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Workshop resources:

- [Workshop booklet \(including agenda, registration list and further reading\)](#)
- [Event webpage](#)
- Find out more about Equinet and equality bodies [here](#). The full Directory of national equality bodies is available [here](#)
- [Link to subscribe](#) to the European Commission Newsletter on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life



Context:

Equinet, the European Network of Equality Bodies, brings together 47 organizations from across Europe, which are empowered to counteract discrimination as national equality bodies across a range of grounds including age, disability, gender, race or ethnic origin, religion or belief, and sexual orientation.

With antisemitism worryingly on the rise across EU Member States and beyond, the European Commission adopted its first ever Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life in October 2021. While it addresses EU Institutions and Member States, it will undoubtedly influence work against antisemitism in third countries as well. An important next step for the Strategy will be to ensure its effective implementation. The Strategy encourages Member States to develop national strategies by the end of 2022 and equality bodies may be involved in the development, implementation and monitoring of these. Collaboration between stakeholders will be key, including EU and national institutions, Jewish civil society, representatives of Jewish communities, and equality bodies. This online workshop therefore explored how to promote collaboration amongst all these relevant actors to achieve the successful implementation of the Strategy and to effectively combat antisemitism in Europe.

The workshop was designed for equality bodies to deepen their knowledge and understanding on combatting antisemitism, especially for those that had not actively worked on this issue. As institutions working against inequality and discrimination based on race or ethnic origin, and often with mandates including religion or belief as well, Equality bodies are well placed to contribute to the effective implementation of the Strategy. However, limitations in Equality bodies' mandates and powers (notably in the areas of hate speech and litigation powers) as well as external circumstances such as high levels of under-reporting, have posed an obstacle to their work in combating Antisemitism. For this reason, it is key that equality bodies engage and collaborate with representatives of Jewish communities and civil society to combat and prevent antisemitism.

This online workshop served as a unique opportunity to bring together equality body staff and Jewish communities and civil society organisations to encourage dialogue and the development of common strategies. The event aimed to:

- Discuss the role equality bodies can play in combating antisemitism at national level and share good practices;
- Discuss what tools equality bodies would need to further strengthen their efforts to combat antisemitism.
- Identify how equality bodies, civil society, national authorities and European institutions can cooperate to successfully implement the EU Strategy on combating antisemitism.

In particular, the last session of the workshop provided representatives of equality bodies and Jewish organisations from the same country the possibility to bilaterally discuss ways to enhance their cooperation in contributing to national strategies and more broadly on combating antisemitism at the national level.

In the Annex to the Workshop Report, please find a list of questions for follow-up in 6-months' time in order to assess the level of engagement between equality bodies and Jewish communities and civil society.

Setting the scene: combating antisemitism in the EU

Katharina von Schnurbein, EC Coordinator on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life.

In this first session, Katharina von Schnurbein introduced the [EU Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life](#) and gave a first reflection on the role equality bodies can play in its implementation. This workshop was the first event bringing together equality bodies, Jewish community representatives and Jewish civil society at the national level; one of the recommendations in the EU Strategy on Combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life. Katharina von Schnurbein stressed the importance of enhancing awareness, communication and cooperation between Jewish communities, associations and national equality bodies and their respective activities when it comes to combating, preventing and responding to cases of antisemitism.

Antisemitism is worryingly on the rise in Europe and beyond. The 2018 FRA report on the [Experiences and perceptions of antisemitism – Second survey on discrimination and hate crime against Jews in the EU](#) covering 12 EU Member States clearly points to the persistence and prevalence of antisemitism in Europe. In this context, it is very important to note that in the past decade we have not only witnessed an increase in antisemitic incidents, but also an increase in the number of antisemitic attacks, including lethal attacks against Jews, Jewish premises or those perceived to be Jewish spaces. Hate speech and antisemitism online is of particular concern. In 2021 we saw a seven-fold increase in French online antisemitic language and thirteen-fold increase in German online antisemitic language. Nine out of ten Jewish persons consider that antisemitism has increased in their country and four out of ten Jews have considered emigrating because they do not feel safe living in Europe. We have also seen a [rise of antisemitism online during the pandemic](#), including the resurgence of century-old conspiracy myths that fuel new forms of antisemitism and *repackage* antisemitism under new guises. Acknowledging that antisemitism can mutate and adapt to particular situations is therefore central to understanding contemporary manifestations of antisemitism in Europe and beyond.

The **European Commission** was determined to bring forward its first ever Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life following the [2020-2025 Anti-racism Action Plan](#). Stemming from both racial and ethnic hatred and religious intolerance, **EC coordinator Katharina von Schnurbein** stressed the importance of understanding the differences and similarities between racism and antisemitism: whilst there are of course many overlaps, it is crucial to recognize the specificity of antisemitism in order to effectively combat it.

