



Kozerod O. V.

## MODERN EUROPEAN POLICY ON PROTECTION AND FOSTERING JEWISH LIFE



**NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES OF UKRAINE**  
**Kuras Institute of Political and Ethnic Studies**

**Kozerod O. V.**

**MODERN EUROPEAN POLICY  
ON PROTECTION AND FOSTERING JEWISH LIFE**

**Monograph**



**Kyiv  
2025**

UDC: 930 (477.83/.86); 161.2:316.73.32.94 C 57  
K 57

*Recommended for publication by the Academic Council of Kuras Institute of Political  
and Ethnic Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine  
(Report № 7 since of 19 December 2024)*

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**K 57 Kozerod O. V.** Modern European policy on protection and fostering Jewish life. Kyiv: Kuras Institute of Political and Ethnic Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, 2025, 184 p.

ISBN 978-617-14-0368-0

The monograph contains the results of the author's research on the European Union's (EU) policy regarding the "Jewish question", as well as the characteristics of contemporary Jewish communities in Europe. It analyzes current issues related to the development and implementation of the EU Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life (2021–2030).

It is argued that the development of new legislation to combat antisemitism, based on the definition of antisemitism proposed by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), as well as the implementation of effective measures to support the development of Jewish life (the term "Jewish life" refers to the development of the traditional way of life of the Jews), are important tasks not only for the EU but for the entire civilized world. European efforts in these areas can serve as a benchmark and model for the United States, Canada, and other countries where such practices are just beginning to be established.

The author also analyzes the challenges of combating antisemitism in the EU and the reasons for the increasing emigration of Jews from the European continent. The monograph is intended for political scientists, historians, civil servants from EU countries and EU candidate countries, students of humanities, and all those interested in Jewish Studies.

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ISBN 978-617-14-0368-0

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DOI: 10.53317/978-617-14-0368-0 Studies of the NAS of Ukraine, 2025

**НАЦІОНАЛЬНА АКАДЕМІЯ НАУК УКРАЇНИ**  
**Інститут політичних і етнонаціональних досліджень**  
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**СУЧАСНА ЄВРОПЕЙСЬКА ПОЛІТИКА ЗАХИСТУ  
ТА РОЗВИТКУ ЄВРЕЙСЬКОГО ЖИТТЯ**

**Монографія**



Київ  
2025

UDC: 930 (477.83/.86); 161.2:316.73.32.94 С 57  
К 57

*Рекомендовано до друку вченою радою Інституту політичних і  
етнонаціональних досліджень ім. І. Ф. Кураса НАН України  
(протокол № 7 від 19 грудня 2024 р.)*

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**К 57 Козерод О. В.** Сучасна європейська політика захисту та розвитку єврейського життя. Київ: Інститут політичних і етнонаціональних досліджень ім. І. Ф. Кураса НАН України, 2025, 184 с.

ISBN 978-617-14-0368-0

Монографія містить результати дослідження автором політики Європейського Союзу (ЄС) щодо "єврейського питання", а також особливостей життя сучасних єврейських громад у Європі. Проаналізовано актуальні проблеми розроблення й упровадження Стратегії ЄС щодо боротьби з антисемітизмом та сприяння єврейському життю (2021–2030).

Аргументовано, що розроблення нового законодавства для боротьби з антисемітизмом на основі визначення антисемітизму, запропонованого Міжнародним альянсом пам'яті жертв Голокосту (IHRA), а також упровадження дієвих заходів зі сприяння розвитку єврейського життя (терміном "єврейське життя" називають традиційний спосіб життя євреїв) є важливими завданнями не лише для ЄС, а й для всього цивілізованого світу. Європейські зусилля в означених напрямках можуть слугувати орієнтиром і взірцем для Сполучених Штатів, Канади та інших країн, де відповідні практики тільки започатковуються. Автор також аналізує проблеми боротьби з антисемітизмом у ЄС та причини посилення еміграції євреїв з європейського континенту.

Монографія призначена для політологів, істориків, державних службовців країн ЄС та країн-кандидатів на вступ до ЄС, студентів гуманітарних спеціальностей та всіх, хто цікавиться юдаїкою.

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ISBN 978-617-14-0368-0

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DOI: 10.53317/978-617-14-0368-0 досліджень ім. І. Ф. Кураса НАН України, 2025

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## INTRODUCTION

The development of modern Jewish communities in Europe is one of the important research problems currently being studied by many research centers worldwide. However, there are still numerous topics that remain unexplored.

One of the least-researched issues is the contemporary policies of European governments and institutions regarding the "Jewish question", as well as the realities of combating phenomena such as anti-Semitism, which has become widespread in Europe.

A significant part of our research is focused on analyzing the decision-making processes of European governments regarding the "Jewish question", as well as the nuances and complexities of the political struggle surrounding this issue. The daily lives of various communities across European countries and their struggle for equal rights in practicing Judaism have also been subjects of research in this monograph. The fight against anti-Semitism and various forms of xenophobia is traditionally an integral part of the lives of contemporary Jewish communities, and we would like to draw attention to this issue. Examining the existing legal framework in Europe related to the lives of European Jewry and the latest legal and political achievements in combating anti-Semitism has become another crucial task for the author of this monograph.

The right of Jews to live safely in Europe, practice their religion freely, and adhere to their national traditions has sadly been put into question. This is one of the reasons why the questions raised and conclusions drawn in this work can contribute to finding solutions to the current situation.

Each European country determines its policies towards national minorities, including the Jewish community, in its own way. Ukraine is no exception, where certain norms have been established for the relations between representatives of national minorities and the government, as well as the perception of Jewish individuals.

Many authors claim that the best and worst aspects of Ukrainian-Jewish relations belong to the distant past. Indeed, the Jewish community



in the country is rapidly aging, with the main focus being on providing social and patronage assistance to the elderly members of the Jewish community in the cities of the country throughout Ukraine's years of independence. However, this matter is not entirely straightforward, and the Ukrainian government possesses various tools capable of addressing a range of issues related to the presence of Jews in Ukraine. An example of this is the policy of the Polish government, which actively restores Jewish heritage sites within its territory, reviving neglected synagogues, including those in small towns, intensifying the restitution process, and creating legislative frameworks to protect the Jewish community. In recent years, the Polish government has invited residents of Israel with any historical ties to their country to resettle in Poland, issuing 20,000 passports to Israelis. Similarly, the actions of the Spanish and Portuguese governments, which have apologized for the tragic events related to the expulsion of Jews from their territories and invited Jews to return, are also an example of this approach. Studying recent events in the lives of European Jews suggests that the situation concerning national minorities largely depends on the position of the government, which must be based on modern political trends in this area. Today, a number of European governments operate under a single program, focusing on the necessity of combating anti-Semitism and protecting Jewish communities, which unfortunately have become targets for various extremist and terrorist groups.

The guiding documents today include the definition of anti-Semitism provided by the International Holocaust Alliance and the "Catalog of Policies to Combat Anti-Semitism" adopted at the Vienna Conference on Anti-Semitism in November 2018. For many years, unfortunately, the Ukrainian government has been under the influence of Russia and has been hesitant to take steps towards actively combating anti-Semitism. In particular, Ukraine's accession to the "International Alliance for the Memory of the Holocaust" has been repeatedly delayed, and the government has not accepted the organization's definition of anti-Semitism, despite these steps being taken by many European governments. Despite this, recent events, including the participation of Ukraine's Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Vienna conference, give

hope for positive changes. The need for changes in the field of inter-ethnicinter-ethnic policies in Ukraine has long been apparent, and the government should take the first step in this direction. Tolerance and a caring attitude towards national minorities are important and integral characteristics of the Ukrainian people, and this should be reflected at the state level.

The author's main objective has been to examine the policies of the United Kingdom government regarding the Jewish community in the country, which has a population of 300,000, serving as a model in contemporary Europe. Additionally, the author has conducted an analysis of recent events in the lives of Jewish communities in Austria, Belgium, Spain, Monaco, the Netherlands, Germany, Poland, France, the Czech Republic, Switzerland, and Sweden. A significant research task of this monograph has been the study of the legacy of the most prominent contemporary Jewish philosophers in Europe, assistance to European Jewish communities, the support of Ukrainian Jews during the period of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2014, the development of Jewish education in Europe, the fight against anti-Semitism, the influence of the pro-Palestinian lobby on the lives of contemporary European communities, and other related topics.

## SECTION I

### MODERN EU POLICY REGARDING THE "JEWISH QUESTION"

#### ***European Commission strategy on combating anti-Semitism and promoting Jewish communities: key features and significance***

After 2015, combating anti-Semitism became one of the pressing issues in the European Union. Mass terrorist attacks against the Jewish community in France, a surge in political anti-Semitism after 2014, the gradual increase in anti-Semitic sentiments among refugees arriving in the EU, and other factors compelled the EU authorities to pay attention to the problem of anti-Semitism. Starting in 2015, the European Union worked on establishing institutions and consolidating its efforts under the leadership of Jewish communities in combating anti-Semitism and protecting Jewish communities. Over the course of five years, painstaking work was done in this direction, leading to a new phase – the creation of a special EU strategy that will serve as a road map for the policies of the 27 member countries of the European Union for the period from 2021 to 2030. The work on the strategy was carried out over a year and concluded in October 2021, on the eve of the International Holocaust Remembrance and anti-Semitism Resistance Forum in Malmö, Sweden [*Malmö International Forum...*, 2021].

On October 5, the European Commission presented its first-ever Strategy on Combating anti-Semitism and Promoting Jewish Life until 2030. The strategy focuses on raising awareness of Holocaust issues, ensuring the security of Jewish communal facilities, monitoring anti-Semitism, and cooperation with the State of Israel within joint initiatives. The authors of the 26-page document, who worked on it for a year, identified three main goals: preventing anti-Semitism in all its forms, protecting and developing Jewish life in the EU, and promoting research, education, and the preservation of Holocaust memory. "We want Jewish life to flourish again in the hearts of our communities. This is how it should be. The strategy we are presenting today is a gradual change in how we respond to anti-Semitism. Europe can only thrive when its

Jewish communities feel safe and thrive", said Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, presenting the document [*Commission presents...*, 2021].

Within the "EU Strategy on Combating anti-Semitism and Strengthening Jewish Life (2021–2030)", a series of specific measures are proposed. To combat anti-Semitism, the Commission will initiate the creation of a network of organizations across Europe that will monitor anti-Semitism on the internet and take necessary actions afterward. Moreover, in order to prevent online sales of Nazi-themed products, work will be conducted with retailers [*Commission presents...*, 2021].

In 2022, the EU will allocate 24 million euro for the enhanced protection of Jewish facilities, as well as initiate programmes to raise Europeans' awareness of Jewish life and culture in Europe. Additionally, the EU will strengthen its cooperation with Israel in the fight against anti-Semitism and the revival of Jewish heritage. To oversee these efforts, the Commission's Working Group on Combating anti-Semitism will transform into a permanently operating body. Reports on the progress of the work will be published in 2024 and 2029. "Anti-Semitism is incompatible with EU values and our European way of life. This strategy, the first of its kind, is our commitment to tackling the problem in all its forms and ensuring the future of Jewish life in Europe and beyond", noted Margaritis Schinas, Vice-President of the Commission for Promoting the European Way of Life, who will oversee the implementation of the Strategy [*EU releases first-ever...*, 2021].

One of the points of the Strategy is dedicated to combating anti-Semitism in all areas of European policy. "Combating anti-Semitism is a complex task. Its multifaceted manifestations and prevalence in the social and political spectrum require comprehensive responses, starting from the creation of a strong legal framework, properly enforced, to aspects of security, policy, education, and integration, and these are just some of them. Thus, the Commission will systematically take into account the fight against anti-Semitism in the development of policies, legislation, and funding programmes and invites other EU institutions to cooperate..." note the document's authors [*EU Strategy on combating...*, 2021].

In the Strategy, it is also emphasized that targeted actions to combat anti-Semitism and discrimination based on nationality will be carried out

through the "Citizens, Equality, Rights, and Values" (CERV) program, which has a budget of 1.55 billion euro. Furthermore, financial support for the Strategy will be provided through EU programmes such as Horizon Europe, Creative Europe, Erasmus+, the Justice Program, the Internal Security Fund, the Neighborhood, Development, and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI), cohesion policy funds, and the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) [*EU Strategy on combating...*, 2021].

Within this Strategy, the organization of an annual civil society forum on combating anti-Semitism is also envisaged, bringing together representatives of the European Commission and Jewish communities. Additionally, the European Commission will support the efforts of member states in developing and implementing their national strategies to combat anti-Semitism and discrimination through the Technical Support Instrument and will assess this work by the end of 2023.

EU member states are recommended to develop national strategies to combat anti-Semitism by the end of 2022 or incorporate relevant measures into their national plans to combat racism, providing adequate funding for their implementation. Member states are also encouraged to adopt and use the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism and urge local authorities, regions, cities, and other institutions and organizations to do the same. In this document, the European Commission called for close cooperation with Europol, including its EU Internet Referral Unit, to combat online anti-Semitic terrorism by taking action against groups and individuals disseminating terrorist content on the internet [*EU Strategy on combating...*, 2021].

The document also proposes measures for the development of Jewish life in the EU, including strengthening the connection between Jewish tradition of planting trees on Tu B'Shvat and the EU's commitment to plant an additional 3 billion trees as part of biodiversity preservation strategy. It supports the exchange of best practices through the European Integration Network on informing migrants about EU values, including the fight against anti-Semitism. It ensures, through political and legal measures, that religious groups or communities, including Jews, can live in accordance with their religious and cultural traditions. It promotes the exchange of practices

related to Jewish life and traditions between government authorities and Jewish communities, including publicly commemorating days significant to the history of the Jewish people and funding projects and campaigns [*EU Strategy on combating...*, 2021].

The creation of this programmatic document was a significant milestone in the development of the European Union's policy regarding Jewish communities. The most crucial decision in this regard was the transformation of the Commission's Working Group on Combating anti-Semitism into a permanently operating EU management body that will coordinate efforts to combat anti-Semitism in all 27 countries of the European Union. Additionally, the European Commission's support for the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism will be a new impetus in the EU countries' policies regarding the promotion and recognition of this definition by a greater number of European countries.

It should be noted that after the publication of the Strategy, some leaders of Jewish communities criticized it for lacking solutions to urgent problems they face in everyday life and for not addressing religious freedoms. "They took the easy way out and did not act correctly", said Rabbi Menachem Margolin, head of the European Jewish Association, on October 12 [*EU Plan to fight anti-semitism...*, 2021]. In his opinion, the problem lies in the fact that the Strategy does not mention the recent bans on ritual animal slaughter introduced in many EU countries, including Belgium in 2019, which is a necessary condition for the production of kosher and halal meat. Ritual animal slaughter is currently prohibited in Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, and Slovenia. "The European Commission couldn't solve this problem to avoid conflicts with countries where bans and attempts to ban exist", Margolin noted [*EU Plan to fight anti-Semitism...*, 2021]. "We welcome these plans, but it's hard to take the plans for the development of Jewish life in Europe seriously if they do not address a serious threat to this Jewish life". Joel Mergui, President of France's major Jewish organization "Consistoire", also pointed out the problem of bans on non-medical circumcision of boys in some European organizations. "The Commission is making the plan a hollow set of good theoretical statements without any further action possibilities" [*EU Plan to fight anti-Semitism...*, 2021], said Benjamin Jacobs, Chief Rabbi of the Netherlands.

### ***Modern issues of Jewish identity in Europe***

The issue of Jewish identity in Europe is one of the pressing matters in contemporary Jewish studies. The rise in anti-Semitism and significant changes in the structure of European Jewish communities, driven by Jewish emigration to other continents, have led to substantial transformations in Jewish identity in recent years. In 2018, a large-scale study by the Institute for the Study of Jewish Politics, titled "European Jewish identity: Mosaic or Monolith? An empirical assessment of eight European countries", authored by Dr. David Graham, shed light on whether there is such a thing as "European Jewish identity" and, if so, what it entails.

The research compares the European landscape with the two main centers of global Jewry – the United States and Israel – and explores the nature and composition of Jewish identity across Europe, focusing on three main pillars: religion, a sense of belonging to the Jewish people, and behavioral peculiarities that constitute Jewish identity.

The study became possible due to a survey conducted in 2012 by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA). It examined the Jewish experience and perceptions of anti-Semitism in nine EU member states: Belgium, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Romania, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. In addition to collecting data on anti-Semitism, the research examined various aspects of "Jewishness" among the respondents to understand how different types of Jews perceive anti-Semitism. The primary focus of this research is the data gathered about Jewishness, allowing for direct comparisons of life in different European Jewish communities.

The authors of the report concluded that there is no monolithic European Jewish identity today. It varies in each country, highlighting the following key differences: In Belgium, Jewish parents are more likely to send their children to Jewish schools, leading to unique polarization between religious and non-religious Jews.

In France, Jews demonstrate the strongest feelings of being part of the Jewish people and also the highest emotional attachment to Israel.

Germany's Jewish community has the highest proportion of Jews born abroad and, along with Hungary, represents the youngest Jewish population.

In Hungary, the primary focus of Jewish identity is the "fight against anti-Semitism", and it shows the lowest level of support for Israel.

In Italy, respondents are less likely to report being Jewish by birth or having both Jewish parents.

Latvian Jews are the oldest population and are more likely to engage in intermarriage.

In Sweden, Jewish respondents prioritize the "fight against anti-Semitism" even though they relatively rarely encounter it. They also adhere to only a few Jewish traditions.

In the United Kingdom, Jews are the most religious and are least affected by anti-Semitism. They are more likely to be Jewish by birth and less likely to enter mixed marriages [*European Jewish identity...*, 2018].

It's worth noting that despite the absence of a "monolithic" identity among European Jews, there are several factors that unite them. Firstly, there is the collective memory of the Holocaust, which is perceived as a deliberate process of annihilating European Jewry as a whole. Additionally, due to the considerate policies of European authorities, resolutions by the European Parliament, and the actions of the European Commission, there has been a unified definition of anti-Semitism in the EU, along with gradual measures aimed at combating it. Unfortunately, anti-Semitism continues to serve as a constant reminder of their heritage to European Jews. According to data from a sociological survey conducted by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 89% of Jewish respondents stated that anti-Semitism in the EU has significantly increased in the last five years, with 85% considering anti-Semitism the most serious issue they face in society [*Survey: 38% of Jews...*, 2018].

This report is based on the world's largest survey on anti-Semitism, involving 16,400 respondents from 29 EU member states. Nearly one-third (30%) of the respondents reported personal encounters with anti-Semitic attacks. Shockingly, 80% of the tens of thousands of Jewish respondents told the EUAFR sociologists that they refrained from reporting anti-Semitic incidents to the police and other authorities. A third of the respondents stated that they chose to stay away from events held in Jewish communities and institutions, fearing for their safety. Respondents revealed that the most prevalent anti-Semitic comments they encountered contained phrases such as "Jews have too much power and



influence", "Jews use the Holocaust to protect their own interests", and "Israel treats Palestinians as the Nazis treated Jews". In response to these findings, Yaakov Hagoel, Vice Chairman of the World Zionist Organization, said, "We expect that... legislation and its enforcement will be stricter, budgets will be allocated for the implementation of decisions, and awareness about anti-Semitism will be raised. Jews are loyal citizens of the countries they choose to live in, and the governments of these European countries bear the responsibility for ensuring their safety" [*Survey: 38% of Jews...*, 2018].

These data are based on a sociological survey conducted by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights in 2018. Among young respondents aged 16–34, 45% stated that they prefer not to wear or display Jewish clothing and symbols in public due to concerns for their safety. Young Jews participating in the survey reside in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Overall, 44% of surveyed young European Jewish respondents reported experiencing anti-Semitic persecution, which is 12% higher than among older respondents. According to the survey, 80% of young victims do not report these incidents to the police or other authorities. Almost two-thirds, or 62%, of young respondents stated they feel a "strong attachment" to Israel, which is almost identical to their affection for their countries. Only 35% of respondents reported the same level of attachment to the European Union. Vera Jourova, EU Commissioner for Justice, Consumers, and Gender Equality, emphasized in her statement, "Young European Jewish people are deeply attached to their Jewish identity. I am saddened by the fact that they are afraid for their safety in Europe, hesitate to wear the kippah, and some even consider emigration" [*Young Jews...*, 2019].

The issue of identity among members of European Jewish communities is more relevant today than ever. Unfortunately, the governments of many European countries have not yet addressed the reasons why Jews are leaving their nations or why far-right and pro-Palestinian organizations can behave aggressively and attempt to intimidate Jewish leaders, activists, and synagogue attendees, including through acts of terrorism.

### ***The "Jewish question" in European Union politics from 2015 to 2021***

In Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU), it is stipulated that all forms and manifestations of anti-Semitism, racism, xenophobia, and intolerance are incompatible with the values on which the EU is based [*European Union anti-discrimination ...*, 1997].

In 2015, to counter the rising level of anti-Semitism, the European Commission appointed a Coordinator to Combat anti-Semitism. Its key tasks included raising awareness of Jewish communities to the attention of the European Commission, bringing issues to the political level, and assisting in coordinating the efforts of various services as part of the comprehensive policy of the European Commission to combat racism, xenophobia, and other forms of intolerance [*Coordinator on combating...*, 2015]. In October 2015, the first Colloquium on fundamental human rights was dedicated to combating anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim hatred, as well as other forms of racism and inter-ethnic inter-ethnic intolerance [*Commission holds...*, 2015].

In June 2016, the European Commission established a High-Level Group on Combating Racism, Xenophobia, and other forms of intolerance. This structure, which included representatives from all 28 EU Member States, worked to address the problem of under-reporting hate crimes and improve the standards of their registration. Quarterly round tables held with Jewish umbrella organizations and visits to EU Member States strengthened cooperation with Jewish communities, international organizations, and the governments of EU Member States, as well as relevant NGOs [*A EU High Level...*, 2016].

In June 2017, the European Parliament adopted a special resolution on combating anti-Semitism. In December 2018, the EU Council adopted a Declaration on Combating anti-Semitism and developing a common approach to security for better protection of Jewish communities and institutions in Europe.

On November 29, 2018, the EU signed a permanent international partnership agreement with the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. In 2019, the European Commission established a Working Group to Combat anti-Semitism to support EU Member States in implementing the 2018 Council Declaration. As a practical tool for

defining the concept of "anti-Semitism", the European Commission uses the working definition of anti-Semitism by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), which does not have legal force [*EU steps up its...*, 2018].

After taking office as President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen assigned the Vice-President for Promoting the European Way of Life to lead the work on combating anti-Semitism. The role of the EU Coordinator for Combating anti-Semitism was subsequently placed under the European Commissioner for Promoting the European Way of Life. In her statement dedicated to the memory of Holocaust victims in 2021, the President of the European Commission stated, "anti-Semitism strikes at the heart of our values: humanity, religious freedom, and equality. anti-Semitism is a poison for our society. We must all fight against it. To prevent this phenomenon. And to eradicate it" [*Speech by President...*, 2021].

On October 19, 2020, the European Commission announced its Work Programme for 2021, which included the presentation of a comprehensive strategy to combat anti-Semitism in the European Union by the end of 2021. On December 2, 2020, the European Council supported this idea by adopting a Declaration on stepping up the fight against anti-Semitism in all areas of policy. The European Commission's declaration explicitly proposed "promoting the fight against anti-Semitism... by consolidating auxiliary measures into a comprehensive European strategy against anti-Semitism" [*Antisemitism: Council...*, 2020].

This new strategy will be implemented alongside the EU Action Plan to Combat Racism for 2020–2025. It is expected to take into account the development of Jewish history and culture in Europe in the past and encourage the development of Jewish life in modern communities in EU countries. Within the Horizon 2020 program, the EU has established the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI) in the Netherlands, aimed at strengthening the network of European Holocaust research and developing a European perspective on Holocaust events [*EHRI's mission*, 2020]. Moreover, thanks to funding of €3.5 million per year from the "Europe for Citizens" program, work has been ongoing for many years to commemorate the Holocaust and combat anti-Semitism in

the 20th century. Every year, this program highlights a specific event related to the history of European Jewry. For instance, in 2018, the project shed light on the expulsion of thousands of Jews, many of whom were Holocaust victims, from Poland in 1968 as part of the anti-Semitic purges of the country's communist regime [*EHRI's mission*, 2020].

An important institution in the fight against anti-Semitism in the European Union is the European Parliament's Working Group on anti-Semitism (EP-WGAS), which was chaired by Member of the European Parliament Heinz Becker, representing Austria. He has explicitly condemned the wave of anti-Semitic attacks that swept across Europe after President Trump recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and moved the US embassy there. He stated at the time: "The conflict between Israel and the Palestinians or any other political issue can never be used as an excuse for anti-Semitic attacks on Jewish communities. Incidents of violence that occurred last week in Berlin, Gothenburg, and Vienna are unacceptable. When people shout for the murder of Jews and it is seen as peaceful protest, and when young people are forced to hide in the basement of the synagogue due to the attacks of an angry mob, it is time to take this issue seriously" [*Chair of European Parliament...*, 2017].

In 2019, after the election of a new European Parliament, the EP-WGAS was co-chaired by Members of the European Parliament Karoline Edtstadler from Austria and Nicola Beer from Germany. The deputy chairs of the group are Juan Fernando Lopez Aguilar from Spain and Sergey Lagodinsky from Germany [*European Parliament Working...*, 2019].

Fulvio Martusciello played a significant role in establishing good relations between the European Union and Israel, as well as the European Parliament's policy on the "Jewish Question". He led the EU-Israel delegation from 2014 to 2019 and took part in adopting many decisions in international policy in the Middle East, earning high praise for his activities from the leadership of the State of Israel and the European Jewish community. In the new composition of the European Parliament, Fulvio Martusciello, representing Italy, continues to be a member of the EU-Israel Delegation (D-IL), coordinating many issues related to the life of Jewish communities and the fight against anti-Semitism [*43rd EP-Knesset...*, 2017].

"Throughout the autumn months of 2021, the European Union intensified its efforts to combat anti-Semitism. On October 5, 2021, the European Commission published a new Strategy to Combat anti-Semitism and Support the Jewish Community in Europe for the first time in history. This was done amid concerns that the pandemic had become a catalyst for extensive extremist activity in the region. EU Coordinator for Combating anti-Semitism, Katharina von Schnurbein, acknowledged being shocked by how anti-Jewish rhetoric had spread on the internet, primarily in the context of conspiracy theories related to the spread of COVID-19. She said, "The pandemic indeed triggered a surge in anti-Semitism on the internet. We saw many old conspiracy myths repackaged. The speed at which it erupted was truly shocking", she noted. The EU Coordinator also recognized that the level of anti-Semitism in Europe had sharply increased due to the recent military conflict between Israel and the Palestinians" [*EU to publish strategy...*, 2021].

The new strategy, published on October 5, 2021, aims to "implement" the fight against anti-Semitism in the lives of EU member countries through a series of policy measures. The new strategy should serve as a "crucial impetus" for EU members to transpose and enforce legislation criminalizing hate speech. It should rectify the current situation where only three EU countries have a national strategy to combat anti-Semitism, despite the 2018 agreement that all EU member states should adopt such strategies. A separate section of the strategy will be dedicated to public education about the Holocaust and the Jewish community as a whole. "We know that awareness of Jewish life is very low", Schnurbein told Politico reporters [*Interview with Politico...*, 2021].

It is worth noting that the period from 2015 to 2021 is characterized by the EU's active policy regarding the "Jewish Question". Initially, this was a response to the surge of anti-Semitism in European Union countries, but it later led to the strengthening of the legislative framework and the coordination of efforts across various branches of government to combat hatred against Jews and the violation of the rights of national minorities. Currently, the main challenge is the harmonization of legislation among EU member countries concerning anti-Semitism, promoting the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism, and assisting non-EU countries in this complex work.

### ***Main centers of Jewish religious life in the EU and trends in their development***

Traditionally, the centers of Jewish religious life in Europe have been the communities in large cities of the countries with the highest Jewish population. Religious communities in Europe have evolved, and new centers of Jewish education and strong communities have emerged in various places.

However, the situation is dynamically changing today, and the centers of Jewish life in Europe are shifting due to several political, economic, and social reasons. For instance, during the first decades of the 21st century, the primary centers of Jewish life in Europe were in the United Kingdom and France, which had the largest Jewish communities. Now, the focus is shifting to other countries like Germany, Portugal, Spain, and Poland.

One significant consequence of Brexit for the European Jewish community was the relocation of the headquarters of the Conference of European Rabbis (CER), a central hub for religious life on the continent, from London to Munich. Pinchas Goldschmidt, president of the Conference of European Rabbis, confirmed that the UK's departure from the EU was a key factor in this move. He stated that "Germany is one of the few countries in Europe where the Jewish community is growing, and the political climate supports the development of Jewish life". The group of rabbis had been based in London since the founding of the Conference of European Rabbis in 1956 and has approximately 1,000 rabbi members living from Dublin to Vladivostok [*Orthodox group leaves UK...*, 2023].

The announcement of the relocation to Munich was made on May 9, when CER awarded its Lord Jakobovits Prize to Bavarian Prime Minister Markus Söder for his "outstanding commitment to the protection and promotion of Jewish life in Europe". The ceremony took place at the Ohel Jakob Synagogue in Munich, which was completed in 2006. The synagogue and its community center will also become the home of the planned CER Center for Jewish Life, offering educational opportunities for Orthodox rabbis and their spouses. Moreover, international conferences on Jewish themes are planned to be held in the city. The center will be primarily funded by the Bavarian state government, with

additional contributions from private donors, according to Goldschmidt [*Orthodox group leaves UK...*, 2023].

This move was planned for several years. After Brexit, CER leadership "felt that the headquarters should be in the center of Europe", Goldschmidt said. The government of Bavaria then invited CER to hold its 32nd Congress in Munich, and Söder and Charlotte Knobloch, the president of the Munich Jewish community, invited the group to relocate. In Germany, there were approximately 500,000 Jews before Hitler came to power in 1933. After World War II, when most Holocaust survivors left Europe for the United States or Israel, there were around 25,000 Jews in what was then West Germany. Today, there are about 90,000 members of Jewish communities in Germany and another 100,000 Jews who are not affiliated with communities. The vast majority have roots in the former Soviet Union. In the past decade, many Israelis have also made Germany their home.

Recently, several thousand Ukrainian Jews found refuge in Germany. Goldschmidt, a former chief rabbi of Moscow, himself moved to Israel in 2022 after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. He revealed that he and Shuster "discussed how to integrate rabbis, rabbinical schools, and refugees from Russia and Ukraine into Germany". "Being a refugee and an immigrant is never easy", Goldschmidt said, "but I see my mission as using these challenging times and waves of displaced Jews and communities to strengthen Jewish communities in Europe. This is a unique opportunity in life", he added [*Orthodox group leaves UK...*, 2023].

The establishment of a new center of Jewish life in Europe in Germany has led to the creation of new educational institutions. For example, the Chabad movement opened the largest Jewish center in Germany since World War II.

The largest Jewish center in Germany and one of the largest of its kind in the world was inaugurated on June 25, 2023, in Berlin during a solemn ceremony attended by diplomats and community leaders from around the world. The Jewish campus Pears, which covers an area of over 80,000 square feet and cost \$43.7 million to build, is under the administration of the Chabad-Lubavitch community in Berlin, as reported by JTA [*Chabad opens Germany's...*, 2023].

The campus features an indoor basketball court and a gym that can be used as a lecture or reception hall, a cinema, a music studio, and a kosher cafeteria. The seven-story building, fully open to the public, is situated on a typical Berlin street, with a blue glazed brick façade on its curved frontage.

The local Chabad director, Rabbi Yehuda Teichtal, stated, "There are millions of Germans who don't even know who Jews are. Let's have a positive partnership with them, face to face, through dialogue, through shared, positive, joyful, vibrant, future-oriented Jewish life" [*Chabad opens Germany's...*, 2023].

Currently, approximately 90,000 Jews in Germany are members of congregations, ranging from Reform to Conservative and Orthodox, under the auspices of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, while another 100,000 individuals identifying as Jews are not affiliated with communities. When Teichtal arrived in the capital of Germany with his wife Leah in 1996, there were only a few Chabad communities in Germany. According to 2023 data, there are now 20 Chabad communities in the country.

Gradually, other European countries are becoming centers of Jewish life in the EU, as their governments actively attract citizens of Jewish nationality by granting them citizenship and residency permits. This primarily concerns Spain and Portugal. According to information from 2022, at least 90,000 descendants of Sephardic Jews have become citizens of Portugal or Spain since 2015 when these countries enacted laws offering a naturalization process for such applicants [*Spain and Portugal have...*, 2022]. These laws were designed to atone for the Inquisition, a campaign of religious persecution launched at the end of the 15th century against hundreds of thousands of Jews who inhabited the Iberian Peninsula and thrived there. According to recently published reports on immigration trends in Spanish and Portuguese media, Spain has received at least 153,000 citizenship applications, and Portugal has received more than 86,000 applications [*Spain and Portugal have...*, 2022].

Spain granted citizenship to 36,000 applicants, approximately 23% of the total number of applicants. Portugal granted citizenship to 63% of



applicants, or more than 54,000 people. Many thousands of applications are still awaiting review in both countries.

According to the Lisbon newspaper *Observador*, over two-thirds of applicants in Portugal are Israelis. In Spain, the percentage of Israelis was less than 5% as of the end of 2019. In both countries, the official Jewish community reviews applications and submits for government approval only those it deems deserving of trust [*Spain and Portugal have...*, 2022].

As part of its Strategy to Combat anti-Semitism and Promote Jewish Life, EU authorities aim to improve the situation of Jewish communities. One important aspect of this policy is coordinating the efforts of EU countries' governments and the interests of the European Jewish religious community itself. European experts and leaders face the challenging task of creating new centers of Jewish religious life, which is significantly complicated by the surge in anti-Semitic sentiments in Europe linked to events on October 7, 2023, in Israel.

### ***EU policy on the "Jewish question" in 2023***

The primary goal of European policy regarding the "Jewish question" in 2023 is to inform the public in all 27 EU member states about the new standards established by recently adopted legislation and to coordinate the efforts of various levels of government in the European Union regarding their implementation. An essential part of these efforts is a broad discussion among diplomats from Western countries dedicated to combating anti-Semitism. On January 30, the European Commission's Commissioner for Combating Anti-Semitism, Katarina von Schnurbein, met in Berlin with the U.S. Special Envoy for Monitoring and Combating Anti-Semitism, Deborah Lipstadt [*Europäische Antisemitismusbeauftragte...*, 2023].

Before the meeting, von Schnurbein emphasized, "Combating anti-Semitism means defending democracy and the values that unite us on both sides of the Atlantic. This meeting is an important step in strengthening the close cooperation between the EU and the U.S. in the global fight against anti-Semitism and in achieving our common goal – promoting the development of Jewish life" [*Europäische Antisemitismusbeauftragte...*, 2023]. Douglas Emhoff, the husband of

US Vice President Kamala Harris also arrived in Germany to support the Biden-Harris administration's efforts to combat anti-Semitism worldwide and strengthen Holocaust remembrance. Deborah Lipstadt, as the U.S. Special Envoy for Monitoring and Combating Anti-Semitism, visited Germany for the first time. On the morning of January 30, she and Felix Klein, the Federal Government Commissioner for Jewish Life and Combating Anti-Semitism, visited the meeting of European Commissioners on anti-Semitism at the "Topography of Terror" documentation center in Berlin. The central topics of discussion among high-ranking diplomats were the national strategies of individual countries to combat anti-Semitism and the working definition of anti-Semitism by the IHRA, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. Felix Klein stated, "Our national strategy against anti-Semitism and in support of the development of Jewish life is a historic document – it allows us, at last, to comprehensively combat and prevent hatred of Jews. I am very pleased that our innovative model is also generating significant interest at the international level" [*Europäische Antisemitismusbeauftragte...*, 2023].

