



antisemitismus
meldestelle

Antisemitic cases 2021 in Austria

ISRAELITISCHE KULTUSGEMEINDE WIEN



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1. Foreword

965 antisemitic incidents in 365 days



Oskar Deutsch
President of the Jewish
Community of Vienna (IKG)

You may find this annual report from the IKG's Reporting Office for Antisemitism disturbing. In the calendar year 2021, 965 antisemitic incidents were recorded – that's an average of over 18 per week; an increase of 65 per cent since 2020.

However, anyone who is seriously interested in the subject of antisemitism should not be alarmed by the headline figures but should read this year's annual report. In it, the team led by Secretary General Benjamin Nägele gives a useful insight into the daily work of the Reporting Office, the IKG and its institutions such as the ESRA Psychosocial Centre.

We have to remember that the report only deals with antisemitism that is reported. The fight against the “rumour about the Jews”, as Theodor Adorno defined antisemitism, has to be fought on many different levels: by the IKG's security department, the police and the army to protect life, and by educational and cultural initiatives, so that the prejudices don't arise in the first place. Even though fighting this battle is not, after all, the primary purpose of our community, it has to be an inevitable part of life for us, because “never again” means our survival.

Do you stand up if someone in the office or online or in the football stadium is chanting antisemitic slogans? As we all know, words always come before deeds. Let's not wait. Don't you wait.

Negative record is a wake-up call to us all – including you!



Benjamin Nägele
Secretary General of the IKG

In 2021, the Jewish community faced an unprecedented number of reports of abuse, harassment and other psychological and physical Assaults. Never since records began have so many people, including non-Jews, been affected by anti-Jewish agitation – and of course the number of unreported cases must be far higher. Because of the dramatic increase in incidents in certain categories, we have even had to change our approach, and, in cases where there are several antisemitic postings on the same subject, we only enter them in the statistics as one incident.

The role of the IKG's Reporting Office for Antisemitism is vital here: it makes antisemitism visible, complete with all the ugly details. However, it also has another, far more important function: it serves as a professional, confidential point of contact for anyone who is affected by antisemitism or has witnessed it. The experts at the Reporting Office record these incidents, offer professional support to the people reporting them and work closely with the IKG's other institutions. ESRA, the IKG's Psychosocial Centre, plays a key role in supporting both Jewish and non-Jewish people who have been affected by antisemitism.

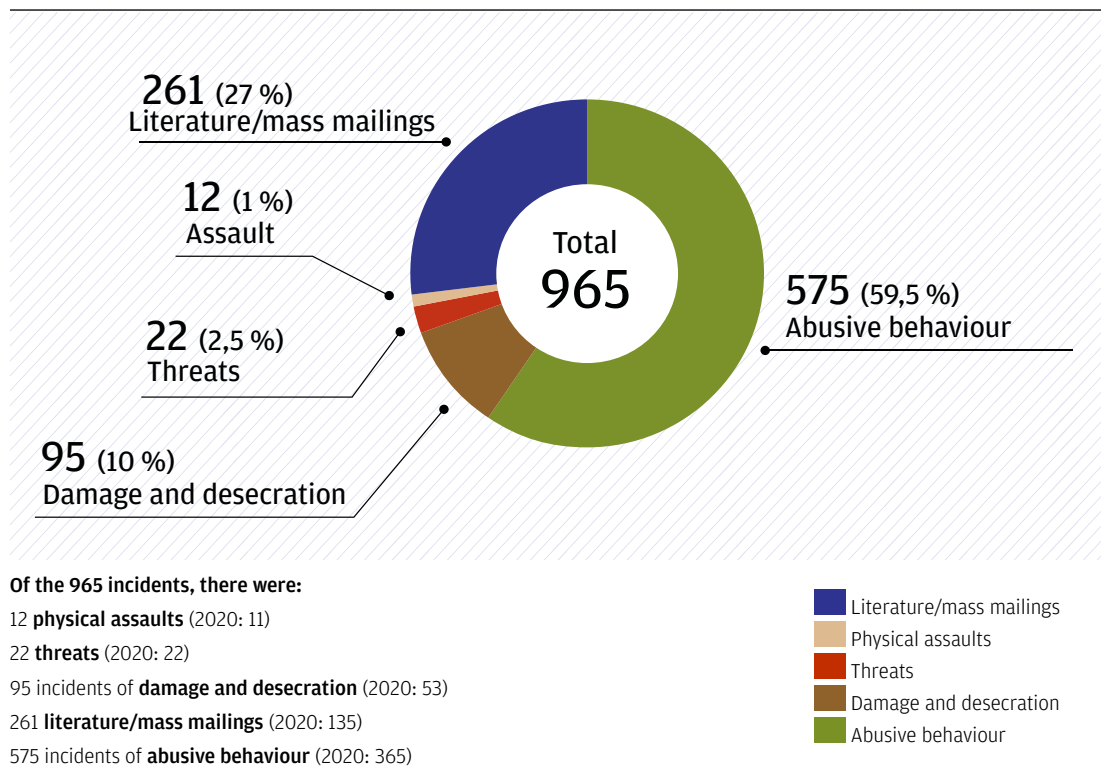
Help us to make antisemitism visible by reporting it and showing civil courage, in your own lives and in public.

2. Summary

During the 2021 calendar year, a total of 965 antisemitic incidents were reported to the Reporting Office for Antisemitism of the Jewish Community of Vienna (IKG). That represents an increase of 65 per cent over the previous year (585 incidents) and therefore the highest number of recorded antisemitic incidents since documenting of them began, 20 years ago.

This report does not constitute a complete overview of antisemitism in Austria. As in previous years, it must be assumed that there is a larger number of unrecorded incidents. The report counts only those antisemitic incidents which were reported and which, following evaluation by the experts at the Reporting Office for Antisemitism, were found to be clearly antisemitic under the [IHRA definition](#).

