

Experiences and perceptions of antisemitism - Second survey on discrimination and hate crime against Jews in the EU'

Some of the survey results are counter-intuitive for some Member States (Hungary and Poland), from which we can expect strong messages.

To ensure that the FRA spokesperson and FRA staff answering such queries take the same line, follow some critical questions that FRA may face from media, government officials and Jewish communities.

See below background information from the CNN general population survey on antisemitism which gained high media attention on 28 November 2018, as well as the JPR online news item.

Some critical questions following the publication of FRA's 2nd antisemitism survey:

FRA presents the findings of the antisemitism survey together with the Austrian government – are you not helping a far-right wing government to brush off responsibility? You have also presented the findings in the Justice and Home Affairs Council and were present at conferences organised by the Austrian Minister of Interior from the FPÖ.

The European Commission invited FRA to present the findings at an event with the Council of the EU. The agency provides data and analysis on the perception of discrimination and hate crime against Jews on a European scale.

FRA gives rights-based *advice* to EU institutions and Member States.*MS*. Bringing the results of our data and analysis to the knowledge of Justice and Home Affairs Ministers supports Member States to take the right measures.

The agency gives rights-based *advice* and promotes fundamental rights compliance towards all EU Member States.*MS*.

Can you speak to the reliability of these findings? You note that the report “analyses data from the responses of self-identified Jewish people”, and that the survey was carried out online. How can you be sure there was no manipulation?

- FRA implemented a number of **quality control checks** to reduce the risk of manipulation, such as:
 - the **time it takes to complete the questionnaire**. The average time for survey completion was 33 minutes. Testing of the survey questionnaire and survey experience show that even people familiar with the survey and without a significant volume of antisemitic experiences to report took about 15 minutes to fill it in. Any time below that could be indicative of a less than serious approach to data collection. However, the scope of such a problem in the final dataset was not significant, the presence of such cases was minimal, it was carefully checked and the small number of cases were removed from the dataset. It has no impact on the findings.
 - the **routing within the questionnaire** was designed so that each question was only asked of a respondent if it was appropriate for them, based on their previous responses. The online script was set up so that it was not possible for respondents to override a hard check, as **the questionnaire was designed so that impossible responses could not be given**.

- The dataset went through data quality control checks (e.g. double entries). Some further **analysis and checks was conducted after data collection, before data analysis, to identify inconsistencies in the answers. The presence of answers which consistency can be doubted was minimal both at the level of the whole data file and at country level.** If there were specific contradictions/inconsistencies, the cases were removed from the data set. In total, 65 cases were removed, which were spread across the Member States and has no impact on the survey findings.

Is it possible there was a selection bias within the Jewish communities responding to the survey? For example, to what extent are these results the views of more traditional Jews, as opposed to more secular Jews? How does that affect the results?

- Due to the absence of comprehensive sampling frames for Jewish populations in the selected EU Member States, Jewish communal organisations were the primary distribution channels of invitations to take part in the survey. The contractor made attempts to identify and cooperate with the Jewish organisations able to reach out different segments of the Jewish communities. In this way, the contractor worked to ensure that the questionnaire reached all sub-groups of Jews in each country, irrespective of their denominational attachments, age or location. The questionnaire itself then asked respondents to forward the survey link onto other Jews, thereby helping us to reach Jews who were not on organisational lists.
- There is **a great variety among the respondents in how they identify as being Jewish.** This means that the survey was able to capture a very broad range of experiences; this gives the results a high level of validity. It was established by the survey asking a number of questions on the respondents' Jewish identity, it's strength, the level of religiosity of the respondents, and following the Jewish practices.

Recently, you published an update on the data available on antisemitism in the European Union, which the Polish government has used to argue antisemitism is in decline in Poland. How does this square with your results?

- FRA's annual update on the situation of data collection on antisemitism in the EU brings to light the very many gaps that exist within and between Member States in how they record antisemitism. As for all other forms of crime, **there is a very high level of under-reporting**, which leads to what is known as the 'dark figure' of crime: in the best case, about 25 % of incidents of hate crime are reported to the authorities.
- It must also be noted that annual variations in the recording of crime can be due to a number of factors, not least the willingness of victims to report incidents. It is therefore important not to take any annual variations in administrative figures (the recording rate) as an indication of a rise or a decline in antisemitic incidents (the true extent of the phenomenon). Instead, the survey figures combined with those of the annual update show that antisemitism continues to be a serious problem that requires urgent action from the EU and all its Member States. No data or low numbers do not mean no problem(s).

Following up on this: your survey results seem to indicate that antisemitism in Hungary is falling when compared to your previous survey. Why is this?

