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# Action plan against anti-Semitism

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# Preface

One may ask oneself why in 2022 we still have to put effort into fighting anti-Semitism. The answer is simple: because anti-Semitism still exists and because it poses a threat to our open and free society.

Today, about 7,000 Jews live in Denmark. A survey from 2018<sup>1</sup> of the perceived anti-Semitism among approximately 600 Danish Jews showed a development that we must respond to. Of the Danish Jews surveyed, 85 per cent experienced that the level of anti-Semitism in society has risen the last five years. In the same survey, 80 per cent stated that they always, often or occasionally avoid wearing items in public that could identify them as Jews, and 41 per cent stated that they had experienced anti-Semitic harassment within the past five years.

Moreover, the Danish National Police's latest report on hate crimes for 2020 shows that the number of religiously motivated hate crime cases against Jews have risen over the recent years.<sup>2</sup>

Unfortunately, the figures show that anti-Semitism is present in Danish society.

Should you have any doubts, just walk past the synagogue in Krystalgade or Caroline school (Carolineskolen) in Copenhagen. Here, children and young people have to live with police protection and armed guards every single day. Or one can look at the desecration of Jewish graves, which unfortunately has taken place in several places in Denmark.

We must never passively accept this hateful behavior. For the government, the fight against anti-Semitism is about protecting our free and open society. It is about ensuring that everyone can live in safety and without fearing harassment or attack.

Therefore, in 2020, the government set up a working group to come up with proposals for how to

fight anti-Semitism in Denmark. Based on the working group's proposals, the government has prepared this action plan. Because we have to act before anti-Semitism really takes root in Denmark.

The action plan reflects that there are no simple measures against the scourge of anti-Semitism. The security efforts around the Jewish institutions are an important focal point in the plan. The same is true of efforts to raise awareness about the Holocaust and Jewish life in schools and educational institutions.

The action plan is as broad in its initiatives as it is important.

Because we have a historical responsibility to take care of the Danish Jews just as the Danes did during World War II. Just over 97 per cent of all Danish Jews were rescued. Many ordinary Danes helped, including the Danish National Church and its priests. It is an important part of the Danish self-understanding and history.

But six million Jews were killed during the Holocaust in Europe. That number is almost incomprehensible. Also incomprehensible is the degradation and humiliation to which Jews were subjected - both in Auschwitz and elsewhere.

What happened during World War II must never happen again.

Unfortunately, we still see anti-Semitism in our society. So we must take action now. We must act to protect the Danish Jewish community and to preserve the free and open society that characterizes Denmark today. The Danish Jews have been a part of Danish society for more than 400 years. They shall continue to be.

<sup>1</sup> Report by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights: Experiences and perceptions of antisemitism/Second survey on discrimination and hate crime against Jews in the EU (europa.eu).

<sup>2</sup> The National Police's report on hate crimes for 2020 shows that an increase in religiously motivated hate crimes for the period 2015-2020 from 15 registered reported cases to 79.



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Anti-Semitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of anti-Semitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and / or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.



# What is anti-Semitism?

Jews generally enjoy great support in Denmark. Yet today we see growing anti-Semitism in various parts of society.

Anti-Semitism is a complex phenomenon that can be difficult to explain simply and unequivocally. Throughout history, anti-Semitism has had many different causes and expressions. Particularly religious, socio-economic and political factors have been crucial in the rise of anti-Semitism. Often, anti-Semitism is linked to the xenophobia that exists in the societies where we see anti-Semitism sprouting.

Anti-Semitic forces will often accuse Jewish community of being part of a conspiracy aimed at harming humanity. Throughout history, the same forces have blamed Jews for all sorts of societal problems. Anti-Semitism does not have a single form. It can be expressed in speech, in writing, in visual forms and in actions, as well as through the use of certain stereotypes and negative traits.

## Why a definition?

If we are to ensure a coherent effort against anti-Semitism, it is important that we have a common understanding of what anti-Semitism is. It is important so that relevant authorities and civil society agents can respond effectively and efficiently to anti-Semitism. In other words, we must agree on the knowledge of the poison so that we can respond effectively with an antidote.

Anti-Semitism must, of course, be seen in a national context. But it is also part of a larger issue that involves prejudice and hatred against religious and cultural minorities in general. Therefore, the work of combating anti-Semitism must be based on a

universal understanding of equality and equal rights for all.