The Strategy is founded on 3 Pillars:

1. Preventing and combating all forms of antisemitism;
2. Protecting and fostering Jewish life in the EU; and
3. Education, research and Holocaust remembrance.

These measures are complemented by the EU's international efforts to combat antisemitism at the global scale through the Commission's external action work. The Strategy includes 70 concrete actions in the areas of online hate-speech, ensuring the security of Jewish communities, fostering Jewish life, and promoting research, education and remembrance. In particular, antisemitism needs to be made visible: today, eight out of ten Jewish people do not report even the most serious antisemitic incidents to local and national authorities. Therefore, the Commission is determined to assist Member States to **improve and streamline their data collection methodologies** with regards to hate crime, hate speech, and incidents that may not qualify as such but nonetheless contribute to a hostile environment for Jewish

communities. This work will be conducted together with the **Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA)** in collaboration with Member States.

The role of Equality bodies:

In order for this Strategy to be effectively implemented, cooperation needs to take place at all levels of governance. **Equality bodies** need to play a key role in fighting antisemitism at the national level. There is room to significantly improve the cooperation between national Jewish communities and equality bodies through the EU Strategy in parallel with the [Commission's proposal for binding standards for national equality bodies by 2022](#). The proposal aims to strengthen equality bodies by setting standards for their functioning in all grounds and fields of life covered by the EU equality directives. The workshop was therefore also an opportunity to discuss the challenges NEBs and CSOs face in addressing antisemitism at the national level and collectively think of ways to overcome the current limitations in equality bodies' mandates to successfully combat antisemitism and foster Jewish life.

This is indeed timely in light of the [Council conclusions on combating racism and antisemitism](#) adopted on 4 March 2022 in which the **Council of the European Union** endorsed the Anti-racism Action Plan together with the Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life, **inviting Member States to develop national action plans against racism and national strategies on combating antisemitism by the end of 2022**. Enabling and fostering national-level dialogue is therefore essential to promote ownership at the regional and local level – without which the material conditions of Jewish communities will not change.

Session 1: Combating antisemitic discrimination and hate speech

This session focused on the manifestations of and responses to antisemitic discrimination and hate speech and the role equality bodies can play in combating these, depending on their mandate and powers. Three speakers from European-wide and national level Jewish organisations and an equality body shared their expertise: **Robin Sclafani**, [a Jewish Contribution to an Inclusive Europe \(CEJI\)](#); **Galina Elbaz**, [Ligue Internationale Contre le Racisme et l'Antisémitisme \(LICRA\)](#); and **Karl Moehl**, [Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency \(FADA\)](#), Germany.

Robin Sclafani, a Jewish Contribution to an Inclusive Europe (CEJI)

CEJI was founded in 1991 to train and support change agents to create inclusive environments where everyone can reach their full potential with all their diversity. CEJI's main activities are in **training, research, advocacy**, and facilitating **cooperation** between stakeholders. Their current projects include:

- [Belieforama](#): anti-bias training programme on issues of religion and belief supporting individuals and organisations seeking to make a positive long-term impact on religious diversity and belief issues.
- [Facing Facts](#): a training programme and network aiming to tackle the issues of hate crime and hate speech in Europe, specifically through training on and advocating for hate crime monitoring systems that expose overlooked hate motivated acts.
- [NOA \(Networks Overcoming Antisemitism\)](#): project aimed at tackling the problem of rising antisemitism in Europe by facilitating partnership and collaboration amongst major Jewish networks to evaluate EU Member State's policies across numerous areas, from education to

culture and security, and help them develop holistic national action plans to address and prevent antisemitism.

The work of CEJI focuses on all manifestations of antisemitism based on the structure of the [pyramid of hate](#), whereby bias, biased attitudes, and discrimination are understood to develop and serve as the foundation for a pyramidal structure of hate and violence. CEJI therefore sees hate speech as a cross-cutting issue throughout the various levels, including when it amounts to violence and criminal offence under EU law, as well as an expression of bias and biased attitudes. Hate speech can be harmful even when it's not *criminal*: it is harmful towards victims and to society as a whole. Hate speech perpetuates unconscious and conscious bias, hostility and hostile environments, and verbal and physical violence.

Unfortunately, there is not enough information on discrimination against Jewish people, primarily due to the **lack of sufficient equality data**. Lack of data and lack of confidence to report incidents fuels unconscious bias and is an obstacle to addressing antisemitism. This **unconscious bias is a significant barrier** to addressing and combating antisemitism at the national level, where **Jews are often excluded when thinking about discrimination** and the kind of information that is collected by monitoring agencies and equality bodies.

