

EU anti-racism body publishes antisemitism reports

The European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC), an agency of the European Union (EU), launched two major reports on antisemitism today, 31 March, at the European Parliament in Strasbourg. The main report, “Manifestations of Antisemitism in the EU 2002 – 2003” (344 pages) details manifestations of antisemitism in the EU over a two-year period from 2002-2003 using data available mainly by October 2003 and proposes policies to counter it. The second report, “Perceptions of Antisemitism in the European Union” (48 pages) provides snapshot interviews with members of the Jewish community.

The main report shows that there has been an increase in antisemitic incidents in five EU countries, (Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK). These incidents ranged from hate mail to arson. In some other countries there has been little evidence of increase in antisemitism. “These reports are a clear indication of the seriousness with which the European Union takes the subject of antisemitism and of our determination to tackle it”, said Beate Winkler, Director of the EUMC.

Although it is not easy to generalise, the largest group of the perpetrators of antisemitic activities appears to be young, disaffected white Europeans. A further source of antisemitism in some countries was young Muslims of North African or Asian extraction. Traditionally antisemitic groups on the extreme right played a part in stirring opinion.

The report also shows that there is a tremendous variety between Member States in their practices on the monitoring and collection of data on antisemitic incidents. In some EU countries there are relatively well-established official or semi-official monitoring structures, which produce year-by-year reasonably reliable statistics on antisemitic incidents and others not at all.

This is the largest report ever done on antisemitism in Europe and is based on data collected by the EUMC’s European information network, RAXEN. RAXEN consists of 15 offices in each member state, staffed by experts. Data was collected according to common guidelines set down by EUMC and was validated by an independent academic.

The second report - interviews with the members of the Jewish community - reveals that they perceive a more hostile environment in Europe. Most Jewish people wish to be a recognized equal part of European societies and to live in good relationships with their neighbours.

European Monitoring Centre
on Racism and Xenophobia

Observatoire Européen des
Phénomènes Racistes et
Xénophobes

Europäische Stelle zur
Beobachtung von
Rassismus und
Fremdenfeindlichkeit

EUMC
Rahlgasse 3
A – 1060 Vienna
Austria

tel. +43 (1) 580 30 - 31
fax +43 (1) 580 30 - 93
media@eumc.eu.int
<http://eumc.eu.int>

Main Proposals

- Europe's political leaders must make it very clear that they do not accept antisemitism and racism by taking a strong leadership position on the issue.
- A strong legal framework is needed to support policy actions in all Member States.
- To develop targeted policies it is necessary to establish efficient data collection systems in order to record accurately incidents of antisemitism.
- Teachers and other professionals have a crucial role to play in combating racism and antisemitism
- Encouraging intercultural and interfaith dialogue is crucial in creating harmonious community relations based on the respect for Human Rights, individual dignity and the rule of law.
- There are many examples of good practice in member states, which should be extended across the European Union.

“It is the greatest achievement of the European Union that conflict between Member States is now inconceivable. It would be an even greater achievement if the possibility of conflict between groups of European citizens could also become inconceivable. Mutual respect for each others human rights must be the basis for this” said Ms Winkler.

Note to editors:

- The EUMC was created in 1997. Based in Vienna it has a staff of 31.
- The job of the EUMC – on behalf of the Union as a whole – is to monitor racist, antisemitic and xenophobic attitudes and actions, with a view to helping develop policies.
- The Management Board of the EUMC is made up of independent experts all eminent in their field, nominated by Member States, the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Council of Europe.
- In 2005 the EUMC will become the European Union's Human Rights Agency following a decision by the Head of Government at their summit in 2003.

For further information contact:

EUMC +43 1 580 30 31,
website: <http://eumc.eu.int>