

## Steering brief

### Scene setter

You will be giving a keynote address in the Opening Plenary of the American Jewish Committee Global Forum on Sunday 11 June at 16.00.

Objectives: AJC Global Forum is the annual flagship event and policy forum of the association, gathering international leaders from countries across the globe. This year, it will mainly focus on: Fighting the global resurgence of antisemitism; Strengthening Israel's growing relations in the Middle East and the Abraham Accords; Deepening relations between American Jews and Israelis; Defending democratic values.

Participation: It will bring an audience of thousands of viewers from civil society, government and communal institutions.

On 12 June, special envoys on combating antisemitism (including EC Coordinator) will receive the David Harris Award.

### ***American Jewish Committee Global Forum 2023***

The AJC Global Forum is the **annual flagship event** and policy forum of the association, gathering international leaders from countries across the globe. It will bring an audience of thousands of viewers from civil society, government and communal institutions. The AJC is a bi-partisan Jewish organisation. President von der Leyen has sent a recorded video message to AJC Global Forum in June 2021.

The AJC has a strong engagement with Europe, dating to 1948 as the first American Jewish organization to establish a presence in Germany. AJC was a strong supporter of the EU project and the NATO alliance. Today in Europe, they have regional offices in Germany, Paris, Brussels, Warsaw and representatives in Prague, Rome, and Sofia.

AJC's actions went from an early stage beyond the US. It supported through the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee Jewish victims of World War II. AJC helped to pave the way towards improving Jewish-Christian relations leading to the publication of *Nostra aetate* in 1965. AJC was the first American Jewish organization to open a permanent office in Israel, and since then played a role in supporting Israel. AJC also supported Soviet Jews to gain emigration rights.

On 25 May 2023, President Biden announced the release of the first US National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism. The **US National Strategy** follows an increase in antisemitic attacks, as shown in AJC Report "State of Antisemitism in America Report 2022". This survey of American Jews found 41% of Jewish respondents consider the status of Jews in the U.S. less secure than a year ago, up from 31% in 2021. Nine in 10 of both American Jews (89%) and the U.S. general public (91%) agree antisemitism affects American society as a whole. At the same time, however, 48% of Jews and 34% of the general population believe antisemitism is taken less seriously than other forms of hate and bigotry.

## **Key messages**

### ***[EU-US-IL cooperation on fighting AS]***

- Warmly welcome the adoption of the US National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism. This is a historic opportunity to step up our trilateral EU-US-IL cooperation and global joint efforts to put an end to antisemitism, to promote Holocaust remembrance and foster Jewish life worldwide.
  - Combating antisemitism is not the responsibility of the Jews, it is the responsibility of all of us. Antisemitism is a threat to European and American societies. It is toxic to our democracy, to our values and our European way of life. We share and are bound by these key values across the Atlantic, and across the Mediterranean with Israel.
  - The EU Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life, adopted in 2021 has a strong external dimension.
  - The US and Israel are key partners in the global fight against antisemitism, including in international fora.
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### ***[EU Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life]***

- The EU Strategy is the most ambitious EU-led effort to combat antisemitism. Among 70 of its almost 100 initiatives have been put in motion.
- The EU Strategy aims at bringing an end to antisemitism. And while we are not naïve and fully aware of the enormity of this task, we are determined and convinced that we do not have the luxury of blind spots of antisemitism.
- That's why the work of the EU in the fight against antisemitism is firmly rooted in the IHRA definition of antisemitism. With its examples it helps to detect the various contemporary forms of antisemitic bias.
- At the European Commission we regard all forms of antisemitism as equally pernicious.
- In the strategy we address the big challenge of our times: (1) online antisemitism, (2) Holocaust remembrance and (3) teaching future generation about Jewish life and history.

***[Combating online antisemitism]***

- The internet needs to be under control. Hate speech online is a threat to our democracy.
- Holocaust denial and distortion are on the rise online, especially since the military invasion of Ukraine by Russia, fueling antisemitism and hatred.
- With the **Digital Service Act**, we are strengthening our legislation to counter hate speech online. We impose clear and harmonized obligations for online platforms. We have increased the accountability of these platforms and ultimately, will render the internet a safer place for all users.
- As part of the EU Strategy, we will build a Europe-wide Network of trusted flaggers and fact checkers, to identify and report antisemitism hate speech, and develop counter narratives.

***[Holocaust remembrance]***

- 75 years after the end of the Shoah, the last Holocaust survivors, who have been recalling their first-hand story again and again, are leaving us. We need to find new ways of remembrance.
- It is Europe's long-term commitment and responsibility to ensure that the memory of the victims of the Shoah will continue. To do so, we have created a Network of Young European Ambassadors to promote Holocaust remembrance. They will work in the physical and digital sphere.
- Another flagship action of our Strategy is the creation of a **Network of Sites** "Where the Holocaust Happened", such as hiding places, deportation places and killing sites all over Europe. This network will be a game-changer in the Europe remembrance landscape. It is essential to show that the Shoah happened locally. People had a choice and a duty to act back then as their neighbours disappeared. We today have a choice and duty to act today in the face of rising antisemitism.