Equality bodies must consciously include Jewish persons in their work to address antisemitism. Through the project NOA, CEJI is currently compiling and benchmarking national policies based on existing international standards across 10 different policy areas: education, culture, intercultural dialogue, media, remembrance, hate crime, hate speech, religious freedom, security, and sport. **Some of these standards measure the involvement of equality bodies, particularly in the area of discrimination and hate speech.**

Some **relevant questions to equality bodies** in the NOA survey include:

- Are there equality bodies (or equality commissions) enforcing anti-discrimination law and issuing legal guidance on the application of anti-discrimination law concerning Jews and Judaism?
- Is antisemitism and Judaism or Jews explicitly mentioned within the mandate of the national equality body enforcing anti-discrimination law?
- Does the equality body take action to address incidents of antisemitism or discrimination related to the religious freedom of Jewish individuals or communities?
- Are there established partnerships with CSOs and Jewish groups to ensure better victim support?

Based on this research, the NOA project has identified the following **recommendations to equality bodies**:

- Equality bodies should use their unique position and independence to facilitate more systems-thinking and holistic approaches to the issue of antisemitism.
- They should act as facilitators of multi-stakeholder dialogue, to minimise counter-productive intra-community dynamics as well as inter-community dynamics.
- They need to build the awareness of their staff regarding the characteristics and specificities of antisemitism.
- They should help staff become aware of their own biases and build their confidence and capacity to deal with difficult issues.
- They must hold people, organisations, and institutions accountable, including political and public figures, through monitoring, research, recommendations, public statements, and reports.

Equality bodies therefore need to facilitate a more systemic, holistic approach to intersectional issues as well as tackling those issues that are undercutting different communities.

Galina Elbaz, Ligue Internationale Contre le Racisme et l'Antisémitisme (LICRA), France

LICRA is a non-governmental organisation founded in 1927 based in France fighting against racism and antisemitism. They are the first organisation fighting against antisemitism in France. What LICRA has observed in their years of work combating antisemitism is that the majority of complaints received from Jews and members of the Jewish community do not pertain to discrimination or discriminatory access to goods, services, employment, housing, etc., but rather to **criminal offences in relation to hate crimes and hate speech, particularly online**. LICRA has observed a change in contemporary expressions of antisemitism, from the structural discrimination of World War II to the **antisemitism of today, which predominantly manifests itself through criminal acts committed by private persons**; such as the propagation of antisemitic conspiracy theories, myths and prejudices amounting to hate speech as well as hate crimes. Physical attacks on Jewish citizens have increased over the last 20 years and figures on antisemitism have now undergone a significant and constant rise in France. Furthermore, LICRA has observed an increase in physical injury in occasions where Jewish persons wear recognizable signs of their faith, such as the Kippah. In order to make a useful diagnosis and find ways to curb these trends in antisemitism it is necessary to **generate data and statistics on antisemitic crime**.

Another worrying trend is the steep decline of France's Jewish population. France is undergoing a Jewish exodus that studies have related to Jewish communities' fear of antisemitism and the perception that their personal safety is not guaranteed by the French state. Currently, LICRA has received 526 reports concerning antisemitism, 70% of which qualify as criminal offenses.

Equality bodies need to play a leading role in combating antisemitism: for instance in schools, to ensure the implementation of **educational curriculum and training** to combat antisemitic prejudices fuelling antisemitic crime; to **ensure and enforce the distinction between free speech and antisemitic hate speech**; and to monitor and ensure the implementation of the **aggravating factor** in crimes motivated by hate.

Karl Moehl, Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency (FADA), Germany

Karl Moehl's contribution from the **German equality body** focused on how antisemitism is addressed from the perspective of Germany's anti-discrimination law and FADA's mandate, in particular how they receive or come in contact with cases of antisemitism and what actions they take in response. The protected grounds of religion or belief as well as race and ethnic origin are both mentioned in FADA's mandate, while antisemitism specifically is not. Furthermore, FADA's mandate is restricted to the areas of employment and services. That means that when cases of antisemitism are reported, FADA must make a distinction whether it falls under one protected ground or another on a case-by-case basis as well as to verify whether it falls under the areas of employment and service provision. Overall, FADA applies the [non-legally binding working definition of antisemitism developed by International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance](#).