U.S. Special Envoy Deborah Lipstadt emphasized, "We are all well aware of the growing wave of hatred and, in particular, anti-Semitism that the global community faces. Modern technologies, the internet, and, above all, social media contribute to the rapid spread of ideas. Today, hatred knows no borders. An anti-Semitic post in one country can provoke violence across the ocean, and events in one country are all too easily replicated in another. That's why international cooperation, partnership, and coordinated action are now more important than ever" [*Europäische Antisemitismusbeauftragte...*, 2023].

At the beginning of 2023, Brussels also became the center of discussions on EU policy regarding the "Jewish question". On January 22 and 23, 2023, a conference dedicated to combating anti-Semitism was held in the capital of the European Union under the leadership of President of the North Rhine-Westphalia Landtag, André Kuper. The conference was attended by the presidents of the Landtag from German and Austrian states, South Tyrol, and the German-speaking community of Belgium. In their joint statement, they expressed concern

about the increasing level of anti-Semitism, welcomed the European Commission's strategy to combat this phenomenon, and called on national parliaments to actively participate in cross-border projects to combat anti-Semitism. Participants in the event held talks with the President of the European Parliament, Roberto Metzola, and the European Commission's Commissioner for Combating Anti-Semitism, Katarina von Schnurbein. The focus was on the EU's actions against anti-Semitism and the role of parliaments as intermediaries between the European Union and regional residents. Karl Freller, the First Vice President of the Bavarian Landtag, emphasized the exceptional importance of contemporary witnesses to the Holocaust, who, having experienced the tragedy, make an invaluable contribution to preserving people's awareness of this dark period in German history and passing it on. He stated that only in this way can the common goal under the motto "Never Again!" be successful [*Landtagspräsidentenkonferenz in Brüssel...*, 2023].

In the political declaration adopted at the conference on January 23, 2023, the following points were among those outlined:

- The presidents of the regional parliaments welcome and support the newly adopted strategy of the European Commission to combat anti-Semitism and promote the development of Jewish life. As intermediaries in the multi-level system of the EU, regional parliaments aim to continue making a tangible contribution to the implementation of the strategy and its individual initiatives.

- As an integral part of European culture, it is essential to protect and improve the lives of Jews through dialogue with civil society in all regions of the EU. This is a fundamental prerequisite for ensuring that Jewish cultural heritage is recognized and valued by people in European regions as an integral part of European culture and way of life.

- Regional parliaments play a central role in implementing coordinated European-level measures to combat anti-Semitism and promote Jewish life, including the living culture of memory and history. Due to their proximity to local residents, they not only breathe life into the EU's strategy and their national and regional action plans but have long been involved in combating anti-Semitism, promoting the development of Jewish life, and preserving the culture of memory and remembrance.

– Regional parliaments also serve as communicative bodies and consistently raise awareness of the dangers of anti-Semitism in debates and discussions.

– The presidents of the regional parliaments advocate for greater participation of regional parliaments in cross-border, national, and regional projects aimed at combating anti-Semitism.

They also expect regional parliaments to be involved in the European Commission's announced regular dialogue with the European Parliament and national parliaments of member states to support new measures to combat anti-Semitism and promote the development of Jewish life. As parliaments close to the people, they hold significant weight as intermediaries between citizens and the European Union. Furthermore, some regional parliaments have legislative powers related to school education and internal security. This is of great importance when it comes to providing information about Jewish life, preventing anti-Semitic crimes, and protecting the lives of Jews, synagogues, and other Jewish institutions [*Landtagspräsidentenkonferenz in Brüssel...*, 2023].

The second-largest European country, after Germany, to develop and present its policy strategy regarding the "Jewish question" was France. On January 30, 2023, the Prime Minister of France presented the National Plan to Combat Racism, Anti-Semitism, and Discrimination based on origin for 2023–2026. The plan was developed following extensive discussions with youth and heads of associations against racism and anti-Semitism. It was presented by the Prime Minister of France, Élisabeth Borne, at the Arab World Institute in Paris. It serves as a continuation of another regulatory act, the Plan Against Racism and Anti-Semitism, presented by Édouard Philippe in March 2018 [*La Première ministre a présenté...*, 2023].

The provisions of the new plan have been widely discussed in French society. The government examined it with key civil society players, including associations, memory and history foundations, and independent institutions such as the National Consultative Commission for Human Rights (Commission nationale consultative des droits de l'Homme), the Defender of Rights (Défenseur des droits), the Regulatory Authority for Audiovisual and Digital Communication (Arcom), and

others [*La Première ministre a présenté...*, 2023]. The plan contains 80 articles grouped into five sections. Among the most important and reform-oriented proposals included in the new plan are:

- Anonymization of complaints regarding anti-Semitic incidents.
- Holding judicial hearings.
- Mandatory visits by every student in French schools to memorials related to racism and anti-Semitism.

Training of public service employees in interacting with Jewish communities and combating anti-Semitism, among many others.

It is worth noting that a distinctive feature of this plan by the French government is its focus on combating anti-Semitism, while the theme of promoting the development of the Jewish community by the state is not addressed. The presence of the largest Jewish community in Europe in France may lead to discussions on this matter, although the state may be concerned about significant costs if it were to take on responsibilities for developing Jewish culture, religion, and communal life.

Overall, the first months of 2023 have been a period of developing new standards for the policies of EU member states regarding the "Jewish question". It has also been a time for conducting discussions and forming plans to combat anti-Semitism and promote Jewish life, as mandated by the European Commission, in all regions of the European Union.

### ***Modern discussion surrounding the normative framework for combating anti-Semitism***

The fight against anti-Semitism in contemporary Europe is a crucial issue with a normative and legal dimension. The absence of a unified definition of anti-Semitism in the legislations of various European countries presents a fundamental challenge in this sphere. Additionally, there are significant variations in the legal measures employed by European governments to address public displays of anti-Semitism, as well as the societal attitudes toward such individuals.

A notable development in recent years regarding the fight against anti-Semitism was a conference held in Vienna. At this conference, the first concrete proposals and recommendations for legislation against anti-Semitism were presented. The event took place on November 21,

2018, under the auspices of the Austrian Presidency of the European Union and featured high-ranking European officials, including President Alexander van der Bellen and Chancellor Sebastian Kurz [*Suddeutsche Zeitung: Antisemitism...*, 2018].

The "Catalogue of Policies to Combat anti-Semitism", initiated by Dr. Moshe Kantor, President of the European Jewish Congress (EJC), is the outcome of intensive collaboration among senior experts and scholars from universities in Vienna, Tel Aviv, and New York. These experts devised a specific strategy to be implemented by governments, public and private institutions, religious communities, and individuals engaged in combating online hatred. "Today, people are being killed on the streets of Europe simply because they are Jewish", stated Dr. Kantor at the conference "Europe Beyond anti-Semitism and Antizionism – Securing Jewish Life in Europe", organized by the Federal Chancellery of Austria in Vienna.

"Jewish communities in Europe are increasingly concerned about their safety and pessimistic about the future. In Europe, there is no longer a monopoly on anti-Semitism. No Jewish community in the world, no matter how strong and well-organized, is now immune from hatred against Jews. The fight against anti-Semitism must be more than just declarations of goodwill. We need specific policies and strengthened legislation. The boundaries between anti-Semitism and antizionism are becoming blurred, but they are two sides of the same coin. I hope that the definitions of anti-Semitism and the conclusions presented at this conference will ensure the safety and well-being of Jews in Austria, Europe, and other places. I believe that this is the only way to fulfill our responsibilities as the head of the European Council", Chancellor Kurz concluded [*Suddeutsche Zeitung: Antisemitism...*, 2018].

Among the recommendations mentioned in the Catalog:

- Adoption and implementation of the working definition of anti-Semitism by the IHRA (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance) by all countries, institutions, and enterprises.
- Governments and intergovernmental organizations should denounce state-sanctioned anti-Semitism, such as that existing in countries like Iran.
- All countries should appoint a representative for combating anti-Semitism.

- Each country should allocate a portion of its GDP annually to fund the fight against anti-Semitism.
- The creation of new legal acts for an effective anti-anti-Semitism strategy and the reinforcement of existing ones.
- Individuals expressing or holding anti-Semitic views should not be members of political parties or hold leadership positions.
- Companies should not conduct business with countries or organizations that support anti-Semitism.
- Governments should allocate financial and operational resources to ensure the safety of Jewish communities.
- Internet companies should be responsible for anti-Semitic content on their platforms.

It is worth noting that after the UK's departure from the EU, which was known for its consistent stance against anti-Semitism, Austria has emerged as a potential leader in this field. In less than a year after Sebastian Kurz became the Chancellor of Austria, the government assumed a leading position in the fight against anti-Semitism in Europe.

Austria, often criticized for its reluctance to acknowledge Nazi crimes, has, under Chancellor Kurz's leadership, become an international hub for conferences and symposiums on this issue. It all began with the five-day "End to anti-Semitism" conference at the University of Vienna in February. In October, the National Union of Students held a conference on anti-Semitism. This month, Chancellor Kurz invited survivors of persecution to Parliament for a solemn event commemorating the 80th anniversary of Kristallnacht.

"In Vienna, there have been many conferences on anti-Semitism lately. For many years, we did not talk about it", noted Benjamin Hess, President of the Jewish Austrian Student Association.

However, while Jews and other citizens appreciate Chancellor Kurz's efforts to combat anti-Semitism, they also fear the alliance of the ruling party with the far-right Freedom Party, founded in 1949 by former SS members. Critics argue that the conferences and similar statements are mere cover for the normalization of xenophobic and anti-Semitic policies in Austria and across Europe as a whole. Benjamin Abtan, President of the European Grassroots Antiracist Movement, commented,

"If Kurz wants to fight anti-Semitism, the best thing the Chancellor can do is break the alliance with the Freedom Party" [*Suddeutsche Zeitung: Antisemitism...*, 2018].

Despite these measures, negotiations, and discussions taking place in Vienna and other European cities regarding anti-Semitism and the protection of Jewish communities, European society still needs significant transformation for the Jewish community to feel safe within it without the need to conceal their identity.

A sociological survey commissioned by CNN in Europe in November 2018 demonstrated a widespread presence of anti-Semitism and a lack of knowledge about the Holocaust among Europeans. In a survey conducted among 7,092 adults in seven European countries, 25% of respondents stated that "Jews have too much influence", and one-third admitted they "have little knowledge of the Holocaust". The survey was conducted by the polling service ComRes for CNN in September 2018 in the UK, France, Germany, Poland, Hungary, Sweden, and Austria. Overall, nearly 25% of all respondents claimed that "Jews have too much influence in conflicts and wars worldwide". One in five believed that "Jews have too much influence in the media", while an equal number thought that they "have too much influence on politics". One-third of respondents stated that Jews use the Holocaust to advance their own positions and goals.

Approximately 40% of respondents said that "Jews are at risk of racist violence in their countries", and half believed that "their governments should do more to combat anti-Semitism". 28% of respondents believed that anti-Semitism in their countries was mainly related to Israel's actions. 18% claimed that "this phenomenon was a response to the everyday behavior of the Jewish people". About 34% of all respondents said they "know very little or nothing at all about the Holocaust", with only 5% reporting they had never heard of it. Yad Vashem, Israel's official Holocaust memorial, expressed deep concern over these findings, noting, "Furthermore, the survey confirms the troubling fact that many deeply rooted anti-Semitic myths persist in European societies" [*A Shados Over...*, 2018].



## SECTION II

### JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN WESTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES: CHARACTERISTICS AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

#### *Trends and patterns of anti-Semitism development in contemporary Denmark*

In 2015, Denmark, along with countries like France and Belgium, experienced terrorist attacks targeting the Jewish community. This made the issue of countering anti-Semitism and terrorism relevant for Danish society and its leadership, who have been actively working to address these challenges in recent months. Examining Denmark's experience in this field proves valuable for other Western and Eastern European countries, underscoring the significance of the topic explored by the author.

Various aspects of the main trends and patterns of anti-Semitism development in Denmark have been examined in works by Andrew Bukser, Janike Anderson, and others [Buckser, 2003; Anderson, 2015].

It's worth noting that Danish politicians were the first in Europe to initiate discussions at the political level concerning the resistance to imams who incite violence against Jews. In March of this year, Danish parliament members decided to address the activities of an imam from a mosque in Aarhus who called for the complete destruction of Jews and advocated stoning women. They even held special debates on this matter. Marcus Knuth, a member of the ruling party Venstre, suggested during the discussion that all foreign imams be prohibited from working in the country. Mette Frederiksen, the leader of the opposition Social Democrats, proposed that the governments of all European countries create a joint security system aimed at combating extremist imams, which would lead to the deportation of those who spoke against democracy and incited violence in other countries.

This discussion in the Danish parliament is the first of its kind in Europe. Following the deportation of extremist preacher Abu Qatada from the UK, which was an isolated case, there have been no similar

precedents in recent years. Danish parliamentarians have put forward several initiatives related to security and counterterrorism that have become part of European practice. Therefore, the commencement of finding a solution to this issue in Copenhagen gives hope that the problem of radicalizing Islam in Europe will be overcome [*Denmark wants to deport...*, 2016].

A crucial aspect of countering terrorists who plan attacks against the civilian population and the Jewish community in Denmark is the resistance against radicals who recruit children and adolescents to carry out their plans. In March 2016, secret information concerning the arrest of a 16-year-old girl suspected of preparing a terrorist act in Denmark was revealed. Explosive materials, detonators, and propaganda materials were found by the police in the young girl's possession in the village of Kundby on the island of Zealand in mid-January. The police stated that the girl's transition to Islam and her subsequent preparation for a terrorist act were facilitated by her 24-year-old friend and local imams. According to the statement by the Western Zealand Police and the Danish Security and Intelligence Service (PET), the schoolgirl was planning attacks on two schools in the country – the daytime Jewish school Carolineskolen in Copenhagen and Sydszkolen school in Western Zealand.

As intended by the terrorists, the young age of the female terrorist was meant to help her gain easy access to school buildings and trigger explosive devices. Following the terrorist attack that took place in February 2015 at the Copenhagen synagogue, Islamists continue to view the Jewish community as a primary target for attacks, constantly formulating violent plans and seeking real ways to execute them [*Danish teenager suspected...*, 2016].

Experts and politicians in Denmark are increasingly critical of the country's government, which has pursued a liberal policy towards Islamists in recent years, allowing radical imams who incite violence against Jews to operate freely. "Denmark is a safe haven for Islamists", stated conservative Danish parliament member Naser Hader [*"Denmark is a haven..."*, 2016]. Hader, who was born in Syria, emphasized that the country's leadership lacks a clear strategy for addressing the refugee crisis and combating radical Islam. "In Denmark, we have very liberal

laws, making it easy for extremists to thrive... Furthermore, because Danish newspapers published caricatures of Muhammad in 2006, we are now among the top five enemies of radical Islamists worldwide", he added. "We need legal methods to expel radical preachers completely... About 30 individuals who traveled to Syria and Iraq for jihad visited a mosque that acts as a travel agency for the Islamic State", he explained in an interview with Der Spiegel.

Naser Hader moved to Denmark from Syria at the age of 11. He is part of a small group of prominent Muslim public figures in Europe who warn about the danger of Muslim radicalization in society and aim to combat this dangerous phenomenon [*"Denmark is a haven..."*, 2016].

Not long ago, another well-known public figure, Arab poet Adonis, declared to all of Europe that "Islam cannot be modernized" as it is a "religion founded on a totalitarian foundation" [*"Denmark is a haven..."*, 2016].

Recently, Danish parliament members and the government reached an agreement regarding radical imams. They will be revoking the citizenship of imams who incite acts of terrorism and inter-ethnic hatred. This political decision was preliminarily made in March 2016 following consultations between Denmark's major political parties. The initiative was proposed by the Danish People's Party, whose members aimed to combat radical imams like Abu Bilal Ismail from the Grimhoj Mosque in Aarhus. The idea received support from the ruling Liberal Party, opposition Social Democrats, and Conservative Party [*Imam at Danish...*, 2016].

Ismail gained notoriety across Europe after a video surfaced on the internet in July 2014, showing him calling for the "extermination of Zionist Jews" during a sermon in Berlin. However, his statement went unpunished by the police in both Germany and Denmark. He returned safely to Aarhus, where he received support from the head of the Grimhoj Mosque Association, Khosro Hassanzadeh, who claimed, "Ismail didn't say anything that other imams don't say; they all think the same way as others do worldwide" [*Imam at Danish...*, 2016]. Danish People's Party member Martin Henriksen emphasized, "The Danish Constitution allows for certain restrictions on freedom of religion... The Constitution states that everyone can practice their faith as long as it doesn't contradict

morality or disrupt public order... Some of these imams are Danish citizens, and we believe that we should strip them of their citizenship" [*Politisk flertal: Imamer...*, 2016].

Khosro Hassanzadeh, the leader of the Grimhoj Mosque community known for his anti-Semitic views, expressed his disagreement with the government's actions. "We won't solve the problem this way, but we risk creating even more radicalization", he told Politiken. In the near future, parliament members will hold a series of meetings with the country's Prime Minister, Lars Løkke Rasmussen, to create a program for combating radical Islamists in Denmark. Judging from the recent terrorist attacks at the airport and metro in Brussels on March 22, Danish politicians are motivated to act swiftly [*Politisk flertal: Imamer...*, 2016].

Overall, the issue of the Islamist threat in Denmark is one of the most pressing concerns in contemporary Europe. The country is listed among the "enemies of Islam", and therefore, terrorist acts, including those targeting the Jewish community, could occur at any time. Notably, unlike other European countries, Denmark's political elite is determined to address the activities of Islamist organizations within the country, despite the stance of some liberal politicians who accuse the government of "violating the rights of national minorities and human rights" during counterterrorism measures. Along with the United Kingdom and some other European countries, Denmark leads in developing legislative initiatives to combat anti-Semitic forces and radical Islamists, and its experience can be used as a model for other countries, particularly in Eastern Europe, which are just beginning to establish security systems and counter Islamic terrorism.

In January 2022, the Danish government outlined 15 initiatives to combat the escalation of anti-Semitism in the country. Holocaust education will now be mandatory in schools, and countermeasures will be intensified in environments where hatred towards Jews is particularly prevalent. Efforts to inform Danes about Jewish culture will also be heightened. The Danish government initiated these measures after dozens of anti-Semitic acts were committed across Denmark on November 14, 2019, including the desecration of over 80 Jewish graves in Randers on the anniversary of Kristallnacht.

The government's efforts to combat anti-Semitism will be financially supported, which is good news for various cultural centers, such as the Danish Jewish Museum, which will be encouraged to hold more exhibitions and discussions on this issue. Furthermore, sociological research will be conducted, and "necessary efforts will continue to ensure the safety of Jews and Jewish institutions". "From European studies, we know that some Danish Jews avoid carrying items that can identify them as Jews and that some face persecution in school and at work simply because they are Jews", explained Minister of Justice Nick Hækkerup.

The Danish government has presented the following 15 measures to combat anti-Semitism:

- Enhanced monitoring of anti-Semitic incidents in Denmark.
- Collection of knowledge and research on anti-Semitism.
- Mandatory teaching of Holocaust history in primary and secondary schools.
- Promotion of education and preservation of Holocaust and other genocide memories.
- Disciplinary measures against teachers who do not adhere to dress code rules.
- Promoting dialogue among young people representing different faiths.
- Provision of more information about Jewish life and culture in Denmark.
- Provision of specialized consultations on anti-Semitism and its prevention.
- Enhanced training for police personnel on preventing radicalization and anti-Semitism.
- Maintenance of necessary security measures to protect Jews and Jewish institutions.
- Appointment of a national coordinator for combating anti-Semitism.
- Informing the Danish Working Environment Authority about anti-Semitism and offensive actions against other religious minorities in the workplace.
- Increased attention to anti-Semitism through dialogue with other countries.

- Expanded Danish participation in IHRA programmes.
- International celebration of the 80th anniversary of the rescue of Danish Jews [*Regeringen lancerer...*, 2022].

***The modern issues of policy regarding Jews and the fight against anti-Semitism in Sweden***

The Jewish community in Sweden stands out as one experiencing the most dynamic development in the Northern European region. It comprises 18,000 individuals, with several synagogues in the country, notably in Stockholm, Malmö, and Gothenburg. In Stockholm, there's a Jewish Museum and an active Society for Yiddish Language Studies. The primary challenge facing the Jewish community in this country over the past two years has been the rise of anti-Semitism, partly associated with an unprecedented influx of immigrants. In December 2017, Sweden's Prime Minister Stefan Löfven acknowledged the existence of anti-Semitism in Swedish society.

This statement followed the arson attack on a synagogue in Gothenburg and anti-Semitic slogans at a demonstration in Malmö. "It must be clear that anti-Semitism and hatred towards Jews have no place in our society. They should not exist", [*Sweden's Prime Minister...*, 2017] remarked the Prime Minister. The recognition by Sweden's leader of the presence of anti-Semitism as a fundamental social issue in the country marked a turning point in shaping the nation's policy on this matter in the contemporary era.

However, it's worth noting that this problem began surfacing much earlier. In the previous decade, concerns about anti-Jewish sentiments in this Scandinavian nation were increasingly voiced. Perhaps the most notable was the warning issued in December 2010 by the Simon Wiesenthal Center based in the USA, urging Jews to exercise extreme caution when traveling to southern Sweden. Yet, Sweden's fight against anti-Semitism is not a new phenomenon. According to Henrik Bachner, a historian and leading researcher on anti-Semitism in Sweden, this problem has existed for some time, even though it's only recently been more openly discussed. "anti-Semitism is a problem in Swedish society. It's far from new, but in the last few decades, it has become more

pronounced. Anti-Jewish ideas have spread widely through social media. More aggressive anti-Semitism is noted in far-right and Islamist circles, and we also observe problems with anti-Jewish sentiments among certain groups of immigrants. We see an increase in anti-Semitic trends in connection with the escalation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, such as during the 2008–2009 war in Gaza and the 2014 conflict", Bachner pointed out to "The Local" publication [*Swedish PM...*, 2017].

According to the latest data from the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå), the country reports 228 anti-Semitic hate crimes annually. Compared to other crimes, this figure has remained relatively stable over the last decade but peaked after escalations in Israel. anti-Semitic crimes most often occur in public places (24%) and on the internet (20%) [*Antisemitic hate crime...*, 2019]. In Sweden, only two public opinion surveys on anti-Semitism have been conducted. Both were commissioned by the "Living History Forum", a Swedish state agency focusing on human rights, tolerance, and democracy. The 2010 survey (another was conducted in 2005) shows that while 18% of high school students in Sweden express anti-Semitic attitudes towards Jews, this number rose to 55% among Muslim students.

Overall, the country's authorities understand the complexity of combating anti-Semitism and frequently acknowledge the mistakes and significant shortcomings in dealing with this phenomenon. "The Swedish government did not protect the Jewish community", acknowledged Sweden's ambassador to Israel, Magnus Hellgren, referring to the recent attempted arson at the Gothenburg synagogue, anti-Semitic demonstrations in Malmö, and other incidents following Donald Trump's decision to move the embassy to Jerusalem.

Magnus Hellgren made this statement in an interview with the Israeli daily newspaper "Makor Rishon". Responding to the correspondent's question about some Swedish Jews potentially becoming targets in the streets due to security issues in Sweden, the ambassador emphasized, "This is the reality of the Jewish community, and it's a failure, it's not what should exist in reality. If even one Jew feels this way, we have failed".

According to the diplomat, police officers who heard calls for killing Jews during recent mass demonstrations in Malmö did not

intervene because they didn't understand the Arabic language in which the ant-Semitic slogans were shouted. In recent years, Israel has strongly criticized the Swedish government for its pro-Palestinian stance. This criticism intensified after a statement made by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Margot Wallström, in 2015. The minister likened Israel's policies to the actions of jihadists in France. Sweden is the only European country that recognizes Palestine as a state. Hellgren also noted that Sweden does not conduct an anti-Israeli foreign policy [*Sweden has failed...*, 2018].

A significant milestone in escalating ant-Semitic sentiments in the country was Donald Trump's decision to move the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. ant-Semitically inclined citizens perceived this as a malicious intent of Swedish Jews, leading to ant-Semitic attacks across Sweden. Immediately after Trump's statement, a synagogue in Gothenburg was set on fire, and there was an attempted arson at a Jewish cemetery in Malmö, the second and third largest cities in Sweden, respectively. During demonstrations involving hundreds of people in Malmö and Stockholm, protestors shouted ant-Semitic insults and threatened terrorist acts in Israel. Two days after the US recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, around 200 people participated in a demonstration in Malmö, where some participants chanted anti-Jewish slogans. Participants shouted, "We declare an intifada from Malmö. We want to regain our freedom, and we will shoot Jews". During a demonstration in the capital, Stockholm, the same week, hundreds of people carried Palestinian and Turkish flags chanting, "We march to Jerusalem" and "O Jews, Muhammad's army will return".

The crowd also listened to speeches in Arabic, during which a leader referred to the Jewish people as descendants of cows and pigs, following which participants burned an Israeli flag with the Star of David. In recent weeks, Swedish Jews have reported to local media being subjected to attacks, insults, and hateful expressions. The Jewish congregation in Malmö has only 450 members. Svante Lundgren, a senior researcher in Judaic studies at Lund University, links anti-Semitism in Malmö to the increasing number of immigrants from the Middle East.

"Strong anti-Semitism is practiced in many countries in the Middle East, and as a result, there are people who have been raised accordingly.



They nurture hatred not only towards Israel but towards all Jews. It's evident that some people from the Middle East bring strong ant-Semitic views from their home countries", he told the "Kvallsposten" publication [*Intifada is announced...*, 2017]. Svante Lundgren added that "this doesn't apply to all immigrants" and stated that Malmö also faces serious issues with anti-Muslim sentiments.

It's worth noting that thanks to coordinated efforts between the Swedish government and Jewish communities, many problems have been avoided, maintaining a high level of security for their members. In several cases, the participants in ant-Semitic actions reconsidered their deeds, reaching conclusions that were directly opposite to those instilled by ant-Semitic propaganda. For instance, in April 2018, Swedish teenagers visited a synagogue in Malmö to apologize for their threats to "bomb Jews". Moshe David HaCohen, an Orthodox rabbi living in the city, shared this incident with the reporters of Sveriges radio. Two high school students in December of the previous year approached the synagogue building and shouted ant-Semitic slogans, urging to "bomb Jews". The synagogue building was located near the school attended by the teenagers, and they were quickly identified. Hacoheh noted that the synagogue administration did not report to the school director, and they were not punished. However, the police conducted an investigation and informed social services about the teenagers' behavior. "This is part of a broader picture where the Jewish minority feels threatened, a product of ant-Semitic rhetoric", stated Hacoheh to journalists regarding this issue [*Teens apologize...*, 2018].

The Jewish community in Malmö has had a more negative experience with anti-Semitism compared to members of other Jewish communities in Sweden, a country where approximately 20,000 Jews currently reside. The local synagogue has faced near-constant attacks from antisemites. According to the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå), in 2014 and 2015, a total of 547 incidents of ant-Semitic manifestations were registered in Sweden. Representatives of the first and second generations of immigrants from the Middle East currently make up about a third of the population in the city of Malmö, which counts 300,000 people.

The current situation of the Jewish community in Sweden is one of the crucial research problems. The country's government, which, alongside Germany, has accepted the highest number of refugees from countries in the Middle East and North Africa, is compelled to take a series of measures to protect the country's Jewish community. This includes changes in national legislation based on recommendations from the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA).

***Contemporary issues of policy towards Jews and Holocaust memory in Italy***

The Jewish community in Italy is considered the oldest in the world as it includes the so-called "Italim" – Jews whose ancestors lived in Italy since Roman times. Today, Italy is home to about 70,000 Jews, and the community is very diverse, encompassing both Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews. Ashkenazi Jews predominantly reside in Northern Italy and are descendants of Jews expelled from France starting in 1182, which occurred after the massacre in the Rhineland and the First Crusade. Historically, these communities remained separate: in various Italian cities, there were often "Italian synagogues" and "Spanish synagogues", and sometimes even "German synagogues". In many cases, they have since united, but the same synagogue may serve more than one rite.

The authorities' attitude toward Italy's Jewish community is quite favorable, and the country is not among the leaders in Europe regarding the level of anti-Semitism. Over the past few years, the relationship between the Jewish community and the authorities has been developing positively. However, some problems arise concerning historical memory and the active growth of right-wing parties and organizations in the country. For instance, the Jewish community in Rome boycotted official ceremonies dedicated to Italy's Liberation Day held in the Italian capital on April 25, 2018. This day traditionally marks Italy's liberation from fascism. In a statement issued by the leadership of Rome's Jewish community, it was noted that they would hold separate events, to which the public would also be invited. The statement highlighted that despite the agreement signed in April 2018 between the National Association of Italian Partisans (ANPI), the Mayor of Rome, and the head of the Jewish

community, "ANPI could not take an official and definitive position regarding the organized participation of Palestinian and pro-Palestinian organizations that carry symbols alien to the spirit of April 25" [*Rome's Jews to boycott...*, 2018].

This primarily referred to anti-Semitic slogans in which the State of Israel was equated with Nazi Germany. Leaders of Rome's Jewish community accused the authorities of insulting the memory of members of the "Jewish Brigade", who bravely fought against the Germans in Northern Italy in March and April 1945. The Jewish Brigade or the Jewish Infantry Brigade was part of the British Army, consisting of about 5,000 Jewish volunteers.

The brigade fought under a flag similar to the flag of the present-day State of Israel. As a result, on April 25, 2018, the Prime Minister of Italy and the Mayor of Rome attended rallies organized by Rome's Jewish community to mark the 73rd anniversary of Italy's liberation from the Nazis. These rallies were held separately from the main Liberation Day march in Rome, which the Jewish community boycotted due to the presence of Palestinian and pro-Palestinian groups.

According to JTA, Jewish organizations participated in marches and rallies in Milan, Turin, and other cities on Wednesday without organizing separate events, although pro-Palestinian groups participated in them, accusing Israel of "Nazi policies toward Palestinians" [*Rome's Jews to boycott...*, 2018].

Quite often, the authorities demonstrate understanding towards the position of the Jewish community and the preservation of Holocaust memory. For example, the Mayor of Rome blocked the renaming of one of the streets in the Italian capital in honor of a well-known Italian neo-fascist leader. Rome will not have a street named after Giorgio Almirante, one of the most famous post-war neo-fascist leaders in the country. Almirante, who died in 1988, founded the well-known neo-fascist group MSI in 1946. He was one of the signatories of the anti-Semitic manifesto of 1938 "On the Struggle for Race Purity" and worked as an editor for the anti-Semitic journal "Race Defense". Rome Mayor Virginia Raggi vetoed the City Council's decision to rename a street or square in honor of Almirante. This proposal was put forward by far-right parties.

"Italian media reported that almost all members of the People's Movement Five Star Council voted in favor of this proposal. The Jewish community in Rome condemned the attempt to rename the city as a „shame to the city's history". The statement from the Mayor of Rome noted, Someone who held the position of editor for the publication "Race Defense" and never repented does not deserve to have a street named in his honor. As the leader of MSI, an organization that was dissolved in the 1990s, Almirante was one of Italy's well-known politicians, serving in parliament for many years. Several cities in Italy already have streets named in his honor" [*Rome mayor blocks...*, 2018].

Despite such facts, Italy has been quite successful in perpetuating the memory of those Italians who saved the country's Jews during the Holocaust. For instance, an Italian cycling champion who saved Jews during the Holocaust was posthumously granted honorary Israeli citizenship. Avner Shalev, the head of Yad Vashem, presented the late Gino Bartali's granddaughter, Gioia, with honorary citizenship of the Jewish state. Gino Bartali was once a famous athlete, winning the Tour de France and the Giro d'Italia.

He grew up in a Tuscan village and was revered in the country in the mid-1930s, including by members of Benito Mussolini's fascist government. However, his admiration was not mutual. Bartali initially refused to dedicate his Tour de France victory to the dictator and later worked to undermine the fascist regime and rescue Italy's Jews. In the early 1940s, Bartali worked covertly as a courier between Italian resistance groups. He went by the alias "Iron Man of Tuscany" and transported documents hidden in the frame of his bicycle across the Tuscan hills. When the Nazis occupied northern and central Italy in 1943, Bartali began transporting forged identity papers for Italian Jews. For a year, Bartali smuggled fake documents for Jews, enabling them to flee to safe havens like Switzerland [*The Tour de France...*, 2023].

He also hid a Jewish family in an apartment he owned in Florence. To ensure their safety, he asked the police not to check the residence, stating that his bicycle, specially tuned for races, was kept there. But the athlete's activities raised suspicions, and in 1944, he was arrested. In 2013, he was recognized as Righteous Among the Nations.

"His story is unique because he used the same pedals that helped him win many races to save people, but one victory was the most beautiful, noble, and courageous of all", said Italian Ambassador to Israel Gianluigi Benedetti at the ceremony. "Gino Bartali's greatest victory was a victory over evil", he added [*The Tour de France...*, 2023].

Currently, the 27,300 Jews living in the country form a thriving community, concentrated in major cities: Rome, Milan, Turin, Florence, and Livorno. Interest in Jewish culture is widespread among various segments of the Italian population, although knowledge about Judaism is often limited. Kosher food is available in major cities. The representative body of Italian Jewry is the Union of Italian Jewish Communities (UCEI), the Italian branch of the World Jewish Congress [*Jews on the Italian...*, 2023].

One of the important issues in contemporary Italian authorities' policies regarding the "Jewish question" is creating conditions for the development of communal life and combating anti-Semitism, which may take place either in accordance with the IHRA definition or within the framework of the anti-Semitism definition proposed by the government. The European Commission has mandated Italy to develop a program throughout 2023 for protecting the Jewish population from anti-Semitism and for the development of Jewish religious life and culture.

### ***Modern issues in French politics regarding Jews and the fight against anti-Semitism***

The status of Jews in contemporary France is one of the crucial political issues, causing concern not only to Jewish organizations in Europe but also to the leadership of the European Union. The EU is interested in a balanced and fair policy that respects the interests of national minorities and combats anti-Semitism and the associated terrorist threats. Currently, France is the only Western European country where the Jewish question is not only acute but further complicated by the presence of a threat of mass terrorist acts against Jewish targets. Behind these threats loom ISIS and other groups that have placed French Jews at the top of their list of "main Islamist threats".

It should be noted that there has been an atmosphere of hostility towards Jews in society during 2017–2018, which has even impacted the

academic activities of European scholars. A notable case involved historian Georges Bensoussan, who faced legal action for a statement related to Jews. This case became an important test of academic freedom in France.