## Definition of anti-Semitism

As a member of the intergovernmental international organization International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), Denmark has helped to adopt a working definition of anti-Semitism. The work definition has the following wording:

"Anti-Semitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of anti-Semitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and / or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities." (IHRA, May 26, 2016)

The government wants to use this definition as a basis for future work with anti-Semitism in Denmark. The definition will thus serve as a starting point for the initiatives launched with the action plan.

At the same time, the government will actively encourage new relevant international research on anti-Semitism to form the basis for the fight against anti-Semitism in Denmark.

## The expression of anti-Semitism in Denmark

Anti-Semitism in Denmark can be traced all the way back to the anti-Jewish discourse, which was widespread in the 16th century and onwards. At

the beginning of the 19th century, Jews were made scapegoats for the economic decline that Denmark experienced after the state bankruptcy in 1813. The conflict materialized in the so-called Literary Jewish Feud, in which various actors debated the role of the Jews in society. In 1819, the conflict culminated in the so-called Jewish feud, in which Danish Jews were attacked both verbally and physically.

Despite the Jews' increasingly active participation in Danish political and economic life, anti-Jewish stereotypes were allowed to flourish right up until the interwar period and the time before the Holocaust. The stereotypes were reproduced in various pamphlets and cartoons and lived on in Danish culture and language use.

We have also seen anti-Semitism expression through violent and hateful manifestations. In 1985, the synagogue in Copenhagen was targeted in a bomb attack in which a number of people were injured. And in 2015, a voluntary security guard at the synagogue in Copenhagen was killed in connection with a terrorist attack.

Anti-Semitism can also manifest itself in non-violent ways. Thus, an example of anti-Semitism can be if the Jewish people as a whole are accused of being responsible for real or imagined illegal actions committed by a single Jewish person or group in Denmark or in another country - or even for actions committed by non-Jews.

Even today, Danish Jews must find themselves in hateful expressions and assaults being directed at them, simply because they are Jews. Anti-Semitism is also expressed through grotesque and highly derogatory portrayal of Jews.

This description of anti-Semitism in Denmark is far from complete. There are many more examples of how anti-Semitism can and has expressed itself over time.

Unfortunately, there is anti-Semitism in Danish society. It became clear with the terrorist attack in 2015, which was inspired by militant Islamism. Most recently, there have been examples of anti-Semitic graffiti from the far right as well as setting up posters and desecrating Jewish cemeteries, but there is also anti-Semitism on the far left and in certain immigrant communities.

### **Anti-Semitism and Danish legislation**

In Denmark, we have a long and important tradition of valuing freedom of expression. We must adhere to that tradition. Therefore, it shall continue to be permissible to criticize the state of Israel - and, incidentally, all other states - if one disagrees with the actions of these states. It shall also continue to be legal to criticize the Jewish religion, just as other religions can be criticized.

Fighting anti-Semitism is not about criminalizing expressions or actions that are legal today. The action plan will therefore not propose a new legal delimitation of anti-Semitic actions and expressions. The punishment for speaking out or acting on the basis of an anti-Semitic aim will - as today - follow from the criminal law and fall under the courts.

However, the common definition of anti-Semitism can be used by authorities and civil society in the fight against anti-Semitism in cases where it is not a criminal matter. Just as the definition can help to create a common understanding of the problem in our society in general.





# More research on anti-Semitism

News media and organizations regularly report on anti-Semitic incidents. It can be difficult to get an overview of all reports and incidents, especially those that originate from the Internet. There is therefore a need to strengthen the monitoring of anti-Semitic incidents in Denmark.

At the same time, the authorities lack an overview of current research into anti-Semitism in Denmark. The Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS) has pointed out that existing research in this area is limited. This applies to research into the

causes of anti-Semitism, in which environments the anti-Semitism flourishes, as well as how the current anti-Semitism is linked to for instance the conflict in the Middle East and to anti-Zionism.

It is crucial that the relevant authorities get a better overview of the existing knowledge, so that they can aim their efforts at the challenges we have with anti-Semitism in Danish society. In continuation of this, we shall at the same time conduct research where we currently lack knowledge.