In the past 10 years, FADA has only received 174 cases related to antisemitism. Of these, only 90 are actually covered by Germany anti-discrimination law and fall under employment and services. As equality bodies, the question that must be asked is: **why do such few cases make their way to equality bodies?** Numbers and statistics collected by other counselling services have shown that around **80% of cases fall outside the mandate of Germany anti-discrimination law**. The limitation of FADA's mandate is therefore an obstacle to addressing antisemitism. For instance, FADA does not currently have a mandate to address antisemitism in education, in penal law, social media or the internet. However, **these are the main areas**

where incidents of antisemitism occur. Some examples of cases received by FADA include; complaints of exams being held on Jewish holidays; reports of antisemitic incidents in schools by teachers and pupils; complaints about antisemitic language on social media; complaints on the treatment of Russian Jewish immigrants from the German state; reports of discrimination at companies run by the Catholic or Evangelical churches only accepting applicants of the same denominations; bullying and intimidation in neighbourhoods; reports of hate speech and violence in sports; as well as reports of antisemitic graffiti. Unfortunately, none of these cases are covered by the federal anti-discrimination law in Germany. The incidents that were covered by German anti-discrimination law include: reports of discrimination in access to services such as gyms and sports centres for wearing the Kippah; complaints about obligations to work on Jewish holidays; and complaints about being prevented to access certain spaces, such as nightclubs, with a Kippah.

From this picture, it is clear that FADA's **mandate is not sufficient to work against antisemitism.** For the moment, FADA orients applicants and complainants to other institutions that may be able to better assist them. However, as an equality body they are **politically active to advocate for a stronger mandate.** Furthermore, FADA is actively trying to reach out to the Jewish communities through a **communication campaign** to raise awareness on antisemitic discrimination and violence but also raising awareness as well as on Jewish faith, culture, life and the history of Jewish life in Germany.

Examples of the campaign can be found on the following links:

- https://www.instagram.com/p/CYi5m-sC19/?utm_medium=share_sheet
- https://www.instagram.com/p/CYi_Tqms6m7/?utm_medium=share_sheet
- https://www.instagram.com/p/CYjF6yeMo5h/?utm_medium=share_sheet

Session 2: Education and awareness-raising to tackle under-reporting

This session looked at education and awareness-raising on the manifestations of antisemitism, the legal framework and institutions set up to counter it, and the issue of under-reporting. Three speakers from the Fundamental Rights Agency, a national level Jewish organisations and an equality body shared their expertise: **Henri Nickels**, [EU Agency for Fundamental Rights](#) (FRA), **Marina Chernivsky**, [Counselling Centre for Antisemitic Violence and Discrimination](#) (OFEK), Germany, and **Lucia Gandžalová**, [Slovak National Centre for Human Rights](#).

Henri Nickels, EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)

Low statistics of reporting cannot be taken as indicative of the level of antisemitism in any country due to the issue of under-reporting. The 2018 [FRA report on Hate crime recording and data collection practice across the EU](#) provides an overview of the state of play for reporting of hate crimes in the EU and any systemic cooperation with civil society and community organisations to address under-reporting.

Furthermore, the findings of the [FRA survey on the Experiences and perceptions of](#) antisemitism point to some possible ways forward for equality bodies to effectively contribute to combating antisemitism at the national level. Amongst the 11,000 Jewish persons interviewed in the survey, 80% of respondents who experienced antisemitic harassment in the past 12 months did not report the incident to any authority or organisation. Half of these respondents stated that they did not report the incident specifically because

they thought nothing would change whilst the other half stated that they considered the incident ‘to not be serious enough’ or to lack the sufficient proof to document the event. 77% of Jewish persons interviewed stated they would not report even the most serious incidents of antisemitism. **Out of the 1,500 respondents who reported they felt discriminated against for being Jewish, only 11 reported the incident to a national equality body.** According to the FRA, whilst this is an extremely low number it is not atypical: other surveys have shown that **equality bodies receive fewer reports of discrimination compared to other channels of reporting, despite there being a very high awareness of equality bodies (61%) amongst survey respondents.**

Based on these findings, the FRA developed a series of **recommendations on how to address the high levels of under-reporting to equality bodies:**