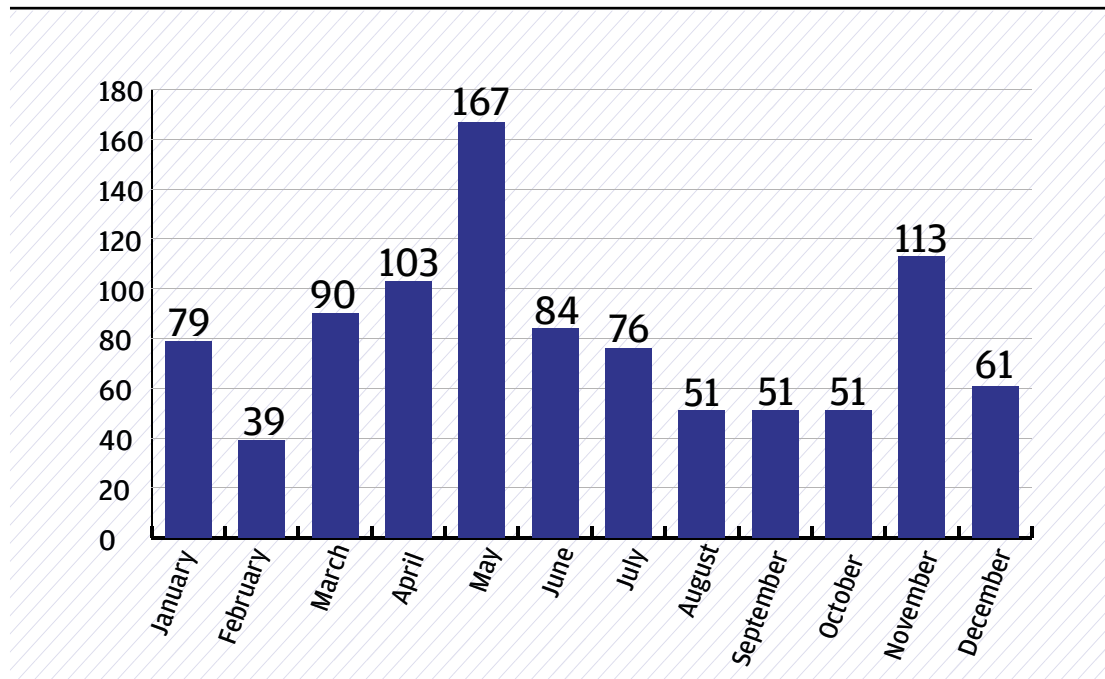
Antisemitic incidents



To enable international comparisons, the categorisation of the recorded antisemitic incidents is based on the system used in Germany and the United Kingdom (see the section on "[Categorisation](#)," page 10 onwards).

The dramatic rise in reported incidents during the first half-year was followed by a fall over the summer. However, in the autumn the atmosphere deteriorated once again.

Antisemitic incidents 2008 – 2021

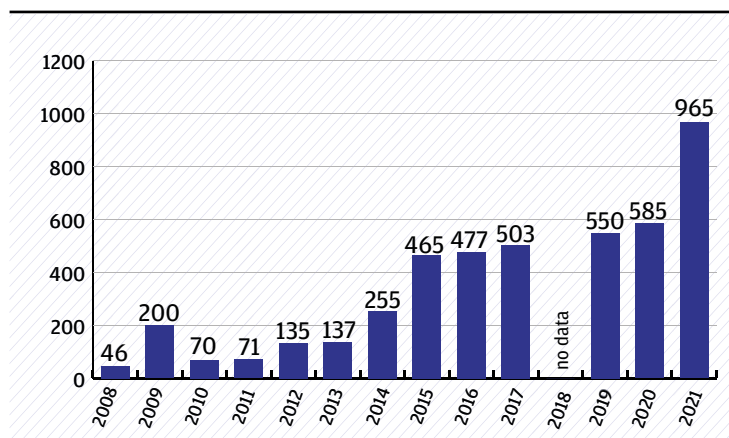


The negative record number of incidents in May (167) was mainly due to the military escalation between Palestinian terrorist organisations in Gaza and the State of Israel and to extremist far-right activity connected with the pandemic that had been increasing since the end of 2020. The second-highest number of reported antisemitic incidents last year was 113, recorded in November; these occurred mainly in the context of new measures to prevent coronavirus and the announcement of vaccine mandates at that time.

Most of the reported antisemitic incidents took place on **social media networks** (386); the number of incidents reported on the basis of **personal perception** was 292. 131 incidents were recorded in the online environment. However, it must be emphasized that in discussion forums or on social media threads there can often be several antisemitic comments – sometimes dozens – but they are only recorded as one incident.

Emails with antisemitic content were reported 99 times. There were 52 cases of antisemitism in the form of **letters**. The statistics include 3 incidents of antisemitic **phone calls** and 2 **newspaper articles**.

2021: Total 965 cases



Changes in the number of reports

3. Commentary

It comes as little surprise that the year 2021 was once again dominated by the coronavirus pandemic; however, the weeks surrounding the renewed escalation in violence between Palestinian terrorist organisations in Gaza and the State of Israel in May brought a massive increase in Israel-related antisemitism which was far more intense than anything seen in previous decades.

3. 1. Dramatic consequences of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict

Over the last two decades, Jewish communities around the world have become targets for localised hatred of Jews during regularly recurring escalations in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. It is nothing new for Israel-related antisemitism in all its forms to be constantly bubbling beneath the surface and seeking an outlet for stored-up resentment that is often directed at Jews, Jewish organisations and supporters of Jewish communities. However, the force with which this happened in spring 2021 left even Austria's resilient Jewish community shocked. There were almost daily reports of cases where people became the target for abuse, threats and physical assaults. Mostly, those affected were recognisably Jewish – mainly because of their clothing or symbols that are Jewish or believed to be Jewish; nevertheless, it is precisely in this group of victims that we observe some reluctance to report or prosecute incidents. It must therefore be assumed that there is a significantly higher number of unreported cases. We should also point out that this time there was a strikingly high incidence of antisemitic hostility directed at children, sometimes even including physical assaults (whether the children were alone, in groups or accompanied by adults; see examples).

The direct nature of many of the incidents is also apparent in the categorisation by ideological background, with the majority of physical assaults and threats being carried out by perpetrators from a Muslim background.

Although most of these assaults were carried out by individuals in ad hoc situations, the current climate – in which we are seeing organised anti-Israeli events – is characterised by a particularly aggressive, demonising and, in some cases, crude form of antisemitism. Apart from slogans depicting eliminatory antisemitism and the [relativisation of Shoah by the participants](#), the organisers – who come mainly from an extreme left, anti-imperialist background – stood out for their radical statements; in addition to the examples already listed in the half-yearly report, there continued to be yet more openly antisemitic statements made by members of so-called “Palestine Solidarity Austria” – an alliance of several groups, some of which overlap in their organisation and membership, whose leaders come from the antisemitic BDS movement (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions against Israel). [Here](#) a leading member of this alliance engages in wild conspiracy theories about Israel; a [sympathiser](#) expounds on the poisoning fantasies of his [father](#), which the latter had set out in an earlier public statement.

These activists from the anti-imperialist camp are – following in the tradition of the Querfront or Third Way ideology, that transcends conventional political alignments – also involved in protests against coronavirus measures and therefore find themselves not only ideologically but also sometimes physically [side by side](#) with right-wing extremists.

3. 2. Another year dominated by the pandemic

The trends that were observed during the first half of the year continued: every tightening of the coronavirus measures due to rising infections and hospitalisations was followed by a marked increase in coronavirus-related antisemitism. This is what happened in the months from March to May (when the vaccination campaign began in Austria) and, above all, in the autumn. The month of November in particular put all previous months in the shade. The renewed lockdown and the announcement of plans to make vaccination compulsory were key factors here.

