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# European nations must do more to fight anti-Semitism

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European nations must increase their efforts to ensure security for the continent's Jews in the face of widespread anti-Semitism, the Council of the European Union said in a declaration that one Jewish group called "unprecedented".

The declaration passed in Brussels called on the council's member states to develop a common security approach to better protect Jewish communities and their institutions.

Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz, whose country holds the council's rotating presidency of the council, promoted the declaration. The council is made up of the heads of state or government of the member states.

In its declaration, the council acknowledges that Jewish communities in some EU countries feel particularly vulnerable to terrorist attacks following

an increase in violent incidents in recent years. It notes that anti-Semitic hatred remains widespread, as confirmed by the EU's 2018 Fundamental Rights Agency report on anti-Semitism.

The declaration calls on member states to "adopt and implement a holistic strategy to prevent and fight all forms of anti-Semitism, as part of their strategies on preventing racism, xenophobia, radicalization and violent extremism", according to a statement issued by the council. It also expresses concern that the situation for Jewish people has not substantially improved and that anti-Semitism can be disguised under the cover of political views.

The document also calls for an emphasis on the importance of Holocaust remembrance and education for all.

The European Jewish Congress called the declaration "unprecedented" in a statement praising its passage.

"This declaration is an important step in the fight against anti-Semitism because it provides a positive and concrete roadmap for the safeguarding of Jewish communities and strengthens the legislative tools for governments to fight hate and intolerance," the EJC's president, Dr. Moshe Kantor, said in a statement. "Now we hope that each EU Member State will take the required and appropriate action, and that the European Commission and the European Parliament will monitor the progress made by each state against anti-Semitism. We hope that the implementation of the provisions contained in this declaration will severely restrict the space for hate and that our Jewish communities will feel more safe in Europe."

It praised the council for passing the declaration and called on the EU to appoint a coordinator on combating anti-Semitism.

Chief Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt, President of the Conference of European Rabbis, said:

"Following a difficult year for European Jewry, the unanimous adoption of this declaration is a significant milestone and shows that Europe is united in wanting to fight anti-Semitism in all its forms. It is the many divisions in our society that have caused the rise of extreme politics and increased levels of anti-Semitism and racism in all its forms. Decision makers and influencers across Europe need to work together to ensure that faith communities are properly protected."

## UK politics has worst record for anti-Semitism in Europe

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In France, 95% of Jews believe anti-Semitism is a very or fairly big problem, up from 85% when the poll was last conducted in 2012. Nine out of 10 Jews in France say they had faced expressions of hostility on the street.

The survey of communities in the 12 member states, accounting for 96% of the Jewish population in the EU, further found that on average 41% had considered emigrating to escape because they no longer feel safe.

It was the high level of concern over anti-Semitism in the UK political sphere that stands out in the survey, with 75% of Jewish people here perceiving anti-Semitism to be generally a very big or fairly big problem, up from 48% in 2012, with 29% having considered emigrating.

This compares with the 12-country average of 70%.

It also found that 89% of British Jews say anti-Semitism has increased in the six years since the last survey.

The European commissioner for justice, Věra Jourová, said the results were a dismal setback for the EU that should be taken up as a

challenge by the heads of states and government.

She urged Jeremy Corbyn, whose Labour party has battled accusations that it has allowed anti-Semitism to take hold within its ranks, to take heed of the results.

"This is a serious message we have received from the Jewish community," she said. "We must do everything to let the Jewish communities know that they are not alone in Europe."

Among the other results, the survey found that nearly half (44%) of Jews in Germany and France have considered emigrating because they do not feel safe.

Across the 12 countries as a whole, 89% said anti-Semitism is at its worst and most problematic on the internet and social media platforms. Nearly three in four (73%) think hostile behaviour toward Jews in public is a big or very big problem, and 71% believe there is evidence of anti-Semitism in the media.

In Hungary, where the re-election campaign of the prime minister, Viktor Orbán, was heavily criticised for encouraging anti-Semitism through the demonisation of the philanthropist George Soros, the proportion of Jews who felt that anti-Semitic attitudes is a major problem has fallen from 89% in 2012 to 77%.