French Jewish historian Georges Bensoussan was accused of Islamophobia and brought to court after stating that "Arabs soak anti-Semitism up with their mother's milk". This legal process was closely followed by many in France, with some scholars calling it a "significant test of determining academic freedom" Bensoussan, a Holocaust history specialist, is also one of the world's leading experts on the history of Jewish communities in Arab countries. The legal action against him was initiated by a group of Muslim lobbyists.

The statement about "anti-Semitism absorbed with mother's milk" was made by the historian during an interview with one of the Paris radio stations that took place in 2012. In the course of a months-long trial, Bensoussan explained to the court that he was merely quoting the film director Smaïn Laacher, an ethnic Frenchman, who said that "in many Arab families, anti-Semitism is absorbed with the air they breathe". In the end, the judges stated in their ruling that the prosecutors failed to substantiate the charges of incitement to hatred and concluded that Bensoussan had simply "quoted Laacher", with no intention to incite hatred. Georges Bensoussan was acquitted by the 17th Criminal Tribunal of Paris in the case of incitement to inter-ethnic enmity. Representatives of academic circles welcomed the court's verdict [*French historian...*, 2017, p. 16].

In this context, the treatment of French Jews goes far beyond careless remarks aimed at them. The situation for members of the Jewish community in France is dangerous, not only on the streets but also within their homes. Antisemites carry out attacks on the residences of ordinary Jewish community members, as well as their leaders. In this situation, none of the French Jews can feel safe, especially considering that there is no equivalent to the Community Security Trust (CST), which operates in the United Kingdom, offering private security services.

One of the recent high-profile cases involved the assault on the head of the Sephardic Jewish community in France, which occurred right in his home. On September 9, 2017, attackers broke into the home of Rabbi Roger Pinto, located in the northeastern Paris suburb of Livry-Gargan.

They vandalized the house and brutally beat the community leader, his son, and his wife. The attackers numbered three, and one of them, a man with dark skin aged between 20 and 30, declared that he participated in the crime because the victims were "Jews, and they must have money".

The assailants took credit cards and jewelry items and tortured the entire family for several hours regarding the availability of additional funds. The men left after Roger Pinto managed to discreetly call the emergency services from his mobile phone. French Jewish philosopher Bernard-Henri Lévy expressed his solidarity on Twitter, stating, "I was struck by the ant-Semitic attack in Livry-Gargan. I express my solidarity with Roger Pinto and his family, who became victims" [*Famille agressee...*, 2017]. Israel's ambassador to France, Aliza Bin-Nun, also condemned the incident, stating it was an ant-Semitic attack. A series of attacks on Jewish homes due to the belief that "they have money" began in 2014 when three men broke into a Jewish family's home in Creteil, a suburb of Paris. One of them sexually assaulted a young woman, another beat her boyfriend, and a third went to an ATM to withdraw money from the victims' cards. The criminals later stated that they were targeting Jews. Antisemites have been active in Creteil for a while. In 2006, they kidnapped Ilan Halimi, a Jewish mobile phone salesman, whom they held hostage for ransom and later murdered. Today, some French Jews consider Halimi's murder a turning point in the life of the French Jewish community, changing it forever.

An important phenomenon in contemporary France is political anti-Semitism. Despite the defeat in the recent presidential elections, Marine Le Pen and her supporters have not abandoned their plans for a comeback and the implementation of a series of ant-Semitic laws in society. Of particular concern is the right-wing interpretation of the "Vel d'Hiv Roundup", which is evidence of French involvement in the Holocaust [*Famille agressee...*, 2017]. Marine Le Pen, in particular, has repeatedly stated that France is not responsible for the "Vel d'Hiv Roundup", the largest series of arrests of Jews in the country during World War II. Between June 14 and 15, 1942, more than 13,000 Jews were arrested in Paris and at the Velodrome d'Hiver bicycle track and sent to concentration camps. "I do not think that France is responsible for Vel d'Hiv", Le Pen said in an interview with LCI. "I think that, in fact, if

there are responsible people, they are the ones who were in power at the time. It's not France... the Vichy regime was not France", she added [*La faute de Marine Le Pen...*, 2017].

However, despite the rather grim state of affairs with anti-Semitism in modern France, law enforcement agencies are trying to combat everyday anti-Semitism as a manifestation of racism. The most aggressive antisemites are still arrested, fined, and the most dangerous ones are sent to prison.

For instance, a French court sentenced an Arab man who insulted a local rabbi and his family on the streets. The incident occurred on October 12 in the town of Nîmes, located 60 miles west of Marseille. The 22-year-old Talal Arruiyal approached the rabbi, his wife, and four children as they were leaving the local synagogue and started insulting them, calling them "dirty Jews". The incident did not go unnoticed by local authorities. The police were called to the scene, and a month later, the trial began. The prosecution requested to suspend the prison sentence for the young man on humanitarian grounds, but the court decided otherwise. The judge decided to impose the harshest penalty provided by the Criminal Code for verbal insult based on racial hatred. The offender will serve a 2-month prison term and pay a fine of 1000 euros. Arruiyal was identified thanks to footage from a nearby car's video recorder. He apologized in court, saying he had "acted immaturily" [*French court sends...*, 2017].

The development of the Jewish community in France is an important research issue that sheds light on the status of the Jewish community in Europe as a whole and allows for conclusions regarding its future existence in a region that witnessed the greatest tragedy in Jewish history – the Holocaust. Today, the French Jewish community is more susceptible to terrorist attacks and anti-Semitism than any other in Europe. A significant problem is the desire of right-wing parties to revise the history of the Holocaust, partially blaming Jews for it, a trend that is already taking root in some Eastern European countries. Given this, increased emigration of French Jews is likely, as the terrorist threat grows and right-wing parties seek to ban the wearing of the kippah and Jewish symbols in public places, as repeatedly stated by Marine Le Pen.



### ***Characteristics of the development of the Jewish community in France in 2020–2021***

Over the past decades, France has had the largest Jewish population in Europe, and the "Jewish question" is one of the most prominent issues in its political life. Following the departure of the UK, with its 300,000-strong Jewish community, from the EU, the majority of Europe's Jews reside in France. Therefore, the official position of Paris on any issue related to the Jewish community is more important than ever. The period of the pandemic has had an impact not only on the decrease in the overall crime rate in France and Europe as a whole but also partially on the level of anti-Semitic incidents.

According to the Service de Protection de la Communauté Juive (Service for the Protection of the Jewish Community), the number of anti-Semitic incidents in France in 2020 decreased by 50% compared to the previous year. However, the number of physical attacks based on anti-Semitism remained nearly unchanged despite the COVID-19 lockdown. In 2020, the SPCJ registered 339 incidents compared to 687 cases in 2019. According to the organization's annual report published on January 27, 2021, 44 out of 45 cases were physical attacks on Jews. In one case, a 29-year-old man was beaten by two individuals of African descent who called him a "dirty Jew". This incident occurred in an elevator in a building where the victim's parents lived. Conspiracy theories related to the COVID-19 pandemic constituted the majority of documented online manifestations of anti-Semitism, as stated in the SPCJ report [*Que disent les chiffres...*, 2020].

One of the most prominent incidents of anti-Semitism, discussed throughout French society, took place in Strasbourg, where the European Parliament is located – a vital center of the country's political life. During the incident, French police arrested an illegal immigrant from Algeria who, working as a courier in Strasbourg, refused to deliver food to two kosher restaurants, stating that he "does not serve Jews". French parliamentarian Meyer Habib reported this on January 13, 2021, after which the story made headlines in international media. Following Eden's cancellation of orders from Jewish organizations on the Deliveroo service, law enforcement agencies began an investigation into the case

of religious discrimination. In France and most other EU countries, laws prohibit refusing to provide commercial services based on race, ethnicity, religion, appearance, gender, and other characteristics [*Deliveroo driver...*, 2021].

Another incident received less attention in France but deeply affected the global Jewish community. A Frenchwoman who finished second in the national beauty contest "Miss France" received numerous threats on Twitter after she told the competition's judges that her father was Israeli. "I have the most diverse origins: my mother is of Serbian-Croatian descent, my father is Italian of Israeli origin. This has given me a passion for geography and an understanding of different cultures", said April Benaym during the competition on December 19, 2020. Following this, she received a stream of threats on Twitter, as reported by the Jerusalem Post. Messages included "Hitler forgot about you" and threats of harm. The French Minister of the Interior expressed support for the young woman, stating that law enforcement agencies were "dealing with this shocking matter". The 21-year-old Benaym holds the title of "Miss Provence". Amanda Peti, who won the "Miss France" competition, has already stated that these tweets are "very disappointing", and she "fully supports" April [*Miss France runner-up...*, 2020].

In general, threats and attacks on Jews in France remained at a traditionally high level throughout 2020. The country has a strong undercurrent of everyday anti-Semitism, which many former members of the Jewish community who emigrated to Israel consider the primary reason for leaving. Nonetheless, the police in France respond relatively promptly, taking into account the level of terrorist threats, which are often directed at individuals of Jewish nationality and Jewish communal institutions. For example, the French police arrested two adults and two minors suspected of attacking a Jewish family near Paris on December 17. "Last night, during Hanukkah, a family from Oberwiller was attacked because they are Jews. This is in France in 2020. The culprits were promptly apprehended by law enforcement representatives. „They must be punished due to the seriousness of these acts“, wrote French Interior Minister Gérald Darmanin on Twitter" [*French Jewish family...*, 2020]. According to Le Parisien, Hebrew songs were playing

from the family's car, which may have triggered the anti-Semitic attack. Oberwiller, a municipality in the northern suburbs of Paris, is a relatively impoverished area with a significant Muslim population and houses a Jewish school. "The incident reminds us of the precarious situation of Jews identifying as such in France", noted Neomi Madar, the president of the Union of Jewish French Students (UEJF) [*French Jewish family...*, 2020].

A significant part of anti-Semitic rhetoric in France in 2020 consisted of various conspiracy theories that accused Jews of orchestrating the coronavirus pandemic. "Anti-Semitism has plagued French society for centuries, flaring up during crises, especially during epidemics", according to JTA. For example, in the 14th century, many Jews were killed in France during the "Black Death" epidemic after being accused of spreading the disease through well poisoning. In Strasbourg alone, according to historian Robert Gottfried's book on this period of French history, 2,000 Jews were burned alive at the local council's command. "It is profoundly sad and repugnant, but the coronavirus pandemic is a reminder that Jews will be blamed for any epidemic, whether today or in 1347", said Mark Noble, a historian who headed the research department at CRIF, the umbrella group of French Jewish communities, since 2002 [*An unwanted symptom...*, 2020].

Throughout several weeks in 2020, a caricature of Agnès Buzyn (the French Minister of Health from 2017 to 2020) depicted as a Jew pouring poison into a well circulated widely in the media. The caricature was reprinted in various media outlets and shared on social media tens of thousands of times, as reported by JTA. Another viral image that circulated on the internet featured an anti-Semitic caricature called "The Happy Merchant", depicting a smiling Jew rubbing his hands. This caricature had Buzyn's face superimposed onto it. Additionally, there is a widely shared video in which Buzyn and her husband, both of Jewish heritage, are accused of refusing to use hydroxychloroquine, an anti-malarial drug promoted by some individuals, including former President Donald Trump, as a potential cure for COVID-19. However, the effectiveness of this drug against the coronavirus has not been proven.

The video received 170,000 views on YouTube before being removed. Alain Soral, a Holocaust denier who has been convicted

multiple times for inciting hatred against Jews, claimed in a video posted on YouTube that the virus was being used by the "secular society, which we are not allowed to name", that "wants to profit from the French to weaken them with a massive death toll" [*An unwanted symptom...*, 2020].

It is worth noting that the UK government has been one of the most effective in combating anti-Semitism in the European Union. The government was one of the first to adopt the stringent definition of anti-Semitism proposed by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA). It now requires local authorities, universities, and agencies to do the same, closely monitoring incidents of anti-Semitism and protecting the community with the help of experts from the Community Security Trust. In France, the situation is somewhat less favorable, and the government is expected to follow a similar path in the future. Nonetheless, it is essential to set an example of tolerance and respect for the rights of national minorities, as declared by France in various international documents, especially in the wake of Brexit and the need to lead other countries in this regard.

### ***Contemporary issues in the politics regarding Jews and the fight against anti-Semitism in Spain***

The study of issues related to the development of anti-Semitism in Spain is crucial for understanding the peculiarities of contemporary European Jewry. Spain has held the top position in expert ratings for several years when it comes to the level of anti-Semitism, and, therefore, the situation in this country acts as a catalyst for the overall European situation regarding anti-Semitism. In particular, the Gatestone Institute experts declared Spain the "most anti-Semitic country in the EU" in 2010 [*Spain: "The Most Anti-Semitic..."*, 2011].

It should be noted that over the last two to three years, Spain has become an unwavering stronghold for proponents of boycotting the State of Israel. Legends about the level of anti-Semitism in this country have existed for a long time, but the available statistics are striking in their support from both state and local authorities. In 2015, approximately 50 municipalities across various regions in Spain adopted decisions to boycott the State of Israel. This is significantly more than in any other

European country and even more than in several countries combined. The leaders of the anti-Israel BDS (Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions) movement in Spain primarily rely on left-wing political parties, which make up the majority in municipal and local authorities and traditionally exhibit a specific attitude towards the "Jewish question".

For instance, in May 2015, Catalan legislators requested the removal of the head of the Barcelona Jewish community from the Catalan Parliament building, labeling him as a "foreign agent". Unfortunately, this act did not receive the proper assessment from the Spanish and European public, and the political tendency of "not sitting at the same table with Jews" partly persists in this region [*Why Spain is standing up...*, 2016].

In addition to anti-Semitism against local Jews, this problem is also felt by foreign Jews of Jewish descent. For example, in August 2015, the organizers of the Rototom Sunsplash festival in Benidorm asked the American singer of Jewish descent, Matisyahu, to make a political statement condemning the State of Israel before his performance in Spain. When he refused to do so, his invitation to the festival was revoked. The Federation of Jewish Communities in Spain characterized this incident as an "anti-Semitic act", and many cultural figures from the United States and Israel declined to participate in cultural events in Spain [*Why Spain is standing up...*, 2016].

Nevertheless, the Jewish community actively resists the BDS movement. In 2015, pro-Israel activists received 24 resolutions, legal opinions, and court injunctions against BDS in Spain. "The BDS movement in Spain is strong and works systematically. However, they encountered a response for the first time, which is also systematic", emphasized the head of the pro-Israel organization ACOM, Angel Mas [*Matisyahu: "Anti-Semitism..."*, 2015].

In July 2016, ACOM compelled the authorities of Campes, a city located 210 miles north of Madrid, to withdraw their previously adopted resolution. ACOM activists threatened to take the matter to court and prove that BDS actions were unconstitutional and discriminatory. It's worth noting that not all residents of the country are anti-Semites. In Spain, there is a support group for organizations like ACOM, primarily

composed of businessmen who understand that in times of crisis, reducing trade with Israel as advocated by BDS is destructive. Much now depends on Spanish courts. As of now, the position of this closed group, which is independent and has its own views on many issues, differs from that of other branches of power, and is not favorable to Israel [*Why Spain is standing...*, 2016].

In 2009, a Spanish judge opened a case regarding the "war crimes" of former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. However, as highlighted by former Israeli diplomat Igaël Palmor, who worked as a cultural attaché in the 1990s, the situation may change for the better. He links this to Spain's transition to European legal standards regarding incitement to hatred, the improvement of the rule of law, and the emergence of a centrist government [*Why Spain is standing...*, 2016].

The Spanish government has even started granting citizenship to Sephardic Jews as a form of apology for their expulsion from the country in the 15th century. This process is under the patronage of the King of Spain, whose efforts have not gone unnoticed by the European Jewish community and have earned him several awards. Of course, there is great hope that the view of politicians who argue that boycotting Israel will not benefit Spain's economy will prevail. Unemployment in Spain stands at 21%, rising to 45% among individuals under 25 years of age [*Welcome home, 500 years...*, 2015].

Recently, the events in the northern Spanish city of Santiago de Compostela provided a good illustration of the economic factor in this matter. After the city's authorities decided to support the boycott of Israel, the airline "El Al" ceased negotiations about establishing a direct flight connection, causing financial losses to the city's airport. Representatives of the People's Party accused the left-wing city government of sabotaging the tourism industry and losing valuable jobs. Currently, Israel's GDP is 36% higher than that of Spain, and 350,000 Israeli tourists visit Spanish resorts every year. In any case, the leaders of ACOM note that the main battle between anti-Semites and pro-Israel forces is currently taking place within the Spanish judicial system. "The independent Spanish judiciary system has long resisted pressure from BDS activists" [*Matisyahu: "Anti-Semitism..."*, 2015], says Ramon

Perez-Mora, a Spanish journalist for ABC newspaper. However, this year, the situation has changed. The Jewish community, numbering 45,000 individuals, cannot withstand this pressure. "The Spanish Jewish community is small... It's not the kind of society that can easily confront the challenge posed by BDS activists who are already well-entrenched and have foreign financing and strong ties to the government", [*Why Spain is standing...*, 2016] added Palmor.

It's worth noting that the situation regarding anti-Semitism in Spain remains tense. This phenomenon can be found not only among the uneducated population and marginalized elements but also among politicians and public figures. The campaign to boycott Israel has become an opportunity for anti-Semites working in local and regional government bodies to organize and implement policies that restrict the civil rights of Jewish residents of Spain. The efforts of the central government and the monarchy aimed at attracting Jews to the country cannot yet compensate for the level of anti-Israel and anti-Semitic rhetoric in society. The situation in Spain, overall, significantly contrasts with that in other European countries, where in 2017, many individuals who made anti-Israel statements equated with anti-Semitism faced criminal prosecution.

### ***Modern challenges in Portuguese Jewish policy and the fight against anti-Semitism***

The Portuguese government, along with the leadership of Spain and Poland, has been actively working in recent years to establish a significant Jewish community in the country. Portugal has passed a law allowing descendants of Sephardic Jews, who were expelled from Portugal in the 16th century after the Lisbon Massacre, to return to the country. As of October 2019, the Portuguese authorities approved approximately 10,000 requests for citizenship from members of the Sephardic Jewish community. This constitutes about one-third of the approximately 33,000 citizenship applications submitted under the 2015 law for descendants of Sephardic Jews. Most of the applications have come from residents of Israel, Turkey, Brazil, and Venezuela, as reported by the Times of Israel [*Portugal grants citizenship...*, 2019].

Portugal enacted the law on the return of Sephardic Jews shortly before Spain adopted a similar law, which is more restrictive and set to expire in October 2019. Thousands of Sephardic descendants have already received Spanish citizenship. The Portuguese law on the return of Sephardic Jews is indefinite, and the return of Jews to the country will continue beyond 2019. Both countries have stated that the law aims to atone for the consequences of the persecution of Jews in the 15th and 16th centuries under the Church's leadership, known as the Inquisition [*Portugal grants citizenship...*, 2019].

Currently, as noted by JTA, the economies of Spain and Portugal rely significantly on foreign investments, particularly in the tourism sector. Unemployment rates in these countries are relatively high, standing at 17% and 8.9%, respectively. Portugal is making substantial efforts to promote its Jewish cultural heritage. For example, a large Jewish museum is under construction in Lisbon, expected to open next year. The network of regions in Portugal, part of the "Rede de Judiarias" program, which hosts Jewish cultural sites, has grown from 2011 to include 27 municipalities. In 2014, a new program called "Rotas de Sefarad" ("Sefard Routes") was launched [*A soaring number of Sephardic...*, 2018]. Restoration work on tourist sites listed under Rotas de Sefarad was completed in December with a total investment of \$ 5.7 million, most of which was provided by the Portuguese government. Ana Mendes Godinho, Portugal's Secretary of State for Tourism, visited the United States this month and met with Jewish community leaders to draw attention to these developments. She stated, "We want the presence of Jews in Portugal... and we count on Jewish investments... We have a significant Jewish heritage and a very ancient and deep connection with Jewish communities" [*A soaring number of Sephardic...*, 2018].

In addition to the process of Jews returning to Portugal, there is a revival of the country's Jewish community from within. In some cities and even villages, Jewish communities that existed hundreds of years ago are being reestablished. For example, 70 members of the Jewish community in the Portuguese village of Belmonte are seeking recognition. Friday evenings and Saturday mornings in the local



synagogue are dedicated to services and gatherings at the local Jewish museum. Once a year, members of the Belmonte Jewish community organize a small kosher market on Sundays.

However, this community is the only one on the Iberian Peninsula that has preserved the rituals and other elements of its identity dating back to the time of the Spanish Inquisition. This has been made possible through the sacrifices and dedication of subsequent generations of "crypto-Jews" – Jews who were forced to convert to Christianity but continued to secretly practice Judaism. This year, the Jewish community of Belmonte is for the first time seeking equal status and access to funding from the government, compared to the two larger Jewish communities in Portugal in Lisbon and Porto. The presence of Jews in Belmonte, who survived the Inquisition, was first documented in 1917 by Samuel Schwartz, a Jewish engineer from Poland who worked at a nearby lead mine. He noticed the specific customs of some families in the city [*Portugal's only rural...*, 2019].

In 1925, Schwartz wrote a book called "New Christians in Portugal in the 20th Century", in which he described how three Jewish holidays were observed in Belmonte: Passover, the Fast of Esther – part of the Purim holiday – and Yom Kippur. "The history of the Jews of Belmonte resembles a fairy tale or a science fiction series", wrote Eliyahu Birenboim, former Chief Rabbi of Uruguay and the head of the Israeli rabbinical seminary Strauss-Amiel, in his detailed study of this place in 2012. At the same time, there are everyday challenges in the life of a small and remote Jewish community. The rural area of Belmonte offers few employment opportunities, and there are only a few children in the community, raising concerns about its long-term viability. In recent years, several dozen people have emigrated from Belmonte to Israel [*Portugal's only rural...*, 2019].

Despite the law allowing the return of Jews to Portugal, some incidents of anti-Semitism still occur, despite the favorable state of affairs in terms of inter-ethnic relations in the country and the pro-Jewish position of the ruling Socialist Party. For instance, the New York Times had to apologize for a Portuguese cartoon that caused a global scandal. The cartoon depicted a "blind President Trump, dressed in a kippah, with

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu portrayed as a dog on a leash", with a Star of David on his collar. In an editorial letter, The New York Times stated that "the image was offensive, and publishing it was a mistake". Previously, US President Trump angrily reacted to the cartoon, writing on Twitter: "The New York Times has apologized for the terrible ant-Semitic cartoon, but they haven't apologized to me for all the fake and corrupt news they print on a daily basis. They have reached the lowest level of „journalism” and certainly a low point in anytimes history!" [*NY Times apologies...*, 2019].

It was later revealed that this ant-Semitic cartoon was initially published in Portugal in the national newspaper Expresso and was created by the well-known cartoonist "Antonio", who has been publishing his cartoons in that publication since 1974. The author himself denied the presence of ant-Semitic context in his work. It is worth noting that the cartoon received widespread criticism, including from CNN, Fox News, The Jerusalem Post, and Times of Israel. Despite the fact that the issue of anti-Semitism in Portugal is not as acute as in other European countries, such as neighboring Spain, the Jewish community, like everywhere in the world, remains a target for various extremist and terrorist groups [*NY Times apologies...*, 2019].

Europe, as always, remains a source of trouble and misfortune for terrorists, and therefore, in the foreseeable future, Portugal may become a target for terrorists. This is aided by the increasing number of tourists and enhanced security measures traditionally popular for terrorist attacks in countries like Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands. This was stated at a conference on counterterrorism by Israeli expert Boaz Ganor. The conference was held at the School of Social and Political Sciences of the University of Lisbon and brought together leading experts in countering terrorism worldwide. According to Ganor, Portugal is not an easy target but a series of preventive measures can be taken to counter terrorism in the country. He also added that there can never be enough security, and each time, more advanced measures need to be proposed to counter terrorism [*Terrorists may attack...*, 2017].

Overall, Portugal is the most positive example of government policy on the "Jewish issue" in Europe. The country has far less anti-Semitism

than Spain and Poland, which also have policies to facilitate the return of Jews to their respective countries. Weighted political decisions by the ruling Socialist Party in Portugal and a high level of tolerance towards representatives of other religions and nationalities give hope for the positive development of the Jewish community in this country.

***Spread of anti-Semitic conspiracy theories in Western European countries during the COVID-19 pandemic***

The emergence and dissemination of new conspiracy theories became one of the characteristic manifestations of anti-Semitism during the COVID-19 pandemic that engulfed virtually all countries worldwide in 2020. The nature of this viral infection and the unpreparedness of modern medicine for such an ailment led to the spread of new conspiracy theories and groundless accusations against various religious communities among the populations of many Western countries.

Initially, in early 2020, mass accusations were directed towards China, the country where the coronavirus infection was first registered. However, these accusations gradually shifted towards Jews. In a report published by the Community Security Trust (CST) in the UK, the "alarming" spread of anti-Semitic conspiracy theories related to the coronavirus on the internet is noted. Followers of conspiracy theories increasingly linked the coronavirus with Jews in 2020, which experts on anti-Semitism in the UK found to be a troubling trend. The CST report titled "Coronavirus and the Plague of anti-Semitism" emphasizes that online anti-Semitism has been on the rise since January 2020. CST experts analyzed anti-Semitic content circulating on the internet and identified "several different anti-Jewish narratives related to COVID-19". They noted that the British internet featured rather bizarre theories that attributed the emergence of the coronavirus to a "Jewish conspiracy" and claimed that the "Jewish people were its main spreaders". "Hatred thrives when it is not monitored, and CST highlights the presence of this anti-Semitic material so that social media and law enforcement agencies can take action where necessary. The spread of such anti-Semitism online is particularly alarming because the overwhelming reaction of people in the UK to this crisis is to come together and support collective

efforts in the fight against COVID-19", states the report [*Coronavirus and the plague...*, 2020].

The authors of the CST report also observed that anti-Semitism in the United States "influences extremist expressions in the United Kingdom" and drew attention to the growth of "anti-Chinese xenophobia, blending with anti-Jewish conspiracy theories". "Even when these theories do not begin with the Jewish community, anti-Semites do not miss the opportunity to blame Jews", the authors of the analytical report emphasized [*Coronavirus and the plague...*, 2020].

It is worth noting that concepts that connect traditional myths of a conspiracy against the West, such as the "Sabbatean sects", with new accusations of creating the COVID-19 virus have found particular resonance among English-speaking residents. Publications about the "worldwide Jewish conspiracy" that circulate on social media by former sports presenter and British citizen David Icke, including claims that "Jewish occultists" or "Frankist Sabbateans" are responsible for the COVID-19 pandemic, have been viewed more than 30 million times [*Icke antisemitic conspiracies...*, 2020]. Data presented in a new report by the Center for Countering Digital Hate (CCDH) illustrate the significant increase in the level of anti-Semitism and the popularity of ideas related to the "worldwide Jewish conspiracy". Millions of internet users have also observed Mr. Icke explaining that Bill Gates and the "Rothschilds" are part of this conspiracy, and that vaccines and 5G networks have made people more vulnerable to this disease [*Icke antisemitic conspiracies...*, 2020].

Research by the Center for Countering Digital Hate (CCDH) demonstrates the extent of the development of the "industry of creating anti-Semitic myths". For example, the audience of just one of the accounts of a popular propagator of conspiracy theories, who has over two million subscribers, could generate up to £20 million in annual revenue, mainly from advertisers [*Icke antisemitic conspiracies ...*, 2020].

Moreover, Mr. Icke's YouTube videos bring in significant advertising income, both from Google Ads and from his sponsor, an investment company that seeks to exploit the paranoia of his followers

for its political purposes. After the publication of the CCDH report, the leadership of CCDH called on social media owners to remove content created by Mr. Icke. A special letter in support of this call by CCDH was sent to the heads of Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and Amazon, signed by the co-chairs of the All-Party Parliamentary Group Against anti-Semitism in the British House of Commons, Andrew Percy and Cat McKinnell. A survey published last week showed that despite the traditional media largely avoiding publications about Mr. Icke for the past 30 years, he is now known to 51% of Britons, with every eighth resident of the United Kingdom having watched one of his numerous videos or read one of his books. His website is currently listed among the top one thousand most popular in the United Kingdom, and a significant portion of its traffic comes from social networks such as Twitter and Facebook [*Icke antisemitic conspiracies...*, 2020].

Furthermore, a report published by the Kantor Center at Tel Aviv University revealed that the COVID-19 pandemic gave rise to an "intense and exceptionally powerful wave of anti-Semitism and anti-Zionist propaganda, accusing Jews or Israel of inventing the virus or benefiting from the situation". The researchers at the Kantor Center concluded that the pandemic triggered a unique worldwide wave of anti-Semitism [*COVID-19 fueling worldwide...*, 2020].

In addition, a special study by researchers at the University of Oxford showed that 19.1% of the population of the United Kingdom to some extent believes that "the coronavirus pandemic was organized by Jews" [*One in five Brits...*, 2020].

Similar trends are observed not only in English-speaking countries but also, for example, in Germany, where during the summer of 2020, ideas were propagated that "Jews, led by Soros, organized the coronavirus pandemic with the assistance of the German government to gain power and influence". Notably, a well-known German TV host, Attila Hildmann, disseminates conspiracy theories that praise Hitler and condemn the "Angela Merkel regime, which established a communist dictatorship in the country" [*German Jewish leaders...*, 2020].

It is worth mentioning that modern anti-Semitic conspiracy theories not only persist in developed Western countries but also find a significant

resonance among a portion of the population. Accusations against Jews for creating the COVID-19 virus and spreading it worldwide have become another reason for the intensification of anti-Semitic sentiments and the increase in the level of anti-Semitism observed in most European and American countries. Undoubtedly, the success in combating the spread of conspiracy theories will be directly related to the efforts of law enforcement agencies and resistance from religious leaders, public opinion leaders, and politicians interested in maintaining societal unity and fostering a high level of tolerance.

***Modern Jewish community in the Austrian Republic: features and development prospects***

The Jewish community in Austria is one of the most dynamically developing contemporary communities in Central Europe. This community is characterized by diversity; for instance, in Vienna, one can find communities of Bukharian, Mountain, Russian-speaking Jews, and religious communities of all branches of Judaism. The country hosts a significant number of Jewish cultural centers, and research into Jewish history and culture is actively pursued in higher education institutions. The Austrian government maintains a stringent policy against anti-Semitism, and its levels are lower than in other countries in the region, particularly Germany. Nevertheless, anti-Semitism still exists, and its monitoring is an important part of the work of monitoring organizations closely cooperating with law enforcement agencies [*Jewish Life in Austria...*, 2016].

According to a survey conducted before the onset of the pandemic in 2019, slightly over 30% of Austrians held some form of anti-Jewish prejudice, which was significantly lower than in 2018. According to a survey commissioned by the Austrian government and conducted by the Institute for Empirical Research among 2,000 respondents in a representative sample, 31% of those surveyed agreed with statements that exemplify anti-Jewish beliefs. In 2018, this figure stood at 46%. These statistical data were presented at a special press conference in Vienna by the President of the National Council of Austria, Wolfgang Sobotka, indicating a high level of attention to this issue in the country [*In Austrian Anti-semitism...*, 2021].

The survey, titled "Austria – anti-Semitism Study 2020 – Analysis of Results", included statements such as "Jews try to take advantage of the fact that they were victims of the Nazi era" (28%) and "Jews have too much influence in Austria" (11%). In addition to this government-funded survey, surveys on this topic were previously conducted in the country by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) for the Global 100 rating in 2014 and 2019. According to these data, the prevalence of anti-Semitic views was 28% and 20%, respectively. According to the ADL rating, Austria was grouped with countries with the highest levels of anti-Semitism. The country's score was above the average score by 24% and much higher than in the Netherlands (5%), the United Kingdom (8%), and the United States (9%) [*In Austrian Anti-semitism...*, 2021].

Despite the serious work of law enforcement agencies in Austria, it was not possible to prevent the tragedy that occurred on November 2, 2020. During a terrorist act in the Jewish quarter of Vienna, several criminals opened fire on people sitting in street cafes near the Stadttempel synagogue. As a result, four people were killed, and seventeen others were injured [*At least 4 dead in suspected...*, 2020].

An important part of the discussion on the "Jewish question" in contemporary Austria is the differing historical assessments held by representatives of the Jewish community and the authorities. One historical figure around whom heated debates revolve is Karl Lueger, the former mayor of Vienna, who was a staunch antisemite but made significant contributions to the development of the Austrian capital [*Anti-Semitic ex-mayor...*, 2020]. For instance, the city of Vienna's government defends the monument to Lueger, located on Ringstrasse Boulevard, which is constantly targeted by protesting anti-fascists and other activists who spray graffiti on it and demand its removal. Lueger served as Vienna's mayor for 13 years until his death in 1910 at the age of 65. He was widely known for his ant-Semitic rhetoric, which, it is said, inspired Adolf Hitler, who lived in Vienna in his youth. Hitler once wrote in "Mein Kampf" that he felt "unconcealed enthusiasm" for Lueger [*Anti-Semitic ex-mayor...*, 2020].

Due to frequent attacks on Jews, Lueger faced several career setbacks but did not abandon his rhetoric. In one of the speeches

delivered before members of the Association of Christian Social Workers in Vienna on July 20, 1899, Lueger stated: "The influence over the masses is in the hands of Jews among us, a large part of the press is in their hands, the majority of capital and especially big business are in the hands of Jews, and Jews here practice terrorism... How can you think about this without anger?! First and foremost, it is about freeing the Christian people from the domination of Judaism in Austria" [*Anti-Semitic ex-mayor...*, 2020].

Another debate surrounding the history of Austrian Jews revolves around the issue of creating the Holocaust Memorial Wall in Vienna. The Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance (DÖW) rejected criticism of the Memorial to Holocaust Victims in Vienna, calling it "historically inaccurate and politically motivated". Construction of the Wall, which will consist of several granite slabs over 2 meters high, began in June 2020. When completed, it will bear the names of more than 64,000 Austrian Jews who perished during the Holocaust. The concept for the Wall was proposed by Kurt Tutter, an Austrian-Canadian artist who survived the Holocaust and continues to be actively involved in its construction. The idea was voiced by the French philosopher Bernard-Henri Lévy and supported by participants of the conference on anti-Semitism in Vienna in February 2018. The names to be inscribed on the Wall will be taken from the DÖW database. Some historians argue that the Nazis often falsified personal information in official reports, so the list of names will be inaccurate. Critics also believe that the creation of the Holocaust Memorial Wall was politically motivated, as Chancellor Sebastian Kurz sought to divert public attention from his coalition with the Freedom Party, which took place in December 2017 [*Anti-Semitic ex-mayor...*, 2020].

Despite the numerous challenges facing the Jewish community in Austria, the government is making strides in addressing many issues. One such step, symbolizing the government's apology for the Holocaust and solidarity with the Jewish community, is the new law granting Austrian citizenship to descendants of Holocaust victims. Austria allowed descendants of Holocaust victims to obtain citizenship from September 1, 2020. Before the amendment to the Austrian Citizenship Act was ratified, only Holocaust survivors who remained alive and had left Austria due to Nazi persecution before the beginning of May 1945 were eligible to apply



for citizenship. However, now tens of thousands of Israelis, in accordance with the new rule, will be entitled to Austrian citizenship. Importantly, the application process will be free of charge. The amendment "corresponds to Austria's ongoing efforts at reconciliation with all those who suffered from the totalitarian Nazi regime in Austria", as stated on the Austrian government's website [*Historians attack "political" ...*, 2021].