- We have to admit that the findings from Hungary took us somewhat by surprise, when comparing them to those of the other Member States. Any perception that the situation is

getting better, must, however, be tempered with the observation that, for example, 77 % of Jewish respondents in Hungary do still perceive antisemitism to be a problem there, or that 71 % perceive that antisemitism has increased in the country over the past five years. These figures indicate that antisemitism continues to be an issue of serious concern to Jews in Hungary, as is the case in the 11 other countries that were surveyed (see Figure 19).

- Also, the survey findings on experiences of Hungarian respondents, e.g. in case of antisemitic harassment, refer to similar levels.

What is behind significant increases in antisemitism in countries like the UK, Germany and France? Is this evidence of a geographic divide when compared to countries in central and eastern Europe?

- The findings for each country need to be examined against the reality of the national context. Detailed analyses at the national level are needed if one is to understand better how antisemitism manifests itself in any given country. In addition, the reality of the survey findings is that merely 1% of the respondents across the 12 countries say that the level of antisemitism in the country where they live decreased in the last five years (Figure 2, p. 19 of the report). Nine per cent say that it stayed the same. Eighty-nine per cent say that it increased. In this context, it makes little sense to try and make an artificial comparison between Central and Eastern Europe and Western Europe.

You cite the adoption or endorsements of IHRA definition of antisemitism as a positive development. But your Agency infamously deleted that definition from its website. Why? Why not include it now?

- The IHRA definition of antisemitism was adopted in May 2016 and it was never deleted from FRA's website.
- FRA notes that the EU coordinator on combating antisemitism stresses that the IHRA definition of antisemitism is a useful, non-legally binding, awareness raising tool. The European Parliament adopted a resolution on combating antisemitism in June 2017, calling "on the Member States and the Union institutions and agencies to adopt and apply the working definition". To date, 7 Member States have formally adopted the IHRA definition.
- FRA's work is, however, **rooted in EU law**, with the Framework Decision on Racism and Xenophobia the main point of reference in this context. The Framework Decision does not define antisemitism as such, which has led to Member States developing their own legal definitions and categorisations of what is antisemitism, according to their constitutional traditions. For that reason, FRA examines existing national practice with a view to identifying gaps in such practice, based on which it can provide assistance and expertise to the EU and its Member States in their fight against antisemitism. This is the case for the annual update on the situation of data collection on antisemitism in the EU.

Your survey notes a normalisation of antisemitism across the political sphere. So how realistic is it to expect any progress through policymaking?

- It is important to differentiate *policymaking* from *politics*. All EU Member States (except the UK, which opted out of it) are bound to fully transpose the Framework Decision on Racism and Xenophobia into national law, although they have not all done so yet. This Framework

Decision defines a common EU-wide criminal law approach to countering severe manifestations of racism or xenophobia, and therefore also antisemitism, including in “cases where the conduct is committed through an information system” (Article 9). Countering the normalisation of antisemitism in the **public** sphere would therefore require Member States to apply EU law in full, without equivocation. When the law is correctly transposed, states can develop policy measures to ensure that the law is applied on the ground.

Every year, you issue a report on the data available on antisemitism in the European Union. Every year, you call for better data collection and recording. Isn't that evidence that nothing is being done? Why isn't anything being done?

- It is not true that nothing is being done. The European Commission has convened Member States, international organisations, the FRA and civil society organisation together under a high level group to combat racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance.
- Under this high level group, FRA works closely with the European Commission, Member States, relevant international organisations¹ and civil society organisations to improve the recording of hate crime, including antisemitic hate crime. The impact of such work is not directly visible, as it involves the practical implementation of key guiding principles at the operational level by frontline police officers. This means that there is much behind-the-scenes capacity building work being done in the EU, which is not visible to the public.

Your survey asks about traditional religious practices such as circumcision. But in many countries there are those who opposed circumcision on children's rights grounds. Is that necessarily antisemitic? What is your view?

- It is beyond FRA's remit to determine whether any given incident is antisemitic or not. Such a determination needs to be done by the courts or any other relevant authority based on the relevant legal framework. Where proposals to ban any religious practices are concerned, it is FRA's opinion that: *Any legislative or administrative proposal that risks limiting the freedom to manifest one's religion or belief should embed fundamental rights considerations and respect for the principles of legality, necessity and proportionality.*

Who are the main perpetrators of antisemitic acts? If we know who they are, why can't we stop them?

- A great degree of variation exists among the perpetrators of antisemitic acts, within and between the countries surveyed. The findings show that the range of perpetrators spans the entire social and political spectrum. On average, the most frequently mentioned categories of perpetrators of the most serious incident of antisemitic harassment experienced by the respondents include: someone they did not know (31 %); someone with an extremist Muslim view (30 %); someone with a left-wing political view (21 %); a colleague from work or school/college (16 %); an acquaintance or friend (15 %); and someone with a right-wing political view (13 %).
- It can happen that perpetrators are anonymous, as is usually the case where Jewish religious sites are desecrated or where properties (presumably) owned by Jews are vandalised. In the great majority of cases, victims of antisemitism do not report incidents they experience to

¹ The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human rights (ODIHR) at the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) at the Council of Europe.

any public authority or community organisation. This means that incidents can be neither investigated nor prosecuted, with a great degree of impunity for perpetrators.

