

Roundtable discussion on antisemitism – Dutch House of Representatives 12 September 2018 – Draft background paper

In July 2018, the Committee on the Interior of the House of Representatives of the States General of the Netherlands (Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal) invited the European Union (EU) Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) to participate in a roundtable discussion on combating antisemitism. This paper provides background information relevant to the three blocks of discussions to be had at the roundtable of 12 September 2018.

Incidents of antisemitism

Unlike what is the case in several EU Member States, a number of public authorities and civil society organisations in the Netherlands collect and publish a variety of data on antisemitic incidents on a yearly basis (Table 1).¹ The regular availability and close analysis of such data enables the identification of trends in the manifestation of antisemitism, and shows that antisemitism is a persisting phenomenon that requires the continued vigilance of the State.

Table 1: Examples of data on antisemitism published in the Netherlands, 2014–2017

	National Police		Public Prosecutor*		Local anti-discrimination agencies		National hotline on online discrimination (MiND)		Information and Documentation Centre Israel (CIDI)	
Type of data	Incidents of antisemitic discrimination recorded by the police		Acts of antisemitic discrimination recorded by the public prosecutor		Incidents of antisemitic discrimination reported to the local agencies		Discriminatory antisemitic incidents on the internet reported to MiND		Incidents of antisemitism reported to CIDI	
Number of incidents	2014	358	2014	59	2014	147	2014	64	2014	171
	2015	428	2015	35	2015	104	2015	46	2015	126
	2016	335	2016	39	2016	122	2016	31	2016	109
	2017	284	2017	42	2017	67	2017	236	2017	113

Source: published data collated by FRA.

Notes: *Estimates extrapolated from the annual report on criminal discrimination of the public prosecutor.

Yet, these data cannot and should not be taken to provide an accurate portrayal of the prevalence of antisemitism in the Netherlands. Rather, they offer an indication of the extent to which incidents are reported by victims or witnesses of antisemitism. Indeed, EU-wide victimisation surveys conducted by FRA consistently show that victims of discrimination and hate crime overwhelmingly tend not to report incidents of harassment, physical violence or vandalism they experience, whether to the police or any other body.²

FRA's first survey on discrimination and hate crime against Jews in selected Member States confirms this finding, showing that more than three quarters of people who experience antisemitic harassment do not report such incidents; nearly two thirds do not report antisemitic physical violence; and, more than half do not report antisemitic vandalism.³ Preliminary analysis of findings of FRA's second survey on discrimination and hate crime against Jews confirms this trend; this second wave of the survey also covers the Netherlands and will be published in December 2018.⁴

Impact and perpetrators of antisemitism

Both waves of the survey show that sizeable proportions of Jews across the EU, including in the Netherlands, experience antisemitism as a growing and pervasive problem in the country where they live, whether it manifests itself online, in the media, in political life, in public spaces or in vandalism of Jewish objects or property. The ubiquity of antisemitism impacts negatively

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on feelings of safety and security among Jews in the EU and on their ability to live an openly Jewish life, for fear of becoming victims of antisemitic harassment, discrimination or hate crime. For many, this has led them to hide any visible markers of their Jewish identity in public. For others, this has led them to seriously consider or even prepare emigrating from the country where they live because they do not feel safe there as Jews.

Limited data are available on perpetrators of antisemitic incidents in most EU Member States, including in the Netherlands. For example, data from the public prosecutor show that just under one third of all 144 criminal acts of discrimination it recorded in 2017 relate to antisemitic insults directed at supporters of the Ajax Amsterdam football club, whose supporters and players are often referred to under the nickname of “Jews”.⁵ The FRA survey data show that Jewish victims of antisemitic violence or harassment identify different perpetrators, in western European countries mostly Muslims with extremist views, and, in eastern European countries people with extreme right-wing views.

Measures to combat antisemitism

FRA delivered a range of opinions, as well as practical recommendation in its 2013 report³ addressing educational authorities, as well as law enforcement in Member States. Most importantly, FRA argues in favour of evidence-based policies. Law- and policymakers need robust and reliable data if they are to devise courses of action to combat antisemitism effectively. To that end, data need to be produced by and combined from a variety of national sources, including police and criminal justice statistics on hate crime; data from equality bodies on complaints of discrimination; monitoring data from civil society organisations; and regular victimisation surveys conducted by national authorities.

In this respect, close cooperation between Member States, the European Commission and FRA can assist national law- and policymakers in devising measures to combat antisemitism. For example, guidance on how to improve data collection on hate crime has been agreed by the EU High Level Group on combating racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance, through a process facilitated by FRA.⁶ FRA and the Office for Democratic Institutions for Human Rights (ODIHR) have started working with EU Member States to put this guidance into practice, through national diagnostic workshops that serve identify gaps in hate crime recording and solutions to address these gaps. Similarly, guidelines on how to improve the collection and use of equality data are being produced by the EU High Level Group on non-discrimination, equality and diversity, also through a process facilitated by FRA.

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- ¹ FRA (2018), Hate crime recording and data collection practice across the EU, available at: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2018/hate-crime-recording>. FRA (2017), *Antisemitism - Overview of data available in the European Union 2006–2016*, available at: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2017/antisemitism-overview-2006-2016>. The next overview will be published in November 2018.
 - ² FRA (2018), EU-MIDIS II: Second European Union minorities and discrimination survey, available at: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/project/2015/eu-midis-ii-second-european-union-minorities-and-discrimination-survey>. FRA (2014), *Surveying LGBT people and authorities*, available at: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/project/2011/surveying-lgbt-people-and-authorities>. FRA (2014), *FRA survey on gender-based violence against women*, available at: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/project/2012/fra-survey-gender-based-violence-against-women>.
 - ³ FRA (2013), *Discrimination and hate crime against Jews in EU Member States: experiences and perceptions of antisemitism*, available at: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2013/discrimination-and-hate-crime-against-jews-eu-member-states-experiences-and>.
 - ⁴ FRA (2018), *Second FRA survey on discrimination and hate crime against Jews*, available at: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/project/2017/second-fra-survey-discrimination-and-hate-crime-against-jews>. Findings of this survey will be published in December 2018.
 - ⁵ Openbaar Ministerie (2017), *Strafbare Discriminatie in Beeld 2017*, available at: www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/rapporten/2018/04/26/bijlage-5-strafbare-discriminatie-in-beeld-2017.
 - ⁶ EU High Level Group on combating racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance – Subgroup on methodologies for recording and collecting data on hate crime (2018), *Improving the recording of hate crime by law enforcement authorities - Key guiding principles*, available at: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/news/2017/improving-recording-hate-crime-law-enforcement-authorities>.