

Dear Excellences,

I am here today at the OSCE to remind each other of our duty to protect all citizens against words, actions and campaigns which are hateful, criminal and discriminatory.

I will specifically focus on the staggering rise of anti-Semitism in Europe.

We welcome that the incoming German Chairmanship will focus on combating anti-Semitism, and we encourage the inclusion of young Jewish voices.

The European Union of Jewish Students wants to bring three concerns related to anti-Semitism to your attention.

1. The first kind of anti-Semitism concerns the negative effect of political conflicts in the Middle East on Jewish life in Europe.

Anti-Semitic words and actions have become more publicly visible especially since 2014. Unfortunately anti-Semitism has been justified in light of the war between Israel and Gaza, during which anti-Semitism took on a new character.

Some European governments, media outlets and members of civil society have persistently expressed their political disagreement with the war by directly antagonising Jewish individuals, communities and organizations.

The association between Jewish identities and the State of Israel stems from the misconception that the State of Israel uniquely represents all and only Jewish people, and vice versa.

There is a need for public stakeholders to set an example and not confuse cases of real anti-Semitism for political disagreement with respect to the State of Israel.

On this matter, we recommend to the OSCE and participating states to undertake awareness raising measures that enable public stakeholders the following: To strongly differentiate between what it means to have a Jewish identity, on one hand, and the political image of the State of Israel, on the other hand.

2. The second kind of anti-Semitism concerns the distortion and denial of the Holocaust.

We ask governments to implement their commitment to promote Holocaust remembrance and education, and to resist the political and revisionist motives behind distortion of the Holocaust.

We recommend that various forms of Holocaust education should in no way be compromised.

3. The third kind of anti-Semitism concerns online hate speech against Jewish life.

The online incitement of hatred may prepare the ground for offline violence. Therefore governments should support civil society initiatives which promote counter speech and a critical approach towards online content.

Finally I also want to thank ODIHR for providing us with a Youth Training on Hate Crime, which has been fruitful in our preparation for this Meeting.

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