Eighty-four-year-old Israeli Ben Zion Lapid, a native of Vienna, became the first Jew to reclaim Austrian citizenship under the new law. The Israeli, who left Austria 76 years ago at the age of eight, received his passport at the Austrian Embassy in Israel on September 4, 2020, just a few days after the new law came into effect. It is expected that thousands of Jews residing in different countries worldwide will apply for Austrian citizenship, and many may choose to relocate to the country. "I am experiencing the autumn of my life. It doesn't matter who I am or what I am, but I want to leave something to my four children and eight grandchildren. Now you can also become Austrians, and if you ever have to leave from here... then you will have that opportunity", Lapid said to his family [*Austria offers citizenship...*, 2020]. "For me, it's a full circle... I was a child. Of course, Israel is my home, but this is also like coming back home. Because I still speak German and I'm curious about what's happening in Austria. And because my brother lives in Austria", added the retiree [*Vienna-born Israeli...*, 2020].

Lapid fled Austria with his mother in 1946 and subsequently lived in Slovenia and Italy before boarding a crowded boat to Mandatory Palestine, according to JTA. He said he took the name "Lapid", meaning "torch" in Hebrew, in Israel because it signified "freedom" to him [*Vienna-born Israeli...*, 2020].

The Jewish community in Austria serves as a positive example of the free development of national minority communities in European Union countries. It upholds the rights of its members, ensures their safety, and focuses on positive interaction between community leaders and the government. The Austrian government's policies, such as granting citizenship to descendants of Holocaust victims, safeguarding community facilities, and responding to community needs, set an example for governments worldwide.

***The problem of anti-Semitism in the Netherlands in 2020–2021***

During the pandemic, the Dutch government paid special attention to the "Jewish question", particularly the fight against anti-Semitism. The government implemented a series of measures aimed at protecting the Jewish community from attacks by individuals with ant-Semitic views. One of the main innovations in this regard was the appointment of a special official responsible for combating anti-Semitism. While such a practice has existed in the United States for some time, it is only just beginning to be introduced by the most progressive European governments.

The decision to appoint a national coordinator for combating anti-Semitism was made at the end of 2020 by the country's Minister of Justice after consultations with members of the national parliament. "The Dutch government will soon appoint a new national coordinator for combating anti-Semitism to strengthen the government's approach to combating threats, discrimination, and intimidation", stated Justice Minister Ferd Grapperhaus on December 13, 2020, during his visit to the "Maccabi" community on the occasion of the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah [*Nationaal Coördinator...*, 2021].

The demand for the establishment of this state position was raised by members of the Dutch parliament a year before such a decision was taken, following a significant increase in ant-Semitic incidents in the country. The primary task of the new advisor will be to provide recommendations to the government on combating anti-Semitism from a legal perspective and implementing measures for the security of the Jewish community in the Netherlands. Minister Grapperhaus emphasized that social media has made anti-Semitism more visible and extended its influence. Additionally, the coronavirus crisis has provided fertile ground for the spread of conspiracy theories related to the Jewish community [*Nationaal Coördinator...*, 2021].

It's worth noting that political support for the Jewish community in the Netherlands doesn't always align with financial aid, which is provided less frequently compared to neighboring countries like Germany. For instance, the Dutch Parliament traditionally does not vote to allocate funds from the state budget to ensure the security of Dutch Jews. While parliament readily accepts proposals highlighting the need

to combat anti-Semitism, an amendment stating that "the Jewish community in the Netherlands often lacks the means for adequate protection of synagogue infrastructure, events, and services" is consistently rejected. According to leaders of the Jewish community in the Netherlands, over 1.2 million euros are spent annually on the protection of Jewish community facilities in a country with around 40,000 Jewish individuals. However, Dutch politicians consider funding communities to be their internal affair. At the same time, lawmakers supported the idea of establishing a specialized police unit to combat ant-Semitic crimes [*Dutch Parliament backs...*, 2020].

It should be noted that discussions regarding the Jewish question were a recurring theme in Dutch politics during 2020–2021. The issue of increasing penalties for ant-Semitic crimes was particularly prominent. Two Dutch political parties, CU and Groen Links, advocated for tougher criminal sanctions against offenses based on racial and international hatred. In this regard, a bill was presented on June 29, 2020, by the coalition partner Christen Unie (CU) and the left-wing opposition group Groen Links. Both political parties spent two years developing their proposed law, aiming to make it easier for victims of racism and anti-Semitism to file discrimination complaints when reporting crimes. This applies to both acts of vandalism and physical attacks carried out by antisemites [*GroenLinks en ChristenUnie...*, 2020].

Traditionally, it is believed that courts can already extend sentences if a crime is considered discriminatory, but in practice, this happens infrequently. In 2019, Dutch courts convicted only 47 individuals of racial and international discrimination, despite hundreds of ant-Semitic incidents being reported [*GroenLinks en ChristenUnie...*, 2020].

The initial motivation for the development of a new law was a series of ant-Semitic attacks on certain targets in Amsterdam, such as the Hacarmel restaurant. However, CU leader Gert-Jan Segers stated that the Black Lives Matter protests also influenced the timeline of its development. "Over this time, many things have changed for many people, including me. It is currently very difficult to file a complaint with the police regarding anti-Semitism. An attack on a person due to their belonging to a particular minority is such a serious crime that we want it to be a basis for increased penalties", he said. GroenLinks MP Kathalijne

Buitenweg, who worked with Segers on the bill, mentioned that the passage of this law would be the first step in improving the justice system concerning racism and hate crimes [*GroenLinks en ChristenUnie...*, 2020]. "I believe that as members of parliament, we have not paid enough attention to discrimination against people of African descent. We can see that the discriminatory aspect often disappears from the picture during legal proceedings. This creates two problems: it leaves victims dissatisfied and does not allow us to establish a standard in the country where discrimination is unacceptable", she added [*GroenLinks en ChristenUnie...*, 2020]. "We must continue to advocate for equal treatment of minorities... We must do everything to combat racism, anti-Semitism, and discrimination", emphasized Segers [*GroenLinks en ChristenUnie...*, 2020].

It is worth mentioning that Jewish organizations in the Netherlands are also politically active. In particular, Dutch Jewish organizations sent a letter to the lower house of the country's parliament, requesting that the comparison of the COVID-19 pandemic policy with the Holocaust, which is becoming increasingly common, be stopped. They asked the Dutch House of Representatives to take a clear stance on this matter, as reported by the Jewish community publication *Nieuw Israelistisch Werkblad* [*Tweede Kamer must...*, 2021].

Five Jewish organizations in the country, including the Central Jewish Consultative Committee (CJO), the Israeli Center for Information and Documentation (CIDI), the Dutch Auschwitz Committee, and the National Holocaust Museum, stressed in their letter to the Tweede Kamer (House of Representatives) that only politicians' intervention can stop what is happening on the streets of Dutch cities. At present, some opponents of COVID-19 vaccination claim that they are being treated in the same way as Jews during the Second World War. They emphasize their position by wearing T-shirts with yellow David stars, like the ones Dutch Jews were forced to wear during the Nazi occupation. "We do not just consider this extremely painful... We simply emphasize that people who voluntarily refuse vaccination are being compared to population groups who had no choice at the time. They were killed simply because of who they were", the letter stated [*Tweede Kamer must...*, 2021].

The use of "yellow stars" had previously been supported by some politicians. For example, Thierry Baudet, a member of the Dutch

Parliament from FVD, said in early September that with the introduction of the "coronavirus passport", people "for the first time since World War II must present a pass to participate in society". In their letter, Jewish organizations did not name specific MPs or politicians who make such comparisons but stated, "We urge you to take responsibility". Femke Halsema, the Mayor of Amsterdam, stated that she was "shocked" when she saw demonstrators with yellow David stars but, as a representative of the authorities, could not take any action because "if there were no calls for discrimination against Jews, then there was no crime" [*Tweede Kamer must...*, 2021].

An important part of the Dutch government's work related to the "Jewish question" is combating instances of anti-Semitism in education, which are quite common within academic circles, including among professors and legal scholars. For instance, in November 2020, the leadership of Leiden University conducted a large-scale investigation into anti-Semitism at the Law Faculty. This followed a scandal involving the political party Forum for Democracy, which has strong ties to the faculty. The university's leadership stated that an independent expert organization should conduct an investigation into such a delicate matter. "The university's leadership takes these allegations seriously because if they turn out to be true, they clearly contradict the values upheld by Leiden University", it was emphasized in their statement [*Leiden University opens...*, 2020].

Previously, some faculty members at the university, including Professor Paul Cliteur from the Law Faculty, expressed support for the ideas of the party's founder and former university graduate Thierry Baudet, who is accused of anti-Semitism, racism, and homophobia. Professor Paul Cliteur, who retired, did not withdraw his support for Baudet. He recently tweeted his support for Baudet and his party's ideology as described in the party's manifesto [*Leiden University opens...*, 2020].

Of course, an important part of the Netherlands' government policy is the commemoration of the Holocaust's victims, an effort that continues even as events of World War II gradually recede into the past. For instance, on September 19, 2021, King Willem-Alexander of the

Netherlands inaugurated the Holocaust Names Memorial in Amsterdam. Over 75 years after the end of World War II, this memorial displays the names, birth dates, and ages at the time of death of more than 102,000 Dutch Holocaust victims, including Jews, Sinti, and Roma [*King unveils monument...*, 2021].

Prime Minister Mark Rutte stated that this monument is a tribute to each victim personally, "with every name on the memorial, a memorial for each person, for each life story". "This memorial reads 102,163 times: No, we will not forget you. No, we will not allow your name to be erased. No, the last word is not left to evil", Rutte emphasized at the monument's unveiling. He also added that in our day, anti-Semitism is ever-present. "This monument cries out: be vigilant", the Prime Minister stated" [*King unveils monument...*, 2021].

Amsterdam Mayor Femke Halsema, present at the unveiling ceremony, said, "As we all know, at the start of the occupation in the Netherlands, there were 140,000 Jews living here. 80,000 of them lived in Amsterdam. Only 15,000 survived the Holocaust. 65,000 Amsterdam Jews never returned" [*King unveils monument...*, 2021]. The "Memorial of Names" located on Vesperstraat in the former Jewish quarter was designed by Polish-Jewish-American architect Daniel Libeskind. The creation of the 15-million-euro memorial was made possible in part through active citizen participation in its construction. Anyone willing could purchase a stone for 50 euros, which became a part of the memorial. To date, between 70,000 and 80,000 stones have been laid, and requests continue to come in [*King unveils monument...*, 2021].

It should be noted that the overall period from 2020 to 2021 has been marked by active Dutch government policies related to anti-Semitism and the "Jewish question" as a whole. This political direction was reinforced by the appointment of a special advisor, parliamentary factions are discussing strengthening measures against xenophobia, and efforts to combat anti-Semitism in universities and society are ongoing. All of this demonstrates that the Netherlands, within the European Union, occupies a leading position in upholding the rights of national minorities and serves as a positive example for other member countries of the European Union.

***Modern Jewish community in Germany: challenges and development prospects***

The modern Jewish community in Germany currently numbers over 200,000 individuals, making it one of Europe's communities showing dynamic growth. Germany's state policy towards Jewish communities differs from what is observed in other European countries [*"Einfach normal leben"*..., 2021]. The state exercises more control over the activities of the communities, involving them in public programmes and initiatives. However, unlike in other EU countries, it often finances public programmes, actively supporting Jewish educational institutions, synagogue maintenance, and community centers located within Germany.

This support has a positive impact on the development of some communities, which are steadily growing due to Jewish immigration from former Soviet Union countries. From this perspective, the situation differs from what can be observed in the UK, France, or the Netherlands, where Jewish religious communities sometimes have to close synagogues and sell properties due to insufficient funding. Additionally, law enforcement agencies in Germany take more decisive action against manifestations of anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial, as well as attacks on Jewish public institutions.

However, the overall level of anti-Semitism in the country continues to rise within the context of a pan-European trend. In 2018 alone, the number of anti-Semitic crimes in Germany increased by 10%, with violent incidents rising by 60%. Josef Schuster, President of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, strongly reacted to these figures, stating, "What Jews have long felt subjectively has now been confirmed by statistics" [*Anti-Semitism: Germany*..., 2021].

One of the factors contributing to the rise in anti-Semitism in the country is the continued dissemination of anti-Israel rhetoric. In order to counter this, the German government has taken a series of legally ambiguous measures. For instance, it called for the prohibition of public displays of HAMAS flags, the Palestinian Islamist group, in response to demonstrations tainted with anti-Semitism. "We do not want terrorist organizations' flags to fly on German soil", emphasized Torsten Fray, leader of the Christian Democratic Union, to *Welt am Sonntag*. He

added, "This law is a clear demonstration of support for our Jewish citizens" [*Große Koalition verbiete...*, 2021].

During the latest escalation of the conflict between HAMAS and Israel in May 2021, demonstrations were organized in several major German cities. Some of these protests featured anti-Semitic slogans, and during one Berlin demonstration, an attack on the police occurred. The German authorities plan to invoke Section 86a of the Criminal Code, initially used to prohibit the display of Nazi symbols, to address this issue [*Große Koalition verbiete...*, 2021].

At the same time, the public is demonstrating its rejection of anti-Semitism, both in politics and in everyday life. For example, hundreds of people protested in front of a hotel in Germany after a Jewish musician claimed he was denied service due to wearing a Star of David necklace. The 39-year-old singer, Gil Ofarim, who holds dual Israeli and German citizenship, posted a video on Facebook on October 5, 2021, accusing the Westin Leipzig hotel of anti-Semitism. According to Ofarim, upon arrival and while waiting in line for check-in, he noticed other customers being served ahead of him. Another customer allegedly said to him, "Take off the Star". At least one hotel staff member supported this statement. As reported by *Leipziger Zeitung*, on the same night, more than 600 people gathered near the hotel, some carrying signs with the Star of David and the Muslim crescent. The protesters accused the hotel staff of anti-Semitism, according to JTA. A hotel spokesperson told DPA that the management is "deeply concerned" and views the matter as "extremely serious". The Central Council of Jews in Germany expressed being "shocked" by the hotel staff's anti-Semitic behavior [*Antisemitismus: Hunderte...*, 2021].

A significant focus of the government's efforts concerning the Jewish community is the support of Jewish history and culture studies. In Cologne, a unique museum will be created on the site of an ancient Jewish settlement. No city north of the Alps has been a home to Jews for as long as the Roman settlement of Cologne. Recently discovered, the ancient Jewish quarter is being revived through the efforts of the government and local authorities. It is situated right in the middle of the city's Town Hall Square, where there are a hospital, a bakery, a dance hall, and a synagogue. Currently, there is active construction underway



for an underground museum, allowing visitors to immerse themselves in the life of the Jewish quarter during the era of the knights. The museum is named MiQua, short for "mikveh", a Jewish ritual bath. Its opening is planned for 2024. The same year, Germany will celebrate the "1700 years of Jewish life in the country".

As part of the anniversary, a themed week titled "More than Little Jerusalem" will take place in Hamburg, a photo exhibition called "Emigrants from Germany" will open in Nuremberg, and in Herxheim, in the state of Rhineland-Palatinate, a play titled "Judah" by Lot Vekemans will be staged [*Cologne breaks ground...*, 2018].

Also of great significance in the life of the Jewish community was the launch of a new Judaic Studies program at Goethe University in Frankfurt. This new Judaic Studies center joined the growing number of Judaic Studies programmes at universities in Germany. The announcement of the opening of the Martin Buber-Rosenzweig Institute for Contemporary Jewish Intellectual and Cultural History was made on the 143rd anniversary of Martin Buber's birth. Buber, a philosopher who taught at the university from 1924 until his dismissal by the Nazis in 1933, was the inspirational figure behind the establishment of this new academic institution. Jewish studies and Jewish religious philosophy were first taught at the university following the creation of a guest professorship in 1989 in the Department of Protestant Theology. With the appointment of Christian Wiese in 2010, this position became permanent. The new institute was named in honor of Buber and his colleague Franz Rosenzweig, who together established the Free Jewish House of Learning in Frankfurt. Among their most famous projects was a joint translation of the Bible into German, which Buber completed in 1961 in Jerusalem [*New Jewish studies...*, 2021].

The religious community in Germany is also growing. This is facilitated by the opening of new synagogues and prayer rooms. For example, the first new synagogue since the Holocaust recently opened in Potsdam. The synagogue is part of the newly inaugurated European Center for Jewish Education at the University of Potsdam, which also houses a Jewish theology school founded in 2013 and two rabbinical seminaries: the progressive Abraham Geiger College established in 1999

and the conservative Zacharias Frankel College founded in 2013. According to historian Ulrich Knufinke, who served as a consultant during its construction, this synagogue is not only the first to open in Potsdam since the end of World War II but also the first ever to be part of a university in Germany. The synagogue can accommodate about 40 worshipers. The total cost of the construction project amounted to 13.5 million euros, covered by the government of Brandenburg. The opening ceremony of the synagogue, held on August 25, 2021, was attended by the President of Germany, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, the head of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, Josef Schuster, the Israeli Ambassador to Germany, Jeremy Issacharoff, and other dignitaries. President Steinmeier condemned the rise of anti-Semitism in Germany, including "crude conspiracy myths" related to the coronavirus pandemic. He pledged to take "decisive action against those who incite and sow hatred" [*Potsdam's stylish new...*, 2021].

It is worth noting that the German government's policy regarding the "Jewish question" aligns with European standards and the needs of the country's Jewish community. Germany does not have heated debates or confrontations with Jewish religious communities, particularly regarding the prohibition of religious slaughter methods like "shechita", which is banned in neighboring countries such as Denmark and Belgium. The German government continues its program of admitting Jews from former Soviet Union countries, thereby increasing the size of the country's Jewish community, and the state supports various public programmes and initiatives. However, a significant challenge remains the substantial support for far-right organizations within the population, which espouse xenophobic and anti-Semitic ideologies, leading to an increase in anti-Semitic incidents in the country.

### ***Modern anti-Semitism in Germany: characteristics and development trends***

Due to a series of historical reasons and a sense of guilt within the German population regarding their involvement in the Holocaust, the German government has made combatting anti-Semitism a significant priority. Germany has undertaken various initiatives to commemorate the

Holocaust's victims, provide compensation to survivors and their descendants, and engage in cultural asset restitution efforts. However, over recent years, the state of anti-Semitism in Germany has shown concerning trends, primarily influenced by the significant impact of social media, the strengthening of anti-immigrant political parties, and the rise in popularity of conspiracy theories.

A recent study focusing on the level of anti-Semitism in modern Germany reveals persistent prejudices against Jews among supporters of right-wing political parties. The survey, commissioned by the Central Council of Jews in Germany and conducted by the Forsa sociological company, demonstrates strong support for anti-Semitic ideas among followers of the far-right party "Alternative for Germany" (AfD) as well as among German voters in general [*New Survey Reveals...*, 2021]. For instance, 30% of surveyed Germans firmly believe that Jews exploit Germany's guilt for the Holocaust to gain advantages, with this number increasing to 59% among AfD supporters. Additionally, 21% of respondents agreed that Israel's policies towards Palestinians accurately mirror the persecution of Jews by Nazi Germany, a belief supported by 32% of AfD supporters. Furthermore, 24% of respondents think that Jews exert disproportionate influence over Germany's politics, with this figure reaching 50% among AfD sympathizers. Notably, the majority of respondents do not consider themselves anti-Semitic, as 92% agreed with the statement "I have nothing against Jews", and 57% endorsed the statement "I have nothing against Zionists" [*New Survey Reveals...*, 2021].

Simultaneously, in recent years, the issue of anti-Semitism has emerged within local government politics in Germany in relation to the development of historical memory. According to a study commissioned by Berlin's Commissioner for Combating Anti-Semitism, Samuel Salzborn, a minimum of 290 streets and squares in Berlin bear names associated with individuals who held anti-Semitic views. The study's author, political scientist Samuel Salzborn, who assumed his position in 2020, clarified that he did not call for changing street names. Instead, he indicated that the research aimed to "create a systematic basis for an important public discussion" [*Berlin has 290 streets...*, 2021].

Within this discussion, the question arises of how anti-Semitism was a prevalent viewpoint in Germany for centuries, implying that many individuals who made significant contributions to society might have held anti-Semitic beliefs. For example, Martin Luther advocated for the persecution and expulsion of Jews, yet today, Martin-Luther-Straße is located in one of Berlin's popular neighborhoods. The study highlights several streets named after individuals who opposed the Nazis but still expressed anti-Semitic views. As an example, Martin Niemöller, a pastor who opposed Nazism but accused Jews of deicide, is commemorated with Berlin street names. Additionally, there is a street named after Heinrich von Treitschke, who coined the phrase "The Jews are our misfortune", as reported by JTA [*Berlin has 290 streets...*, 2021]. Felix Sassmannshausen, a political scientist and author of the study, suggested that in some cases, renaming streets and squares could be appropriate, while in others, adding plaques or markers detailing their anti-Semitic history might also be a suitable step [*Berlin has 290 streets...*, 2021].

The situation regarding anti-Semitism in Berlin is one of the most challenging in all of Germany. Incidents of hatred and criminal acts against Jews in the German capital have reached disturbingly high levels. According to the prosecutor's office, Berlin has witnessed a new peak in anti-Semitic crimes. In 2022, the prosecutor's office registered 691 such cases, reported by Florian Geng, the Berlin officer responsible for combating anti-Semitism. Geng stated, "Unfortunately, the persistent increase continues, and from the data we have, it can be concluded that it is indeed significant" [*Figures for 2022: public...*, 2023]. The General Prosecutor's Office had already observed a continuous rise in the number of such cases in previous years. In 2021, there were 661 cases, and the year before saw 417 procedures, with 386 cases in 2019. Geng emphasized that anti-Semitism exists in everyday life and is deeply rooted in certain segments of society [*Figures for 2022: public...*, 2023].

Presently, there is a trend of reinforcing anti-Semitism with conspiratorial narratives. A typical pattern involves unfairly attributing "malicious" responsibility to Jews for matters they have no connection to. During the COVID-19 pandemic, parallels were drawn between state measures aimed at curbing the virus's spread and the systematic extermination of Jews by the Nazis.

For instance, yellow stars with inscriptions like "unvaccinated" or the phrase "vaccination liberates", which draws inspiration from an inscription at the entrance gates of Auschwitz concentration camp, have been used. Geng stressed that the prosecution consistently addresses such incidents. Several final judgments have been rendered in Berlin for inciting hatred. However, the judicial practices of district courts and regional courts differ. Geng also pointed out that misinformation related to the aggressive war of Russia against Ukraine has fueled anti-Semitism. Moreover, National Socialist rhetoric is being used in "horrifying ways", according to the *Blick* publication. Regardless, Jews face hatred and slurs in their everyday lives, both on the streets and on social media [*Figures for 2022: public...*, 2023].

The level of anti-Semitism, including anti-Semitic violence, increased in Germany in 2022. Official statistics published on February 28, 2023, bear witness to this trend. According to data from the Federal Criminal Police Office, incidents of anti-Semitism continued to rise significantly in Germany in terms of annual figures, with the number of registered acts of violence increasing by nearly 40%. Describing these figures as a "shame for the country", Germany's Interior Minister Nancy Faeser called for stricter penalties for offenders [*Germany labels youth...*, 2023].

The report indicates that the number of violent crimes against Jews rose from 63 in 2021 to 88 in 2022. A total of 2,639 offenses related to anti-Semitism were recorded over the year, representing a slight decrease compared to the 3,028 cases registered in 2021. However, officials emphasized that the overall number for 2022 would likely increase since some statistical data collected at the end of the year had not yet been included in the final report [*Germany's strategy to combat...*, 2023].

Many officials acknowledge that a significant number of anti-Semitic crimes go unreported. Thomas Haldenwang, President of the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution in Germany (BFV), pointed out last year that a vast number of incidents are not reported to authorities for various reasons. He stated that the incidents reported to the authorities represent only the "tip of the iceberg" [*German intel: Know...*, 2022].

The Jewish community in Germany expresses regret that "anti-Semitism is becoming more brutal". Joseph Schuster, President of the

Central Council of Jews in Germany, remarked, "It is not limited to words and property damage – violence is increasingly directed at Jews themselves". Petra Pau, Vice President of the German Parliament, the Bundestag, stated that the data indicates that anti-Semitism "poses a threat to society as a whole". Pau, whose office requested the police to release this data, called on the government to approach the issue with greater "sensitivity". She noted that in the third quarter of 2022, due to inadequate criteria used for reporting, the initial conclusion of 302 acts of anti-Semitism was later revised, and the number of cases increased to 653 [*Zentralrat klagt über...*, 2023].

In conclusion, despite the state's efforts to combat anti-Semitism, the situation in Germany continues to deteriorate. Experts and law enforcement agencies have the necessary legislative framework and conditions to address anti-Semitism. Still, they struggle to cope with the rise in racist and anti-Semitic sentiments supported by right-wing political parties and groups on social media.

### ***The history and resilience of Luxembourg's Jewish community***

Jews have had a presence in Luxembourg since the 14th century, although historical challenges such as persecutions, massacres, and expulsions prevented the establishment of substantial communities before the Napoleonic era. By the time of the Grand Duchy's independence in 1815, fewer than 100 Jews resided in Luxembourg. The first synagogue in Luxembourg City was constructed in 1823, marking the beginning of organized Jewish religious life in the region [*Luxembourg Jewish...*, 2023].

In 1880, Luxembourg City was home to 369 Jews, and by then, about 60 Jewish families had settled in different parts of the Grand Duchy. Rabbi Samuel Hirsch, Luxembourg's first Chief Rabbi, played a key role from 1843 to 1866 and was instrumental in shaping what is now known as Classic German Reform Judaism.

The late 19th century saw the dedication of a second synagogue in Luxembourg City in 1899, along with another in Esch-sur-Alzette. The 1930s witnessed an increase in the Jewish population, rising from 1,500 to 4,000 due to the influx of refugees from Germany. Tragically, 1,945

members of Luxembourg's Jewish community fell victim to the Holocaust, while approximately 1,560 survived in France and other locations.

Post-World War II, around 1,500 Jews returned to Luxembourg. Synagogues were re-established in Luxembourg City and Esch-sur-Alzette. Over subsequent decades, the Jewish population experienced a gradual decline as families migrated to Israel and elsewhere. However, recent years have seen a reversal of this trend, thanks to a wave of younger Jewish immigrants attracted by favorable working and financial conditions [*Luxembourg Jewish...*, 2023].

Despite its small size, Luxembourg's Jewish community has played a significant role in the Grand Duchy's political, economic, and cultural spheres. Notable figures such as Alain Mayer, former vice president of the community and President of Luxembourg's Council of State; Edmond Israel, president of the Luxembourg Stock Exchange; Laurent Moysse, editor-in-chief of *La Voix du Luxembourg*; and Corinne Cahen, the Grand Duchy's Minister of Family and Integration, have contributed to the community's prominence.

Today, approximately 700 Jews, constituting one of Luxembourg's largest ethnic minorities, reside in the country. Most of them are concentrated in Luxembourg City, with a smaller community in Esch-sur-Alzette. The rich history and resilience of Luxembourg's Jewish community continue to shape its dynamic present [*Luxembourg Jewish...*, 2023].

On September, 2023, Luxembourg has become the 11th EU country to present a new plan to combat anti-Semitism. On September 28, 2023, Luxembourg's Prime Minister, Xavier Bettel, presented the country's plan to Katarina von Schnurbein, the Coordinator of the European Commission for Combating Anti-Semitism and Promoting Jewish Life. Prime Minister Bettel noted that there has been a recent tendency in his country to downplay the significance of the Holocaust. According to a report published in June, the number of anti-Semitic incidents in the country remains alarmingly high. Currently, 11 EU countries have adopted national plans to combat anti-Semitism: Austria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Romania, and Slovakia [*Xavier Bettel presents...*, 2023].

Luxembourg presented its new "National Action Plan Against Anti-Semitism" (PANAS), which includes 19 measures aimed at supporting memorial culture, enhancing synagogue security, and combating online hatred in the face of a presumed rise in anti-Jewish sentiments across Europe. In 2021, the European Commission adopted its first EU Strategy to Combat Anti-Semitism and Promote Jewish Life. Against the backdrop of reports of growing anti-Semitism in Europe, the European Union has recommended its member states to develop national action plans to combat anti-Semitism over the past few years [*Xavier Bettel presents...*, 2023].

A crucial element of the plan is the reinforcement of security around both synagogues in Luxembourg. Anti-Semitic intentions will be considered aggravating circumstances in criminal cases, potentially leading to doubled sentences. According to the proposed plans, the Château de Septfontaines, which was once used by the Germans to detain Jews, will become an educational and memorial site. Luxembourg's action plan also includes compliance with EU directives aimed at combating online hatred. According to a June report by RIAL, Luxembourg's research and information body on anti-Semitism, the number of anti-Semitic incidents in the country remains alarmingly high, with 76 incidents of an anti-Semitic nature recorded, most of which occurred online [*Xavier Bettel presents...*, 2023].

A representative from RIAL comments, "A particularly painful phenomenon is the connection of these two occurrences: the trivialization of the Holocaust by equating it with an imagined genocide against the Palestinians". Approximately 1,000 Jews reside in Luxembourg, accounting for around 650,000 people in the total population.

### ***Modern challenges in politics regarding Jews and the fight against anti-Semitism in the Principality of Monaco***

The history of Jews in the Principality of Monaco spans several centuries. Monaco had a very small Jewish community before World War II, consisting of only about 300 individuals, but it suffered greatly at the hands of the Nazis. During the Holocaust, the authorities of this small state attempted to issue fake identification to its Jewish residents to protect them from Hitler's deportation [Scheib, 2009].



Prince Louis II refused to dismiss Jewish civil servants as demanded by the Nazis and protected Eduard de Rothschild from deportation to concentration camps. However, to appease Hitler, the Monaco police arrested and handed over 90 Jewish refugees from Central Europe who were residing in the country [Curtis, 2003].

In 1946, the Jews of the Principality established the Cultural Association Israelite de Monaco. Within the community today, there is a synagogue, a Jewish school, and a kosher store. In total, 1,000 Jews live in the country, constituting 2.86% of Monaco's population and making it the territory with the highest proportion of Jewish residents outside of Israel. Among the most prominent Jews in Monaco is the billionaire Edmond Safra, who supported projects for the development of Judaism and Jewish life worldwide during his lifetime. Currently residing in the country is Aaron Frenkel, a well-known philanthropist and president of the Jewish festival Limmud FSU.

Monaco maintains full diplomatic relations with Israel, and these relations are dynamically evolving. One significant indicator of this is Prince Albert II of Monaco's participation in the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel [*Prince Albert of Monaco...*, 2018].

The Association of Friendship between Israel and Monaco, established in February 2017, already boasts around 400 members. Relations between the two countries continue to thrive. An Independence Day reception for Israel was held at the luxurious Yacht Club Monaco, organized by the Association. Approximately 300 guests attended, including local businessmen, government officials, and representatives of the Jewish community in Monaco. Among the attendees was Israeli Nobel laureate Professor Dan Shechtman. Aliza Bin-Nun, the Ambassador of Israel to France and Monaco, highlighted in an interview with The Jerusalem Post: "The reception was very moving. Prince Albert stayed throughout the evening and delivered an exceptionally friendly speech, emphasizing the warm relations between the two countries, underscoring his role in strengthening bilateral ties. He also expressed his commitment to continuing the fight against anti-Semitism in Europe, a subject that evidently holds great importance for him... I was delighted

to be in Monaco, and this hospitable atmosphere continued during Idan Raichel's performance, which was very well received. Monégasques making decisions, respected businessmen, and, of course, representatives of the local Jewish community attended the event to express support for Israel" [Prince Albert of Monaco..., 2018].

In December, Tel Aviv University organized a symposium in Monaco, in collaboration with the Prince Albert II Foundation, titled "Global Changes in Solutions to Environmental Issues", dedicated to smart cities, biodiversity, and ecology. The symposium brought together friends, governors, senior officials, and scholars from Israel and Europe. Prince Albert II is expected to receive an honorary doctorate from the university on June 12 for his commitment to environmental protection [*Prince Albert of Monaco...*, 2018].

A significant milestone in Israel-Monaco relations was the apology offered by Prince Albert II for the deportation of Jews to Nazi camps during the Holocaust. The Prince's apology marked an important moment in the relationship between the Monaco government and the Jewish community. Following this, Prince Albert II was awarded the European Council Medal for Tolerance and Mutual Respect. The medal was presented by the president of the organization, Moshe Kantor, and its director, Tony Blair. The prestigious Center for Tolerance, led by many former European leaders, honored Prince Albert II for his courage in acknowledging partial responsibility in this matter. In 2015, Prince Albert II admitted that his country deported 66 of its Jewish citizens in 1942, who later perished in Nazi concentration camps. "You found the courage and demonstrated political wisdom to openly address a painful history and difficult memories", said Moshe Kantor. The European Council for Tolerance and Mutual Respect includes former ministers of Spain and Sweden, José María Aznar and Hans Göran Persson, former president of Poland, Aleksander Kwaśniewski, and other leaders [*Monaco's prince honored...*, 2018].

The Monaco government's statement of apology for handing Jews over to the Nazis was a belated gesture, made two decades after similar apologies were issued by heads of states such as France, Belgium, Italy, and Austria. However, due to the size of the principality and the small

number of victims, the political establishment of Monaco did not face internal and external pressure on this matter. Therefore, according to the leadership of the European Council for Tolerance and Mutual Respect, this gesture is highly valuable. In his acceptance speech during the award ceremony in the famous Monte-Carlo Casino conference hall, Prince Albert II called his apologies a gesture based on the necessity of remaining faithful to the historical memory of the Holocaust. The Prince promised to continue working on perpetuating the memory of Holocaust victims "not only as the head of state but also as an ordinary person" [*Monaco's prince honored...*, 2018].

It's important to note that the Jewish community in Monaco plays a significant role in the development of the principality, its culture, and economy. The principality is home to many Israeli businessmen and philanthropists, and it maintains excellent relations with Israel, thanks to the personal interest of Prince Albert II in Jewish history and culture.

**SECTION III**  
**TRAITS AND DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES**  
**OF JEWISH COMMUNITIES**  
**IN EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES**

***Contemporary challenges in Polish politics concerning Jews and combating anti-Semitism***

The Jewish community in Poland has a lengthy, tragic, and contentious history and is currently one of the most dynamically developing communities on the European continent. In a country that was once considered a global hub for Jewish life, today, there are fewer than 10,000 Jews. This number is strikingly lower compared to the more than 3 million Jews who resided in Poland on the eve of the Second World War. In the capital city, Warsaw, alone, over 300,000 Jews, constituting more than 30% of its population, used to reside [Ehrlich, 2008]. Presently, the Polish government is implementing policies aimed at revitalizing Jewish culture, pursuing a restitution program, and enticing Jews from Israel who demonstrate their loyalty to Poland. In conjunction with Spain and Portugal, Poland stands as the sole European country granting citizenship to individuals of Jewish descent, seeking to rectify the historical injustice linked to the expulsion of Jews from its territory. According to recent statistics, over 20,000 Israelis obtained Polish citizenship between 2010 and 2017. Data published by the Polish Embassy in Israel in August 2018 reveal that 10,820 Israelis became Polish citizens exclusively between 2015 and 2017. In 2015, there was a remarkable spike, with over 3,000 Israelis receiving Polish passports. Poland's membership in the European Union allows its citizens to work and reside in any of the 28 member states, which might serve as an incentive for those Israelis who express the desire to obtain Polish citizenship [*Poland gives out...*, 2018].