1. **Ensure that victims of antisemitic discrimination are encouraged and facilitated to report incidents to authorities, equality bodies and third-party organisations.** This can be achieved through: **funding dedicated to informational awareness-raising campaigns** organised with the relevant ministries, equality bodies, and Jewish civil society. It is important to take into account that equality bodies often lack the necessary resources that would enable them to conduct surveys of the population or to raise awareness of discrimination amongst the general population or amongst groups at risk of discrimination. Furthermore, due to a lack of resources, half of equality bodies do not have local or regional level offices which makes them more difficult to reach by Jewish communities and can limit the access of rights holders to these services. This contributes to the lack of awareness of the existence and the functions that equality bodies can perform, for example in terms of providing support to victims in cases of discrimination, etc.
2. **Increase cooperation between equality bodies and Jewish organisations:** cooperation is often done informally and on an ad hoc basis despite there being many possible areas of cooperation. Equality bodies therefore need to be provided with the necessary resources to engage in long term, sustainable cooperation and dialogue with organisations and to fulfil their full mandates.
3. **Develop specific guiding principles on encouraging reporting of discrimination to equality bodies, in close cooperation with Equinet, equality bodies, and Jewish community organisation:** Setting up an effective system for referrals between equality bodies, police and public authorities, and civil society organisations to facilitate cooperation and channels for the exchange of information; ensuring accessible reporting channels, including third-party reporting and anonymous reporting; providing tailored outreach to people at risk of discrimination in order to raise awareness on the legal framework and reporting channels available. **The [FRA Compendium of practices on hate crime](#) provides some promising examples.**
4. **Transferring lessons-learned from activities facilitated by the FRA in the context of the [EU High Level Group combating racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance](#) to encourage reporting.**
5. **Ensure that equality bodies have the necessary means to fulfil their mandate in terms of financial and human resources, technical and operational resources as well as independence.**
6. **Foster independent research** on the experiences of groups and populations most affected by discrimination to **explore the different factors that may influence their decisions** when it comes to reporting incidents of antisemitism to equality bodies or not.

Marina Chernivsky, Counselling Centre for Antisemitic Violence and Discrimination (OFEK), Germany

OFEK is a non-profit organisation and counselling centre specialised in antisemitic violence and discrimination. OFEK was founded in response to the need to provide specific assistance for Jewish victims of antisemitic violence and discrimination, including psychological, therapeutical and legal support. Firstly, OFEK provides assistance to individuals after antisemitic incidents and attacks, providing case-related psychosocial support and legal advice. Secondly, they provide consultations and advise institutions regarding prevention and response to antisemitic incidents and attacks. This includes coaching and training for schools, educational institutions, and organisations for professional development.

One of the primary issues encountered in their work has been the enormous differences in the perception of antisemitism on the one hand and the historical understanding of antisemitism on the other hand, leading to a lack of recognition of Jewish persons' experiences of discrimination and antisemitic violence. Many Jewish persons they encounter are not aware that they should report cases of antisemitism to the police or that as victims they can access counselling services. However, they have observed an **increase in the demand for counselling**, and at the same time the willingness to report episodes of antisemitism has also increased amongst Jewish persons accessing counselling services. In their opinion, **mainstreaming equality** is important to combat antisemitism on all levels at all times, and not only when an incidence of antisemitism occurs. The Jewish community needs to play a key role not as a third party or as a victim, but as an important actor in the fight against antisemitism. **Equality bodies** need to equip communities with the necessary knowledge and skills to **raise their own voice and be empowered** to participate actively.

Having **third-party reporting in place by civil society organisations, with clear agreements with police services and public authorities facilitated by equality bodies, can promote the reporting of antisemitism**. Trust needs to be built together with the capacity of law enforcement authorities to recognise and understand antisemitism. Jewish communities need to feel secure that reporting the incident will not result in further victimisation or discrimination and that their accounts will be taken seriously. Victims need to feel safe to report first and foremost, and the system needs to provide victims with the security that it works and that their cases will be objectively and thoroughly addressed. For this reason, **civil society organisations can play a key role by bridging the gap between law enforcement and Jewish communities** in order to **make reporting more accessible** to Jewish persons. These relationships and **agreements between civil society and law enforcement can potentially be facilitated by equality bodies**, as Robin Sclafani from CEJI stated. Another example on the ways in which civil society organisations can support reporting of antisemitism when no third-party reporting is in place is by accompanying victims to law enforcement facilities, as OFEK does.

Lucia Gandžalová, Slovak National Centre for Human Rights

The Slovak National Centre for Human Rights has only received 1 reported case of antisemitic discrimination in the past seven years, demonstrating the extent of the issue of under-reporting. As part of their mandate, the equality body provides legal assistance to victims of discrimination as well as educational activities. In the previous year, education and training activities were conducted in 19 elementary schools and 14 high schools, as well as universities and professional centres. In 2017 the Slovak equality body provided training to the national counterterrorism unit and the Prosecution Office of Slovakia in a programme designed to improve knowledge of equality law and enhance capacity to

recognise and investigate hate crimes. The equality body is now also fulfilling the task of monitoring and analysing the state of human rights in the context of hate speech, hate crimes, and extremism.