This report covers Jewish people's perceptions. But how close are the results to reality?

- What the report shows is the lived experience of Jewish people across the EU. The survey did not only cover perceptions of the prevalence of antisemitism. It also asked detailed questions about the experiences of antisemitic incidents, their frequency, the perpetrators, and their location. In that sense, the report shows the reality of what it is like to be Jewish in the EU today. The reality is frightening and demands urgent action from all components of society.

CORRECTION in the EMBARGO PDF COPY OF THE REPORT:

Figure 3 is now correct in the web-PDF. The text on p. 20 reads as follows:

- 'The survey also asked respondents whether they feel that racism and intolerance towards Muslims have increased or decreased during the past five years. The majority of respondents across the survey countries feel that these have increased (76 % and 72 %, respectively). The percentage of respondents indicating that intolerance towards Muslims has 'increased a lot' over the past five years is especially high in Hungary (76 %) and Poland (74 %) (Figure 3). Regarding racism, a large majority of respondents (around 80 %) in Sweden, Italy, Hungary, Poland, Austria, and the Netherlands indicate that this has increased 'a lot' or 'a little' over the past five years.'
- In the Figure 3, the MS level data are incorrect, the 12 country average is correct.

Background information

CNN survey

On 27 November 2018, CNN released under the title '[A Shadow Over Europe](#)', the results of its online general population survey on antisemitism based on a sample of 7,092 adults in seven EU MSs (AT, DE, FR, HU, PL, SE and UK).

Survey highlights:

- Four out of 10 respondents thought their own countries were between 3% and 10% Jewish. In fact, Israel is the only country in the world where more than 2% of the population is Jewish.
- The majority or near-majority in all MSs surveyed said they were not aware of ever having met a Jewish person.
- 40% said Jews were at risk of racist violence in their countries and half said their governments should do more to fight antisemitism -- substantial minorities blamed Israel or Jews themselves for antisemitism.
- One in five said Jews have too much influence in the media and the same number believe they have too much influence in politics.
- About one in 20 has never heard of the Holocaust and a third of respondents said they knew just a little or nothing at all about the Holocaust.
- In Austria 12% of young people said they had never heard of the Holocaust - Austria had the highest number of people (4 out of 10) in the survey saying they knew "just a little" about the Holocaust.
- More than a quarter of respondents (28%) said most antisemitism in their countries was a response to the actions of the state of Israel.
- Nearly one in five (18%) said antisemitism in their countries was a response to the everyday behaviour of Jewish people.
- 54% of respondents said that Israel has the right to exist as a Jewish state, with the figure rising to two-thirds in Poland.
- A third of survey respondents believe that criticism of Israel tends to be motivated by antisemitism, while only one in five said it does not.
- In all MSs surveyed except Hungary, significantly more people said they had a favourable opinion of Jews than an unfavourable one (In Hungary, favourable topped unfavourable 21% to 19%). Overall, 10% of Europeans admitted they had unfavourable views of Jews, 16% of LGBT+ people, 36% of immigrants, 37% of Muslims, and 39% of Roma.

Detailed data and report at: <http://www.comresglobal.com/polls/cnn-anti-semitism-in-europe-poll-2018/>

JPR new item

FRA antisemitism survey latest

Date 23 Nov 2018



The JPR team has completed its work on the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) survey of Jewish people's perceptions and experiences of antisemitism in thirteen EU Member States, and the FRA team in Vienna is now putting the final touches to the report on the survey, which is being prepared by them. The results, based on FRA analysis of the data, will be published by FRA in Brussels in December.

The study, the largest of its kind ever to take place in Europe, covers the Jewish populations of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden and the UK.

The JPR professional team, working in partnership with Ipsos MORI and with the support of its research associates from several of the countries involved in the study, conducted the survey with and for the FRA after winning the right to do so in a competitive tender process in 2017. Our work on the study included helping to develop and enhance the questionnaire, sampling, Jewish community liaison and engagement, data gathering, assessment and analysis. However, the report being released in December will be a FRA publication, based on data analysis conducted by the FRA's own social scientists. The FRA is the organisation associated with the European Union that is responsible for gathering data on hate crime, discrimination and racism across Europe to support policy development at both the European and national levels.

The study includes in-depth analysis of a range of issues, including how antisemitism manifests itself, people's experiences of antisemitic harassment, vandalism and violence, reporting levels and rights awareness. Data from the previous study, also published by FRA and conducted by JPR working in partnership with Ipsos MORI, have been essential in driving policy to combat antisemitism across Europe, and within individual Member States.