It is well-known that approximately 200,000 Jews and their relatives left Poland over the 20 years following the establishment of Israel in 1948. This exodus transpired amid widespread manifestations of anti-Semitism, which were partially fueled by puppet leaders in Poland who were under Soviet control. Israeli activist Jonny Daniels, the founder of From the Depths, an organization dedicated to preserving the

memory of Holocaust victims, underscored that "Polish-Israeli relations, despite political disagreements, are not only expanding in terms of the growing number of Israeli claims regarding property restitution and Polish citizenship, but we are also witnessing, for example, a substantial growth in tourism". He added, "Last summer, over 200,000 Israelis visited Poland for shopping, culinary tourism, and entertainment. These facts demonstrate that cultural and inter-ethnic connections continue to thrive and flourish" [*Poland gives out...*, 2018].

One of the remarkable features of the modern situation in Poland, and specifically in its political landscape, is the fact that the Prime Minister has Jewish roots. Former Finance Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, who previously worked as the director of the financial group "Santander", assumed leadership of the country's government during a critical phase of the ruling party "Law and Justice" preparations for the 2019 parliamentary elections. The politician has Jewish heritage and recently revealed that his two aunts were rescued by non-Jews during the Holocaust.

Morawiecki first spoke about his Jewish roots at the beginning of 2018 during a commemorative ceremony at the Warsaw Zoo, dedicated to his predecessor Jan Żabiński, who along with his wife Antonina, saved 300 Jews from the Nazis. "I always start thinking about my family's history at such ceremonies. My aunt Irena was Jewish when the war began, and she was only 10 years old. Until the age of 16, she lived with a Polish family who saved her, with the support of several dozen other Poles who risked their lives to rescue her", Morawiecki noted. He also mentioned that another aunt, named Roma, currently lives in Israel. She managed to survive the Holocaust by going to the USSR, while the rest of her family perished in Poland. Morawiecki even pointed out that none of the Poles who helped Irene were recognized as Righteous Among the Nations [*Poland appoints ex-banker...*, 2017].

It is worth noting that the modern Polish authorities are doing a considerable amount to distance themselves from the policies pursued in the 1960s by their predecessors, which led to the expulsion of the Jewish community from the country. Synagogues are being restored, new Jewish communities are emerging, and new museums dedicated to the

Holocaust history are being established, along with the issuance of more than 20,000 passports to residents of Israel.

All of this indicates a promising prospect for the growth of the Jewish community, the interest of Polish businesses in collaborating with the State of Israel, and constructive dialogue between Poland's political elite and the Jewish state. Nevertheless, there are several issues to contend with, including the presence of media disseminating xenophobic and anti-Semitic ideas, a relatively high level of everyday anti-Semitism, and a lack of understanding of some aspects of restitution of Jewish property within the leadership of the country's cities. Nonetheless, it is particularly valuable and positive that, along with Spain and Portugal, Poland is committed to dialogue with Israel, inviting Jews from Israel and other countries, and restoring a portion of its rich Jewish heritage, making it one of the leading centers of Jewish civilization in the recent past.

### ***Poland's policy towards the Jewish Community and Holocaust remembrance***

Poland's active involvement in the development of Jewish culture, the establishment of Holocaust museums, and the restoration of synagogues and prayer houses in recent years has set a positive example of a policy towards the Jewish community that stands out not only in the Eastern European region but also on the entire European continent.

One of the important elements of this policy is conducting extensive scientific research aimed at discovering new historical facts and commemorating the heroism of Poles who saved Jews during the Holocaust. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Poland has been actively engaged in this work, employing many historians who have transitioned into diplomatic service. In early September 2020, the Polish Embassy in Israel published an e-book about the activities of Polish diplomats during World War II, particularly their efforts to rescue Jews from the Holocaust. The book tells the story of a group of Polish diplomats during World War II who worked in Bern and forged hundreds of passports that helped save Jews from the Holocaust [*Polish embassy in Israel...*, 2020].

This book is written in Hebrew and is available on the website of the Polish Embassy in Tel Aviv. The e-book contains 24 narratives

describing a wide range of events and episodes that reflect the work of Polish diplomats during the war. Among them is the story of an encrypted telegram sent by the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Józef Beck, to the Polish embassies in Paris and London on September 1, 1939, demanding that they inform the respective governments about the German invasion of Poland. Another story highlights the Polish ambassador in Moscow, Waław Gżibowski, who refused to accept a diplomatic note justifying the Soviet aggression against Poland on September 17, and more. The e-book also contains a wealth of materials dedicated to Polish-Jewish relations [*Polish embassy in Israel...*, 2020].

One of the stories recalls the historic concert by Polish-Jewish pianist Artur Rubinstein at the United Nations in San Francisco in 1945. Upset that Poland was not invited to the conference, Rubinstein stopped playing the piano and asked the audience, which included the Soviet delegation, to stand up. He said, "In this hall, where great nations have gathered to make this world better, I do not see the flag of Poland, on behalf of which this brutal war was fought, and now I will play the Polish national anthem" [*Polish embassy in Israel...*, 2020].

The content of this book echoes with an English-language book presented by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the Wiener Holocaust Library in London, which is also dedicated to the work of Polish diplomats in Bern who saved Jews during the Holocaust. The "Ładoś List" provides information about people of Jewish descent who received forged passports from a group of Polish diplomats aiming to rescue individuals from the Nazis during World War II. The book was named after Aleksander Ładoś, a Polish diplomat who led an informal group in Bern, Switzerland, that produced passports for Jews from ghettos in German-occupied Poland. The "Ładoś List" was published in Polish in December 2019 by the Pilecki Institute and includes the names of over 3,000 people of Jewish origin who received forged passports from neutral countries. The book was also presented at the Hebrew Union College in New York [*English language "Lados List"...*, 2020].

It is worth noting that in addition to conducting historical research, an important part of the Polish government's policy is combating far-right parties that seek to downplay or negate the significance of the

Holocaust. Polish political leaders have actively opposed a resolution that aimed to halt the restitution of property lost by Jews during the Holocaust. The ruling party in Poland, PiS, strongly opposed the proposal of far-right forces, which called for stopping the restitution of property that belonged to Jews and others before the start of the Holocaust [*Poland blocks bill...*, 2020].

Extreme right-wing activists have gathered enough signatures to present a resolution project in the Sejm, the lower house of the Polish parliament, which would prohibit the redistribution of "inheritance property" – property that belonged to private individuals. Many of these individuals were Jews who were killed during the Holocaust, and if their heirs exist, they have never filed for restitution. The project states, "Any actions aimed at satisfying claims regarding the property of its heirs, including negotiations, settlements, recognition of claims, actions related to property, as well as consent to mediation, negotiations between parties with mediation, or payment of monetary compensation, are prohibited" [*Poland blocks bill...*, 2020].

It also states that Nazi Germany, not Poland, is responsible for everything that happened in Poland when it was occupied by Germany. Speaking on behalf of the "Law and Justice" party, Deputy Arkadiusz Mularczyk stated that the resolution project is unnecessary because "there is no problem with ownerless land in Poland". Mateusz Kijowski, a deputy of "Left Together", called the project ant-Semitic, adding that it was a "campaign to intimidate Jews, who, according to its initiators, are going to plunder Poland" [*Poland blocks bill...*, 2020]. According to the World Organization for Jewish Restitution, Poland has already returned millions of dollars as compensation for property that belonged to Jewish communities, but it is the only large country in Eastern Europe that has not taken any steps to return private property to its heirs.

Poland's government policy towards the Jewish community comes against the backdrop of growing anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe, as warned by many expert organizations. For instance, surveys by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) indicate a rise in anti-Semitic sentiments in Eastern Europe. The ADL published the results of a sociological survey conducted this year, which covered approximately 9,000 people in 18 countries [*Antisemitic attitudes...*, 2019].



The data mostly align with the results of previous surveys conducted in these countries in 2017, but Ukraine, Poland, Hungary, and Russia showed significant increases. In these countries, 46%, 48%, 42%, and 31% of the 2015 respondents, respectively, exhibited what the ADL considers "anti-Semitic attitudes" [*Antisemitic attitudes...*, 2019]. In the 2017 survey, these countries had much lower rates: 32%, 37%, and 40%, respectively. In Russia, this figure jumped from 23% in the previous 2015 survey to 31% this year. Among Western European countries, Sweden had the lowest "anti-Semitism index" (4%). In Belgium, ADL sociologists recorded a 24% increase in anti-Semitism, three points higher than in 2017. In France, this indicator remained unchanged from 2015 and 2017 (17%). In the United Kingdom, it was 11% this year, one point lower than in 2017. "We are deeply concerned that approximately every fourth European holds the same anti-Semitic beliefs that existed before the Holocaust", said Jonathan A. Greenblatt, CEO of the ADL, in an interview with JTA [*Antisemitic attitudes...*, 2019].

The policy of Poland's government regarding the "Jewish question" underwent significant transformation during the 2010s – from supporting extreme right-wing organizations traditionally hostile to Jews to state support for Jewish culture, synagogue restoration, and granting Polish citizenship to tens of thousands of Israeli citizens. During the rule of the "Law and Justice" party, the Polish government is developing programmes to commemorate representatives of the Polish state who saved Jews during the Holocaust. This instills trust and cautious optimism for the future of the Jewish community in Poland.

### ***Modern Jewish community in Slovakia: characteristics and development prospects***

Studying the development characteristics of the Jewish community in Slovakia is an important research task. Slovakia, along with neighboring countries like Ukraine, shares commonalities, and the progress regarding the "Jewish question" in Slovak politics can serve as a positive example for their reform and integration into the EU. The Jewish community in Slovakia, which has been an independent state since January 1, 1993, is dynamically evolving. Jewish communities in

Bratislava, Kosice, Presov, Levoca, and Nove Zamky are united in a federation, with the country also hosting the main rabbinate. In 1991, the Jewish Museum of Slovak Culture was established in Bratislava [Heitlinger, 2011].

It should be noted that Slovakia initially established favorable diplomatic relations with Israel, recognizing Slovakia's independence immediately upon its declaration. The people of Israel pay tribute to the Slovaks who saved Jews during the Holocaust. In 2018 alone, twelve Slovaks were honored with the title "Righteous Among the Nations". These were extraordinary individuals who, during the darkest times, did what few could do to save people from certain death, as noted by Israeli Ambassador Tzvi A. Vapni [*The Bishop who saved...*, 2021].

Historians are discovering more examples of Slovaks saving Jews. One of the world's most renowned righteous individuals was Bishop Jozef Feranec, who saved approximately 1,500 Jews. Catholic Monk Pavol Peter Gojdic was born in Slovakia in 1888. In 1938, Nazi Germany occupied the region and introduced anti-Jewish laws, restricting Jewish movement and excluding Jewish children from regular schools. On January 25, 1939, just two days after the formation of the Slovak Autonomous Government, which was tasked with defining a plan to address the "Jewish question", Bishop Gojdic penned a special letter addressed to all parishes in his Presov eparchy. The letter emphasized the catastrophic consequences that such a discriminatory policy could cause. It reminded people of the core principle of their faith – that every person has equal rights in the eyes of God. It also warned of the implications of Nazi ideology and racism. Gojdic's activities did not sit well with the fascist Slovak state [*The Bishop who saved...*, 2021].

During the summer of 1939, other Slovak priests started to boycott Gojdic's actions and authored a memorandum expressing their dissatisfaction with his deeds. In 1940, the Vatican accepted his resignation as an apostolic administrator but simultaneously appointed him the Bishop of the Presov eparchy. Meanwhile, the new President of Slovakia, Jozef Tiso, who was also a priest, began expropriating Jewish property and deporting Jews to Nazi-occupied Poland. After the Second World War, the Czechoslovak government sentenced Tiso to death for

treason, suppression of freedom, and crimes against humanity [*The Bishop who saved...*, 2021].

Modern historians highlight that Bishop Gojdic saved Jews by providing them with fraudulent certificates of conversion to Catholicism. Most of the "converts" continued practicing Judaism. He is attributed to directly or indirectly saving up to 1,500 Jews. In 2007, Yad Vashem posthumously honored Bishop Gojdic with the title "Righteous Among the Nations". After the Second World War, the communist government of Czechoslovakia sentenced Gojdic to life imprisonment because he refused to renounce the outlawed Greek Catholic Church. Despite many letters from the Jews he had saved, Gojdic was unable to obtain his release and died in 1960 in the Leopoldov Colony on his 72nd birthday [*The Bishop who saved...*, 2021].

One of the most significant milestones in the dialogue with the Jewish community was when the Slovak government, on September 8, 2021, formally apologized for the Legal Status of Jews, also known as the "Jewish Code", enacted in 1941. This code contained 270 paragraphs and was one of the largest legal acts of that time. The law established a new definition of Jews based on racial criteria. The legal norm adopted by the then Nazi-allied Slovak government 80 years ago led to the deprivation of Jews' human and civil rights, including access to education and certain professions. "The Slovak cabinet considers it a moral obligation to publicly express regret for the crimes committed by the authorities of that time, especially for the adoption of the condemning decree that restricted the basic rights of persons and the freedom of citizens of Jewish origin from September 9, 1941", [*Slovakia Officially...*, 2021] stated the government announcement by Eduard Heger.

Another important event was the visit of Pope Francis II to Slovakia, aimed at improving relations between Catholics and Jews. On September 13, 2021, Pope Francis met with members of the Jewish community, including Holocaust survivors, in a symbolic location – Rybné Square in Bratislava, which was once a Jewish district where a synagogue stood. "Initially, we thought His Holiness would only meet with the leadership of the Jewish community somewhere in an office. We were pleasantly surprised when the Vatican announced that

Pope Francis would visit Rybné Square, a place that is very symbolic and emotional for our community", [*Jewish leaders hope...*, 2021] shared Richard Duda, head of the Central Union of Jewish Communities in Slovakia. Over the centuries, Rybné Square housed two religious structures - the St. Martin Cathedral and the synagogue, which was demolished by the communist government of Slovakia in 1969 to make way for a bridge. In 1996, a Memorial was erected on the square, commemorating the 105,000 Holocaust victims in Slovakia. Rabbi Michal Kapustin, the spiritual leader of Bratislava's Jewish community, which comprises 500 members, emphasized that dialogue with Slovak Christians is improving under Pope Francis [*Jewish leaders hope...*, 2021].

It's worth noting that the current Slovak government actively cooperates with the country's Jewish religious community to support its development. Renovated synagogues are opening in many cities. This process intensified in 2017 when Slovakia welcomed its first Torah scroll since the Holocaust period into a synagogue. "It is one of the most touching moments of my life", said Dr. Tomas Stern, President of the Jewish Community of Bratislava, which has 500 members. The celebration of the Torah's entry took place in Bratislava, Slovakia's capital, during the Bar Mitzvah of the local rabbi, the son of Rabbi Baruch Myers, who founded the Chabad community in Slovakia in 1993 [*Slovakia dedicates first...*, 2019]. The traditional Torah procession went through the entire city. The revived community has managed to build a kindergarten, a Jewish school, and a summer camp. They also host year-round festivals, festive meals, teach Torah, and welcome Jewish tourists coming to Slovakia. The Jewish community in Slovakia currently consists of around 2,600 people [*Slovakia dedicates first...*, 2019].

Despite the progress in fostering dialogue between Jews and Slovaks, anti-Semitism remains quite prevalent in the country. According to the Slovak analytical center Globsec, 51% of a thousand surveyed Slovaks endorse anti-Semitic ideas, including the belief that "Jews have too much power and secretly control governments and institutions worldwide". This figure is the highest among ten Central and Eastern European countries where similar sociological surveys were conducted [*Which Slovaks Believe...*, 2019].

It's worth noting that the history of Slovakia's Jews in the 20th century was complex and tragic. Even after the Holocaust, Jews in Slovakia continued to face persecution. The communist government imprisoned Jews for alleged "Zionist activities", and the regime prohibited practicing Judaism. Therefore, the Velvet Revolution of 1989 was a significant milestone for the Jewish community as religious freedom was restored in the country. Presently, the Slovak government is pursuing a policy of reevaluating the history of Slovakia's Jews in the 20th century and improving dialogue among representatives of different religions and nationalities in the country. This policy serves as a positive example for other post-Soviet countries that gained independence in the early 1990s and are shaping their policies regarding the protection of national minorities' rights, a crucial aspect of the Copenhagen criteria, and consequently, their European integration.

### ***Modern challenges in commemorating Holocaust victims in the Czech Republic***

The Jewish community in the Czech Republic is one of the most active in Eastern Europe. Presently, the country is home to 3,000 to 10,000 Jews, with approximately half residing in Prague. Notably, the Czech government has been actively cooperating with the community in recent years, working to ensure the safety of communal structures and commemorate the Holocaust victims on the territory of Czechoslovakia. An essential program related to Holocaust memorialization is the installation of commemorative plaques, also known as "stumbling stones" (Stolpersteine).

In 2017, ten commemorative plaques were installed in the western Czech town of Teplice to honor the Holocaust victims who were persecuted and destroyed by the Nazis. These plaques, or "stumbling stones", are placed in front of buildings where Jewish families once resided before being deported to concentration camps. Daniel Meron, Israel's Ambassador to the Czech Republic, emphasized that these plaques serve as both a reminder of past events and a warning of the importance of combating contemporary anti-Semitism and racism. Yaroslav Kubera, the mayor of Teplice, noted that tragic events could

recur if people fail to remember them. The tradition of installing yellow "stumbling stones" was initiated by German artist Gunter Demnig in 1992 and has since led to the placement of tens of thousands of plaques across European city streets.

Before World War II, Teplice was home to around 5,500 Jews, including the parents of 87-year-old Frantisek Lederer, who resides in the town today. Lederer shared that he was born in Teplice, but in September 1938, they had to move to Prague, and later, they were deported to the Polish city of Lodz. He expressed his gratitude that the Jewish community in Teplice is making an effort to commemorate these events [Zmizel  židovsk ..., 2017]. His parents, Elli Ledererova and Richard Lederer, passed away in Lodz, while he was sent to the Auschwitz concentration camp, where he miraculously survived. Currently, Teplice houses a small Jewish community consisting of 130 individuals [Zmizel  židovsk ..., 2017].

To further perpetuate the memory of Holocaust victims, the Czech government has planned to transform the location of a pig farm in the town of Leti, South Bohemia, into a Holocaust Memorial. This memorial will primarily commemorate the Romani people persecuted by the Nazis during World War II. The farm is expected to be purchased, with an official contract scheduled for mid-September. Afterward, the farm will be closed, and a monument dedicated to Holocaust victims will be built on the site. While earlier reports suggested that the state would pay hundreds of millions for the farm, Minister of Culture Daniel Herman clarified that these figures are not accurate. Once the pig farm is dismantled, which was constructed in the 1970s, archaeological work will be conducted, followed by a design competition for the Holocaust Memorial. Herman also noted that the Memorial might resemble those established in Terezin or Dachau.

Commemorating Holocaust victims involves significant work by scholars and researchers, both from the Czech Republic and abroad. In a bid to make the Czech Republic a center for Holocaust research, the non-governmental organization "Ziva Pamet" ("Living Memory") presented video archives of testimonies from Holocaust victims, stored at Yale University Library and well-known as the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies.

The archive comprises over 12,000 hours of video interviews and testimonies from nearly 4,500 Holocaust survivors in 22 languages, including Czech. Of these, 17 interviews are in Czech and 163 in Slovak, along with over 3,000 recordings in English. The first interviews date back to 1979. These interviews convey the stories of former concentration camp prisoners, victims of Nazi persecution, individuals who hid from the Nazis, witnesses, resistance fighters, and soldiers who fought against the Nazis [*Ziva Pamet...*, 2018].

Pavel Voves, the chairman of "Living Memory", expressed that these Holocaust victim stories are essential for our history. The organization "Living Memory" has access to the Yale University Library archive. Researchers, educators, and interested parties can now access the archive at the "Living Memory" office in central Prague. Access to this archive from Yale University is only permitted via computers within the premises of the Czech organization [*Ziva Pamet...*, 2018].

One of the significant activities aimed at preserving Jewish heritage in the Czech Republic is the return of Judaica items stolen during the Nazi occupation. Thanks to the joint efforts of the Jewish Museum in Prague and the New York-based auction house "Kestenbaum & Company", a rare 16th-century book that was looted by the Nazis from the Library of the Prague Jewish Community, which is now part of the Jewish Museum in Prague, has been saved from being sold at auction. Initially, the book was listed for sale at an American auction but was withdrawn from sale after experts discovered stamps indicating its past ownership by the Library of the Prague Jewish Community.

The ceremony for the return of this book was scheduled for January 16<sup>th</sup> 2018 at the Center for Education and Culture of the Jewish Museum in Prague. Daniel E. Kestenbaum, the owner of the American auction house, will personally return the book to Leo Pavlat, the director of the Jewish Museum in Prague. Kestenbaum & Company has specialized in the sale of rare books, manuscripts, and Judaica for many years.

The book in question is the first edition of the work "Mikne Avram-Pekulium Abrae" by the renowned thinker Ben Meir de Balmes. It was printed in Hebrew and Latin by Daniel Bomberg in Venice in 1523. The

book represents an attempt at a philosophical analysis of the Old Hebrew language, focusing on syntax as a specific element of grammar. Ben Meir de Balmes, who lived between 1460 and 1523, was a Jewish physician, linguist, and philosopher in Lecce, located in southern Italy.

Towards the end of his life, he served as the personal physician to Cardinal Domenico Grimani of Venice. He translated many works from philosophy and astronomy from Old Hebrew to Latin. The history of how and when Zeev Ben-Chaim, the president of the Academy of the Hebrew Language, acquired this book remains unknown. After Ben-Chaim's passing in 2013 at the age of 105, the book was purchased by a younger Israeli scholar who decided to auction it. The auction house withdrew the book from sale and reached an agreement with the owner for its return to the Jewish Museum in Prague [*Hebrew grammar book...*, 2018].

The Czech government's and non-governmental organizations' efforts to commemorate Holocaust victims serve as an excellent example for other Eastern European countries. The Czech Republic has noticeably intensified its efforts in this direction, supporting various international humanitarian initiatives and implementing them on a local level. This may mark a new stage in the development of the Jewish community, which is experiencing a period of renaissance and is one of the most protected in Europe.



## SECTION IV

### **CURRENT ISSUES IN COMBATING ANTI-SEMITISM AND SUPPORTING JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN WESTERN EUROPE AFTER THE EVENTS OF OCTOBER 7, 2023**

The events of October 7, 2023, which shocked the entire civilized world with crimes against peaceful residents of Israel, became a significant milestone in the history of the 21st century. The attack by Hamas militants on Israel, accompanied by a mass massacre of civilians and the taking of hostages, sparked widespread discussion about whether the events of the Holocaust could be repeated and how the world must respond to attempts by certain terrorist forces to deliberately annihilate representatives of the Jewish people. Discussions about understanding the events of October 7 became one of the central topics for politicians, public figures, and researchers focused on the understanding and study of modern genocides.

On October 31, 2023, Israel's ambassador to the UN, Gilad Erdan, appeared at the UN Security Council wearing a yellow Star of David, promising that his team would wear yellow stars until the organization condemned Hamas' actions [Magid, 2023]. Some Israeli historians did not support this act. For instance, Dani Dayan, head of Yad Vashem, strongly opposed this move, stating that "the yellow star symbolizes the helplessness of the Jewish people": the Jewish people now have "an independent country and a strong army", so it is more appropriate "to wear the blue and white flag on the lapel, not the yellow badge" [Magid, 2023].

Immediately after the war in Israel began, a debate arose regarding whether these events could be considered genocide. American researcher Aviva Halamish, in her article in *Israel Studies*, stated that comparing the events of October 7, 2023, to the Holocaust was inappropriate. Recognizing the similarity of the October 7 events to the Kishinev pogrom of 1903, which lasted three days and significantly affected the fate of Eastern European Jewry, she noted: "When we compare events and rely on the past to better understand the present, we must look at both

similarities and differences. Applying this rule to current events requires, first and foremost, a clear reminder of the meaning of the term „Shoah” – the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored murder of six million Jewish men, women, and children by Nazi Germany and its collaborators during World War II to achieve the 'final solution of the Jewish question' through the destruction of the Jewish people and their culture. A deep understanding of the Holocaust as a unique historical event, *sui generis*, deprives it of the right to serve as a direct analogy to the catastrophe of October 7. The unspeakable atrocities committed by fanatical fundamentalists, Hamas Palestinian terrorists, were carried out within one day on the territory of the sovereign state of Israel" [Halamish, 2024].

At the same time, some researchers essentially sided with Hamas, including political scientists Raz Segal and Luigi Daniele, who published an article in the *Journal of Genocide Research* with the telling title "Gaza as the Decline of Israeli Exceptionalism: Holocaust and Genocide Studies from Unprecedented Crisis to Unprecedented Change". Responding to the debate about the events of October 7, 2023, the researchers accused the State of Israel of genocide against Palestinians, stating: "...Israeli journalists and high-ranking politicians denied the existence of Palestinians, their right to a state, and the collective protection of civilians long before October 7, 2023, in the context of cumulative state criminality and settler violence in 2023, which was the deadliest year for Palestinians" [Segal, 2024].

Such polarization of opinions regarding the interpretation of the events of October 7, 2023, in the academic world has complicated academic discourse on this issue and further politicized it. At the same time, the support of leading politicians and Western governments formed almost immediately after these tragic events occurred and has since rarely been questioned.

The events of October 7 also emphasized the relevance of modern European policies aimed at protecting the Jewish community in European Union countries within the framework of the EU Strategy to combat anti-Semitism and promote Jewish life. From this perspective, the existence of such a program makes the efforts of EU countries more

coordinated and allows for combating threats to the Jewish community across all regions of the EU.

An important factor in the fight against anti-Semitism and threats to the Jewish community has also been the British government's policy of promoting the definition of anti-Semitism by the IHRA (the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance), which allows for stricter measures against the persecution of Jewish community members in various spheres of public life using legal methods. Many European leaders have expressed their full support for the Jewish people and the Jewish state amid growing threats from Hamas terrorists and other anti-Semitic forces. For instance, British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said he was shocked by Hamas attacks on Israeli citizens. He added that "Israel has an absolute right to defend itself" and assured that British officials "are in contact with the Israeli authorities" [*"Rishi Sunak says Israel..."*, 2023]. On October 9, the illumination of the Israeli flag was projected onto the residence of the British Prime Minister at 10 Downing Street in London [*"UK PM says the has offered..."*, 2023].

A statement from Buckingham Palace mentioned that the King was "appalled" and condemned the "barbaric terrorist acts in Israel", and that "the King's thoughts and prayers are with all those suffering, especially those who have lost loved ones..." [*"Israel-Gaza attacks..."*, 2023].

Immediately after the October 7 terrorist attacks, Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte stated that he had spoken with Prime Minister Netanyahu about the Hamas attack on Israel and "told him that the Netherlands unequivocally condemns this terrorist violence and fully supports Israel's right to self-defense" [*"Just spoke with Prime Minister..."*, 2023].

French President Emmanuel Macron strongly condemned the attack and expressed "full solidarity with the victims, their families, and loved ones" [*"Je condamne fermement les attaques..."*, 2023]. On October 25, 2023, Macron stated that "massive intervention endangering civilian lives would be a mistake". On November 10, 2023, Macron called for a ceasefire and urged Israel to stop bombing the Gaza Strip and killing civilians [*"Macron says 'no justification' for bombing..."*, 2023]. In January 2024, Macron accused Hamas of using Palestinian civilians as

human shields and stated that Israel has the right to defend itself [*"France Rejects Genocide..."*, 2024].

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said he was deeply shocked by the "horrific news" about "rocket attacks from the Gaza Strip and the escalation of violence". He even offered Israel military assistance [*"Europe „aiding and assisting”..."*, 2023]. Later, Scholz expressed disagreement with an "immediate ceasefire" in Gaza, stating that "in the end, it would mean that Israel allows Hamas to recover and obtain new rockets", instead calling for "humanitarian pauses" [*"German Chancellor Opposed..."*, 2023]. On December 17, Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock stated that she "would support a ceasefire but only if it is sustainable" [*"Israel-Gaza war..."*, 2023]. President Frank-Walter Steinmeier called on Muslims living in Germany to distance themselves from Hamas [*"Nobel winner joins..."*, 2024].

Belgian Foreign Minister Hadja Lahbib wrote on the social network X that the country strongly condemned the "massive rocket attacks on Israeli civilians" and stated that their "thoughts are with all those affected" [*"US offers..."*, 2023]. On November 8, Deputy Prime Minister Petra De Sutter urged the Belgian government to impose sanctions on Israel and investigate explosions in hospitals and refugee camps in the Gaza Strip [*"Belgium wants sanctions..."*, 2023]. Similarly, Prime Minister Alexander De Croo called the Israeli bombings of the Gaza Strip "disproportionate" but stated that "Belgium will not take sides" [Shankar, 2023]. On November 23, 2023, Prime Minister De Croo, along with Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, held a press conference at the Rafah border crossing, emphasizing the importance of Israel adhering to international humanitarian law [*"Spain denounces ..."*, 2024].

Danish Foreign Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen strongly condemned the attack on Israel, adding that his thoughts were "with the victims, their families, and all of Israel" [*"Lars Lokke fordømmer..."*, 2023].

On October 9, Austrian Foreign Minister Alexander Schallenberg announced the suspension of aid amounting to 19 million euros (20 million US dollars) to Palestinian territories in response to the Hamas attack and stated that existing projects in Palestine would be reviewed. He also said he would summon the Iranian ambassador to discuss Iran's "disgusting reaction" to the attack [*"Austria Suspends Aid..."*, 2023].

The Swiss government condemned the attacks and asked all parties to work towards a peaceful resolution. It also emphasized that "de-escalation is a priority" and urged those responsible to "do everything possible to achieve a ceasefire and avoid regional escalation" [*"Statement Israel..."*, 2023].

***Political aspects of the development of the Jewish Community in the United Kingdom after the events of October 7, 2023***

After the events of October 7, pro-Palestinian groups in the United Kingdom decided to adopt an aggressive policy supporting Hamas and immediately became active in organizing harassment of members of the Jewish community in the country. Following the Hamas attack on Israel, antisemites sent 99-year-old Briton Lily Ebert, a Holocaust survivor, over 1,000 anti-Semitic messages daily. The Auschwitz survivor was "disturbed and frightened" by this. Some of the messages she received included phrases such as "dirty Zionist", "go and die", and "you people... prove why Hitler did what he did" [Daisley, 2023]. Lily, who lives in London, and her 19-year-old great-grandson Dov Forman manage a TikTok account with 2.1 million followers, where they educate people about the Holocaust. Dov was forced to disable the comments section because the insults became unbearable for his great-grandmother.

In a conversation with a representative of the Treasury, he said: "I am trying to shield her from reading the full extent of the comments. She is horrified that Jews, including myself, feel that we have to hide our identity – as she had to in the 1930s and 1940s". At 20 years old, Lily was deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau from Hungary. Upon arrival, her mother, brother, and one of her sisters were executed in a gas chamber by the Nazis. Lily and her two other sisters survived, spending four months in Auschwitz. Responding to the anti-Semitic insults she received online, Lily said: "It is incredibly distressing and frightening to see people once again calling for violence against innocent Jews" [Daisley, 2023].

An essential part of the British government's policy has been providing material assistance to those affected by anti-Semitism. Members of the Jewish community in the UK, including school students, were given additional protection against anti-Semitic attacks after

Hamas's terrorist attacks in Israel, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak stated. Additional funding of £3 million was allocated to the Community Security Trust (CST), an organization established to protect British Jews from anti-Semitism and related threats. The CST works closely with the police to safeguard Jewish community buildings and events. This additional funding brought the total security grant for protecting the Jewish community to £ 18 million for 2023–2024. This money will allow the CST to place additional security guards in schools they protect during school hours and to deploy extra security personnel near synagogues on Friday evenings and Saturday mornings [*Prime Minister unveils...*, 2023].

A significant challenge for the British government has been the mass pro-Palestinian protests on the streets of UK cities. The protests, which began immediately after the events of October 7, consistently fueled anti-Semitic sentiments in society, often followed by outbreaks of anti-Semitic violence in certain areas.

Each weekend, just hours before announced protests and marches, the British Prime Minister, senior ministers, police chiefs, and the CST gathered regularly on Downing Street to discuss UK security issues under the leadership of Home Secretary Suella Braverman. Such measures became necessary after the CST recorded 139 anti-Semitic incidents in the UK within just four days [*Prime Minister unveils...*, 2023]. Regarding this, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak stated: "In moments like these, when the Jewish people are under attack in their homeland, Jews everywhere can feel less safe. That is why we must do everything possible to protect the Jewish people across our country. If anything stands in the way of ensuring the security of the Jewish community, we will address it" [*Prime Minister unveils...*, 2023].

The Home Secretary commented on the situation as follows: "Hamas terrorists carried out barbaric attacks on the people of Israel. They murdered civilians, raped women, and abducted the most vulnerable. This terrorism is an attack on all our values. Whenever Israel comes under attack, people use Israel's legitimate defensive measures as a pretext to incite hatred against British Jews. The UK unequivocally supports Israel. I have made it clear to police chiefs in England and Wales that there can be no tolerance for anti-Semitism and that they must act

immediately to stop any crimes – whether on our streets or online" [*Prime Minister unveils...*, 2023].

The number of police patrols in London increased sharply following reports of celebrations by Hamas supporters marking their fighters' attack on Israel. Home Secretary Suella Braverman stated that she expects the police to "use the full force of the law" against demonstrations of support for Hamas. A representative of the London police assured that a visible presence would be maintained to "reassure the public" [*Police presence ramped...*, 2023].

In her post on the social network X, formerly known as Twitter, Ms. Braverman stated: "Whenever Israel comes under attack, Islamists and other racists use Israel's defensive measures as a pretext to incite hatred against British Jews. Yesterday, I spoke to CST-UK to ensure the government is doing everything necessary to protect our Jewish communities. There must be zero tolerance for anti-Semitism and the glorification of terrorism on British streets" [*Police presence ramped...*, 2023].

Meanwhile, British media reported that a Briton went missing following the Hamas attack in Israel. Immigration Minister Robert Jenrick also called on the London police to step up patrols, stating that people were "celebrating Hamas's terrorist activities". Videos circulated on social media showed people waving Palestinian flags, clapping, and honking car horns. Mr. Jenrick urged the police to "take this seriously", adding that "there is no place for this in the UK" [*Police presence ramped...*, 2023].