## Concrete initiatives

### **Strengthened monitoring of anti-Semitic incidents in Denmark, inter alia on the Internet**

An annual grant of DKK 300,000 is afforded to the Jewish Community's Department for Mapping and Knowledge Sharing of Anti-Semitic Incidents (AKVAH). The grant goes to reinforce the existing monitoring of anti-Semitic incidents, including those on the Internet, as well as to work to support and guide people who have been exposed to an anti-Semitic incident.

### **Mapping the knowledge about and research into anti-Semitism**

New research on anti-Semitism in Denmark must be initiated. Among other things, a research project, which examines the current prevalence of anti-Semitism, its forms of expression, causal factors, mechanisms of action and influences in Danish society will be initiated with the Danish Centre for Prevention of Extremism, so that it becomes clearer where anti-Semitism thrives in society. At the same time, current research into anti-Semitism shall be mapped both internationally and in Denmark. The mapping will give the authorities the opportunity to assess the need for further research in the field in the coming years.







# Children and young people knowledge about the Holocaust and anti-Semitism

Danish children and young people must be equipped to speak out against anti-Semitism and all other forms of intolerance. It is now several generations since the Holocaust took place, and this means that there will soon be no more eyewitnesses to the Holocaust. It remains important that all children and young people are aware of the atrocities that ravaged Europe in connection with World War II, and which are linked to hate crimes, conflicts and ultimately genocide around the world.

According to legislation, the primary and lower secondary school, the upper secondary education and the preparatory basic education must prepare the students to take an active part in a society with freedom and democracy. Their work must be characterized by intellectual freedom, equality and democracy. Students must be educated to be able to comport themselves in a diverse society and have an understanding that their actions and statements can have negative consequences for other people.

The educational institutions play a central role in teaching students about the past of which Denmark is a part, and in teaching them to respect and recognize diversity. In order to achieve this, the educational institutions must work systematically with critical thinking in relation to e.g. propaganda and fake news, and in challenging extreme and xenophobic attitudes and values.

The action plan obliges educational institutions to ensure that students acquire knowledge and skills, which can help dispel myths and prejudices and which call for tolerance and mutual respect between people. In this regard, it is important that

the professionals in and around the educational institutions have the right competencies and the right knowledge to recognize anti-Semitic and other intolerant expressions and actions, and that they have the tools to prevent and deal with these.

Until the summer of 2020, the Ministry of Children and Education has had an outgoing unit, which has worked with democracy and citizenship, and which has guided schools and high schools in the work of preventing extremism and bolstering respect and tolerance. We must build on the existing knowledge and on the experience of working with the formation of democratic culture. The work must continue to take place close to the schools' everyday life, so that a good coherence is created in the initiatives and their anchoring in the schools.



## Concrete initiatives

### **Compulsory classes about the Holocaust in primary and upper secondary education**

A change is made in the primary school's history canon, so that the existing point, the August Uprising and the Jewish Action 1943, is rewritten to also contain the Holocaust. The change will make it compulsory to teach about the Holocaust in the history subject in primary schools. Changes are being made to the curricula for the history subjects in the upper secondary educations, so that teaching about the Holocaust and other genocides is made compulsory.

### **Education and remembrance of the Holocaust and other genocides shall be promoted**

The task of promoting educational activities and remembrance of the Holocaust and other genocides continues and is developed. Emphasis is shifted from the preparation of materials to the development of student-engaged teaching activities (e.g., visiting and school services, Auschwitz Day, etc.) and the development of teachers' competencies to teach the subject. The effort is aimed at both primary and upper secondary education.

### **Teachers must be equipped to avoid exclusion in the school**

The work of preventing hate crimes begins in school. The Danish Centre for Prevention of Extremism and the Absalon University College have previously developed an inspiration catalog for school leaders and teachers; "Democratic communities - Prevention of polarization and exclusion in school". This has been done in close collaboration with the National Agency for Education and Quality. The inspiration catalog must now be disseminated by improving the skills of teachers and lecturers in the specific methods that appear in the catalog.

### **Young-to-young dialogue between denominations must be expanded**

The Ministry of Immigration and Integration offers pooled funds to civil society agents with the aim of expanding young-to-young dialogue between Muslims, Christians, humanists, atheists and Jews in schools all over Denmark. This is done on the basis of the experience gained partly from the young-to-young dialogue efforts, which have been implemented over a number of years to prevent honor-related conflicts, extremism, etc., and partly from the project "Your faith - my faith", which offers visits on both free and primary schools of a guest teaching team consisting of a Jew, a Christian and a Muslim for the purpose of promoting mutual understanding and respect.