***[Education. Teaching future generations about Jewish life and history]***

- Teaching and education is at the core of the EU Strategy.
- We want to raise awareness on Jewish life among the general public. Only 3% of Europeans say they are well informed about antisemitism.
- We will link mainstream EU policy with education about Jewish life. For example, the EU committed to plant 3 billion trees by 2030. While it might be a challenge to plant a tree in some European countries in January, we will make sure EU citizens learn about **Tu B'Shvat**, the Jewish New Year of the trees, and the importance of environment in Judaism.

***[Contribution of AJC – examples successful cooperation]***

- We continue to closely work together with the AJC and join force on education about Jewish life and history, and on making sure all EU Member States include education about the Holocaust and Jewish life in their school curricula, as part of their national strategy on combating antisemitism.
- Education is the best tool we have to counter prejudices and hatred.

***[Significance of the AJC GF taking place in TA, 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary IL]***

- Commend the work done by AJC, since its creation. You were the first American Jewish organization to open an office in Israel and paved the way for the support to the Jewish State.
- This Global Forum taking place in Tel Aviv is a momentum, as Israel is turning and celebrating three quarters of century (75 years) this year.

- We shall reflect about how much has been achieved, how much Israelis have developed this country and build a nation federating Jews from all over the world. I am so impressed when I compare Tel Aviv 75 years ago, to the “White city” that “never sleeps” it has become today.

***[Democracies are challenged]***

- The EU shares common concerns with Israel today, as our democracies are challenged.
- Our democracy cannot be taken for granted. It is our duty to protect them and ensure the rule of law, democracy, freedom and fundamental rights are upheld.

***[IL a trusted EU partner]***

- The State of Israel is a key partner of the EU. We share the values of an open, democratic and a rule-of-law based society: these values will continue to underpin our relations.

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- But we can grow our cooperation even stronger – on research, education, transport, energy, as well as on security.
- We face many common challenges: stability in the region, war in Ukraine and its impacts across the world, climate change. Democracies need to work together to tackle these challenges.

[REDACTED]

- The EU and Israel also have outstanding **cooperation in research** and innovation. The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) has only two hubs outside of the EU under its Global Outreach programme: one in the Silicon Valley, and the second in Tel Aviv.

***[Importance Abraham Accords, EU's support for trilateral projects]***

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- We EU stands ready to continue to work with Israel towards a more stable and prosperous Middle East, including reviving the MEPP and by building on the normalisation agreements.
- The **Abraham Accords** have fostered unprecedented cooperation between Israel and our Arab partners. The normalisation of relations between Israel and a number of Arab countries is a fundamental development for regional peace and stability.
- Tel Aviv and Dubai are the two most dynamic cities in the Middle East. The EU is supporting the positive developments made possible through the Abraham Accords and is pleased to see these trade and technology hubs coming together since two years.

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- But concrete work is already ongoing. For instance, we are heavily engaged with Israel and Morocco for trilateral projects in the field of water.
- We see the process as a fundamental step for regional stability. In this sense, we believe that the normalisation process can have a positive impact on the Middle East Peace Process. We are particularly supportive of projects that leave an open door to the participation of Palestinians and can benefit them, among others.

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**[Conclusion]**

- Ladies and Gentlemen,
- We will join forces and work together towards a European Union and a United States of America free from antisemitism and any form of intolerance and discrimination.
- Israel is today one of the most European countries outside of Europe. A true friend, a real partner, an ally on major issues ranging from AI and technology to climate change, and last but not least a key partner in the fight against antisemitism.
- Europe thrives in its diversity. Europe thrives when its Jewish community and other minorities thrive in it.

**Agenda**

**SUNDAY, JUNE 11**

- 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM : Opening Plenary
- 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM : Welcome Dinner

**MONDAY, JUNE 12**

- 10:00 AM - 11:15 AM: Breakout Sessions
- 12:30 PM - 2:30 PM: Advocacy in Action Lunches
- 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM: Monday Afternoon Plenary

**TUESDAY, JUNE 13**

- 7:15 AM - 4:00 PM: AJC Global Forum Excursions

**List of Confirmed High-Level Participants**

- H.E. Margaritis Schinas, Vice President, European Commission (Confirmed)
- H.E. Karoline Edtstadler, Federal Minister for the EU and Constitution at the Federal Chancellery of Austria (Confirmed)
- H.E. Ingrida Šimonytė, Prime Minister of Lithuania (Confirmed)
- H.E. Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister of Israel (TBC)
- H.E. Isaac Herzog, President of Israel (TBC)
- H.E. Yair Lapid, Leader of the Israeli Opposition (Confirmed)
- H.E. Amichai Chikli, Israeli Minister of Diaspora Affairs (Confirmed)

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- H.E. Luis Lacalle Pou, President of Uruguay (Confirmed – via video)
- International Antisemitism Envoys (Confirmed)

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