding and programmes, the EU has contributed to countering anti-Semitism and has addressed religious fundamentalism and [radicalisation](#). In December 2015, the European Commission appointed a [Coordinator on Combating Anti-Semitism](#).

Code of conduct on hate speech on the internet

In May 2016, the Commission and four major IT firms (Facebook, Microsoft, Twitter and YouTube) announced a [code of conduct](#) on hate speech on the internet, to protect freedom of speech while putting in place barriers to hate speech and terrorist propaganda. An [evaluation](#) carried out in June 2017 shows significant progress.

Holocaust education

A 2006 FRA project on [education on the Holocaust](#) and human rights highlighted the role of school education on sites of remembrance, and the human rights perspective on the Holocaust. In 2010, FRA published a [handbook](#) for teachers and for Holocaust museum operators, establishing links between the Holocaust and human rights.

Europe for Citizens against stereotypes

[Europe for Citizens](#), an EU programme to raise citizens' knowledge of the EU, its history and diversity, has supported projects of the [CEJI - Jewish Contribution to an Inclusive Europe](#), a Jewish non-profit international organisation promoting a diverse and inclusive Europe at EU level. Its diversity education and training targets anti-Semitism and other kinds of discrimination. In 2016, it received a two-year [research grant](#) from the European Commission for the project '[Facing Facts! – make hate crime visible](#)' on reporting and recording of [hate crime](#) and speech, and training on these issues. The '[Engaging Jewish communities](#)' project focuses on monitoring hate crime against Jewish, Roma, and homosexual minorities.

The European Parliament

In September 2015, Parliament adopted a [resolution](#) on fundamental rights in the EU, concerned with the rise of anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial, as well as the growing numbers of Jews planning to leave Europe. It called on Member States and the Commission to adopt policies to combat all forms of racism, including anti-Semitism. Two months later, in its [resolution](#) on the prevention of radicalisation, it considered that the fight against discrimination, particularly Islamophobia and anti-Semitism, is complementary to the prevention of terrorist extremism. A June 2017 [resolution](#) on combating anti-Semitism calls on Member States to combat anti-Semitic hate speech in social media, to provide appropriate training for enforcement bodies, to promote education about the Holocaust and to collect reliable and comparable data on hate crime. In order to facilitate law enforcement in the Member States, Parliament calls on them and the EU to adopt the [working definition of anti-Semitism](#) provided by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance.

In February 2016, a European Parliament cross-party **Working Group on Anti-Semitism** ([EP-WGAS](#)) and the European Parliament **Anti-Racism and Diversity Intergroup** co-organised a [roundtable](#) on the outcomes of the first annual European Commission colloquium on fundamental rights, anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim hatred. More recently, the EP-WGAS [November 2017 roundtable](#) was devoted to the implementation of the June 2017 resolution on combatting anti-Semitism.