The reported themes were deliberately using set pieces from the context of National Socialism. The “Jewish badges” that were introduced in 2020 and variations on the theme of [“Vaccination sets you free”](#) were joined by other elements from the Nazi persecution of Jews. Serving politicians were compared with Nazi mass murderers (e.g. Health Minister Wolfgang Mückstein as Josef Mengele), the restrictions on unvaccinated people and the coronavirus testing for admission to events were compared with the fate of Jews who were persecuted by the Nazi regime, for example vaccination certificates were equated to Nazi identity cards for Jews.

The way in which the priorities for these campaigns shifted over the course of the year can be clearly seen in the statistics for the various sub-categories over the year: whereas the start of the vaccination campaign in which an innovative new vaccine was used – with Israel being much praised in the media as a pioneer in vaccination – lent itself particularly well to anti-semitic conspiracy theories, by contrast towards the end of the year – following the announcement of compulsory vaccination in Austria – the focus shifted to widespread comparisons equating the current measures with the persecution of Jews under National Socialism. There was virtually no limit to the “creativity” and diversity of the themes used, as can be seen from some of the examples in this report and the one from the first half-year.

These comparisons which attempt to relativise Shoah and are completely absurd in their subject-matter are not only deeply offensive to survivors of Nazi crimes and their descendants; we also believe that there could be a risk of people becoming desensitised to those crimes, something which would jeopardise decades of achievements in terms of commemorative work. That is certainly the aim of people coming from an extreme right-wing or neo-Nazi background. Their malicious efforts in this direction are also, in effect, part of the self-exoneration that has been practised since the Second World War and is a key element of secondary antisemitism.

A probably not insignificant proportion of the people who adopt and replicate this antisemitic symbolism often do so unthinkingly, and not infrequently without any malicious intent; nevertheless, they are being cleverly misused to serve the purposes of strategically acting activists with a radical background. They understand only too well how to channel legitimate anxieties, concerns, frustrations and emotions in general. The use of a regularly adapted propaganda strategy that harks back specifically to the ideology of National Socialism – so deeply polarising and emotive in itself – further fans the emotional flames.

As in 2020, in this year once again the same known characters from the world of organised neo-Nazism and right-wing extremism stood out when it came to organising demonstrations; they and their gangs of thugs from the football hooligan scene were on the front line when it came to skirmishes with the forces of law and order. It is because these right-wing radicals actively seek out confrontation and violence that IKG Vienna was prompted on more than one

occasion to send out safety advice to its members, as happened, for example, in the run-up to the anti-Israeli demonstrations in May.

The fact that, over the course of the last 18 months, right-wing extremism in Austria has been largely associated with coronavirus protests should not divert attention from the fact that the movement continues to be potentially very dangerous in other ways as well. For example, it should be noted that in the last 18 months several weapons stores specifically attributed to neo-Nazi groups were discovered, with investigations reaching as far as Germany.

According to the Ministry of the Interior, the number of criminal offences by right-wing extremists rose sharply in 2021. It recorded 1,053 offences connected with right-wing extremism, while in 2020 there were 895. Of those 1,053 criminal offences, 816 were explicitly carried out in the name of right-wing extremism (2020: 697), 66 were racist (2020: 104), 52 were antisemitic (2020: 36) and nine were anti-Muslim offences (2020: 16). These totals must be seen in relation to the relatively small proportion of Jewish people in the overall population (12,000 – 15,000 people).

The most recent crime statistics for the year 2021 also confirm a growing trend towards radicalisation; whereas in 2019, there were 1,388 prosecutions under the [“Verbotsgesetz” \(Prohibition Act\)](#), in 2021 that figure jumped to 1,671. The statistics also note the connection with the pandemic and the “close links between opponents of coronavirus measures and old- and new-style right-wing extremists.”

It is worth mentioning here a plan to introduce antisemitism training for all police officers in Austria which was launched in November 2021 by the then Minister for the Interior, now Federal Chancellor Karl Nehammer, IKG President Oskar Deutsch and education expert Daniel Landau. The first successful training courses have already taken place in several federal states, including Vienna and Salzburg, and included [LIKRA](#)T encounters.

A further welcome development is that the Austrian judicial system is now also taking action against a deeply offensive form of Shoah relativisation, namely the use of so-called “Jewish badges” in connection with the coronavirus pandemic. In March in Vienna, for the first time two men were given conditional custodial sentences for gross trivialisation of the Nazi genocide and other Nazi crimes against humanity.

The IHRA definition, which is of crucial importance in the fight against antisemitism, was adopted by more organisations, principally in the popular sport of football – which often has problems with right-wing extremism and antisemitism among its fans: the Austrian Football Federation, the Austrian Bundesliga and FK Austria Wien have all endorsed this working definition. It is to be hoped that other associations and institutions with a wide impact will follow their example.

Around the world, in 2021 the definition was adopted by more than [200 institutions](#).

One promising development is the recent adoption by the EU Council of its [“Conclusions on Combating Racism and Antisemitism”](#), which explicitly highlight antisemitism and distinguish it from other forms of racism.

Specific requirements are imposed on member states. The “actions plans and strategies” which are due to be published by the end of 2022 will require them not only to promote “education and training” and combat “illegal online hate speech” but also to promote the “reporting and investigation” of hate crimes, or rather to

“encourage victims and witnesses of racist and antisemitic incidents to report those incidents, to ensure such reports are investigated and to offer assistance, including psychological, social and material support where necessary”.

Furthermore, this is followed by a call for „member states to ensure national coordinators, public bodies, social partners and civil society organisations work closely together to develop preventive measures and evaluate their effectiveness.” To this end, “the Council invites the Commission to support, including financially, member states, public bodies and institutions, local authorities and civil society organisations in the fight against racism and antisemitism”.

3. 3. High volume of reports – a big challenge

Overall, the staff at the Reporting Office for Antisemitism of the Jewish Community of Vienna (IKG) faced an absolute torrent of reports in 2021, both via the report form and through mentions or direct messages on social media. A more than usually high number related to online material and social media. It is important to note the following:

- The Reporting Office does not, by definition, actively search for antisemitic content but relies on victims, witnesses and the general public for this purpose.
- It also only considers cases relating to Austria; reports relating to other countries (and due to the common language this is mostly Germany) are forwarded to the relevant offices (in the case of Germany to RIAS).
- Of course, not all reported cases are automatically categorised as antisemitic. Whereas in 2020, the number of such cases was in the low hundreds, during 2021 it literally exploded to many times that number. This was particularly true of conspiracy theories and Israel-related antisemitism. Just as not every conspiracy theory is categorised as antisemitic, not every invective against the State of Israel is antisemitic, however insulting it may be. The IHRA definition is always used as the benchmark.
- Due to the explosion of antisemitic posts in relevant groups, some of which have very large numbers of members (for example on Telegram, Facebook), the same material is often reported several times; using the same counting method that applies to antisemitic postings in on-line forums (where even dozens of antisemitic comments are combined into one), here too, each topic is only counted as one incident.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our thanks specifically to those **journalists and members of civil society** (whose information we circulate as often as possible on social media and link to in our reports) who frequently put themselves at enormous risk in order to document events at demonstrations and whose work is reflected in many of the reported incidents. In 2021, even more than in 2020, they were deliberately threatened by neo-Nazis and right-wing extremists and often even attacked.