In a statement, Scotland Yard said: "We are aware of a number of incidents, including those reported on social media, related to the ongoing conflict in Israel and along the Gaza border. The Metropolitan Police have increased patrols in some areas of London to ensure a visible presence and provide confidence to our communities. We strongly encourage anyone experiencing threatening behavior or concerned about their safety to contact the police" [*Police presence ramped...*, 2023].

The escalation of the situation in the country, associated with the rise in anti-Semitism, became one of the reasons for the resignation of UK Home Secretary Suella Braverman.

After resigning from her position as Home Secretary, Suella Braverman wrote a letter accusing Rishi Sunak of "failing to address the challenge posed by the increasing anti-Semitism". In her critical letter to the Prime Minister, Braverman stated that he was delaying consideration of laws banning hate marches "to minimize political risk to himself". She claimed that Sunak's response to the threat of extremism was "weak, indecisive, and lacking the leadership qualities this country needs". In the letter, which was also published on social media, Braverman listed a number of mistakes she believed Sunak was responsible for. She wrote: "Another source of frustration – and the context for my recent article in the Times – was your failure to address the challenge posed by the growing anti-Semitism and extremism seen on the streets of Britain after Hamas's terrorist atrocities on October 7".

Braverman added: "I have been hoarse urging you to consider a bill banning hate marches and helping to curb the increasing wave of racism, intimidation, and glorification of terrorists that threatens social cohesion". She declared that Britain "is experiencing a turning point in our history and facing the threat of radicalization and extremism not seen in the last 20 years" [Morton & Seddon, 2023]. "Instead of fully acknowledging the seriousness of this threat, your team has for weeks disagreed with me on the necessity of changing the law" [Morton & Seddon, 2023], she said.

By November 2023, representatives of the Jewish community and activists from various organizations managed to organize and hold a rally in support of the Jewish state. Tens of thousands of people took to the streets in London for the largest rally against anti-Semitism since World War II. According to police, 50,000 people attended the march against anti-Semitism on Sunday, November 26, 2023. Organizers estimated the turnout at 60,000. The event was planned as a response to the global rise in anti-Semitism accompanying the war between Israel and Hamas, which began on October 7 [Friedman, 2023].

The Chief Rabbi of the UK, Ephraim Mirvis, during his speech at the march, stated that Jews "will not be intimidated". "We must teach our children that the heroes of our society are those who strive for peace and kindness, not those who glorify violence and murder, and we must teach



people to draw their own conclusions based on historical facts, not on what they see and hear on social media", Mirvis said [Friedman, 2023].

The march was organized by the "Campaign Against anti-Semitism", a British organization founded in 2016 that publishes reports on hate crime statistics and prosecutes known antisemites. Between October 1 and November 1, 2023, London police reported 657 anti-Semitic and 230 Islamophobic incidents, a significant increase in both categories. Among the participants of the rally was former Prime Minister Boris Johnson. The police had advised far-right activist Stephen Yaxley-Lennon not to attend the event due to concerns that his presence could escalate tensions. When he showed up, police arrested him [Friedman, 2023].

Over the same weekend, about 180,000 people participated in rallies against anti-Semitism in France. The question of how police should respond to pro-Palestinian protests divided the UK's ruling Conservative Party. Suella Braverman, the former Home Secretary under Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, was dismissed after publishing an article alleging that London police were more lenient towards pro-Palestinian protesters than towards right-wing demonstrators. In 1936, at the Battle of Cable Street, the largest anti-anti-Semitism rally in London, around a quarter of a million people – including Jews, Irish dockers, local working-class residents, and communists – came together to prevent a government-sanctioned march by the British Union of Fascists through the city's Jewish quarter [Friedman, 2023].

A major issue for British authorities in recent years has been anti-Semitism in schools, and the period after the events of October 7, 2023, was no exception. The number of anti-Semitic incidents in British schools rose sharply in 2023. The Community Security Trust recorded a 232% increase, with nearly three-quarters of these incidents occurring in the period following Hamas's attack on Israel on October 7 [Sherwood & Ofori, 2024]. Most incidents involved abusive behavior, but 32 cases of assault and 10 cases of property damage or desecration were also recorded. Twenty-four incidents occurred in non-Jewish primary schools. "It's very sad to see children being targeted", said John Dalziel, head of the King David High Jewish school in Manchester. "It's constantly on our minds", he added [Sherwood & Ofori, 2024].

Since he started working at the school three years ago, Dalziel, who is not Jewish, has been aware of the "background of ant-Semitic comments and incidents" directed at children, for example, during sports competitions with other schools. According to him, the situation has worsened significantly since October 7. Immediately after the Hamas attack and Israel's military response, attendance at many Jewish schools plummeted as parents kept their children at home, fearing attacks. Jewish children were advised to remove their yarmulkes and Star of David jewelry on their way to and from school.

"Among all the shocking statistics about the rise in anti-Jewish hatred last year, perhaps the most troubling is that the number of incidents in schools tripled and reached a record high" [Sherwood & Ofori, 2024], said a CST representative. "It is deeply troubling that some Jewish children face bullying and social ostracism, often in the context of oversimplified and contentious political activity related to the Middle East, which has no place in schools" [Sherwood & Ofori, 2024], he added.

The King David High campus in Manchester consists of a nursery, a primary school with 400 pupils, and a secondary school with 800 students, served by around 200 staff. Ninety-five percent of the school community are Jewish. "This makes us a target", Dalziel said. "We tell children to be proud of who they are, their beliefs, and their values", he emphasized, "but we've also installed an 8-foot-high security screen, hired six full-time security guards, and increased patrols by parent volunteers in reflective jackets. Police and CST also regularly patrol the school". "This is the daily reality for our children – being surrounded by fences and security" [Sherwood & Ofori, 2024], he added. Of the 214 ant-Semitic incidents in schools reported in 2023, about 40% involved Jewish schools and 60% non-Jewish schools. Teachers' unions are concerned about the rising levels of anti-Semitism. Jane Peckham, deputy general secretary of the NASUWT teachers' union, said, "We regret the escalation of both anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim racism. Every child, young person, teacher, or school staff member should be able to learn and work in an environment free from racism, intimidation, and hatred" [Sherwood & Ofori, 2024].

The issue of rising anti-Semitism has also affected higher education institutions in the UK. It has been revealed that Jewish students at Queen

Mary University of London (QMUL) were systematically subjected to anti-Semitic ridicule and threats. In a letter sent by the Mishcon de Reya law firm on behalf of Jewish students at Queen Mary University of London on December 4, 2023, numerous allegations of anti-Semitism are detailed [Heren, 2023].

The university administration has been criticized for failing to respond to dozens of allegations of anti-Semitism. In one instance reported by The Times, during an online lecture attended by 500 students, a joke was made in a chat about having received a "Hitler reset card". In the same lecture, a group chat participant joked about "Hitler's gas bill". The letter also claims that Jewish students were threatened with violence. For example, one student received a video featuring a Quran quote overlaid on images of war debris in Israel.

A message also appeared in the university's WhatsApp chat: "We warned the children of Israel in the Holy Scripture: „You will undoubtedly cause corruption on the earth twice and become extremely arrogant. When the first of the two warnings is fulfilled, we will send against you some of our mighty servants who will devastate your homes". This will be the fulfillment of the warning" [Heren, 2023]. A QMUL representative stated that the university does not tolerate oppression or insults of any kind and takes every report seriously. The university's Jewish Society confirmed receiving messages of an offensive nature. One of the online comments sent to the society read: "You are all terrorists. Keep playing the victim, but you will all burn in hell" [Heren, 2023].

Edward Isaacs, president of the Union of Jewish Students, said: "These incidents at QMUL highlight the university's structural failures to rid campuses of anti-Semitism. Jewish students need to be heard and recognized, and appropriate actions must be taken. We need QMUL to take urgent measures to address the numerous glaring issues outlined in this important letter" [Heren, 2023].

A QMUL representative stated: "While we are studying the content of the letter we have just received from the legal firm, we urge all members of our community to report any issues they face, including those mentioned in the letter, through the university's standard reporting

and support procedure so that we can address them immediately. We remain deeply concerned about the horrifying consequences for innocent civilians stemming from events in the Middle East, including Hamas's terrorist attacks on Israel, the taking of civilian hostages, the ongoing military actions, and the humanitarian crisis in Gaza that has resulted. We continue to call on all members of our diverse and inclusive Queen Mary community to come together to support one another, showing compassion, understanding, and empathy for the pain of others" [Heren, 2023].

At the same time, sociological studies regularly demonstrate consistent support among British students for Hamas's activities. For example, 40% of Russell Group students believe that the events of October 7 constitute "resistance". A survey by StandWithUs, an educational pro-Israel charity in the UK, also revealed that more than half of Russell Group students stated that pro-Israel campaign participants should expect to face violence on campus. Nearly 40% of students at the UK's top universities believe that the terrorist attacks carried out on October 7 against Israel, during which approximately 1,200 people were killed and abducted, were "an understandable act of resistance". Only 36% of students across all elite UK universities agree that October 7 "was a terrorist act committed by Hamas against innocent people" [*Poll reveals controversial...*, 2024].

The results also show that 29% consider the attacks to be "an understandable act of resistance", while 35% said they "were undecided". Similarly, 58% of Russell Group students say that anyone clearly displaying Jewish symbols or clothing is likely to face anti-Semitism, compared to 45% of all students. StandWithUs UK stated that the survey results "confirm fears that university campuses have become platforms for flourishing hatred of Israel and Jews, especially among Russell Group universities, which claim to be the academic elite of this country" [*Poll reveals controversial...*, 2024].

StandWithUs Executive Director Isaac Zarphati said: "The survey results confirm what we have been observing for several years, namely that we are in the midst of a historic wave of anti-Semitism fueled by anti-Zionism. The level of ignorance among the future leaders of

Western society should be a serious concern. This serves as an urgent wake-up call for everyone who does not yet realize the vital role that facts and education must play" [*Poll reveals controversial...*, 2024].

Sociological studies were conducted by Savanta with the participation of 1,024 university students in the UK from April 19 to 23, 2024. Beyond the education sector, the problem of anti-Semitism has become more pronounced in workplaces. According to sociological survey data, since October 7, 2023, nearly 40% of British Jews have suffered from anti-Semitism in the workplace.

Work Avenue launched the study after receiving an alarming number of reports about anti-Jewish incidents in workplaces. Almost four in ten Jews who participated in the survey reported facing anti-Semitism at work or during business interactions following the October 7 attacks. It was found that 39% of over 500 respondents encountered anti-Semitic comments from colleagues or clients. Such incidents occurred during direct conversations with Jewish employees, in social media posts, internal emails, and blogs, as well as overheard discussions. There were episodes where people were avoided because of their nationality [*Survey: Four in 10 British...*, 2024].

Although most cases of anti-Semitism were centered around the situation in Israel and Gaza, including the denial of what happened on October 7, stereotypes about the amount of money and influence Jews have were also widespread. Expressions of support for Hamas, challenges to the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism, and claims that "Jews control the world" were encountered. In some cases, the offense was exacerbated by delayed responses or inaction by management, and several reports mentioned anti-Semitism from members of the leadership themselves.

There was regular concern that networks and procedures established to support minority groups remained inactive when it came to protecting Jewish staff.

On a positive note, 72% of survey participants said they received support from colleagues or clients (some of whom also faced negativity). Reacting to the survey results, Work Avenue CEO Debbie Lebrecht said: "These are very difficult times for our community as we mourn the dead of October 7, worry about friends and family in Israel, and are forced to

confront the rising levels of anti-Semitism at home. The fact that four in ten Jews who took part in our survey are also suffering from workplace hatred – a place that should be safe – is shocking. It is extremely distressing that people do not feel as safe at work as they do at home, even though many people spend most of their time at work" [*Survey: Four in 10 British...*, 2024].

In a situation of increasing tension within British society as events of Israel's war against Hamas unfold, the government had to address issues related to the safety not only of individual members of the country's Jewish community but also of prominent politicians. For instance, newly elected Labour Party MP Damian Egan was offered additional security due to threats made against his partner, Israeli Yossi Felberbaum. According to The Mail on Sunday, parliamentary authorities are reportedly negotiating with Egan about his protection. The new MP canceled most debates during the by-elections in Kingswood. He appeared at the vote count alongside his partner, and since then, the couple has been harassed by anti-Israeli extremists. The Labour MP converted to Judaism after meeting Israeli Yossi Felberbaum, who was born and raised in Kiryat Yam. Felberbaum served in the Israel Defense Forces, studied at Ben-Gurion University, and then moved to the UK, where he currently works as a software engineer at Google [Owen, 2024].

Like most Israelis, Felberbaum completed mandatory military service, after which he worked as a software engineer in the army for some time. Mike Katz, head of the Jewish Labour Movement, said: "It is disgusting that the husband of a new MP is being targeted by left-wing trolls who are using the worst conspiratorial leftist anti-Semitism simply because he once served in the Israeli army" [Owen, 2024].

Shortly before this incident, about 80 anti-Israeli protesters attacked the home of Conservative MP Tobias Ellwood. Conservative minister Mike Freer recently decided to leave politics after his office was set on fire and his life threatened, partly due to his pro-Israeli stance and condemnation of anti-Semitism.

At the same time, the British government and leading political parties' commitment to combating anti-Semitism has had negative consequences for their ratings and support among voters. According to a sociological survey published on February 5, 2024, support for the

Labour Party among British Muslims has sharply declined. This is linked to the party leadership's support for Israel in the current war against Gaza. According to the Survation polling service, Labour's support from the Muslim community fell from 86% to 60% since the 2019 election. The Labour Muslim Network, which commissioned the poll, stated that it demonstrated a "crisis point" for the party's typically high popularity among Muslim voters. If undecided voters are also included – though they were not part of the comparable 2019 survey – Labour's current support among British Muslims would drop even further to 43%.

This comes during a period of heightened tension regarding the party's response to the war in Gaza: 38% of British Muslims said their view of the party had worsened over the past 12 months [Adu, 2024]. "Muslim voters have been watching and are now sending a clear signal – they will not support any political party that does not strongly oppose the crimes committed against the people of Gaza", said the Labour Muslim Network in a statement published on February 5, 2024. The group added: "Labour's leadership now needs to take a different path or risk losing the support of the Muslim community for a whole generation" [Adu, 2024]. Khalid Mahmood, a Labour MP, said that the party's position on a ceasefire in Gaza caused significant dissatisfaction among his constituents. "I have never seen so many emails coming into my inbox", he told ITV News [Adu, 2024]. Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer, known for his efforts to combat anti-Semitism within the party, aligns with the U.S. and Israeli positions on the war in Gaza, which was initiated by Hamas militants on October 7 last year.

In March 2024, the United Kingdom assumed the presidency of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA). The IHRA, comprising 35 member governments and involving representatives from academia and civil society, focuses on promoting education and preserving the memory of the Holocaust. The UK's presidency theme for this year was formulated as: "In Plain Sight". During this period, researchers will emphasize certain aspects of Holocaust history [*UK assumes presidency...*, 2024].

For instance, they will examine the social conditions that made the Holocaust possible, emphasize preserving the accuracy of historical narratives, and combat historical distortions and anti-Semitism,

including issues caused by artificial intelligence and online misinformation. This comes against the backdrop of the UK's fight against the rising number of anti-Semitic incidents within society. Prime Minister Sunak condemned such actions and announced an additional £54 million in funding to enhance the security of Jewish communities, part of a broader £72 million safety initiative.

Simon Walters, the UK Ambassador to Israel, remarked: "The Holocaust was the darkest period in human history. We must ensure it never happens again. The UK is proud to assume the responsibilities of the IHRA presidency and is committed to safeguarding the security of the Jewish community and combating anti-Semitism wherever it arises" [*UK assumes presidency...*, 2024].

One of the UK's government initiatives in recent years has been working with state, educational, and civic institutions to recognize the IHRA's definition of anti-Semitism. However, the UK government's efforts to adopt the IHRA's definition of anti-Semitism by state and other organizations faced significant opposition from lobbying groups in late 2023 and early 2024. These groups sought to provide antisemites with the right to attack members of Jewish communities, citing freedom of speech.

In March 2024, Holocaust history education programmes in UK schools were suspended following a lawsuit by a left-leaning political lobbying group. The UK branch of the American organization "Diaspora Alliance" initiated a judicial review of the IHRA's definition of anti-Semitism being used in the UK [Rose, 2024]. This group, supported by American millionaires, filed a case in the High Court to block Holocaust history education programmes.

In 2023, leading Jewish organizations, including the Campaign Against anti-Semitism, the Community Security Trust, Chabad, and the Holocaust Educational Trust, formed consortia and submitted bids for a £7 million program announced by Chancellor Jeremy Hunt in his autumn statement [Rose, 2024]. However, on March 7, 2024, a day before the tender process was due to conclude, the Department for Education (DfE) emailed all interested parties, stating that the process had been indefinitely frozen.

"The ministry has suspended procurement", the email stated, adding hope that the process would resume soon. The notice was sent a week



after the UK branch of the US-based Diaspora Alliance began legal proceedings in the High Court, claiming the program should be canceled as the DfE had determined that the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism would be used in education. According to the Diaspora Alliance, this definition "has been used to suppress free speech and silence those critical of Israeli government actions".

The IHRA's definition states that assertions denying Israel's right to exist or comparing Israel's treatment of Palestinians to the Nazis' treatment of Jews are ant-Semitic. Emily Hilton, director of the Diaspora Alliance in the UK, told the Jewish Chronicle that "the IHRA's definition of anti-Semitism contradicts the actions of those advocating for justice in Palestine".

In her view, the IHRA's definition "threatens efforts to combat anti-Semitism" and, consequently, "the safety and well-being of Jews in the UK and beyond". Hilton and her colleagues instructed the London law firm Bindmans and two leading KCs from Matrix Chambers, Philip Kaufman and Danny Friedman. If the High Court grants permission for a full hearing, legal observers predict costs could reach hundreds of thousands of pounds.

However, the primary sponsor of the Diaspora Alliance, the Tides Foundation, headquartered in San Francisco, has substantial resources. According to the latest US tax filings, the organization held assets worth over \$1 billion in 2022 and has "mobilized over \$4 billion for social programmes" since its founding in 1976. Among its donors is Hungarian-American billionaire George Soros. Its beneficiaries include the "Occupy Wall Street" movement, "Black Lives Matter", and two Jewish organizations campaigning against the Israeli government, "Jewish Voice for Peace" (JVP) and "If Not Now".

On the day of the terrorist attack on October 7, the organization If Not Now released a statement accusing Israel of atrocities, stating: "We cannot and will not say that today's actions by Palestinian militants were unprovoked" [Rose, 2024]. A JVP representative stated the same day: "Israeli apartheid and occupation, as well as the United States' complicity in this oppression, are the source of all this violence". In 2022, the Tides Foundation gave \$104,000 to the radical group Code Pink, which on

October 8 declared that Palestinian "resistance" against Israel is "a human right" [Rose, 2024].

Jewish organizations that hoped to secure a contract for anti-Semitism training reacted with concern to the decision to freeze it. Their representatives noted that preparing and submitting applications took hundreds of hours of work for what they considered a good cause. Speaking anonymously, a representative of one Jewish group said the government adopted the IHRA definition nearly ten years ago, and since then it has been endorsed by "all major political parties and numerous government agencies". "If the Diaspora Alliance succeeds in its demands, it will set the fight against anti-Semitism back years. Fortunately, given that this definition does not contradict the right to freedom of expression under UK law, we believe their efforts will be futile", he added [Rose, 2024].

Given the ongoing war in Gaza, the British government decided to increase funding for the security measures of the Jewish community. On February 28, 2024, UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak announced the allocation of £54 million as part of a new funding program to protect Jewish communities from anti-Semitism over the next four years [*Rishi Sunak announces...*, 2024].

Earlier this month, a representative of the Community Security Trust (CST) stated that thousands of ant-Semitic incidents had been registered in the UK since the start of the war between Israel and Hamas in October, making 2023 the worst year for Jews since the recording of ant-Semitic incidents began in 1984. "These are shocking and wrong biases and racism we have seen over the past months", Sunak said in his speech at the annual CST dinner this week. "This is hatred in its purest form. An attack on the Jewish people. We will combat this anti-Semitism by all means at our disposal", he added.

The government has already allocated CST, which advises approximately 280,000 British Jews on security issues, £18 million for 2024 – 2025, bringing the total funding up to £70 million by 2028 [*Rishi Sunak announces...*, 2024]. The funding will be used to enhance the security of various Jewish buildings across the country, including schools and synagogues, the government stated, outlining measures such as guards, CCTV systems, and alarm systems.

Amid the increased risk for the UK's Jewish communities, the British government was the first on the European continent in March 2024 to launch a large-scale review of political parties and groups regarding extremism, also aiming to formulate a definition of extremism.

During his speech in the House of Commons on March 14, Michael Gove named several far-right and Islamist organizations under review for extremism as part of the government's effort to create a new definition. The British National Socialist Movement, groups like "Patriotic Alternative", as well as the Muslim Association of Britain, Cage, and MEND are under investigation for extremism, confirmed the UK Secretary of State for Communities [Scott, 2024].

He specifically told members of parliament: "We will hold these and other organizations accountable to assess whether they meet our definition of extremism, and we will take appropriate measures" [Scott, 2024]. Gove added: "Organizations such as the Muslim Association of Britain and other groups such as Cage and Mend („Muslim Engagement and Development") raise concerns due to their Islamist orientation and views" [Scott, 2024]. He said that neo-Nazi groups such as the British National Socialist Movement and "Patriotic Alternative" would also be assessed. He added: "In no way do we intend to restrict freedom of expression, religion, or belief, but the government cannot remain in a position where, unwittingly or otherwise, we sponsor, subsidize, or support in any way organizations or individuals that oppose the freedom we value".

"I am confident we can agree that organizations... that promote neo-Nazi ideology, advocate for forced repatriation, the creation of a white ethno-state, and the intimidation of minorities are precisely the groups we should be concerned about and whose activities we will assess under the new definition. The activity of the far-right wing is increasingly concerning, and the attacks by these groups on Muslim and Jewish communities and individuals are deeply troubling and require decisive action" [Scott, 2024], he stated.

At the same time, in an earlier interview with the "Today" program on Radio 4, he said that chanting the pro-Palestinian slogan "From the river to the sea" would not itself be classified as extremist. He emphasized that "the one-time use of a particular phrase, no matter how

offensive it may seem to you or me, will not be classified as extremism under the newly announced definition". Gove added: "We are looking at ideology, patterns of behavior, and a certain set of beliefs and actions". Reflecting on developments in the country, especially after the Hamas attack on October 7 in Israel, Gove said that the Department for Levelling Up, Housing, and Communities (DLUHC) "is working with local authorities, civil society, and religious groups in regions where social cohesion is highest" [Scott, 2024]. He also noted that his department had been informed of widespread "concern" about safety in some organizations and that some advisers had even received "death threats". Gove also praised the work of the independent anti-Semitism advisor Lord Mann as "outstanding".

In a joint statement, Mend (Muslim Engagement and Development), Cage, Friends of Al-Aqsa, 5 Pillars, and the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB) warned that the new definition of extremism would threaten freedom of speech in the UK. "This new definition of extremism... strikes at one of the cherished cornerstones of our pluralistic democracy – freedom of speech", they stated. "Anyone, regardless of faith or political views, should have the right to criticize the current government without being labeled an „extremist”" [Scott, 2024], they added.

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ethno-state, and the intimidation of minorities are precisely the groups we should be concerned about and whose activities we will assess under the new definition. The activity of the far-right wing is increasingly concerning, and the attacks by these groups on Muslim and Jewish communities and individuals are deeply troubling and require decisive action" [Scott, 2024], he stated.

The issue of anti-Semitism in the United Kingdom has become one of the most pressing topics in the nation's inter-ethnic politics over the past few years. This is due to the fact that anti-Semitism and Islamophobia are the "main driving forces" behind hate crimes committed in the UK, according to the leading watchdog in this area – the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). According to the Home Office, nearly one in four religiously motivated crimes is committed against Jews. Data from the Home Office shows that two out of five (42%) religious crimes recorded by the police in both countries in 2021/22 were directed against Muslims. Approximately one in four (23%) targeted Jews, and 8% were against Christians [*Antisemitism and Islamophobia...*, 2023]. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), in its new report, recommended: "Central and local government authorities and police should take measures to combat anti-Semitism and Islamophobia as primary factors driving hate crimes and report on their actions" [*Antisemitism and Islamophobia...*, 2023].

The report states that the number of religiously motivated crimes has not decreased since 2018 "to the same extent" as other similar crimes. The watchdog found a "sudden increase" in racially or religiously motivated crimes triggered by political or terrorist incidents [*Antisemitism and Islamophobia...*, 2023]. Religiously motivated crimes recorded after the Palestinian militant group Hamas attacked Israel last month were not taken into account in the report.

The report, titled Equality and Human Rights Monitor, is prepared for Parliament every five years by EHRC experts, who regulate equality laws in the UK and monitor human rights compliance in England and Wales. It reflects the challenges the country has faced since 2018, including the COVID-19 pandemic, rising living costs, and the impact of Russia's war in Ukraine.

In addition to the activities of UK watchdogs and governmental organizations, significant activity was demonstrated in 2024 by the pro-Palestinian lobby, which consolidated efforts among politicians skeptical of Israel or harboring ant-Semitic views.

A veteran of the Conservative Party called on April 3, 2024, to suspend his former colleagues from the House of Lords for their support of the Jewish state. Sir Alan Duncan renewed his attacks on the Conservative Friends of Israel (CFI), calling on senior officials to "deal with" Lord Polak and Lord Pickles and "remove them from the House of Lords" for "serving the interests of another country" [McDonald, 2024]. In an interview with LBC radio, the former Conservative MP claimed that CFI "acted on Netanyahu's orders". Duncan, who previously accused CFI leaders in his political diaries of preventing him from becoming the Middle East Minister under Boris Johnson, continued to criticize pro-Israel representatives in the Conservative Party in an arrogant speech on LBC on April 4, 2024.

He stated that former Home Secretary Suella Braverman "does not believe that the situation with conflict resolution is wrong, just like Michael Gove and Oliver Dowden" [McDonald, 2024]. Duncan also called for a renewed investigation into Priti Patel's activities in connection with her notorious trip to Israel in 2017, where she held informal meetings with ministers. He added, "We still don't know who paid for her trip to Israel".

Responding to calls for a ban on arms sales to Israel in response to its behavior in the war against Hamas in the Gaza Strip, Duncan said: "We must immediately stop selling arms. Anything that supports what is becoming a total catastrophe in Gaza is morally unacceptable" [McDonald, 2024].

Duncan also condemned Israel for the war against Hamas in the Gaza Strip following the atrocities of October 7, stating: "It is this theft of land, this annexation of Palestine that is the source of the problem". Duncan resigned ahead of the 2019 general election when he was the Minister of State for Europe and the Americas, having made many controversial statements about Israel – particularly regarding Jewish settlements in the West Bank. In 2011, while serving as Minister of International Development, he called Israel's security barrier a "land grab" and accused Israelis of stealing water from Palestinian communities.

A CFI representative stated: "CFI is not affiliated with any political party in Israel. We maintain warm relations with all representatives of Israel's political spectrum. We support the Conservative government in its aspiration to create two states and achieve a peaceful resolution to the Middle East conflict" [McDonald, 2024].

Local authorities in various regions of the UK have made efforts to support members of Jewish communities during this difficult time. For example, London Mayor Sadiq Khan pledged to establish a task force to combat hate crimes on public transport, aiming to counteract anti-Semitic crimes in the capital. In his opening remarks to an audience at JW3 during the London Jewish Forum (LJF) breakfast, the Mayor of London stated that he had not met a London Jew who had not been affected by the events of October 7 and acknowledged that "fear still exists in the Jewish community" [Harpin, 2024c].

Sadiq Khan, in particular, stated: "I can say absolutely frankly and unequivocally that one can be someone who passionately defends Palestinian rights and unequivocally condemns the atrocities committed by the terrorist group Hamas". He added: "All of us, whether Muslim, Jewish, or of any other faith, are praying for the safe return of hostages still being held by Hamas" [Harpin, 2024c].

Responding to a direct question about the negative impact that almost weekly pro-Palestinian demonstrations have on the community, as well as statements that control over them might be strengthened, the mayor pointed out that around 1,000 arrests had been made – both for incidents affecting the Jewish community and since the protests began. He said that some of these arrests were made due to video recordings posted on social media, which could have caused "anxiety" among the public, fearing that no action would be taken. "To reassure you, I can say that the police are taking action. However, it is important that politicians do not tell the police whom to arrest and so on. There must be operational independence... This is a really important principle, and I fear we have national politicians creating the impression that the reason the police are not making arrests is because the mayor is Muslim, and he is telling the police to act more leniently. This is not the case", the mayor added [Harpin, 2024c].

Acknowledging that the cohesion and diversity of London have been seriously threatened after the events of October 7, Khan noted that

"public transport is not as safe for Jewish Londoners as it should be", and he promised to establish a task force to combat hate crimes on transportation. According to him, the task force will help Jewish and Muslim communities identify risk areas and plan improvements, noting that new CCTV cameras have recently been installed at bus stops in North London. Efforts by the pro-Palestinian lobby, propaganda in various media, including Arabic-language outlets, as well as weekly mass protests in support of the population of the Gaza Strip, have led to a persistent support for the Hamas movement among British Muslims.

In particular, a large-scale sociological survey showed that 46% of British Muslims support Hamas. The extensive survey demonstrated that only one in four British Muslims believes that Hamas committed murders and rapes in Israel on October 7. The survey, whose results were published on April 6, 2024, was conducted for the Henry Jackson Society by JL Partners over a month from February 14 to March 12 [Frazer, 2024]. The survey was offered to a representative sample of a thousand British Muslims. It was found that "nearly half of British Muslims say that Jews have too much power over the British government's politics".

In his column for *Eastern Eye*, British writer and head of the organization "British Future", Sunder Katwala, wrote about this: "A recent high-profile public opinion survey conducted by JL Partners for the Henry Jackson Society contained alarming results. Four out of ten Muslim respondents said they do not believe that Hamas committed atrocities on October 7. Only 3% of Muslim respondents sympathized with ISIS, but attitudes toward Hamas were far more ambivalent. Over a quarter (29%) expressed sympathy" [Frazer, 2024].

This survey also shows that "only 24% of British Muslims believe that Hamas committed murders and rapes in Israel on October 7. 39% say Hamas did not do this, and 38% say they are unsure" [Frazer, 2024].

For comparison, according to the survey, 62% of UK residents overall state that Hamas did indeed commit such atrocities. In the context of such widespread support for Hamas, the British government has carried out a series of symbolic actions aimed at supporting the state of Israel. On April 6, 2024, British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak visited a synagogue in Finchley, central London, to honor the memory of the victims and hostages of Hamas attacks. April 7 marked six months since



the October 7 attack, during which Hamas militants breached the barrier between the Gaza Strip and Israel, attacking military bases and civilian settlements. The horrific attack resulted in over 1,100 deaths, 250 being taken hostage by Hamas, and about 130 remaining in captivity [*Six months since Oct. 7...*, 2024].

This served as the trigger for the current Israeli military actions in the Gaza Strip, which have resulted in the deaths of over 33,000 Palestinians, according to the health department of the Hamas-controlled territory, as well as mass displacement and an ongoing humanitarian crisis. The British Prime Minister noted: "Today marks six months since the terrorist act of October 7 – the most horrific attack in Israel's history, the worst loss of Jewish lives since World War II. Half a year later, Israel's wounds remain unhealed. Families are still grieving, and Hamas still holds hostage" [*Six months since Oct. 7...*, 2024].

The Prime Minister also emphasized that the number of civilian casualties among the Palestinian population is increasing, stating that the United Kingdom is "making every effort" to deliver aid to the Gaza Strip while underscoring the necessity for Hamas to release hostages. He called for an immediate humanitarian pause in the fighting, which "leads to a long-term sustainable ceasefire" [*Six months since Oct. 7...*, 2024].

The Prime Minister reiterated his support for the Jewish community during the period of Jewish Passover, mentioning the tragedy of October 7. In his greeting to the Jewish community of the United Kingdom for Passover, the country's Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, noted that the events of October 7, 2023, left empty seats at the festive table for far too many families. In his Passover message, the Prime Minister said that his thoughts are "with those who lost loved ones as a result of Hamas terror and those who remain held hostage" [Harpin, 2024a].

He emphasized that he recognizes Passover as a "moment for families and communities to express gratitude" as they gather at the Seder table to break matzah together. Sunak stated that his government "will continue to support Israel... in the face of the reckless attack we saw earlier this month from Iran". In his video, which was published on social media on April 22, 2024, the Prime Minister also said that "Passover promises that better times lie ahead for us". "So, I hope that for the Jewish community in the UK and around the world, whether your loved ones are

near or far, this holiday brings some comfort", the Prime Minister added [Harpin, 2024a].

By the end of April 2024, pro-Palestinian protests had become a major issue for the government, as their organizers became the main driving force behind the rise of anti-Semitic sentiments in the country. To address this problem, the UK Home Secretary, James Cleverly, held urgent talks on April 25, 2024, with the President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, Marie van der Zyl, regarding control over regular pro-Palestinian protests in the capital. He stated that protecting the right of community members to show their Jewish identity is a "red line." In a candid conversation, Van der Zyl expressed "serious concern" about some police actions during the protests and subsequent responses by officers to what she described as "alarming incidents" [Harpin, 2024b].

In response, the Minister of Internal Affairs emphasized that the community should not only feel safe on the streets of London but also have the opportunity to "publicly and openly express their Jewish identity safely". "For Jews to conceal their Judaism is a red line that must not be crossed", the minister added. Following the negotiations, the President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews thanked Cleverly for his concern on the matter and expressed hope that the organization would continue to maintain good relations with him as well as with the Metropolitan Police in the future [Harpin, 2024b].

In a statement by the Board of Deputies of British Jews regarding the situation with anti-Semitism in the British capital, it was noted: "Since the horrific terrorist attack on October 7, almost every weekend we have seen tens of thousands of people marching through central London during „anti-Israel” protests. While many participants in the marches are genuinely concerned about the dire situation in Gaza, others have seized the opportunity to amplify disgusting anti-Semitic conspiracy theories, and some openly call for the complete destruction of the world's only Jewish state" [Harpin, 2024b].

The Board of Deputies of British Jews stated that during the management of these protests, several "high-profile mistakes" were made, which "could have been completely avoided", harming "the previously high level of trust the Jewish community in the UK had in the police". Tensions resurfaced last week after a video was published of a

conversation between Jewish community activist Gideon Falter and a police officer, who warned him to avoid appearing "visibly Jewish" as he tried to cross a street near pro-Palestinian protesters.

Meanwhile, ant-Semitic incidents during this period did not cease. At times, incidents involved prominent British politicians, including in Parliament. Should British Jews publicly sever ties with the Israeli government? This question was posed during a speech by a member of the House of Lords at hearings held on April 29, 2024.