Similar issues with under-reporting were identified by other countries, such as in **Poland** where the [national equality body](#) conducted a **study surveying the nature and scale of unreported hate crimes against members of selected communities**, including Jewish communities. The study, conducted in collaboration with the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), showed that only 5% of persons actually reported hate crimes.

Session 3: Cooperating for the successful implementation of the Strategy to combat antisemitism at the national level, Panel Discussion

This session was dedicated to discussing ways to foster cooperation between Jewish communities and equality bodies in order to ensure the successful implementation of the Strategy. Panellists represented both EU level policymakers and Jewish organisations and a national equality body: **Wester Meijdam**, [Office of EC Coordinator on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life](#); **Elias Dray**, [European Union of Jewish Students](#) (EUJS); **Ariella Woitchik**, [European Jewish Congress](#) (EJC); and **Monika Čavlović**, [Office of the Ombudswoman of Croatia](#), moderated by Moana Genevey, Equinet.

Panellists were asked two questions on **1) identifying and addressing barriers to cooperation between equality bodies and Jewish organisations at the national level** and the **2) necessary steps to overcome these barriers**.

The following **barriers** were identified by panellists:

1. Limited equality body mandates;
2. Lack of trust amongst Jewish communities in governmental organisations, including equality bodies;
3. Lack of awareness of equality bodies;
4. Perception that equality bodies are not engaging in antisemitism and therefore not seen as reference points for Jewish communities;
5. Differing level of engagement between equality bodies and Jewish communities according to national contexts.

As well as the following **potential next steps**:

1. Attend the virtual [Participatory conference on the legislative initiative on binding standards for equality bodies](#) on April 4th 2022 from 13:30 – 17:30 CET (registration available [here](#); contact information available [here](#)).
2. Refer to the [EU Strategy on Combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life](#) for initiatives and recommendations on how to effectively combat antisemitism.
3. Adopt the [non-legally binding International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance](#) working definition of antisemitism.
4. Engage with Jewish organisations to develop National Strategies to combat antisemitism by the end of 2022.

5. Increase outreach-, communication- and awareness-raising campaigns to inform Jewish persons of their fundamental rights, equality and antidiscrimination law and the work of equality bodies.
6. Tackle distrust by actively engaging in continuous dialogue with Jewish communities on their experiences of antisemitism.
7. Maintain and nurture dialogue with Jewish communities proactively.
8. Ensure to engage with young Jews and work with universities to implement clear and detailed procedures to prevent and handle cases of antisemitism, and promote [EUJS guide to Supporting Jewish Students](#), endorsed by European Commission Vice President Věra Jourová.
9. Take specific, targeted measures to combat antisemitism in all its manifestations and expressions.

Cooperation between equality bodies and Jewish communities at the moment differs from country to country. There are instances of very good practices of cooperation for instance in Italy – where there is very close collaboration between the equality body and the [Union of Jewish Communities of Italy](#) (UCEI); in Bulgaria, where there is a **memorandum of cooperation** formalising the relationship between the equality body and Jewish communities in order to plan events and activities; as well as in the Balkan countries. In other cases, Jewish communities report that they are aware of their respective equality bodies but do not collaborate with them for a number of reasons, including limitations in the equality bodies' mandate and pre-existing collaborations with other governmental bodies or agencies specifically charged with addressing antisemitism, as is the case in France and Austria. For the majority of cases however, there is no collaboration between Jewish communities and equality body counterparts or other governmental interlocutors.

From the perspective of young Jews, the 2019 [FRA Survey on Young Jewish Europeans: perceptions and experiences of antisemitism](#) showed that 45% of young Jews aged 16-34 had experienced antisemitism personally, meaning that almost one in two young Jews will have experienced antisemitism by the age of 34. In addition to this, 24% of the most serious incidents of antisemitic harassment against young Jews occur in the workplace or in universities. According to the Survey, young Jews aged 16-34 are the most likely to experience antisemitism and 97% of young European Jews do not believe their national governments are effectively combating antisemitism. These striking numbers point to the need to further strengthen the fight against antisemitism in a wholistic approach, specifically in the area of higher education and the workplace. Young Jewish students in higher education experience numerous forms of discrimination, for example when they are forced to take exams on Shabbat or Jewish holidays. The [EUJS has published a guide on how to support Jewish students](#), endorsed by the European Commission Vice President Věra Jourová. The guide is aimed at University administrators and Students Unions and contains a number of relevant recommendations for Jewish students across Europe. Thus far, cooperation between equality bodies and Jewish students has been limited, also due to the lack of awareness amongst young Jews of the work of equality bodies and the services they provide. In particular, like a lot of young people, young Jews are unaware of their rights. It is therefore important for **equality bodies to actively engage with young Jews** as a group at heightened risk of antisemitism, through for instance information, awareness-raising campaigns and trainings on both antisemitism and equality and anti-discrimination law to make young people and young Jews in particular aware of their rights.