4. Categorisation of antisemitic incidents and examples

An important element of the recording, analysis and distribution of data relating to antisemitism is the categorisation of antisemitic incidents. For two decades, various EU institutions have highlighted the lack of comparability at international level as a significant problem in the fight against antisemitism and they have consistently sought standardisation.

To that end, guidelines have been published on the categorisation of antisemitic incidents. These were themselves greatly influenced by the CST, which has special experience in this field.¹ The recommendation is that its categories and terminology should be adopted “as far as possible”

At present, the recommendations have only been adopted and translated by the “Antisemitism Observatory” in Italy² (with slight amendments) and RIAS, based in Germany; the latter organisation has been using them in its antisemitism work for the last seven years. The IKG Reporting Office for Antisemitism works particularly closely with RIAS. A further strengthening of the international cooperation is in the works.

Adopting the categories and terminology of the EUMC Guidelines for antisemitism work in Austria in 2019 marked another step forward in international efforts to combat antisemitism.

The following section explains the categories and clarifies them, using examples from the past year. For further details about the methodology employed by the Reporting Office for Antisemitism and the international context, please see the relevant section (from page 18 onwards).

Note: The half-yearly report for 2021, from page 4 onwards, includes several examples from the first six months of last year that mainly reflect the extraordinarily turbulent events associated with Israel-related antisemitism around the month of May.

4. 1. Assault

Any form of physical assault on people or buildings, with or without weapons. Even a failed attempt at an assault (be that because the victim defends himself or was able to flee) is also included in this category. The same applies when objects are thrown at people, even if they miss their target.

(The EUMC Guidelines, CST and RIAS also recognise a category called “Extreme Violence” as an aggravated form. We do not see the need to differentiate between the latter and “assaults” in Austria. See also the section on “Antisemitism work on an international level”)

June: A group of people who were recognisable as Jewish from their clothing (mainly women and children) were crossing the Salztor Bridge in Vienna when a man and a woman walked past them. One of the children was walking behind his mother when he suddenly cried out; the man had pushed the boy violently and, when his mother looked at the man, he cast her a look described as “hate-filled” and walked on with his wife.

July: A father and son – both recognisable as Jewish from their clothing and their side-curls – were walking in Vienna’s 2nd District when an older man came towards them. He walked straight up to the nine-year-old child, jostled him forcefully and knocked his hat from his head. The father and son continued as if nothing had happened. A female

1 EUMC – Manifestations of Antisemitism in the EU 2002 – 2003, p. 343

2 Antisemitism Report Italy 2021, p. 30

witness went up to them and asked the boy if everything was OK, causing the older man to swear at her rudely. Then he disappeared into a side street.

October: Six young men aged between about 16 and 25 were throwing stones and other objects from a house across the road towards a synagogue in Vienna's 20th District during a service, while shouting "Allahu Akhbar!" The police were called and when they arrived the perpetrators tried to run away; an IKG security guard managed to stop one of the offenders escaping and the police took him away.

4. 2. Threat

An explicitly formulated threat of physical violence against individuals or institutions that are Jewish or perceived to be Jewish; the threat is specific and may be either written or verbal.

Bomb threats and fake bombs targeting Jewish institutions are also categorised as threats.

July: At the start of the summer holidays, a group of children from a Jewish school (all recognisable as Jewish from their clothing) went to the Motorikpark theme park in Vienna's 22nd District. Also there, among others, was another group consisting of more than a dozen 13- to 14-year-old male teenagers. They shouted "Free Palestine!" at the children very loudly. One of the teenagers brought a Turkish flag out of his bag and waved it in front of the Jewish schoolchildren a few times. To avoid the threatening situation, the supervisors of the Jewish group took them to a different part of the park. On their way back, at the Kagranerplatz, the same group met two young men with a Middle Eastern appearance who also shouted "Free Palestine!" at the children as they walked past.

October: A man who was recognisable as Jewish from his clothing was walking in Vienna's 2nd District when a passer-by on the other side of the road shouted out to him in a foreign accent: "Shit Jew, I'd stab the lot of you, you dogs!" He followed the Jewish man for a minute longer and then disappeared into a house. The incident was reported by a witness who is also Jewish.

November: A man who was recognisable as Jewish from his kippah was leaving his apartment in Vienna's 2nd District one evening to go to the synagogue when he found three young men and two young women aged between 16 and 18 in the hallway of the building (which was freely accessible because of a faulty lock). They were eating fast food in takeaway boxes and talking in Serbian. As he walked by, the Jewish man greeted the young people and asked them whether they lived in the building. When the resident of the house returned a short time later with two members of his family, they found remnants of the young people's food and takeaway boxes strewn over the floor and graffiti in the entrance hall: "Burn all Jews!!!", accompanied by a swastika. The police were informed.

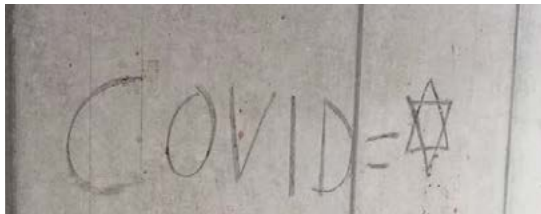
December: Two sisters were talking in Hebrew in a supermarket in Vienna's 2nd District when a man shouted something at them in Arabic. They ignored him at first but soon afterwards they met him again; he stared at them with wide eyes, made a gesture with his hand as if to slash their throats and said: "We will kill all Jewish people!" The two women moved away quickly.

4. 3. Damage and desecration

Non-life-threatening assault on an object. Damage and desecration also includes graffiti and the application of stickers and posters.

Note: Unlike CST and RIAS, we include in this category not only material damage directed at objects which are in Jewish ownership, are perceived as such or could be associated with Judaism, Israel or Shoah, but also damage that does not meet those criteria (e.g. stars of David and antisemitic abuse on election posters).

October: Antisemitic graffiti in Lower Austria



October: Antisemitic graffiti in Vienna



November: Antisemitic graffiti in Vienna



November: On 9 November (the anniversary of the November Pogroms in 1938), the following graffiti was found in Vienna's 16th District



November: Graffiti saying "Yahodi" (Jahudi = Turkish/Arabic, a derogatory word for "Jew") with an inverted swastika in Vienna's 20th District.