The Minister of Internal Affairs, Lord Sharpe of Epsom, declined to answer what he described as a "deeply inappropriate" question in the House of Lords, posed by Lord Singh of Wimbledon. Lord Singh of Wimbledon is a journalist and television presenter known as the editor of *Sikh Messenger* and the host of the "Thought for the Day" program on BBC Radio 4. Lord Singh specifically asked the minister: "Would the minister agree that the image and security of the wonderful Jewish people in this country would be improved if they made a resolute statement distancing themselves from the policies of the Netanyahu government and the atrocities committed against the residents of Gaza, who are also human beings?". He also added: "Instead, the Board of Deputies of British Jews has, unfortunately, sent a delegation to Tel Aviv, showing solidarity with what the Netanyahu government is doing..." [*Should British Jews...*, 2024].

Lord Sharp responded: "I think this is a deeply inappropriate question, and I am not going to stoop so low as to answer it". Labour Party representative Baroness Sherlock, an ordained priest of the Anglican Church, then stated: "Perhaps I can. British Jews are no more responsible for the actions of the State of Israel than I am!" [*Should British Jews...*, 2024]. Later, during the debate, Conservative colleague Baroness Altmann, an Orthodox Jew, reiterated that the British Jewish community "is not responsible for the actions of a foreign government".

Their comments came as the upper chamber discussed plans to enhance the security of London's Jewish community amid a rise in ant-Semitic incidents. Several colleagues referenced footage published by the Campaign Against anti-Semitism, in which its leader Gideon Falter is seen being told by a police officer that his "openly Jewish" appearance might provoke hostility from pro-Palestinian protesters [*Should British*

*Jews...*, 2024]. Accusing the Jewish community of greater loyalty to the State of Israel than to their own country falls under the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism and is a criminal offense in the UK [*International Holocaust...*, 2024].

With the rise of pro-Palestinian demonstrations across British universities, which have affected many campuses, the government and the leadership of the Jewish community are facing the challenge of countering this phenomenon.

In this regard, one of the leaders of the British Jewish community, candidate for president of the Board of Deputies, Michael Ziff, on May 3, 2024, called on the leadership of the University of Leeds to oppose anti-Semitism. Michael Ziff wrote to the president and acting vice-chancellor of the University of Leeds, urging them to "take a stand" against the intimidation of Jewish students at the institution following the events of October 7. Ziff, a former member of the university's board, wrote to President Alastair Da Costa and Acting Vice-Chancellor Professor Hai-Sui Yu, suggesting that university leaders "failed to understand" the issues related to anti-Semitism [*Board president hopeful...*, 2024].

In his letter, Ziff, who was born in Leeds and studied at the university there, noted that "after the brutal atrocities of October 7, Jewish students feel unprotected and unsupported". "Let me cite a few examples of troubling incidents that demonstrate this dangerous environment: an attack on a Jewish chaplain, a sit-in strike near the Parkinson Building, vandalizing the Jewish student center, and a camp near the student union. Apart from the absurdity of protesting "occupation" by seizing university buildings, such demonstrations are inherently inappropriate. When your lecturers, staff, and students chant anti-Semitic slogans and incite hatred against Jewish students and staff, it is time for you to take a stance – not a political stance, but a moral one" [*Board president hopeful...*, 2024], he stated. "Anti-Semitism is not something we should promote in academic programmes, lectures, events, demonstrations, and camps at the university. Hatred of Jews is utterly vile. We must not tolerate it" [*Board president hopeful...*, 2024], he added.

It should be noted that the United Kingdom has become one of the most prepared countries to address a surge in anti-Semitism. The primary reason for this is the well-developed legislation for combating crimes rooted in ethnic and religious hatred. The adept coordination between

Jewish community leaders and the country's leadership is also significant. Thanks to years of work, many structures and organizations in the United Kingdom have adopted the IHRA (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance) definition of anti-Semitism, which clearly and objectively defines what constitutes an anti-Semitic statement or action and what does not.

Despite the country having 3.0 million Muslims, accounting for 6.5% of the UK population, the authorities have managed to control those actively preaching anti-Semitic ideas and prevent a significant number of serious crimes against the Jewish population. This distinguishes the United Kingdom from many other European countries, where legislation on the "Jewish question" is still being developed, and the IHRA definition has been adopted by far fewer governments, expert organizations, and educational institutions.

### ***European Union's position on combating anti-Semitism and supporting the Jewish Community***

Until 2021, there were no European Union programmes dedicated to protecting Jewish communities from anti-Semitism or supporting Jewish culture and community life. It was only after the establishment of an action plan for 2021–2030 that the efforts of European officials gained a structured focus, leading to the development of a systematic EU policy on this issue.

Currently, the management of EU policy on "Jewish matters" falls under the Working Group for the Implementation of the EU Strategy on Combating anti-Semitism and Fostering Jewish Life. Since December 2021, this group has convened five meetings, serving as key milestones in the development and implementation of ideas laid out in the EU Strategy on Combating anti-Semitism and Fostering Jewish Life.

Despite the efforts of experts and stakeholders, as of the first half of 2024, the Strategy's implementation remains stalled at the stage of drafting concrete provisions, which each of the EU's 27 member states is required to prepare. For three years, work has been ongoing to develop measures for protecting Jewish communities from anti-Semitism and promoting Jewish culture and community life, but deadlines continue to be postponed. While the European Commission provides grants to Jewish

communities for strengthening protection and developing educational programmes on Holocaust history, further progress has been limited.

On January 22–23, 2024, the fifth meeting of the Working Group took place in Brussels. This meeting was the first following the barbaric terrorist attack by Hamas on October 7 against the civilian population of Israel. The first day of the working group's session focused primarily on the impact of the attack on Jewish communities in the EU and measures taken at European and national levels to combat the most significant surge in anti-Semitism since the Holocaust.

Margaritis Schinas, Vice-President for Promoting the European Way of Life, opened the meeting, reaffirming the Commission's steadfast commitment to ensuring the continued prosperity of Jewish life in the EU and standing in solidarity with Jewish communities. In his address, Schinas highlighted the devastating impact of the October 7 events on the lives of Jewish communities in the EU and announced the allocation of €30 million on December 21 to secure public spaces in EU countries, of which €5 million will go toward protecting Jewish community facilities, including Jewish schools. He encouraged Jewish communities in EU countries to apply for funding by the April 4 deadline. Additionally, he mentioned that the European Commission has received €3 million in funding over the next three years to preserve sites in Europe linked to Holocaust events.

On the second day, the focus shifted to the development and implementation of national strategies in line with the Council Conclusions on Combating Racism and anti-Semitism dated March 4, 2022, in which member states committed to "developing national strategies to combat anti-Semitism and aim to complete this work by the end of 2022". Delays in the efforts of EU member states to develop national strategies were noted. National authorities and Jewish communities provided updates on recent developments in their respective countries.

In line with the EU Strategy on Combating anti-Semitism and Fostering Jewish Life, the European Commission has pledged to publish a progress report in the first half of 2024 on combating anti-Semitism, based on best practices from national strategies. Following the session, a presentation of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance

(IHRA) Charter on Protecting Jewish Community Sites took place to mark International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

Discussions focused on preserving Holocaust sites and objects for future generations. As a result, at the fifth meeting of the working group, the following relevant topics were considered:

- The impact of the HAMAS terrorist attack on Jewish communities;
- Combating online anti-Semitism as a consequence of the HAMAS terrorist attack;
- Updated information on the development and implementation of national strategies;
- The IHRA charter on the protection of Jewish community sites [*Working Group meeting...*, 2024].

It should be noted that the development of the European Commission's program to support Jewish communities has already taken up almost half of the time allocated for the implementation of this program until 2030. The reason for such delays in the development of the program for implementing the Strategy is the lack of an expert base in EU countries, as well as insufficient interaction between national governments and local Jewish organizations. While the situation regarding anti-Semitism and the protection of Jewish organizations is relatively clear, although discussions on the definition of anti-Semitism are still ongoing, the situation with assistance in developing Jewish cultural, religious, and community programmes remains unsatisfactory. However, it is quite likely that during 2024, the situation will change, and EU national governments will be able to rectify the situation.

An important part of the work of European governments is the development of their own, original plans to combat anti-Semitism and assist Jewish communities in developing Jewish culture and religious life. Throughout 2023, the governments of 27 EU countries worked on drafting these plans. One of the last countries to complete this legislative process was the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. Luxembourg's Prime Minister, Xavier Bettel, presented his country's anti-Semitism plan to Katharina von Schnurbein, the European Commission's Coordinator on Combating Anti-Semitism and Fostering Jewish Life [Lemkowicz, 2023]. As of the end of September 2023, 11 EU countries had adopted

national plans to combat anti-Semitism: Austria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Romania, and Slovakia.

Luxembourg presented its new "National Action Plan Against Anti-Semitism" (NAPAS), which includes 19 measures aimed at supporting memorial culture, enhancing synagogue security, and combating online hatred against the backdrop of a projected rise in anti-Jewish sentiments across Europe. An important component of the plan is strengthening security around both synagogues in Luxembourg. Luxembourg is home to about 1,000 Jews out of a total population of 650,000 [Lemkowicz, 2023].

Anti-Semitic intentions will be considered aggravating circumstances in criminal cases, potentially leading to a doubling of sentences.

According to proposed plans, the Cinqufontaines Monastery, once used by the Germans to detain Jews, will be transformed into an educational and commemorative site. Luxembourg's action plan also includes the implementation of EU directives aimed at combating online hate.

According to a June report by RIAL, Luxembourg's Research and Information Agency on Anti-Semitism, the number of anti-Semitic incidents in the country remains alarmingly high. A total of 76 anti-Semitic incidents were recorded, most of which occurred online.

"Particularly painful is the combination of these two phenomena: the trivialization of the Holocaust by equating it with an imaginary genocide that is allegedly being committed against Palestinians" [Lemkowicz, 2023], commented an RIAL representative.

In March 2024, the European Commission published a document titled "Legal Framework for Combating anti-Semitism in the EU". It became the first such normative document addressing the fight against anti-Semitism in the history of the European Union and laid the groundwork for EU governments' actions in this area. The document stated, in particular: "The experiences and perceptions of the Jewish community and the broader European population, recorded anti-Semitic incidents, the growing volume of anti-Semitic content online, and sociological research demonstrate the persistent presence of anti-Semitism in the European Union".



Research has shown – and some Member States have also reported in the context of this report – that successive crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic and Russian aggression against Ukraine, have exacerbated anti-Semitic sentiments across Europe. To combat racial and / or religious hatred, including anti-Semitism, the European Union has not only implemented specific policies and commitments but has also developed numerous legal tools that can be used to address various forms of anti-Semitism. These include (but are not limited to) the Framework Decision on Combating Certain Forms and Expressions of Racism and Xenophobia, the Racial Equality Directive, the Employment Equality Directive, and the Victims' Rights Directive.

The importance of effectively applying this legislation to combat anti-Semitism is emphasized in the EU Strategy on Combating anti-Semitism and Fostering Jewish Life (2021–2030), in which the European Union committed to 'revitalizing efforts to actively prevent and combat' this phenomenon across all countries" [Kadar, 2024].

The normative document "Legal Framework for Combating anti-Semitism in the EU" provides a comparative overview of how these legal tools are applied in the 27 EU member states. It aims to determine how and to what extent the legal framework and its practical implementation in various member states ensure protection against anti-Semitism in three areas: a) protection against discrimination; b) combating hate crimes; c) combating hate speech [Kadar, 2024]. Its introduction marked an important step towards creating legal instruments to combat anti-Semitic crimes, enabling courts at all levels to make decisions regarding manifestations of anti-Semitism, including on the internet.

An important part of efforts to characterize European anti-Semitism was the joint study conducted in May 2024 by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (HU) and the European Forum (EF). The "HU-EF Barometer 2024", compiled by a group of experts led by Professor Gisela Dax from EF, addresses the issue of mutual perceptions between Israel and several European countries, including Germany, the United Kingdom, France, and Poland. The survey was conducted online from February to March 2024 in Israel, Germany, the United Kingdom, France, and Poland. A total of 1,000 men and women from each country constituted a nationally representative sample of the adult population aged 18 and older. The

maximum sampling error was 3.1% at a 95% confidence level. Online surveys were conducted by Kantar [Siegel-Itzkovich, 2024].

In France, 63% of respondents identified anti-Semitism as a pressing issue, compared to 59% in Germany, followed by 48% in the United Kingdom and 30% in Poland. Respondents' opinions on the likely sources of anti-Semitism varied: German respondents pointed to both far-right groups (48%) and Muslim migrants (45%), while Britons (25%) and French respondents (31%) predominantly blamed migrants. In Poland, 31% of respondents pointed to far-right groups, 27% were uncertain, and 26% identified Muslim immigrants as the source [Siegel-Itzkovich, 2024].

At the same time, about 59% of Poles and 41% of German respondents have never in their lives met a Jew or an Israeli. Additionally, 50% of German respondents agreed with their government's statement supporting Israel's right to self-defense during the Gaza war in May 2021 [Siegel-Itzkovich, 2024]. More men than women, and more residents of the West than residents of the East, agreed with this statement.

It is expected that in the future, Jewish life in Europe will face greater hostility: 53% of Jewish respondents believe the situation will worsen, and only 25% believe things will remain the same. The older the respondent – and the more religious they were – the more pessimistic their view of the situation.

### ***The Dutch government's policy on the "Jewish question" after the events of October 7***

The events of October 7, 2023, significantly influenced the increase in the level of anti-Semitism in continental European countries, particularly in the Netherlands. According to data from the Center for Information and Documentation on Israel (CIDI), in 2023, almost 2.5 times more incidents of hate against Jews were registered in the Netherlands than the previous year. A particularly serious spike in anti-Semitic actions occurred after the Hamas terrorist attack on October 7. In the fall of 2023, the Dutch government decided to respond to this challenge by emphasizing the memory of Holocaust victims.

"Young people need to learn more in school and at home about the persecution of Jews during World War II" [*Big rise in anti-Semitism...*,

2024], stated Minister of Justice Dilan Yeşilgöz on this issue. In 2023, CIDI recorded 379 incidents compared to 155 incidents the previous year.

The Monitor of Anti-Semitic Incidents reports approximately 203 incidents in the last three months: 105 in October, 76 in November, and 50 in December. The organization added that the number of incidents up to October 2023 was almost as high as for the entire year of 2022. CIDI reported a "historic low" in more than 40 years of monitoring anti-Semitism.

CIDI fears that the numbers will be even higher in 2024. More than half of anti-Semitic incidents in the Netherlands involve threatening letters sent via email or regular mail. Jews also received more hateful messages through WhatsApp. Eighteen percent of the incidents involved direct confrontations between the victim and the perpetrator. Nine percent of the incidents were acts of vandalism, such as the destruction of Jewish buildings. Anti-Semitism has risen alarmingly, especially in schools, writes CIDI. The number of incidents, including insults, threats, and violence by other students, increased from 8% in 2022 to 40% last year. "Some Jewish students felt so unsafe that they stayed home for extended periods or even transferred to other schools" [*Big rise in anti-Semitism...*, 2024], reported CIDI experts.

Meanwhile, CIDI experts did not account for all manifestations of anti-Semitism on social media, as there are "too many to track". Justice Minister and VVD leader Yeşilgöz agreed that young people need to learn more about the consequences of anti-Semitism. She stated this on the television program Op1 in response to the CIDI report. According to Yeşilgöz, Dutch schools are required to teach children about the Holocaust. "We often hear that teachers find it very difficult" [*Big rise in anti-Semitism...*, 2024], the minister said. In this case, "support from the school and the school board is very important". According to her, the Education Inspectorate should also work on this. At the same time, the responsibility for children learning about the persecution of Jews during World War II and the other consequences of hatred toward Jews should not rest solely with schools. "Everything must start at home" [*Big rise in anti-Semitism...*, 2024], she added.

After the events of October 7, 2023, the influence of the pro-Palestinian lobby began to be felt throughout the Netherlands. Unlike the United Kingdom, the country did not witness weekly protest marches in support of the Gaza Strip population and the Hamas movement; however, tension was significant in some regions of the country.

For example, the leadership of the Groningen synagogue was forced to cancel the traditional silent march commemorating the anniversary of Kristallnacht, which was scheduled for November 5, 2023, due to the war in the Gaza Strip [*Groningen synagogue leaders...*, 2023]. A representative of the synagogue on Folkingestraat in Groningen stated that they aimed to prevent incidents, considering the current violence in Israel and Gaza and the associated global tension. "The commemoration events usually consist of two parts: a silent march from Waagplein to the synagogue in Groningen and a memorial rally at the synagogue", [*Groningen synagogue leaders...*, 2023], synagogue director Gert Volders told RTV Noord. "Given the current situation in the Middle East, we decided to cancel the outdoor part and focus on the synagogue event", [*Groningen synagogue leaders...*, 2023], he added. Volders emphasized that they had received no threats but understood the reasons for taking precautionary measures. "We want to ensure that the silent procession is not perceived as a demonstration because it is not", [*Groningen synagogue leaders...*, 2023], he said.

Kristallnacht, known in English as the "Night of Broken Glass", is considered the beginning of the mass persecution of Jews during World War II. On the night of November 9–10, 1938, the Nazis attacked Jewish communities throughout Germany, destroying hundreds of synagogues, shops, and homes. The name "Kristallnacht" comes from the association with the glass that later littered the streets of German cities. Many German Jews were arrested, assaulted, and killed.

The synagogue in Tilburg and its parishioners, along with some other communities in the country, have faced threats following the outbreak of the war between Hamas and Israel. Mark Daniel Ben Avi, the head of the synagogue in Tilburg, told reporters from the Omroep Brabant television company about this. "There are many signs that there are people who want to attack synagogues" [*Tilburg synagogue threatened...*, 2023], said Mark Daniel. The synagogue in Tilburg has members from across the southern Netherlands, Belgium, and Germany.

Mark Daniel does not expect organized attacks on his synagogue but fears that terrorists may act individually.

A police representative stated that after the Hamas attacks, no new reports have been received by the police, but in recent weeks, additional surveillance cameras have been installed in the synagogue.

The National Coordinator for Terrorism and Security has sent a letter to mayors requesting additional security measures around synagogues since Jewish people do not feel safe before and after services. Meanwhile, activities in the Tilburg synagogue will continue as usual.

"We will not allow anyone to suppress us. However, we no longer publicize our schedule and have to operate almost clandestinely for our own safety" [*Tilburg synagogue threatened...*, 2023], said Mark Daniel. "We cannot be hospitable right now, and we will have to tighten access control to synagogues", he added. Mark Daniel has been living in the Netherlands for many years. He still has family and friends living in Israel. "I am very worried about my brother" [*Tilburg synagogue threatened...*, 2023], he said. His brother lives eight kilometers from the Gaza Strip in one of the first villages that Hamas invaded on that tragic Saturday, October 7.

Early on Saturday morning, Mark Daniel received a message from his brother saying that gunfire was heard around his house and that he was heading to a safe place. There was no news from him since Saturday evening. "We do not know if my brother is okay. We are powerless" [*Tilburg synagogue threatened...*, 2023], he added.

In these challenging circumstances, the Jewish community in the Netherlands received significant support not only from the government and local authorities but also from the Royal Family. On March 10, 2024, King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands visited the Portuguese Synagogue in Amsterdam for the opening of the National Holocaust Museum. The King was welcomed by Amsterdam's Mayor Femke Halsema and Arthur van Dijk, the royal commissioner in North Holland. Before entering the synagogue, the King was received in the Regent's Hall by Prime Minister Mark Rutte. The opening ceremony of the museum was also attended by Israel's President Isaac Herzog [Quell & Surk, 2024]. During the ceremony, the King delivered a speech and then went on a tour of the museum.

The first speaker at the museum's opening ceremony was Emile Schrijver, General Director of the National Holocaust Museum. In his speech, Schrijver referenced the October 7 attack by Hamas, the "subsequent war", and expressed concern about the "rising levels of anti-Semitism" [Quell & Surk, 2024]. In his speech at the Holocaust Museum opening, Israeli President Isaac Herzog called for the release of Jewish hostages held in the Gaza Strip. He emphasized that the Holocaust Museum serves as a reminder of the "horrors generated by anti-Semitism". "Hatred and anti-Semitism are thriving worldwide today", Herzog said [Quell & Surk, 2024].

Additionally, Federal Council President of Germany Manuela Schwesig, who was present at the ceremony, highlighted in her speech the importance of ensuring that the history of the Holocaust is never forgotten. "Together, we must preserve the memory of the Holocaust", she said, speaking also on behalf of Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier. "Just two steps away from here is the theater from which Jews in the Netherlands were deported to concentration camps and their deaths. Germans are responsible for this. Today, it is our duty to preserve memory and do everything possible to ensure it never happens again", she added [Quell & Surk, 2024].

During the opening of the National Holocaust Museum at the Portuguese Synagogue in Amsterdam, a group protested against the presence of Israeli President Isaac Herzog in the Netherlands. Around 1,000 protesters gathered at Waterloo Square. They attempted to make as much noise as possible at 1:00 PM, as Herzog was expected to speak on stage at the museum's opening around the same time.

In light of the tension within Dutch society due to Israel's ongoing operation in Gaza, there arose a need for legislative measures to regulate the actions of law enforcement and to take steps to curb anti-Semitism. Consequently, Dutch politicians highlighted that there are many migrants within the pro-Palestinian movement. This led members of the Dutch Parliament to support including anti-Semitism as one of the factors influencing the issuance of residency permits to immigrants. A majority of Dutch Parliament members voted in favor of a proposal submitted by the fundamentalist Protestant party SGP, which urged the government to

consider anti-Semitism when determining whether individuals should be granted residency permits [*Dutch Parliament backs...*, 2024].

The proposal notes that anti-Semitism "is an evil that must also be suppressed and actively combated in the Netherlands" and points out that German law allows the deportation of foreign citizens who are antisemites and prevents their integration into society. The Dutch proposal calls on the government to explore how anti-Semitism can be used as a basis for denying or revoking permanent and temporary residence permits and naturalization applications. The proposal was supported by VVD, NSC, and BBB – three of the four parties involved in forming the new Dutch government. Additionally, 37 members of the far-right PVV party voted in favor.

During debates on the proposal last week, SGP MP Diederik van Dijk referenced the rise in anti-Semitism in the Netherlands following the outbreak of the war between Hamas and Israel, such as demonstrations of Hamas flags and the chanting of anti-Semitic slogans. Van Dijk also stated, "Unfortunately, it is a known fact that the evil of anti-Semitism is deeply rooted in people from Arab and Islamic countries" [*Dutch Parliament backs...*, 2024]. A sociological study conducted by the Anne Frank Foundation last year showed that secondary school teachers encounter anti-Semitism in the classroom more frequently than 10 years ago.

The Parliament of the Netherlands even called for April 25 to be declared a National Day of Combatting Anti-Semitism. The Tweede Kamer, the lower house of the Dutch Parliament, expressed its desire for this day to become a National Day of Combatting Anti-Semitism. Annually, around this date, the Tweede Kamer also plans to hold plenary debates on anti-Semitism. The growing anti-Semitism requires "constant political attention", said Joost Eerdmans (JA21) [*Parliament wants 25 April...*, 2024]. His proposal to declare April 25 as a National Day of Combatting Anti-Semitism was supported by parties such as PVV, VVD, NSC, BBB, SGP, ChristenUnie, and CDA. Almost the entire Dutch Parliament also backed the proposal that those guilty of anti-Semitism should receive educational penalties as a special condition of court sentences [*Parliament wants 25 April...*, 2024]. This could include mandatory visits to the National Holocaust Museum or a World War II

concentration camp. However, this proposal was met with skepticism by some politicians. "In theory, a judge could do this, but in practice, such educational measures are rarely applied", noted MP Mpanzu Bamenga (D66).

Local authorities in the Netherlands also expressed their position regarding Hamas' actions in Israel, unanimously voicing support for the Jewish state. Nearly all Dutch mayors signed an open letter opposing the rise of anti-Semitism. The city of Amsterdam published this letter in the Dutch press on behalf of 329 mayors on April 26, 2024. "Let us continue to stand against any form of discrimination and racism", the letter stated [*Open letter against anti-Semitism...*, 2024].

The Netherlands has 342 municipalities, and only 13 mayors did not include their names in the letter. The letter asserts that anti-Semitism is not something new or solely linked to recent events, "but an enduring form of racism that, if left unaddressed, will be passed down from generation to generation". The mayors noted that anti-Semitism did not disappear after World War II and that anti-Semitic incidents have increased significantly since October 7, when Hamas attacked Israel, followed by the war in the Gaza Strip. "Online, on the street, in classrooms, sports clubs, and in our research and applied universities – everywhere, Jewish residents of cities and towns face anti-Jewish intimidation and aggression" [*Open letter against anti-Semitism...*, 2024], they emphasized.

The mayors also stated they are "horrified by the enormous number of civilian deaths in the Gaza Strip", as noted in the letter. "Criticism of the Israeli government is not anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism is when Jews are held responsible for the actions of this government simply because they are Jewish. Intimidation, insult, or physical assault on Jews is anti-Semitic and a criminal offense" [*Open letter against anti-Semitism...*, 2024], they added.

The signatories further stated that volunteers in all Dutch towns and villages are preparing to commemorate deceased Dutch citizens on May 4 and to celebrate Liberation Day on May 5.

### ***Fighting anti-Semitism in Belgium after the events of October 7***

The issue of anti-Semitism has intensified since October 2023 in neighboring Belgium. In October, school administrators in Flanders



raised alarms about growing radicalization and extremism, as reported by "De Tijd" on November 10, 2023. Both popular Flemish school networks, GO! and Catholic Schools, stated they have observed an increase in reports of inappropriate behavior, particularly in urban schools.

Some of these incidents are related to Islam – for example, students refusing to participate in field trips because they cannot pray on time, girls starting to fully cover themselves, and boys performing ritual foot washing in school restrooms. There are also reports of ultra-conservative or misogynistic statements or behavior. Cases include youth refusing to use rainbow flags or making offensive remarks about the LGBTQ+ community, and boys refusing to sit next to girls in class or ignoring instructions from female teachers.

"Every day, our specialist in radicalization and polarization receives three to four reports. A few years ago, it was three to four per year. The number of reports about radical statements or radical behavior has noticeably increased recently", said Koen Pelleriaux, Director General of the GO! school network, to a De Tijd reporter [*Schools note upsurge...*, 2023].

The Catholic school network also reports an increase compared to recent years, with many of the latest incidents tied to the war between Israel and Hamas. "Today, we see interactions between Islamism and far-right ideologies, which share misogynistic narratives, anti-LGBTQ+, anti-government views, and recently, anti-Semitism", said Karin Heremans, director of Koninklijk Atheneum in Antwerp and a GO! Collaborator [*Schools note upsurge...*, 2023].

Not every student is radicalized, and not every radical is prone to violence, but these changes should not be ignored, according to the Belgian Coordinating Threat Analysis Group (CUTA). The counter-terrorism agency does not plan to publish new data until next year, but since 2021, reports have increasingly included information about youth intending to commit terrorist acts. "Often, these are young people who were not previously on the radar of security services but have been radicalized online", said CUTA director Geert Vercaute [*Schools note upsurge...*, 2023].

Flemish nationalist N-VA Minister of Education Ben Weyts called for immediate sanctions. "If youth oppose our norms and values, we must draw a red line and enforce serious penalties for crossing those

boundaries. We are not going to address this issue later on the streets", he noted [*Schools note upsurge...*, 2023].

The Belgian authorities have also attempted to crack down on far-right anti-Semitism, which has been increasing in society over recent months. For instance, prominent Belgian far-right activist Dries Van Langenhove was sentenced to one year in prison. The Ghent Correctional Court sentenced Van Langenhove to one year in prison for violating anti-racism and anti-Semitism laws. He was also sentenced to 10 months probation for violating arms laws, deprived of civil rights for 10 years, and fined €16,000 [*Far-right activist...*, 2024].

The investigation began in September 2018 after a journalistic investigation by staff of the Pano VRT program revealed that racist and anti-Semitic messages were being spread in secret chat groups of the far-right activist group Schild & Vrienden. In June 2019, its leader, Van Langenhove, was officially charged with racism, inter-ethnic hatred, and violations of weapons laws. Six other accused were also found guilty of racial crimes in this case. Van Langenhove's closest associate was sentenced to eight months of conditional imprisonment and fined €8,000. Four others received six months of conditional imprisonment and a fine of €8,000, half of which was suspended [*Far-right activist...*, 2024]. The conditional sentences for the anti-Semites were issued with certain conditions, including attending, under supervision, the Holocaust history museum Kazerne Dossin and the Documentation Center in Mechelen. During World War II, Mechelen was the last stop on the deportation route of Belgian Jews to death camps. "Van Langenhove... involved other accused in his racist, hateful, Nazi... discourse, through which he incited people against each other" [*Far-right activist...*, 2024], stated the judge. "He demonstrated... contempt for fundamental values and rights. He creates a hostile atmosphere in society. He promotes antagonism, discord, and conflict, and encourages physical and psychological violence", he added.

### ***Fighting anti-Semitism in Germany after the events of October 7***

The situation of Jewish communities in Germany, a country with traditionally strong pro-Palestinian forces, has become no less dangerous. In response to the increasing anti-Semitic rhetoric, Vice-

Chancellor Robert Habeck criticized Muslim activists, calling for harsh sanctions against individuals who commit anti-Semitic acts.

"Anti-Semitism cannot be tolerated in any form" [Chiappa, 2024], Habeck declared on November 1, 2023, in a speech published on the social network X, formerly known as Twitter. "The scale of Islamist demonstrations in Berlin and other cities in Germany is unacceptable and demands a strong political response" [Chiappa, 2024], he added.

Anti-Semitic actions, such as the burning of the Israeli flag, are crimes, Habeck said, and those who engage in them will face consequences. "Anyone who is German will have to answer for such actions in court. If you are not German, you also risk your residency status", Habeck stated in a video that had garnered over 4.2 million views by the morning of November 2. "Anyone without residency permits will have grounds for deportation" [Chiappa, 2024], he added.

The representative of Germany's Green Party, Habeck, also criticized German Muslim associations for their silence. While some have distanced themselves from anti-Semitism and the violent attacks by the Palestinian group Hamas on Israel, he noted, "not all of them have, and some are too hesitant, and I think overall their response is insufficient".

However, anti-Semitism is present across the entire political spectrum in Germany, emphasized Habeck. Among the far-right, as well as "part of the political left" and "among young activists", he added. Habeck reiterated that "there is no place for religious intolerance in Germany", noting Germany's historical responsibility to protect the Jewish community. He added: "The responsibility of our history also asserts that Jews can live freely and safely in Germany. That they will never again have to fear openly demonstrating their religion, their culture. But this very fear has now returned".

On November 2, Germany's Interior Minister Nancy Faeser banned the activities of Hamas and the association "Samidoun", a pro-Palestinian group. The German branch of Samidoun, Samidoun Germany, will also be dissolved. "Along with Hamas, today I completely banned the activities of a terrorist organization whose goal is the destruction of the state of Israel" [Chiappa, 2024], Faeser said in a statement. The international network "Samidoun" disseminated anti-Semitic propaganda

and supported and glorified various foreign terrorist organizations, including Hamas.

The idea of countering migrants with ant-Semitic views was supported by German authorities. Thus, in the spring of 2024, it became known that the country's Ministry of Internal Affairs would include questions about the state of Israel and the Jewish community in the test for obtaining German citizenship to filter out antisemites.

Minister of the Interior Nancy Faeser, in her interview with *Der Spiegel* on March 28, 2024, stated that "anti-Semitism, racism, and other forms of disrespect for humanity make naturalization impossible". "Those who do not share our values cannot obtain a German passport", added Faeser [Schindler, 2024]. According to *Der Spiegel*, the new citizenship test may include questions about the basics of Judaism or Germany's special historical obligations to Israel, as well as the year of the founding of the Jewish state. The magazine also reports that possible questions include penalties for Holocaust denial and membership requirements in Jewish sports clubs.

Germany has recently agreed to ease strict citizenship laws, reducing the time required to apply for a passport and making dual citizenship more accessible [Schindler, 2024]. Revising Germany's citizenship legislation was a key promise made by the center-left coalition government of Chancellor Olaf Scholz when it came to power at the end of 2021. In addition to constitutional commitments, applicants seeking German citizenship will now also have to pledge to protect Jewish life in Germany. Under normal conditions, candidates will be able to apply for citizenship after five years of residence in Germany, instead of the previous eight years. Those who are particularly well-integrated and proficient in German will be able to obtain citizenship in just three years.

A group monitoring anti-Semitism in Germany announced at the end of November that it had recorded a sharp increase in anti-Semitic incidents in the month following the Hamas attack on October 7, 2023 – totaling 994 incidents, which is a 320% increase compared to the same period the previous year. In response to pressure from anti-Semitic forces, many state and private organizations in Germany have turned to history to demonstrate just how harmful anti-Semitism can be.

During 2023–2024, the Central Bank of Germany initiated an investigation into its Nazi past, promising never again to allow discrimination or anti-Semitism. The bank released a condensed version of a forthcoming series of studies at a time when far-right forces are gaining momentum in Germany, triggering nationwide protests in a country still grappling with the consequences of its 20th-century history.

The study details how the Reichsbank financed Adolf Hitler's war efforts, assisted in the exploitation of occupied territories, and participated in the confiscation, expropriation, and sale of Jewish assets. "The Reichsbank became a willing puppet and beneficiary of stolen goods in the context of the financial Holocaust", said Albrecht Ritschl, professor of economic history at the London School of Economics and one of the study's authors [*Pressegespräch anlässlich...*, 2024].

Founded in Frankfurt in 1957, the Bundesbank had little in common with the Reichsbank, which was based in Berlin and closed after the end of World War II, initially replaced by the Bank of the German States. The Reichsbank's gold, for instance, was confiscated by the Allies. However, some of its employees, particularly mid-level managers, were hired by the new institutions after undergoing a process known as "denazification" [*Pressegespräch anlässlich...*, 2024].

The criteria for such denazification, introduced by the Allies at the end of the war, were relaxed after 1948 as Germany became more firmly integrated into Western life, and the central bank sought to recruit qualified personnel, researchers found. Bundesbank President Joachim Nagel hoped the hundred-page booklet would reach a broad audience and pledged to learn from it. "There must never again be anti-Semitism in Germany", he said, echoing the slogan used at recent demonstrations against the far-right [*Pressegespräch anlässlich...*, 2024].

### ***Development of the Jewish Community in Austria and the Fight Against anti-Semitism After the Events of October 7***

Austria was one of the first countries whose leadership strongly condemned the massacre of Israeli civilians that took place on October 7, 2023, and called for a fight against anti-Semitism. On October 24, 2023, Austrian Federal President Alexander Van der Bellen condemned anti-Israeli actions in Austria. In an interview with reporters from ZIB and

Ö1-Mittagsjournal, he stated that he hopes young offenders do not fully understand the gravity of their actions. Recently, Israeli flags were torn down from buildings in several Austrian cities. Moreover, slogans were chanted at rallies that indirectly questioned Israel's right to exist. The president told a Puls24 reporter: "This must stop. Our Jewish friends must feel safe".

The Jewish community in Austria is increasingly concerned. "The willingness to resort to violence, which is now being directed at objects, could quickly turn toward people", warned Eli Rosen, president of the Jewish community in Graz. Chief Rabbi of Vienna's Jewish community, Yaron Engelmayer, also sees attacks on individuals as a possible next step. Society must say: "This far, and no further".