### **More information about Jewish life and culture in Denmark**

Funds are allocated to the Danish Jewish Museum to plan, set up and carry out, in collaboration with the country's museums and libraries, exhibitions and debate events on Danish-Jewish cultural history. Furthermore, funds are set aside for an initiative aimed at young people, where the country's folk high schools, libraries, museums, information associations, youth and sports organizations, etc. are encouraged to contribute with teaching courses, information initiatives and knowledge dissemination with a focus on raising young Danes' awareness of Danish-Jewish cultural history and life.





# Preventing Anti-Semitism in particular Environments

Anti-Semitism in Denmark has different faces and exists in different parts of Danish society. However, anti-Semitism is more widespread in certain environments than elsewhere and can be found on the far right, the far left, and in certain immigrant communities.

Combating and preventing anti-Semitism in these particular environments cannot be addressed with a broad enlightening effort alone. Therefore, intensive efforts targeting specifically these environments must be launched.

It is important that action is taken early and directly against individuals and groups showing signs of budding anti-Semitic attitudes. Attitudes must be

challenged and countered, and the person or persons in question must be motivated to take a different and better path. This presupposes that both authorities and civil society agents are sufficiently equipped to detect the signs at an early stage and to take timely and relevant action with tailor-made efforts.

At the same time, there is a need to adapt and further develop the competencies of the local employees who are in contact with individuals involved in anti-Semitism. The employees should be given insight into what drives people to enter into contexts where anti-Semitic and other extremist expressions or actions thrive, so that they can help create a positive change in those involved.



## Concrete initiatives

### Specialized counseling courses on anti-Semitism and prevention

Danish Center for the Prevention of Extremism strengthens the specialized counseling for municipalities, schools, educational institutions, housing organizations, associations and others. In relation to schools and educational institutions, the counseling will take place in close collaboration with the Ministry of Children and Education and the Ministry of Higher Education and Science. The counseling will have a special focus on the environments, both online and offline, where anti-Semitism thrives.

### Strengthened police training in preventing radicalization and anti-Semitism

The Danish Security and Intelligence Service (PET) will strengthen and further develop the training efforts towards specialized police professional staff and civilian preventers. This must be done so that employees are better equipped to plan, carry out and follow up on conversations with radicalized individuals. The purpose is to motivate those involved to take part in a preventive program, which over time, if possible, will make them distance themselves from radicalized and extremist environments.









# Protection of Danish Jews and Jewish institutions

On 31 March 2021, the Danish Security and Intelligence Service (PET) published the Center for Terror Analysis' (CTA)'s annual assessment of the terrorist threat against Denmark (VTD). It appears in the assessment that the most significant terrorist threat against Denmark emanates from militant Islamists. PET assesses that this threat is SIGNIFICANT and i.a. can be directed at Jewish targets.

It also appears in the assessment that the terrorist threat from right-wing extremists is GENERAL and that this threat can also be directed at Jewish targets.

Following the terrorist attack in 2015, a number of security measures have been put in place at nine

Jewish institutions in Denmark. The implementation of the security measures is done in close cooperation between PET and the Jewish Community in Denmark. In addition, the Jewish Community in Denmark receives an unrestricted subsidy on the Finance Act. The subsidy is used i.a. to finance the maintenance and operation of the security measures, as well as to cover the expenses incurred by the Jewish Community itself, in particular for guarding.

In addition, since 2015, the police have guarded Jewish buildings and institutions in Copenhagen. Since the autumn of 2017, the Armed Forces have provided assistance to guarding several of the locations under the leadership of the police.



## Concrete initiatives

### Maintaining necessary security efforts to protect Jews and Jewish institutions

The continuing serious terrorist threat, including targeting Jews and Jewish targets, shows that there is still a need to maintain and support security measures and guarding in order to protect Jews and Jewish institutions. The action plan ensures that the necessary level of security around Danish Jews and Jewish institutions is maintained in the future.

# Strengthened focus on better guidance in connection with anti-Semitic incidents in schools and workplaces

It is crucial that the authorities are good at cooperating and reacting quickly when there are signs of anti-Semitism. This applies to schools, educational institutions, workplaces, etc.