4. 4. Abusive behaviour

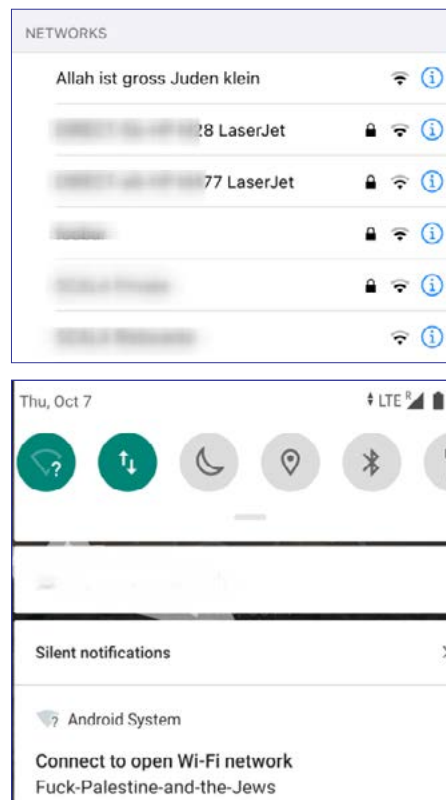
Antisemitic abuse, expressions, comments and messages; these may be expressed verbally (face-to-face, by phone) or in writing (letter, email, online media, other digital communication channels) and are directed at a specific person or institution.

Note: To avoid distorting the statistics, in the case of antisemitic postings online, all comments on one posting (messages or social media) are combined into one incident. In some cases, a discussion forum or social media thread may include several dozen antisemitic comments.

July: The person making the report was waiting for someone beside the recently renamed Marko Feingold footbridge in Salzburg when an older man walked past her and asked what she thought of the new “Jews’ bridge” and whether “the Jews are taking over again now”. He concluded by saying “Heil Hitler”. She reported the incident to the police but they told her that they could not do anything in this case.

August: A school group that was recognisable as Jewish from the children’s clothing was travelling on the underground in Vienna, Line U1, when a man immediately in front of the group raised his arm in the Hitler salute, twice. One of the people accompanying the group immediately moved the children away from the man, took his photograph, contacted the police and collected telephone numbers from witnesses who were present. This caused the offender to leave the train at the next station.

October + November: In Vienna’s 9th District, two Wi-Fi networks were reported where the users had changed the names of the networks to “Allah is great, Jews are small” and “Fuck Palestine and the Jews” respectively.



4. 5. Literature/mass mailings

This refers to written antisemitic material sent to at least two addressees and usually targeting a large group of recipients. It includes publications (online and offline, e.g. newspapers, magazines, blogs), documents sent to multiple recipients (letters, emails) and the social media platforms which are rapidly replacing the latter two.

November: On 9 November (the anniversary of the November Pogroms) the following letter was sent to several recipients.

Von: @msn.com>
Gesendet: Dienstag, November 9, 2021 7:14 PM

Betreff: WG: Wegen Corona.

Hallo.
Wie das jetzt mit dem Virus?
Wo kommt der jetzt her?
Was glaubt die **Kosher Nostra**?
Ihr seid alle **Brunnenvergifter** oder?

Die Inflation ist ganz schön gestiegen im Euro Raum nicht wahr?
Da habt ihr ein wenig zu viel Geld gedruckt oder?
Na ja Dragi ist Italiener die hatten auch nie ein stabiles Geld..

Das sieht ganz so aus als wird der Euro benutzt um eine **neue Weltordnung** herzustellen..
An diesen Tag wurde ja auch die Wahl in Graz nach vor verlegt..
Na ja Nagl ist schon weg..
Kurz auch..

Dann wird das mit dem Euro wahrscheinlich schief gehen oder?

In Weißrussland lässt ihr **Flüchtlinge einfliegen**?
Ich würde nicht immer auf die **Kosher Nostra** hören..
Polen liegt ja zwischen Ostdeutschland und Weißrussland..
In Ostdeutschland ist die Stasibande nicht wahr?
Das wird dann wohl eine **Co-Produktion** sein oder?

Die **Sozialistische Zionistische Internationale** richtet in der Euro Zone zum Bürgerkrieg **zusammen**..
Die müssen alles und jeden verraten und verkaufen.
Das ist eben so beim Judas...

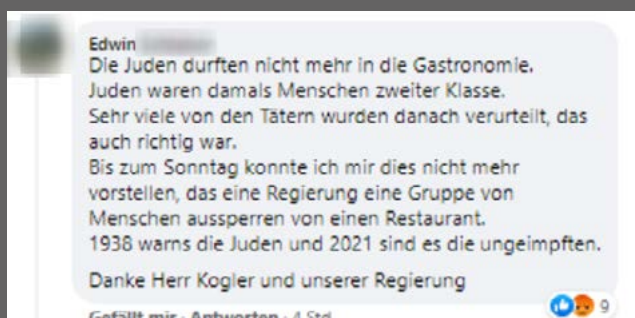
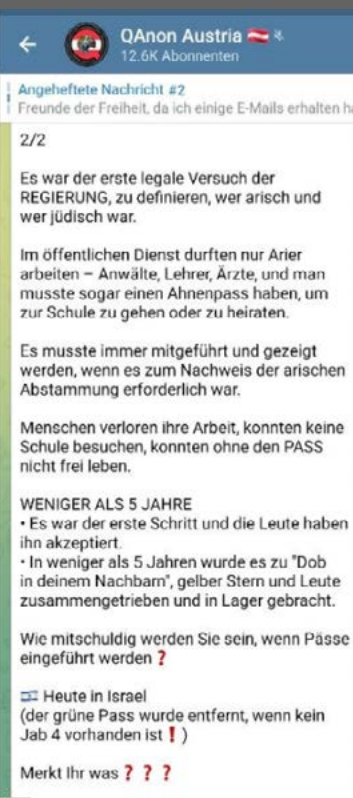
Deswegen haben die **Israels** auch so eine gute **Schnüffel-Software**..
Immer Schöffeln und Schnuppern...

Die Rothschild Währung ist nicht gut für Europa..
Wenn der Euro weg ist wird's mit Corona auch besser.

4. 5. 1. Case study: Coronavirus-related antisemitism.