All panellists stressed that the **limitations in the mandate of equality body** is a significant **barrier to cooperation** in combating antisemitism. [Few equality bodies have an explicit mandate in relation to hate speech](#), for instance. Furthermore, existing mandates in other areas such as anti-discrimination may not always be effectively implemented. Anti-discrimination legislation is also a powerful tool to addressing antisemitism and **equality bodies** are invited to engage with Jewish organisations in order to better

understand how **antisemitism in the workplace, in education, and in accessing goods and services** can be addressed. This cooperation is key to collect qualitative and not just quantitative data on the experiences of antisemitism of Jewish people to really understand the nature and manifestations of antisemitism at the national level. Lack of cooperation between Jewish communities can be tied to the perception of government inaction, and the lack of trust in equality bodies and the judicial system's ability to address antisemitism. Once again, the [Commission's initiative to strengthen equality bodies](#) by setting minimum standards for their functioning in all grounds and all fields covered by the EU equality directives could be a catalyst for enhanced collaboration with Jewish communities following the public consultation.

Some **promising good practices of equality bodies working together with Jewish communities** were shared by speakers and participants:

The **Croatian equality body** presented its experience in collaborating with Croatian Jewish communities. The Office of the Ombudswoman of Croatia has a mandate to cover hate speech and has been fostering its cooperation with Jewish communities for a number of years. This required a constant development of capacity, both in terms of human and financial resources, as well as strengthening their toolbox to respond to particular instances of antisemitism. One example is a [legal analysis published in 2018](#) relating to the trend of relativising fascist Nazi crimes, fascist apologism and a resurgence of fascist symbolism in Croatia from an equality and anti-discrimination law perspective. The Croatian equality body has also appointed a series of civil society organisations as contact points in the context of anti-discrimination work. Furthermore, every year the equality body actively reaches out to all religious communities of Croatia, including the Jewish community, to receive their inputs for their annual report. The Office of the Ombudswoman of Croatia also regularly participates in the annual meetings of the World Jewish Congress.

They face similar issues of under-reporting, which they actively aim to overcome by pro-actively reaching out to Jewish communities and, in their capacity, act in response to human rights violations and incidents of hate crimes. For instance, during the pandemic leaflets with antisemitic propaganda were circulated and the equality body collaborated with law enforcement to initiate proceedings on this episode. Similarly, for other instances of hate crime they initiated ex officio legal proceedings. The equality body is further able to assist the dialogue between Jewish representatives and other governmental interlocutors. They have done so in the case of criminalising fascist symbolism. There is therefore a clear willingness for cooperation that needs to be continually expanded to reach more members of the Jewish community.

UCEI, the **Union of Jewish Communities in Italy**, also reported a close and efficient working-relationship with the Italian [National Office Against Racial Discrimination](#) (UNAR). In particular, they recently jointly submitted a funding application for an EU project, bringing together UCEI, UNAR and the Italian national coordinator against antisemitism in order to identify three main targets in relation to the major criticalities for combating antisemitism in the Italian context, including under-reporting, addressing reports of antisemitism, and follow-up. This was an important exercise to identify and streamline responses for combating antisemitism amongst civil society, equality bodies, and government interlocutors.

In **Bulgaria**, the National Co-ordinator for Combating Antisemitism signed a **memorandum of cooperation** on behalf of the government with the World Jewish Congress and the Organisation of the Jews in Bulgaria “Shalom”. The memorandum aims to **promote joint action and a comprehensive approach** to preventing and combating antisemitism and improving the security of the Jewish community. Furthermore, the agreement **establishes a mechanism to develop regular consultations and cooperation** for the exchange of information, experiences and best practices.

Concluding Remarks

There was a **clear agreement** amongst speakers and participants that **equality bodies must play a bigger role in combating antisemitism**. To achieve this, we need enhanced cooperation between equality bodies and Jewish communities across Europe, in order to bridge the gap within and between different national contexts. For equality bodies to be able to play their role in combating antisemitism effectively, they need **stronger guarantees and standards for their independence, resources, accessibility, mandate and powers**. One of the key issues brought up throughout the workshop is that many of the antisemitic incidents fall outside of the mandate of equality bodies, for instance with regards to hate speech and criminal cases.

Antisemitism is a **structural phenomenon**, meaning that combating it requires **systematic, planned and concerted action** that is mainstreamed in equality policy and not only in response to individual or severe events. Speakers and participants pointed to the varying and mutating manifestations and expressions of antisemitism, such as the rise of online hate speech, as well as how seemingly moderate biases and stereotypes form the basis for discrimination and severe forms of hate crime. [The IHRA definition](#) can act as a key reference point for training on how to recognise all forms of antisemitism.

