

11.02.22**Decision
of the Bundesrat**

Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: EU strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life (2021-2030)**COM(2021) 615 final; Council doc. 12598/21**

In its 1016th session held on 11 February 2022, the Bundesrat adopted the following Opinion pursuant to sections 3 and 5 of the Act on Cooperation between the Federation and the Federal States in European Union Affairs (EUZBLG)):

1. In view of the dramatic increase in cases of antisemitism in Europe and the world, the Bundesrat expressly welcomes the first EU antisemitism strategy published by the Commission on 5 October 2021. The German federal states (Länder) share the Commission's view that antisemitism threatens the very foundations of the European value system and that the goal must be to work together at all levels towards an EU without antisemitism.
2. It particularly supports the explicit inclusion of project proposals targeting antisemitism in the relevant EU funding programmes as announced by the Commission, from the CERV (citizens, equality, rights and values) programme to the Justice programme, Horizon Europe, Creative Europe, Erasmus+, the Internal Security Fund, as well as cohesion policy and international policy instruments.
3. The Bundesrat considers it extremely pressing, as part of the EU's existing criminal and security law framework, to explicitly combat antisemitic agitation and hate crimes as well as violent extremism and terrorism directed against Jews. In

this context, the creation of comparable data sets in the Member States is of particular importance.

4. The Bundesrat sees the appointment of fixed points of contact in security authorities and the definition of (crisis) communication channels as a way to strengthen the trust placed by Jewish communities in the security authorities.
5. The Bundesrat fully supports the measures addressed in the Strategy to improve the protection of Jewish institutions such as places of worship, synagogues, community centres, nurseries, schools and cemeteries. It points out that some of the Länder have already developed their own extensive plans for the protection of Jewish institutions; these should be taken into account as part of the development of the German strategy for preventing and combating antisemitism in cooperation between the Federal Government and the Länder. In this context, it also particularly supports the Commission's intention to place a greater focus on the fight against antisemitism in its activities to promote training and continuing education in the judiciary, public prosecution service, police, prison service and within victim protection. The training should cover awareness of how to recognise antisemitic crimes, on the one hand, and Germany's historical responsibility, on the other.
6. In the view of the Bundesrat, the definition of antisemitism by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) should serve as uniform guidance for the judicial and executive authorities of the German Länder in recognising antisemitic patterns and the various manifestations of antisemitism. Recognising every antisemitic aspect of an act and calling it out ultimately serves to create trust in the authorities and courts and contributes to an increase in the willingness to report crimes motivated by antisemitism.
7. The Bundesrat shares the point made in the Strategy Paper that antisemitism related to Israel has a significant bearing on the everyday reality of Jews living in Europe, and considers measures specifically geared to this to be essential. These should range from imparting knowledge about the history and politics of Israel, to strengthening the exchange between young people in the EU and Israel in particular, as well as actively opposing efforts, networks and movements within the EU that question Israel's right to exist. Therefore, the Bundesrat also supports the intention that has been expressed to further strengthen the cooperation between

the EU and Israel in the efforts against antisemitism.

8. It shares the Commission's view that increased attention must be paid to combating antisemitism on the internet. In this context, it notes – as does the Commission – that the digital dissemination of antisemitic conspiracy myths – including in connection with the Covid-19 pandemic – can lead to radicalisation and ultimately to physical violence. In this context, it is particularly important for the obligations of providers in connection with the Digital Services Act and the Digital Markets Act to be defined more specifically, as is (regarding the development of algorithms) the area of artificial intelligence. Greater attention must be paid to the handling of illegal content on platforms such as Telegram. In addition, government bodies are also called upon to counter the spread of antisemitism online. The option of blocking accounts by way of court order can be an important building block in this regard, as can the consistent prosecution of statements made on the internet and in social media that carry penalties under criminal law. Conspiracy myths and targeted misinformation should continue to be addressed and investigated through existing democratic education programmes run by the Länder.

9. The Bundesrat reiterates that the culture of Judaism is an integral part of European culture and that the Jewish cultural heritage in the Member States must be protected while, at the same time, raising awareness to ensure that it is perceived and appreciated by Europeans as a living part of European culture and way of life. For Germany this means, among other things, drawing attention to the now 1700-year-old tradition of Jewish life and the countless significant contributions made by people of Jewish faith or origin to our joint society and culture. It is very important in this regard that the cooperation between the Länder and civil society is intensified.

10. It shares the Commission's view that in implementing the strategy, both the level of the Länder but also the local and regional levels are of particular importance, both in combating antisemitism and in promoting Jewish life. Accordingly, the Länder regard it as their responsibility to support the Federal Government in developing the German strategy for preventing and combating antisemitism by the end of 2022 and, in doing so, to also use the Bund-Länder Commission on Antisemitism as an important interface in this process. The Länder expect the Federal Government to be involved at an early stage. At the same time, the Bundesrat also considers it important that, going forward, other European bodies at the local and regional level, in particular the Committee of the Regions, increasingly address the issue of antisemitism in order to jointly work on the implementation of the EU's antisemitism strategy and promote an exchange of best practice.

11. The Bundesrat considers the Länder to be responsible, in particular, in terms of an increased discussion of antisemitism in the context of schools, extracurricular education, universities, training and continuing education of the judiciary, public prosecution service, police and prison service as well as with regard to research and the culture of remembrance. With regard to the remembrance of the Holocaust, it shares the Commission's endeavour, in view of the approaching time when a direct exchange with people who can give first-hand accounts will no longer be possible, to jointly strengthen new ways of commemoration in order to keep the awareness of the Holocaust alive in the EU. The Bundesrat therefore welcomes the planned increased focus on the Day of Remembrance for the Victims of National Socialism.