Following on from the equivalent section in last year's annual report and to demonstrate how this form of antisemitism can adapt itself very quickly, as mentioned above and reflected in the statistics, here are some examples:



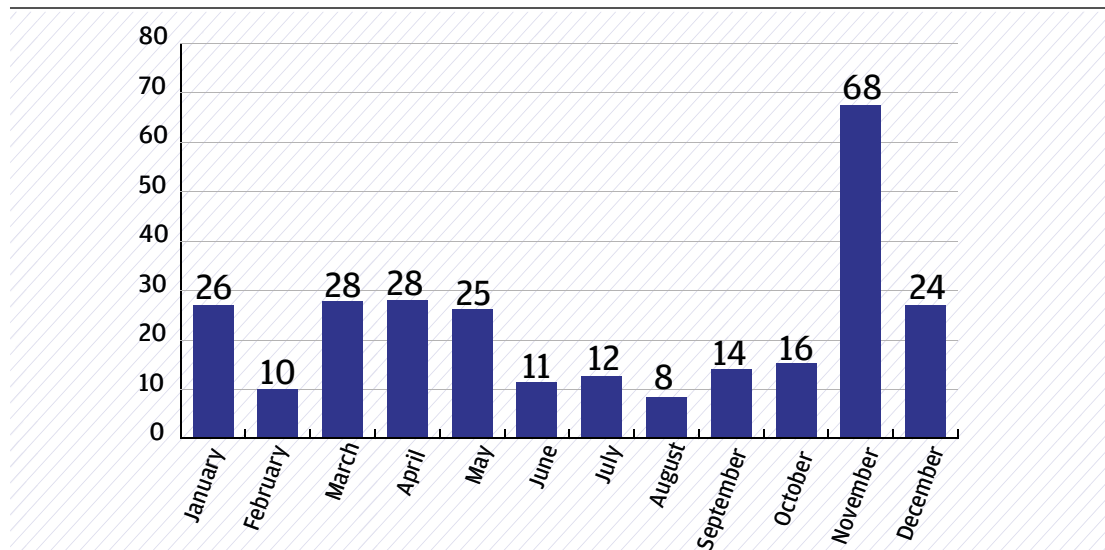


5. Sub-categories

In addition to the main categories, the Reporting Office for Antisemitism also collects other data. We believe that the following analysis of sub-categories is particularly interesting and meaningful.

5.1. Coronavirus-related antisemitism

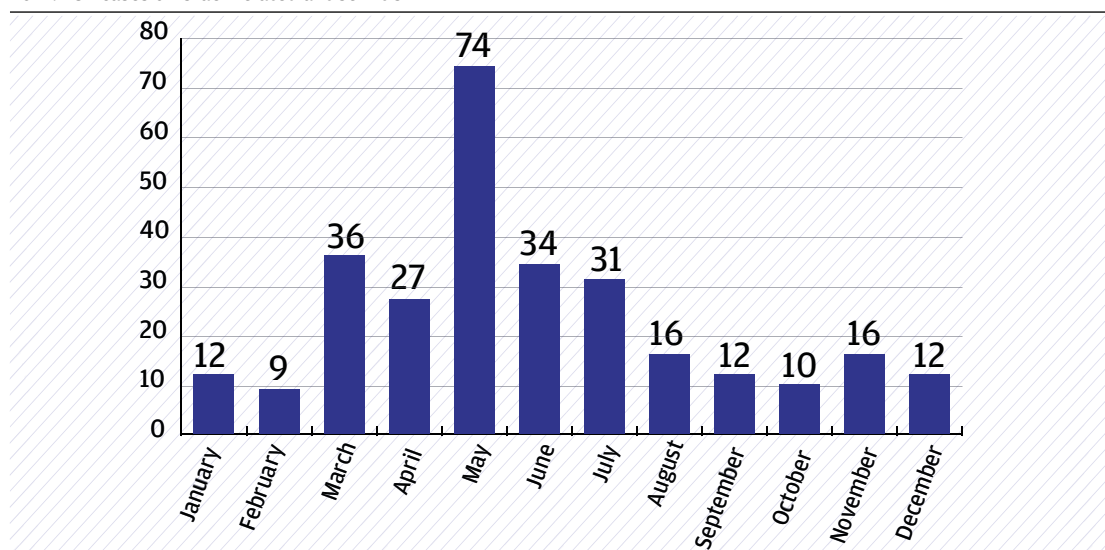
2021: 270 cases of coronavirus-related antisemitism



The sudden increase in November (another lockdown, tightening of the rules for unvaccinated people entering venues) far exceeds the average level of incidents which was already higher than in the previous year; by far the highest number of incidents in 2020 was recorded in December (20).

5.2. Israel-related antisemitism

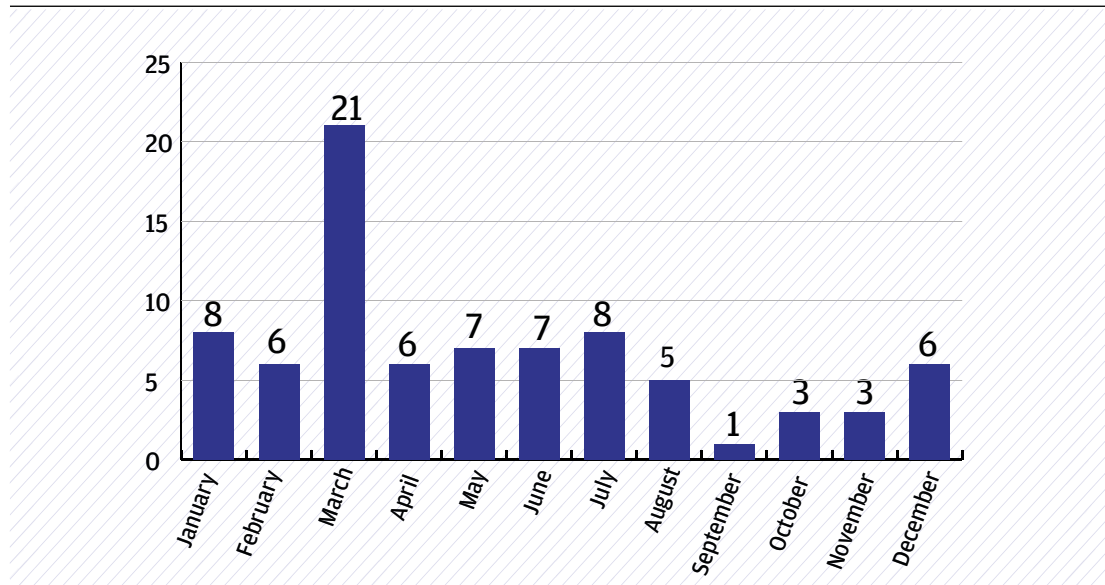
2021: 289 cases of Israel-related antisemitism



The fact that the highest number of incidents of Israel-related antisemitism was recorded in May is plausible in view of the previously mentioned events in Israel; the trend had already begun in March, mainly because of the large-scale coronavirus protests referred to above and the start of the vaccination campaign in Austria; Israel had a particularly high profile in the media because of its role as a pioneer in this context.