Data is key to understanding and rendering visible all of the expressions of antisemitism. In order to collect sufficient data, **equality bodies need to have the sufficient human and financial resources**. The [Council conclusions on combating racism and antisemitism](#) adopted on March 4th 2022 present a **clear commitment by EU Member States** to support equality bodies in their work. This can serve as a starting point to start discussions with respective national governments to address the gaps and limitations to equality bodies’ resources. Furthermore, in order address the issue of **under-reporting**, equality bodies need **to build and nurture a relationship of trust** with Jewish communities, increase awareness of their rights and remedies, and address the perceived lack of effective action against antisemitism.

Equality bodies need to function as independent bridge builders between national authorities and Jewish communities. We have to acknowledge that equality bodies have a unique position and can act as a bridge between CSOs and governments. For instance, they can:

- Provide legal guidance, advice and assistance.
- Raise awareness about the law and remedies.
- Contribute to social change, including through campaigns and their communication.
- Provide training, for instance to law enforcement.
- Advise governments.
- Conduct research, data collection and monitoring activities.
- Work in partnership and advise duty bearers.
- Work in partnership with CSOs.

EU Funding is available to promote cooperation between civil society actors and national equality bodies. The EU currently has the **biggest funding envelope on fundamental rights**, so members of civil society organisations, Jewish communities and equality bodies are encouraged to take advantage of these opportunities.

For those interested in receiving information on EU activities on antisemitism, please sign up to the Newsletter [here](#) with regular updates, including funding opportunities.

Reading Material

Documents

- EU Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish Life (2021 – 2030): https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/eu-strategy-on-combating-antisemitism-and-fostering-jewish-life_october2021_en.pdf
- Factsheet on the EU Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/factsheet-eu-strategy-on-combating-antisemitism-and-fostering-jewish-life_october2021_en.pdf
- European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights report “Experiences and perceptions of antisemitism – Second survey on discrimination and hate crime against Jews in the EU”: <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2018/experiences-and-perceptions-antisemitism-second-survey-discrimination-and-hate>
- Handbook for the practical use of the IHRA working definition of antisemitism: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/d3006107-519b-11eb-b59f-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>
- Non-legally binding working definition of antisemitism by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance: https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/sites/default/files/press_release_document_antisemitism.pdf

Websites

- Combating antisemitism website: https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/racism-and-xenophobia/combating-antisemitism_en

Other practical tools

- EU Coordinator on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life: https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/racism-and-xenophobia/combating-antisemitism/coordinator-combating-antisemitism-and-fostering-jewish-life_en
- Q&A on the EU Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda_21_4991

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Annex: Questions for follow-up to equality bodies

These follow-up questions are intended to informally evaluate progress in equality bodies' work on combating antisemitism and their collaboration with Jewish communities and civil society. The questions will be sent out to Equinet members in Q4 of 2022.

- As an equality body, has your organisation been involved in the development of a national action plan against antisemitism?
- Has your organisation been involved in fulfilling the recommendations to Member States of the EU Strategy on Combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life?
- Has your organisation initiated, increased or strengthened links with Jewish communities and Jewish civil society organisations in the past 12 months? If yes, please briefly describe any and all experiences and good practices.
- Has your organisation explored or discussed ways to enhance reporting of antisemitic incidents and increase access to justice for Jewish persons, including in the presence of mandate limitations (for instance by coordinating third-party reporting mechanisms or collaborating closely with law enforcement authorities to refer antisemitic incidents)?

Equinet, European Network of Equality Bodies

Equinet is a membership organisation bringing together 47 equality bodies from across Europe. Equinet promotes equality in Europe by supporting and enabling the work of national equality bodies. It supports equality bodies to be independent and effective as valuable catalysts for more equal societies.

Equality bodies are champions for the core EU value of equality and defenders of the right to non-discrimination. They are public organisations assisting victims of discrimination, monitoring and reporting on discrimination issues, and contributing to an awareness of rights and a societal valuing of equality. They are legally required to do so in relation to one, some, or all of the grounds of discrimination covered by European Union (EU) law – gender, race and ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability. By engaging closely with policy makers and partners at EU and international level, Equinet promotes the work of equality bodies through relevant publications, as well as participation at conferences and other meetings.

For more information, please see our website: www.equineteurope.org

Check the directory of Equality Bodies for a list of Equinet members: <https://equineteurope.org/what-are-equality-bodies/european-directory-of-equality-bodies/>