A survey from 2018 shows that almost a fifth of the anti-Semitic harassment that Danish Jews in the survey experience is assessed to come from colleagues or people from school. Effective and coordinated efforts are important for the victims of the specific incidents. They must have the experience that the authorities are acting and taking anti-Semitism seriously. At the same time, anti-Semitism must be prevented from spreading and becoming an accepted part of the culture and social tone.

The Danish workplaces are also an arena for the prevention of anti-Semitism and other offensive acts against religious minorities. The Danish Working Environment Authority's supervisor today has the opportunity to support and guide companies in dealing with and preventing offensive actions. At the same time, the supervisors can provide guidance to the vulnerable employees on where they can get help. It is important that supervisors are continuously trained to identify the offensive actions and expressions that may be manifested in the workplace. And it is important that they are continuously provided with knowledge about where you as a company or employee can get more help.

<sup>3</sup> Report from the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights: Experiences and perceptions of antisemitism - Second survey on discrimination and hate crime against Jews in the EU.





## Concrete initiatives

### **Appointment of national coordinator to combat anti-Semitism**

A national coordinator is appointed with responsibility for coordinating the Danish efforts against anti-Semitism, including ensuring the implementation of the action plan's initiatives and follow-up when the initiatives have been implemented. The coordinator will also have to follow the work of combating anti-Semitism under the auspices of the EU and have regular contact with the Jewish community in order to uncover the perceived anti-Semitism among those who are exposed to it. The national coordinator will be a high-ranking employee of the Ministry of Justice.

### **Training of supervisors in the Danish Working Environment Authority on anti-Semitism and offensive acts against other religious minorities in the workplace**

The Danish Working Environment Authority's supervisor must be equipped to identify anti-Semitism and offensive acts against religious minorities in the workplace. This will ensure that the supervisors respond quickly when there are signs of abusive actions against religious minorities.



# Foreign Policy Focus on Combating anti-Semitism

In recent years, we have witnessed several serious anti-Semitic incidents. These incidents have taken place both in Denmark, in Europe and globally.

Rising anti-Semitism is thus largely a cross-border issue. Anti-Semitic forces in particular use the Internet to organize and spread propaganda across national borders.

This trend highlights the need for us to stand together internationally in the fight against anti-Semitism. Denmark should alert the UN and other international fora when there are countries that do not protect their Jewish minorities, spread anti-Semitic propaganda or discriminate.

Denmark must work to internationally promote the understanding and importance of the positive Danish experience with the rescue of Danish Jews in 1943. This applies first and foremost in the fight against anti-Semitism, but also in relation to taking responsibility for protecting religious minorities who are persecuted, and – more generally

– promoting the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

The Danish bishops' pastoral letter in October 1943 contained a message to all Christians to fight racism and provide help to their Jewish compatriots. This is an example of how the UN principle of "responsibility to protect" – as it was called many decades later – can and should be practiced. This principle must be the guiding principle for Denmark's contribution to the fight against anti-Semitism in the UN, the EU, the IHRA and other international fora.

Denmark must work actively for the exchange of information and good practice within e.g. international police cooperation and compare and coordinate information campaigns, share teaching strategies and jointly create the counter-narratives needed to ensure a high degree of resilience to anti-Semitic propaganda, especially among younger people.



## Concrete initiatives

### Increased focus on anti-Semitism through dialogue with other countries

In the future, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will increase its focus on anti-Semitism as part of the efforts of the special unit for freedom of religion and belief, which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs launched in 2018, and which addresses issues of freedom of religion and belief and persecuted religious minorities in its bilateral dialogues with other countries. An increased focus on anti-Semitism in foreign policy will be in line with the need for a new and value-based Danish foreign and security policy strategy, which is expected to focus on Danish values, including the advancement of democracy, human rights, equality, law and duty and committed communities.

### Increased Danish involvement in the IHRA collaboration

Denmark will strengthen its participation from all relevant ministries, including the national coordinator for anti-Semitism, in the work of the international forum International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA).

### International celebration of the 80th anniversary of the rescue of the Danish Jews

A major international celebration will be held in 2023 of the 80th anniversary of the rescue of the Danish Jews. Such a celebration will focus on how we as a society prevent genocide and promote the right to free thought and the practice of religion. There will also be a focus on disseminating research into the processes leading up to genocide. In continuation of this, the website [folkedrab.dk](http://folkedrab.dk), where one i.a. finds knowledge about the killing of minorities around the world, shall be maintained and updated.





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