5. 3. Antisemitic conspiracy theories

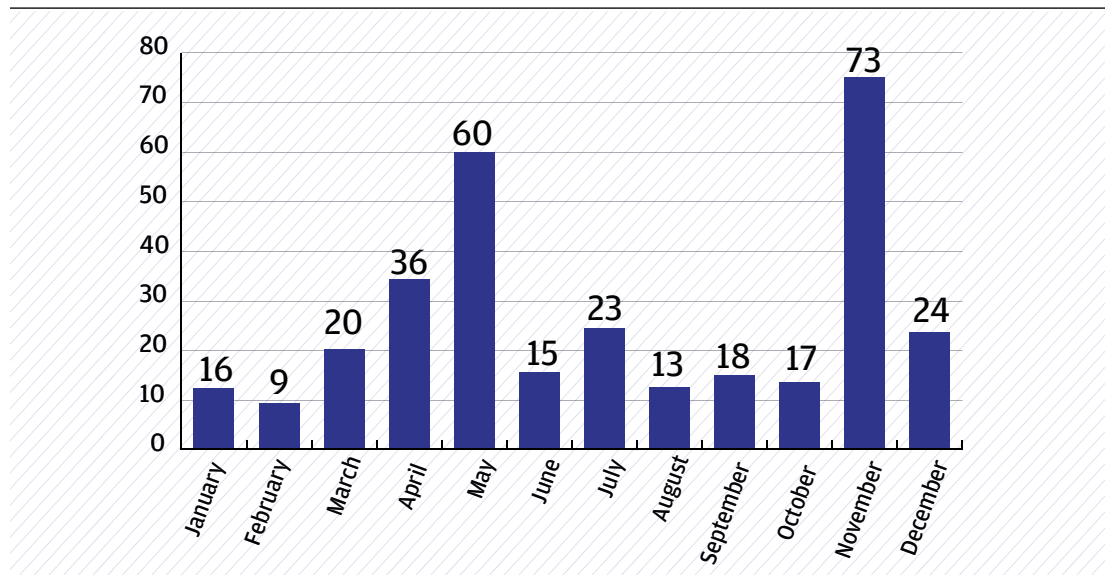
2021: 81 cases of antisemitic conspiracy theories



Even though the demonstrations against the government's coronavirus measures reached a peak in March and November, only the protests in March (the start of the vaccination campaign) led to a disproportionately strong focus on antisemitic conspiracy theories.

5. 4. Shoah relativisation/denial

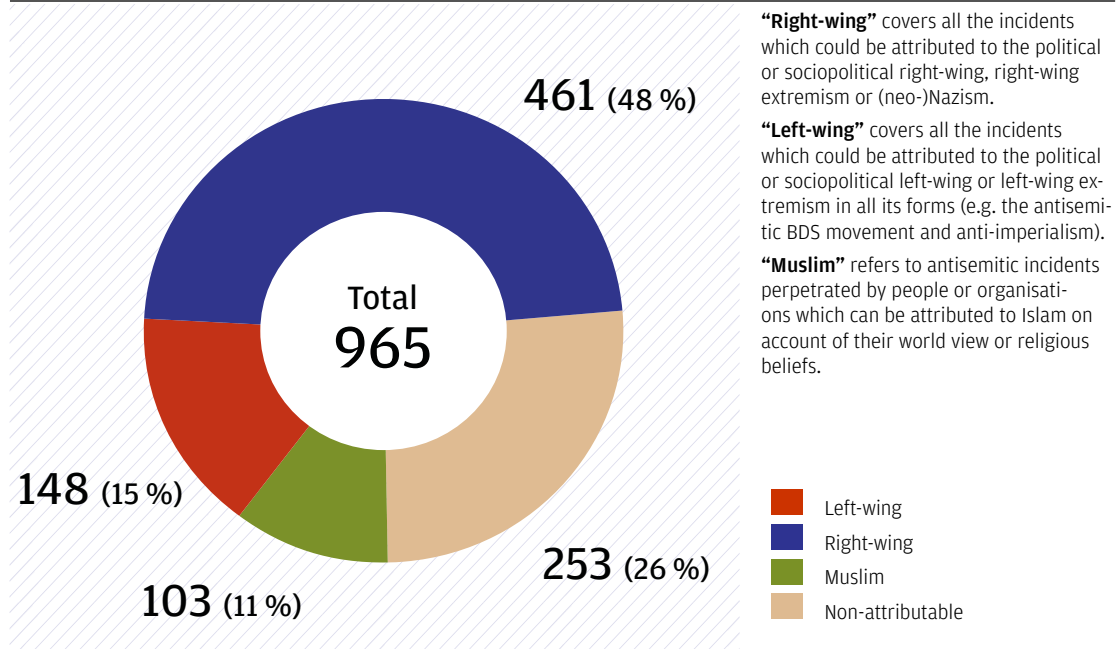
2021: 324 cases of Shoah relativisation/denial



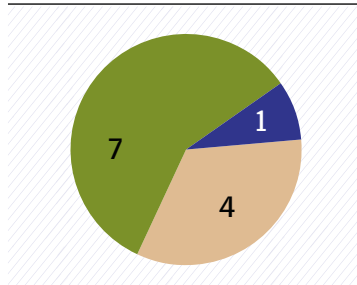
The incidence of Shoah relativisation and denial remained below-average following the big coronavirus protests in March, but those in November resulted in absolute record figures. During the intervening months, this sub-category reached an interim high around the time of the escalation in violence between Palestinian terrorist organisations and Israel which began in the second half of April and reached its peak in May. The incidents mainly took the form of comparisons between Israel and the National Socialist regime.

6. Ideological background

Antisemitic incidents Ideological background

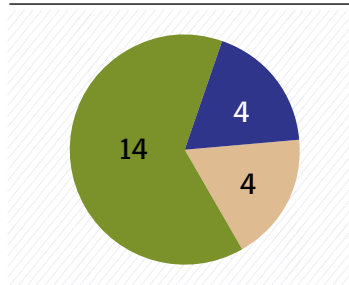


Assaults



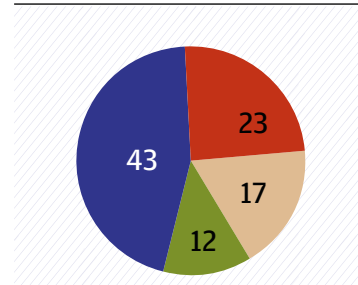
The vast majority of assaults (7) were carried out by Muslim perpetrators. In one case there was a right-wing background and for four further assaults the ideological background could not be conclusively identified.

Threats



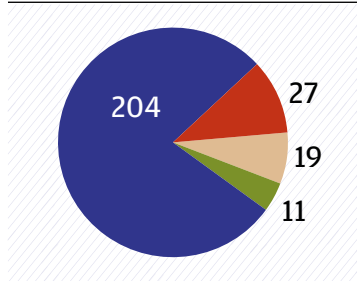
In terms of threats, the proportion of perpetrators identified as Muslim was even higher (14 out of 22 threats), and there were four right-wing incidents.

