



Parliament
Austria



Joint Statement

Adopted by the parliamentary participants of the networking conference “Never again? Democracy cannot tolerate antisemitism” | Vienna, 10 – 11 September 2024

Preliminary Remarks

The networking conference “Never again? Democracy cannot tolerate antisemitism” was held in Vienna from 10-11 September 2024 and was attended by Speakers and Members of 18 Parliaments and representatives of European Jewish communities. The conference was chaired by Mr Wolfgang Sobotka, Speaker of the Austrian National Council.

The conference was structured into three sessions:

- I. Antisemitism and the threat to democracy posed by hostility towards Jews
- II. Current situation of Jewish communities in Europe
- III. Developments in the Middle East and their impact on our society

The participants of the conference “Never again?

Democracy cannot tolerate antisemitism” in Vienna:

are deeply concerned by the alarming resurgence of antisemitism globally and its pernicious impact on democratic values, human rights, and social cohesion;

strongly condemn the terrorist attack of 7 October 2023, recognising its devastating impact;

strongly denounce the subsequent fuelling of antisemitic sentiments, including calls for the elimination of the State of Israel, which have become rampant since the terrorist attack on 7 October 2023, undermine social cohesion and pose a threat to our fundamental values and democratic systems;

endorse the working definition of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) identifying antisemitism as “a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities”;

emphasise that antisemitism is anti-democratic and an affront to the fundamental principles of equality, dignity, and human rights that underpin our shared values, and which national parliaments are responsible for defending;

are thus determined to build a strong parliamentary alliance to prevent this alarming global resurgence of antisemitism and to work together to uphold our democratic values.

In particular, the participants strive to deepen and reinvigorate the dialogue and joint commitment to:

1. **recognise** that any form of antisemitism, hate, intolerance, racism, xenophobia is a genuine danger to our democracies, values and diversity in our societies, and **acknowledge** the necessity for decisive action at international, European, and national levels. Parliaments should promote legislative tools to combat all manifestations of antisemitism or hatred and contribute to building coalitions

within civil society and across different religious communities, ensuring that antisemitism and all forms of prejudice and discrimination are never tolerated and normalised in our societies;

2. **emphasise** the importance of stopping the spread of hatred and radicalisation and to promote, in accordance with the right to freedom of expression and freedom of religious rights, a culture of tolerance, inclusiveness and mutual respect. In this regard, the participants **reaffirm** the need for initiatives in the field of education, particularly democracy education, and will engage in an exchange of best practices regarding initiatives at the parliamentary level;
3. **strongly condemn** the alarming rise of antisemitism on university campuses, in particular slogans, like those with calls of “from the river to the sea, Palestine will be free” and other slogans as a call for the elimination of the State of Israel, the glorification of terrorist organisations and the threat it poses to Jewish students; therefore, **commit to** take measures in order to protect freedom of education and freedom of movement for Jewish students;
4. **stress the need for** media, social media platforms, and the technology and communications sector including new technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI), to fulfil their responsibilities and intensify efforts to quickly detect, assess, and remove illegal online hate speech, disinformation, conspiracy theories and stereotypes that propagate harmful attitudes, in particular antisemitic sentiments, within legal frameworks that protect civil liberties and human rights, including freedom of speech;
5. **call on** parliaments to promote and support further measures and initiatives, fostering a safer and more inclusive digital environment;
6. **welcome** the establishment of strategies against antisemitism at various political levels and reaffirm their unwavering commitment to preserving the memory of the Holocaust, including by the active participation in initiatives such as the #WeRemember campaign, workshops with contemporary witnesses and on preventing and combating antisemitism, for example as part of the Democracy Workshop programme of the Austrian Parliament, and **emphasise** the urgent need

to counter Holocaust denial, falsification, and trivialisation, ensuring that these acts are met with decisive and collective action;

7. **encourage** robust legal protection and the increase of security measures for Jewish communities at international, European, and national levels, including increased funding for the protection of Jewish institutions and their members and the strict enforcement of hate crime laws to ensure their safety and their freedom to practice religion;
8. **recognise** the significant historical and cultural contributions of Jewish communities to society and the need to foster Jewish life by ensuring access to Jewish education and religious needs to preserve Jewish heritage, and to facilitate interfaith and cultural dialogue to deepen mutual understanding and respect;
9. **foster** comprehensive parliamentary strategies to raise awareness and knowledge about Jewish life, traditions, and contribution to societies by endorsing collaboration with Jewish communities and civil society organisations to build a more inclusive and resilient society, with initiatives such as Likrat (Austria and Switzerland) or Meet a Jew (Germany);
10. **encourage and facilitate** systematic monitoring, reporting, improved recording, and data collection of antisemitic incidents, both online and offline, by promoting respective measures by governments, by supporting joint international initiatives, such as the European Network on Monitoring Antisemitism (ENMA), and by adopting legislative initiatives to achieve this goal. Participants also **commit to** a zero-tolerance approach to all antisemitic manifestations;
11. **condemn** all terrorist actions, including Hamas' brutal and indiscriminate attack on Israel on 7 October 2023, and recognise the right of the State of Israel to defend itself in line with international law and international humanitarian law;
12. **call** for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages and the disarming of the terror organisation Hamas as well as the rapid, safe and unimpeded access of humanitarian aid directly to the civilian population in and throughout the Gaza Strip and support diplomatic efforts for a peaceful solution;
13. **emphasise** the urgent need to overcome the hatred and intolerance intensified by the 7 October terrorist attack.

We stand united against antisemitism, anti-Muslim sentiment, and all forms of racism.

In order to strengthen bilateral and multilateral co-operation and to form an effective parliamentary alliance, participants aim to hold regular conferences and meetings at the parliamentary level to pursue the objectives set out in this joint statement.

It is recognised, that due to their constitutional positions or other factors, certain Speakers cannot directly associate themselves with substantive political statements, and therefore should not be seen as indicating specific support for all sections.

Nonetheless, on behalf of their Chambers, they recognise the importance of the issues raised and the intentions of their colleagues in proposing particular ways forward.