On May 6, 2024, during a joint action, the President of the National Council (Austria's lower house of Parliament), Wolfgang Sobotka (ÖVP), the President of the Jewish Community (IKG), Oskar Deutsch, and the Israeli Ambassador to Austria, David Roet, painted over anti-Semitic graffiti on the facade of a building in Leopoldstadt. On the night of May 1, anti-Semitic slogans such as "Death to Zionism" and "Victory to Palestine" were painted on the walls of buildings on Heinestraße in Leopoldstadt, in central Vienna [*Antisemitische Parolen...*, 2024].

In the presence of the Israeli ambassador, Ruth Sobotka and Deutsch painted over slogans on the facade of a store owned by a Jew. Sobotka compared the graffiti to the events in Vienna in 1938. Back then, similar inscriptions appeared on the streets. Sobotka emphasized that he has been warning about the rise of anti-Semitism for six years, referencing the known fact that 30% of the population were covert antisemites, and 8% to 9% were overt antisemites. The Austrian Parliament offers anti-Semitism seminars within the framework of democracy workshops, Sobotka noted. However, schools sometimes hesitate to offer these courses due to the presence of migrants in classes and fears of confrontation. "Here, too, a clear stance by the teaching staff is necessary" [*Antisemitische Parolen...*, 2024], he stated. Furthermore, Sobotka mentioned that anti-Semitism is also imported through migration. Added to this is left-wing or "feuilleton anti-Semitism", as recently expressed by anti-Semitism researcher Monika Schwarz-Friesel. "Although anti-Semitic graffiti will be covered with paint, the

stain of anti-Semitism is not easily erased" [*Antisemitische Parolen...*, 2024], emphasized Ruth. It is unacceptable for Jews to be subjected to fabricated accusations against Israel, for calls for genocide to be painted on walls, or shouted in universities or on the streets of Vienna.

The surge of anti-Semitism and support for Hamas at Austrian universities has led to new research projects aimed at combating this. Thus, new forms of anti-Semitism are at the center of a new research focus of the Austrian Academy of Sciences (ÖAW).

Historian Gerald Lamprecht from Graz took charge of research on anti-Semitism at ÖAW in January 2024. Since 2006, he has been leading the "Center for Jewish Studies" at the University of Graz and is the coordinator of the teaching and learning program dedicated to National Socialism and the Holocaust in Styria, "ERINNERN: AT". The project led by Lamprecht focuses on the development of anti-Semitism at universities since 1945, with the initial stage examining current anti-Semitic activities. "In order to take active measures against all forms of anti-Semitism, we first need a precise understanding of how and where it manifests. Universities, as central organs of social authority, are particularly significant here" [*ÖAW erforscht antisemitismus...*, 2024], he noted.

Another ÖAW project dedicated to anti-Semitism examines changes in anti-Semitic discourses and their perception in Jewish communities. Arian Sajed from the ÖAW Institute of Cultural Studies studies how anti-Semitism is discussed on the internet and social media and the patterns underlying anti-Semitic publications. She says: "In Jewish communities, perceptions of anti-Semitism and its explanations vary greatly. However, the discourse in media and politics is increasingly characterized by struggles over identity politics. We will take this into account in our research project. We want to understand the role of online media in polarizing opinions and explore how to create spaces for exchange and reflection" [*ÖAW erforscht antisemitismus...*, 2024].

Currently, as part of the ÖAW's research on anti-Semitism, a review study on contemporary anti-Semitism is also being conducted under the leadership of Salzburg historian Helga Embacher. "At universities, discourses are held that are not necessarily carried out in broader society but influence it. Among other things, this includes the widely discussed

postcolonial critique of the state of Israel and its policies. The question is always to what extent legitimate criticism turns into anti-Semitism... Over the last ten to twenty years, anti-Semitism in Austria has become significantly more complex. In addition to „traditional” forms of anti-Semitism, layers of which can be found in right-wing political groups, new forms and groups have emerged”, noted Lamprecht.

***The policy of the French government regarding the "Jewish Question" after October 7, 2023***

The security of Jewish communities has also become a pressing issue in France. The services of the French Jewish Community Protection Service (SPCJ) have seen a surge in demand due to the escalating situation in the Middle East. The organization was established in 1980 after the bombing of a synagogue in Paris. The general public is largely unaware of the SPCJ's existence, unlike synagogue leaders, Jewish cultural centers, and community schools, who know the service's phone number by heart.

The SPCJ hotline, available 24/7, was overwhelmed on October 7, 2023. Callers posed a wide variety of questions. One person reported an ant-Semitic attack, another inquired about safety measures, and a third asked how to join the service to protect other Jews in this situation. The massacre of Jews on October 7 shocked French society and the 500,000 Jews living in the country. As *Le Monde* reported at the time, French Jews felt increasingly isolated. "We don't have many people who could support us" [Faye, 2023], some said.

According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, over 1,500 ant-Semitic incidents have been recorded in France since the war began on October 7, 2023. In comparison, 436 such incidents were reported in 2022. According to Interior Minister Gérald Darmanin, 10,000 police officers, gendarmes, and soldiers were deployed to protect Jewish communities [Faye, 2023]. However, they did not act alone; their efforts were conducted in close cooperation with the SPCJ. For instance, all these forces were involved in securing the march against anti-Semitism that took place in Paris on November 12, 2023. "This protection service is meant to compensate for any shortcomings of the authorities" [Faye, 2023], explained historian Marc Knobel, an expert on combating anti-Semitism.



In this situation, French President Macron promised that the country would be "uncompromising" when it comes to anti-Semitism. He made this statement on March 18, 2024, during the annual dinner dedicated to the 80th anniversary of the establishment of the Representative Council of French Jewish Institutions (Crif). "Whenever the slightest trace of anti-Semitism reappears, I will treat it as uncompromisingly as my predecessors" [Kindermans, 2024], Macron stated at the Élysée Palace.

In his address, Crif President Yonathan Arfi stated that the number of anti-Semitic acts "multiplied after the abyss of October 7, and our republican model has been attacked like never before in 80 years". According to Crif's report, the number of anti-Semitic attacks in the country rose to 1,676 in 2023 compared to 436 in 2022 [Kindermans, 2024].

Arfi also demanded that France demonstrate "the same solidarity and trust in Israeli democracy in the face of terrorism" as it shows towards Ukraine in the face of threats from Russia. Macron responded by stating that "loving Israel and wishing for its security does not mean agreeing with all the decisions of the current democratic government". "We must allow for differences, as far as democratic countries permit", [Kindermans, 2024] he added, referring to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, while calling for respect for "humanitarian law and international law" in the Gaza Strip.

Regarding anti-Semitic actions in France, Macron emphasized the importance of Crif's request to establish a parliamentary commission to investigate anti-Semitism in higher education. This occurred just a week after a Jewish student was denied entry to the amphitheater of Sciences-Po University in Paris, where pro-Palestinian students were protesting against the war in Gaza. The incident was condemned at the highest governmental level: at the Cabinet meeting on March 13, Macron stated that the remarks made toward the Jewish student were "unspeakable and absolutely intolerable".

In an interview with the public radio station France Info on March 19, Arfi also noted that "the dire situation of the civilian population affects and matters greatly to me, whether it concerns Palestinians or Israelis" [Kindermans, 2024]. However, he emphasized that responsibility for the situation in the Gaza Strip lies with Hamas.

"All Hamas needs to do is release the hostages tomorrow morning, and this war will instantly end", he said.

Amid rising anti-Semitism, some leading French politicians have declared their Jewish heritage, symbolizing support for the country's Jewish community. For instance, France's Prime Minister Gabriel Attal, who recently assumed office, noted that his Jewish heritage influenced his personality. The 34-year-old Gabriel Attal, who is the youngest prime minister in the country's history, remarked that a significant aspect of his identity was shaped by the Jewish heritage of his late father. Attal's mother, who came from a family of White Russian emigrants, raised him and his siblings in her Russian Orthodox faith. However, his father, film producer Yves Attal, was a Jew born in Paris. "My father told me: „You may be Orthodox, but you will feel Jewish all your life, mainly because you will suffer from anti-Semitism because of your name”" [Kampeas, 2024]. Attal said to the magazine *Liberation* in 2019. Attal is a common surname among North African Jews and is recognized as such in France, where a large number of Tunisian and Algerian Jews live, reports JTA [Kampeas, 2024].

Last year, Attal told *Le Monde* that he is "not a stranger to transcendence" and still celebrates Orthodox Easter but no longer considers himself a religious believer, partly because his father, whose relatives were deported to concentration camps during the Holocaust, told him: "God died in Auschwitz". The politician's surname appeared on an anti-Semitic poster displayed at a protest in Paris during the pandemic. At the time, as a government representative, he condemned the "absolutely disgusting comparisons" between Nazi persecutions and health protection measures, which were a theme of the anti-vaccination protests.

A rising star of President Emmanuel Macron's center-right Renaissance party, Attal was the Minister of Education until the morning of Tuesday, January 9, 2024, when Macron chose him to replace Élisabeth Borne as Prime Minister. Borne resigned due to disagreements with Macron over immigration after Macron supported a law facilitating the deportation of foreigners in France [Kampeas, 2024]. Borne also inherited Jewish identity from her late father, who survived the Holocaust and died by suicide. The previous youngest Prime Minister

was Laurent Fabius, a socialist who was 37 years old when he began his two-year term in 1984. Fabius was born to a Jewish family who converted to Catholicism and raised him in that faith.

***Features of Denmark's policy on the "Jewish question" after the events of October 7***

The events of October 7, 2023, had a significant impact in Denmark, where the Jewish community is traditionally viewed positively. Immediately following the escalation of the situation, the Danish authorities turned to the military and requested the army to protect Jewish community facilities due to heightened tensions amid the war in Gaza. Following this, it was announced that Denmark would deploy army units to protect Jewish and Israeli sites in Copenhagen. According to the plan, soldiers will be stationed near the Israeli Embassy in Copenhagen as well as at synagogues.

The Minister of Justice, Peter Hummelgaard, stated: "The conflict in the Middle East has led to a completely unacceptable rise in anti-Semitism and instability for Jews in Denmark. We are in a situation where the terrorist threat looming over Denmark is serious" [Percival, 2023].

The military began guarding Jewish sites on December 6, and the government announced that the potential risk of terrorist attacks would be continually assessed. The Danish army had previously assisted the police in guarding premises, but this cooperation was suspended in early 2022. The Jewish Community of Denmark reported a sharp increase in reports of hate crimes, vandalism, and death threats against Jews following the Hamas terrorist attack on Israel. Since the Hamas militant attack on Israel on October 7, 80 reports of anti-Semitic incidents have been registered in the country. In comparison, only 30 reports were registered from January 1 this year until the Hamas attack [Percival, 2023].

Denmark's Chief Rabbi, Jair Melchior, was attacked in November on his way to a television interview discussing hatred against Jews. Rabbi Melchior commented on the incident: "When we boarded the train, a man spat on me and gave me the middle finger. These are some of the things that happen" [Percival, 2023]. According to the independent research institute Utrikespolitiska, there are between 6,000 and 8,000 Jews living in Denmark.

Danish politicians have also attempted to create new legal measures aimed at combating anti-Semitism among foreign migrants arriving in the country. One of the proposed measures includes the suggestion that applicants for Danish citizenship should recognize the State of Israel. This was stated by the head of the party, Inger Støjberg, a former Minister for Immigration and Integration and founder of the "Danish Democrats" (Danmarksdemokraterne).

"There are several reasons why this is necessary", Inger Støjberg said in an interview with the DR P1 Morgen program. "In recent years and months, we are witnessing an Islamic revival – not just in Denmark, but in many other European countries. We see people walking down the streets shouting, „From the river to the sea”, which means that the State of Israel must be wiped off the map" [*Danish party leader...*, 2024], she said. "You must remember that Danish citizenship is not just given out. It is something you have to earn" [*Danish party leader...*, 2024], she added.

According to The Guardian, this phrase originated in the 1960s and can be interpreted in different ways – as a call for peace or a call for the destruction of Israel. However, "it is quite difficult, and even impossible, to verify whether people are lying or not", and therefore, this is "a false proposal that seeks to stir emotions", says Social Liberal Party leader Martin Lidegaard. "We grant citizenship based on qualifications. So, you know the Danish language, how many years you've been in the country, and what you have or haven't done regarding criminal activity, etc. That makes sense. But starting to grant citizenship based on political views that people may or may not have is both strange and insane" [*Danish party leader...*, 2024], he stated on P1 Morgen. However, Inger Støjberg believes that this proposal concerns fundamental democratic rights.

### ***Switzerland's policy on combating anti-Semitism and supporting the Jewish community after October 7***

The President of Switzerland has called for determination in combating anti-Semitism. It is unacceptable for Jewish citizens in Switzerland to face attacks or feel threatened, stated Viola Amherd on the eve of International Holocaust Remembrance Day. Remembering this and the victims of National Socialism is a historical duty, noted Amherd [*Anti-Semitism must...*, 2024]. "Therefore, the growing anti-

Semitism in the wake of Hamas's terrorist attacks against Israel's civilian population on October 7, 2023, must be fought decisively and with all available means" [*Anti-Semitism must...*, 2024], she added. According to her, there is no place in a democratic society for anti-Semitism or other forms of hatred against people based on their race, ethnicity, or religion.

On January 27, 1945, the Soviet Red Army liberated the Nazi death camp Auschwitz-Birkenau. The death camp, located west of Krakow in Poland, was one of several death and concentration camps under the influence of Nazi Germany, where at least six million Jews from across Europe were murdered, along with Sinti and Roma people, homosexuals, political prisoners, and other victims of persecution [*Anti-Semitism must...*, 2024].

According to a report prepared by historians at the request of the company, the Raiffeisen banking group has no history of biased behavior toward Jews in Switzerland, despite the anti-Semitic views of its German founder. The presentation of the findings of the Raiffeisen-Switzerland report, presented on April 18, became possible amid protests over the naming of Raiffeisen Square, located near the bank's headquarters in St. Gallen. A public square in the Bleichli area of St. Gallen has been known as Raiffeisenplatz since 2005 [Bleich, 2024].

She is surrounded by the buildings of the company Raiffeisen-Switzerland. The square, designed by artist Pipilotti Rist, impresses with its entirely red pavement; hence, its unofficial name is "Red Square". The St. Gallen Synagogue is located on the edge of this square. In May 2023, public organizations publicly criticized the name of the square, stating that the founder of Raiffeisen in Germany, Friedrich Wilhelm Raiffeisen, was an anti-Semite [Bleich, 2024].

As an alternative eponym, the name of the Jewish rescuer of refugees during the Holocaust, Recha Sternbuch, was proposed. Former senator, Social Democrat Paul Rechsteiner, historian Stefan Keller, and Rist were among those advocating for the name change. At the time this proposal was made, Raiffeisen-Switzerland pointed to ongoing research into its history, which covers the topic of anti-Semitism.

The results of this research were presented at a press conference in St. Gallen on April 18. The main conclusion of the historians was as follows: "There was no evidence that anti-Semitism influenced the

banking business of the Swiss Raiffeisen organizations". This conclusion was reached by Gregor Spuler, historian and head of the Contemporary History Archive at ETH Zurich, and historian Verena Rothenbühler. Both investigated various aspects of the Raiffeisen bank's history. On one hand, they focused on the establishment of this business in Germany, and therefore, on Friedrich Wilhelm Raiffeisen (1818–1888). Spuler explained that there was an issue with the sources and that much material had been lost.

Some data suggested that one of the internal bank documents written by Friedrich Raiffeisen contained many anti-Semitic stereotypes. However, around the same time, Friedrich Raiffeisen wrote a fundamental article on the "Jewish question", in which he distanced himself from the anti-Semitic rhetoric of the time. Spuler described him as an "anti-Semite with contradictions". The Raiffeisen movement propagated the idea that its credit societies were "an instrument against Jewish usury". Over time, the banking group also established itself in Switzerland [Bleich, 2024].

The first Raiffeisen credit union was founded in 1899 in Bichelsee, Canton of Thurgau. Initially, the anti-Semitic ideology that had formed in Germany was reinforced in Switzerland, as announced at a press conference. The first Raiffeisen credit unions were established in Catholic rural areas and, therefore, in an environment where anti-Semitic prejudices were widespread, explained Rothenbühler. Researchers were given access, among other things, to the archives of 40 regional Raiffeisen banks. There, they found no evidence that anti-Semitism played any role in their banking business. Credit refusals were justified by economic factors, and Jewish names were found on the lists of bank employees. The research report filled a gap, said Christian Hofer, responsible for sustainability, policy, and cooperatives at Raiffeisen Switzerland [*Gründungszeit von Raiffeisen...*, 2024]. According to him, the Raiffeisen group distances itself from the anti-Semitic ideology of its founder, which contradicts the values of the company and the cooperative. Based on the report's findings, Hofer believed that the square could still be called Raiffeisenplatz but noted that the responsibility for naming streets and squares lies with the city of St. Gallen. The committee that called for renaming almost a year ago has not yet responded to the report's findings.

A significant issue for the Swiss government has been the anti-Israel demonstrations and sit-in strikes at Swiss universities. One of the largest actions in support of the Palestinian movement began on May 2, 2024, at the University of Lausanne (UNIL). The event was attended by several hundred people. Since May 2, students have occupied a campus hall, demanding a boycott of Israeli academic institutions and an immediate ceasefire in the Gaza Strip. They are conducting a sit-in strike. They were allowed to stay until noon on Monday, May 6, when another meeting with the university administration is scheduled to take place. The protest attracted about 400 people who gathered at the site, decorated with banners and Palestinian flags. The atmosphere was non-confrontational, and participants did not enter the occupied building. Between speeches, participants chanted "Gaza, UNIL is with you" and "End Israeli apartheid" [*Protestors at University of Lausanne...*, 2024].

In his address, Joseph Daher, a visiting professor at UNIL, praised the students' mobilization, which he said was motivated by "outrage at something unacceptable – genocide". Another professor, sociologist Olivier Fillieule, also supported the idea, stating that "the goal of educators is to make students citizens" [*Protestors at University of Lausanne...*, 2024]. He called on the university for "full transparency" regarding its cooperation with Israeli institutions, a demand reflected in a letter addressed to the UNIL administration, which staff members are being asked to sign. Olivier Fillieule welcomed the university leadership's stance, which "at least for the time being" was willing to engage in dialogue – unlike the Federal Institute of Technology Lausanne (EPFL), he noted. In the occupied building at UNIL, students hold two daily meetings to make decisions, according to the Keystone-SDA news agency [*Protestors at University of Lausanne...*, 2024].

The Jewish community of Switzerland expressed its concern over pro-Palestinian activities at universities. The umbrella organization, the Swiss Federation of Jewish Communities (SIG), stated on May 8, 2024, that it is closely monitoring with apprehension the escalation of sentiments at various Swiss universities, where pro-Palestinian demonstrations have taken place in recent days.

"Universities are democratic institutions where open debates should be encouraged" [*Swiss Jewish group...*, 2024], SIG Secretary General

Jonathan Kreutner told the Keystone-SDA news agency. "However, the loud voices of protesters display ideological and radical traits" [*Swiss Jewish group...*, 2024], he added.

The SIG statement also noted that radicals are issuing ultimatums and extremely one-sided demands, while intimidating dissenters. Under such conditions, Swiss universities can no longer provide a safe environment for Jewish students. Clearly, questions arise as to whether such protests, particularly at Lausanne University, are tolerable and whether they align with the values of the university, SIG said.

The organization also emphasized that tolerance should not be extended to explicitly aggressive anti-Semitic statements, such as the slogan "From the river to the sea". Kreutner further stated that it is now up to faculty and university leadership to fulfill their responsibilities, "take control of the situation, and, if possible, engage in constructive dialogue with the protesters" [*Swiss Jewish group...*, 2024].

### ***The pogroms in Amsterdam on 8 November 2024 and their impact on the development of the Jewish community in Europe***

One of the significant events in the history of European Jewry was the pogrom in Amsterdam on November 8, 2024. During this pogrom, members of Islamist gangs attacked and injured Israelis who had arrived in the city for a football match between the Dutch club "Ajax" and the Israeli club "Maccabi". The attackers checked documents of passersby on the streets in an attempt to identify Jews and Israelis, as well as assaulted locals and tourists who tried to defend the victims. Five victims required hospitalization, and police detained 60 rioters. These events posed yet another challenge for the Dutch government and other European authorities amidst the growing hatred toward the Jewish community in Europe. This incident marked the beginning of a new wave of antisemitism at the end of 2024, which affected Belgium, France, and Germany.

After the events occurred, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu ordered the immediate dispatch of two rescue planes to Amsterdam following an "extremely violent incident" targeting Israeli citizens, his office reported on November 8, following reports of attacks linked to a football match. The Israeli Ministry of National Security also



urged its citizens in the Dutch city to remain in their hotel rooms after the attacks, according to a second statement from the Prime Minister's office. "Fans who attended the football match faced anti-Semitism and were attacked with unimaginable cruelty solely because of their Jewish identity and Israeli citizenship", said Israeli Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir in his post on the social network X [*Netanyahu condemns antisemitic...*, 2024].

The local police stated that 57 people were detained after the game when pro-Palestinian demonstrators attempted to reach the Johan Cruyff Stadium, despite city authorities prohibiting protests there. Police earlier reported that fans had left the stadium without incidents, but various clashes were reported in the city center at night.

The Israeli military announced that they are preparing to immediately launch a rescue operation in coordination with the Dutch government following a football match in which Ajax Amsterdam, traditionally identified as a "Jewish club", defeated Maccabi Tel Aviv 5-0. "The mission will be deployed using cargo planes and will include medical and rescue teams", said the Israel Defense Forces. Right-wing Dutch politician Geert Wilders, leader of the largest party in the Dutch government, condemned reports of attacks in Amsterdam in a post on X. "It's shameful that such things can happen in the Netherlands. Completely unacceptable", he said.

Israel's Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar also requested the Dutch government to assist Israeli citizens in safely reaching the airport. Sa'ar conveyed this to his Dutch counterpart Kaspar Veldkamp in a phone call on Friday, November 8 [*Netanyahu condemns antisemitic...*, 2024].

Against the backdrop of such events in Amsterdam on November 19, 2024, the chief of Berlin police warned Jews and LGBTQ+ representatives living in the German capital that not all parts of the city are safe for them. At a press conference, Barbara Slowik insisted that there are no "no-go zones" in Berlin, but then immediately added: "However, there are areas, and we must be honest at this stage, where I would advise people wearing kippahs or openly identifying as homosexual or lesbian to be more cautious".

Slowik noted that "unfortunately, there are certain areas predominantly inhabited by people of Arab origin who also sympathize

with terrorist groups", where "open antisemitism is expressed against people of Jewish faith and origin". Nevertheless, the police chief, clearly treading a delicate line, stated that her intention was not to stigmatize any community, saying: "I do not want to „shame” any specific group of people as criminals". Although she did not specify the exact areas, Slowik made it clear that the war between Israel and Gaza has caused an increase in antisemitic incidents in Berlin [*Berlin Police chief warns Jews...*, 2024].

According to *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, since October 7, Berlin police have initiated more than 6,200 investigations related to anti-Semitism and hate incitement. A significant portion of these cases involve online publications, property damage, and propagandistic offenses. Despite the increase in reported incidents, the level of direct violent crimes against Jews remains relatively low. "Fortunately, violent crimes against Jews are rare, but without a doubt, every act is one too many", said Slovik.

She made her comments a week after a Jewish youth soccer team had to be placed under police protection following an attack by a pro-Palestinian mob armed with sticks and knives in Berlin. Players from the Makkabi Berlin youth team stated that they were "chased" by Arab youths after a game with local opponents. The team consists of teenagers aged 13 to 16. The game took place in Neukölln, a district of Berlin known for its large Arab and Turkish population. The father of one player wrote on Twitter / X that his son was deeply shaken after being spat on during the game and that they were followed by adults and children as the team left the field. The president of Makkabi Germany, Alon Meyer, told the *Frankfurter Allgemeine* newspaper that other witnesses reported threats, and some pursued Jewish players with knives.

Makkabi Berlin was founded in the 1970s by Holocaust survivors and was the first Jewish sports club in the German capital after World War II. Earlier this month, a supporter of the Makkabi Berlin club, who wore a club scarf featuring the club's logo, including the Star of David, was hospitalized after being punched in the face by a man in a café who had asked if he was Jewish [*Berlin Police chief warns Jews...*, 2024].

A wave of anti-Semitic sentiment has been strongly felt in November not only in the Netherlands but also in other European countries. On November 29, UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer held an

emergency meeting on Downing Street with Jewish community leaders to discuss the situation surrounding the intensification of anti-Semitism in society.

Representatives of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the Jewish Leadership Council, the Union of Jewish Students, and the Community Security Trust – an organization responsible for safeguarding Jewish communities – were present at the talks with the Prime Minister. Community leaders called for state support to promote unity and combat extremism, including those with far-right, far-left, or Islamist origins. The meeting also addressed the broader sentiments of the British public regarding Israel's war in self-defense against Iran and its terrorist proxies. They expressed concern about the recent decision of the International Criminal Court, renewed calls for the banning of the Iranian regime's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, and highlighted the dire situation of hostages held by the Iranian regime, including British citizens. The meeting, which was included in the Prime Minister's schedule just a week after community leaders requested it, was dominated by concerns that the threat level to the community had increased in recent weeks following 14 months of escalating serious problems [*Prime Minister asked...*, 2024].

It was noted that problems have escalated as a result of increasingly extreme actions by activists from groups such as "Palestine Action" near buildings used by Jewish organizations, schools, and during demonstrations. The Prime Minister was also informed of the pressure faced by members of the Jewish community in workplaces and other areas of society. Downing Street confirmed a meeting with leaders of the Jewish community, during which, it said, the "repugnant rise of antisemitism and how the government can continue working with the community to address this issue" was discussed. Starmer was told that this situation poses a threat not only to a single community but also as a matter of "national security".

Representatives of the Union of Jewish Students also expressed their concern to the Prime Minister that due to antisemitic incidents on campuses, it is no longer possible to file certain complaints anonymously, leading some students to fear repercussions if they do so. The Prime Minister welcomed the announcement of the establishment of the Council on Antisemitism Commission, chaired by Lord Mann and

Penny Mordaunt, and once again underscored his personal support for interfaith work under challenging circumstances. The discussion also touched on the ongoing crisis and conflict in the Middle East. Starmer spoke about his meetings with the family of British-Israeli hostage Emily Demari.

According to Jewish News, community leaders have scheduled further meetings with other government departments, including discussions on antisemitism within the National Health Service with the Health Secretary. After the meeting, Jewish leaders stated: "We requested this meeting last week in the context of serious concern within the Jewish community about the rise in antisemitism. We are grateful to the Prime Minister for agreeing to meet with us so promptly. We expressed the community's deep concerns about the antisemitism we are witnessing at protests, in Jewish community buildings, on university campuses, online, in workplaces, within the National Health Service, in cultural spaces, and even concerning Jewish students on their way to school" [*Prime Minister asked...*, 2024].

The pogroms in Amsterdam on 8 November 2024 became another important milestone in the history of European Jewry. While earlier anti-Jewish incidents were isolated, they have now taken the form of mass acts of violence, something Europe has not seen for decades. One of the main reasons for such events is the practice of European courts, which issue lenient sentences to antisemites, usually in the form of fines and suspended sentences, and only in the most extreme cases impose prison terms of up to one year. After serving such sentences, anti-Jewish citizens often reengage in their "struggle against Jews" and frequently continue persecuting their victims, who feel increasingly vulnerable.

Pogrom movements could become the norm in European countries pursuing liberal policies toward the younger generation and may become a serious factor influencing the emigration of Jews from European countries.

## CONCLUSIONS

The escalation of the situation in the Middle East following the mass killing of Israelis on October 7, 2023, has brought the issue of the security of Jewish communities in Western Europe to the forefront. The governments of these countries have had to take unprecedented security measures in cooperation between law enforcement, judicial bodies, and Jewish organizations. European countries are currently in the process of developing legislation aimed at combating anti-Semitism and promoting the development of Jewish communities.

In this context, the activities of the Working Group on the Implementation of the EU Strategy to combat anti-Semitism and promote Jewish life, led by European Commissioner Margaritis Schinas, will play a significant role. In connection with this, the idea of establishing a special research unit in Luxembourg or another European country to study Jewish history and culture is being actively discussed in Brussels.

The governments of most European countries are now stepping up measures to prevent migrants with anti-Semitic views from successfully naturalizing. Judicial practices are also being developed regarding individuals who have committed crimes motivated by anti-Semitism, with stricter measures being taken against repeat offenders.

A new factor in this regard has been the efforts of the pro-Palestinian lobby in Europe, which has significant media support and large contracts with law firms, as well as its fight against Jewish communities and governments in judicial institutions. At the same time, while the fight against anti-Semitism based on various definitions of the phenomenon is relatively successful, the tasks of the European Commission and the governments of European countries outside the EU regarding the assistance and revival of Jewish life on the continent remain undefined.

Jewish communities send requests for European grants for various programmes, mostly concerning the restoration of cultural objects in different parts of Europe. However, other forms of assistance to Jewish communities are currently undefined and remain a topic of discussion among European experts.

In addition, the communities require restitution of properties seized during the Holocaust, state support for the development of Jewish history museums, a network of Jewish schools, and the establishment of

departments or universities specializing in Jewish Studies. All these issues are on the agenda of the leadership of the EU, the United Kingdom, and Switzerland and require discussion and resolution.

Overall, the significance of the events of October 7, 2023, for contemporary politics and inter-ethnic relations in Europe and the world is hard to overestimate. They could significantly influence this legislative work and affect the policies of the EU countries, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, and other civilized nations regarding the "Jewish question" for decades to come.

The attacks on Israeli civilians and the brutal massacre carried out by the armed units of Hamas, as well as subsequent attacks on members of Jewish communities in Western European countries, have highlighted the urgency of combating anti-Semitic ideologies and conspiracy theories, placing this issue on the agenda of many governments and political parties. Europe will have to create a large number of educational and awareness-raising programmes, as well as strengthen measures to accommodate migrants infected with ideas of hatred towards Jews, and promote biblical values, the spirit of freedom, and multiculturalism.

Achieving societal unity cannot happen automatically in any government. In developed countries, it is the result of painstaking work to improve of inter-ethnic relations that cement society, introduce common goals, shared values, and accomplishments. Therefore, the primary goal of researching the issue of anti-Semitism in contemporary Europe is to formulate recommendations for improving the situation in this area.

The situation with anti-Semitism and inter-ethnic relations in contemporary Europe is quite complex. Despite the existence of strict laws and a system of inevitable punishments, anti-Semitism and hatred on the basis of racism continue to gain strength in Western European democracies. High levels of interaction between Jewish communities in the European space and the influence of Jewish civic structures on government bodies cannot mitigate this issue. However, the authorities and law enforcement agencies in these countries continually improve the system for protecting public and religious facilities to prevent future terrorist acts and attacks on members of the Jewish community.

Due to the presence of different approaches among EU member states regarding the protection of Jewish communities and development

measures, there is a need to create a research hub to develop a unified EU policy on this issue. This hub could bring together the efforts of key European specialists in the field of Jewish studies and be useful for the EU and member state authorities. In our view, the initial plan for EU policy regarding Jewish communities could include five main points.

First of all, this is a program for the restitution of Jewish property. If communities are given back buildings that once belonged to them and were unjustly seized, this will undoubtedly contribute to the revival of Jewish life, the creation of new communities, Jewish cultural centers, schools, and places of worship.

Another important component could be programs to restore citizenship to descendants of Jews who were illegally expelled from European countries. Such programs exist in Spain, Portugal, as well as in Poland, Austria, and Germany, but perhaps other countries can assess their attitude towards Jews at some point in their history and draw appropriate conclusions. Attracting new citizens of Jewish nationality to EU countries will help revive Jewish life and increase the number of Jewish communities through immigration. It is also worth considering social measures to support fertility in modern Jewish communities, perhaps introducing certain benefits for Jewish families with many children, including payment for kindergartens, educational programs, and parental leave. Another area that could be addressed is the creation of legislation that protects the rights of believers in the workplace, such as giving the right to Jewish believers to leave work on Friday after sunset and on Saturday, as well as providing the opportunity for holidays and prayer time during the workday. Finally, another area of government work could be the protection of the kosher method of slaughtering animals in Jewish communities, as well as providing kosher food for employees of government institutions, transport passengers, forum participants.

European countries face the task of uniting their efforts and creating a single European agency with law enforcement powers, an Agency to Combat Anti-Semitism, with a unified database for registering cases of anti-Semitism in all regions of the European Union, as well as individuals who may use weapons against Jews due to their beliefs, similar to France's "Fiche S" list of potential terrorists. It is necessary to establish close ties between communities and security structures responsible for monitoring anti-Semitism and protecting Jewish communities, places of worship, and educational institutions.

However, the authorities and law enforcement agencies in these countries continually improve the system for protecting public and religious facilities to prevent future terrorist acts and attacks on members of the Jewish community. This could serve as an example for the Ukrainian Jewish community, which, in its structure and development, closely resembles European Jewish communities. The Jewish community of Ukraine, which has completed the process of mass immigration to Israel and other countries around the world, is starting to take shape as a sustainable community that is developing in the context of a democratic society and integrating into the political nation of Ukraine.

A major problem in Ukraine is the lack of enforcement of the legal measures prescribed by law regarding anti-Semitism. Article 161 of the Criminal Code is almost never applied, and the absence of legal precedents enables representatives of political parties, groups, and informal associations to disregard the legal and law enforcement system when committing such offenses.

It is necessary to start implementing the experience of European countries in combating anti-Semitism on the internet, especially on social media. The absence of such a practice can lead to mass anti-Semitic campaigns against politicians, public figures of Jewish nationality, and the division of society along ethnic lines. In the absence of interest from law enforcement and the judiciary, authorities, media, and civil society can condemn this phenomenon.

The main issue currently faced by European Jews is security and countering Islamic terrorism. Therefore, in Ukraine, there is a need to create a single organization responsible for the security of all Jewish institutions, following the example of European countries. Coordination of efforts with Ukrainian law enforcement agencies and those of European countries is necessary to prevent large-scale terrorist acts against Jewish institutions and individual citizens of Jewish nationality in major Ukrainian cities. Unfortunately, the overall situation in Ukraine is unstable, and in the past two years, a significant number of Jews have left the country, especially in eastern Ukraine, where terrorist groups have eliminated some leaders of the Jewish community, and tens of thousands of Jewish communities, led by religious community leaders, have been forced to evacuate.



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**Наукове видання**

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**СУЧАСНА ЄВРОПЕЙСЬКА ПОЛІТИКА ЗАХИСТУ  
ТА РОЗВИТКУ ЄВРЕЙСЬКОГО ЖИТТЯ**

Монографія

Літературний редактор – James Drew

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Підписано до друку 04.04.2025 р. Формат 60х84/16. Папір офсетний.  
Гарнітура Times. Ум. друк. арк. 10,7 Обл.-вид. арк. 9,2  
Тираж 120 прим. Зам. № 2297

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Свідоцтво про внесення до Державного реєстру видавців,  
виготовлювачів і розповсюджувачів видавничої продукції  
серія ДК № 2776 від 26.02.2007 р.