Damage and desecration



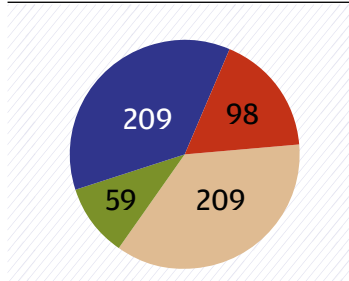
In the case of damage and desecration, the vast majority of incidents (43) could be attributed to right-wing ideology. Just over half as many (23) had left-wing origins, almost invariably rooted in anti-Israel activism.

Literature/mass mailings



In terms of “literature/mass mailings”, the trend from the first half of the year continued: more than three quarters of the incidents (204) fell into this category.

Abusive behaviour



In the “Abusive behaviour” category, the number of incidents with a right-wing ideological background increased massively compared with the first six months and, by the end of the year, was the same as the number of non-ideological incidents (209 each).

7. Methodology

The main basis for our working methodology is the IHRA working definition of antisemitism.

7.1. Working definition of antisemitism

Ever since the working definition of antisemitism produced by the EUMC in 2005 with the help of numerous experts and civil society organizations was adopted in May 2016 by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), it has enjoyed ever-increasing international support at all levels. This is also the case in Austria, where the Council of Ministers (2017) and the Municipal Councils in Vienna (2018) and Graz (2019) have ruled that this working definition should be accepted. At EU level, in December 2018 the EU Council made a declaration to EU member states, calling on them to adopt the definition.³ EU Commissioner Vera Jourovà had already called for the definition to be supported in January 2017.

Even though it is not legally binding, a definition of this kind is an essential weapon in the fight against antisemitism. It should help to achieve the intrinsically important international comparability that we have always called for and that is essential in order to make relevant findings and take the required targeted measures. Especially at national level, it also serves as a scientifically-based working tool: above all for organisations that are involved in the fight against antisemitism but potentially also for the forces of law and order which naturally often serve as the first point of contact for victims of antisemitism.

We should remember that by no means every antisemitic incident has legal implications; however, it is important that they are recorded efficiently in order to create as complete an overall picture as possible. This will in turn enable soundly-based decisions to be made by the relevant stakeholders, not least in terms of preventing antisemitism.

All the incidents reported to us are compared against this definition; not all of them meet its criteria and some are therefore not included in the statistics.

Here is the wording of the definition:⁴

“Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews which may be expressed as hatred towards Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed towards Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property and towards Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”

Manifestations might include the targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity. However, criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic. Antisemitism frequently charges Jews with conspiring to harm humanity, and it is often used to blame Jews for “why things go wrong.” It is expressed

³ Combating antisemitism: Declaration by the Council

⁴ IHRA

in speech, writing, visual forms and action, and employs sinister stereotypes and negative character traits.

Contemporary examples of antisemitism in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in the religious sphere could, taking into account the overall context, include, but are not limited to:

- Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.
- Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective — such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions.
- Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews.
- Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g. gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust).
- Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.
- Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.
- Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor.
- Applying double standards by requiring of it a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.
- Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis.
- Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.
- Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel.

7. 2. Antisemitism work on an international level

As we have highlighted in our previous reports, we are very aware of the particular importance of internationally accepted standards in the recording of antisemitic incidents. Stakeholders have understood this problem since at least 2004, but still there has been very little progress made. In its latest antisemitism update in November 2021, the [EU Fundamental Rights Agency \(FRA\)](#) laments the inadequacy of the data about antisemitic incidents and the difficulty of comparing it at a European level, given that the methods of data collection and categorisation vary from one country to another. It says that this prevents meaningful comparisons and rein-

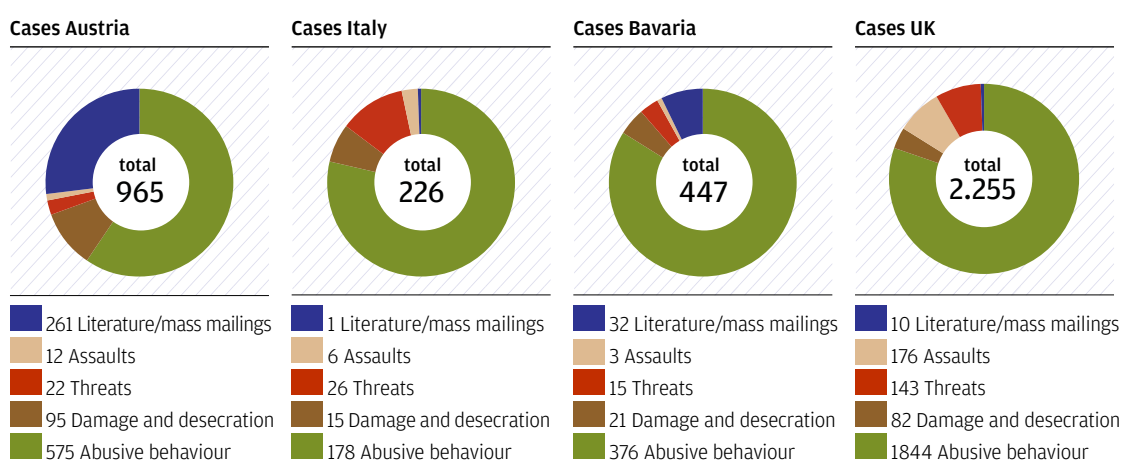
forces the need for the surveys conducted by the FRA among Jews in EU member states.⁵ The [most recent results](#) of this kind of survey were published in 2019.

Even though we regard such surveys as a useful tool in an overall concept for combating anti-semitism, we believe that they can merely represent a complement to the process of recording and dealing with antisemitic incidents in accordance with generally recognised scientific criteria and procedures. Only data resulting from this kind of process can usefully serve as a basis for offering evidence-based recommendations to policy-makers.

Ever since it was first founded, the Reporting Office for Antisemitism has been aware of this long-standing problem of the lack of international comparability. That is why right from the start it adopted not only the IHRA working definition of antisemitism but also the system for categorising antisemitic incidents that is used by two of the leading organisations in this field, namely [RIAS](#) in Germany and the [Community Security Trust \(CST\)](#) in the United Kingdom.

7.3. The situation abroad

At the time of the release of the report, data for 2021 is available from the United Kingdom (CST), [Bavaria](#), [Italy](#) and [Switzerland](#). Although comparisons are very difficult, because of the known differences in methodology and data recording, as described above, the trends that we have seen in Austria can also be observed in other countries, in terms of both coronavirus- and Israel-related antisemitism. Regarding the latter, there was a real torrent of violent assaults, especially in the United Kingdom and France. The CST recorded 173 assaults, an increase of 78 % on 2020, while the SPCJ saw an increase of 36% in cases of physical violence, up to 60 (of which 20 % involved weapons).



⁵ https://fra.europa.eu/sitehttps://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/denmark-new-antisemitism-action-plan-increase-knowledge-about-holocaust_ens/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2021-antisemitism-overview-2010-2020_en.pdf, page 92



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