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#### INFORMATION NOTE

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From: General Secretariat of the Council  
To: Council  
Subject: Addressing Anti-Semitism Through Education - Guidelines for  
Policymakers  
*- Information from the Presidency*

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Delegations will find attached an information note from the Presidency on the above subject, which has been put on the agenda under 'Any other business' for the next Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council meeting on 22 May 2018.

## **Addressing Anti-Semitism Through Education - Guidelines for Policymakers**

Explanatory note from the Presidency

prepared by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)

Anti-Semitic harassment, violence, and discrimination present a serious and continuing problem. Education is an important tool to address anti-Semitism and other forms of prejudice. Anti-Semitism is also a problem within many educational institutions. Anti-Semitic incidents and attitudes have a profound impact on society in a number of ways that are pertinent to educational institutions:

- Anti-Semitic slurs and stereotypes are not only hurtful, but also symptomize ignorance, misunderstanding and confusion;
- Anti-Semitic harassment, discrimination, and violence have an immediate negative impact on the lives of Jewish people and communities, including children, and their enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms; and
- If left unaddressed, new forms of anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance undermine and pose a threat to democratic values.

Contemporary anti-Semitism often takes tacit, covert and coded forms, making it a complex and controversial phenomenon that mutates over time. The changing geopolitical climate as well as the new media environment has led to a situation where open anti-Semitism is no longer confined to extremist circles and has become increasingly mainstreamed. Holocaust education, while important, is not an adequate substitute for education about anti-Semitism. Strong policy guidance is necessary to ensure that educators recognise, identify and properly address anti-Semitism and other forms of prejudice and discrimination.

*Why is it a concern for governments?*

The impact of contemporary anti-Semitism is not limited to the Jewish people, individually or collectively. Anti-Semitism along with other forms of intolerance, can and have become violent or dehumanizing, representing a threat to democracy, civilization, and, therefore, to overall security in states where it appears.

The international community has long recognized that educators must play a central role in facilitating states' compliance with their duties to protect, respect, and fulfil human rights. Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 18 of the ICCPR and the OSCE Helsinki Final Act acknowledge that all people have the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. Anti-Semitic incidents violate fundamental rights, including the right to equal treatment, human dignity, and the freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. This is the foundation of states' obligations to address anti-Semitism. OSCE participating States committed, inter alia, to "strive to ensure that their legal systems foster a safe environment free from anti-Semitic harassment, violence or discrimination in all fields of life" and promote, "as appropriate, educational programmes for combating anti-Semitism." In 2014 the OSCE participating states were called upon to promote educational programmes for combating anti-Semitism; provide young people with opportunities for human rights education, including on the subject of anti-Semitism; and respond promptly and effectively to acts of anti-Semitic violence."

*What can policy makers and educators do?*

The role of governments in this is two-fold. On the one hand, they need to proactively address anti-Semitism through education, ensuring that education systems build students' resilience to anti-Semitism and other forms of prejudice. On the other hand, governments need to respond effectively to anti-Semitism in educational settings and structures. The publication *Addressing Anti-Semitism Through Education - Guidelines for Policymakers* which was prepared by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) offers concrete recommendations to turn political commitments into action, and lays out practical steps that governments are recommended to undertake to improve understanding, prevention, education about and responses to anti-Semitism, alongside examples of good practice from around the OSCE area. By undertaking these steps, governments will demonstrate a clear willingness to overcome the challenge which anti-Semitism poses to the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and minimize the wider threat to our societies' democratic values. This publication will complement UNESCO's and ODIHR's existing materials, becoming part of a new set of tools that is expected to give national education policy-makers and practitioners a common understanding of how to address anti-Semitism following a human rights approach to education. The guidelines for policymakers were developed jointly by OSCE/ODIHR and UNESCO in consultation with a wide range of experts, including education policy makers, academics, teachers and Jewish community representatives from throughout the OSCE region.

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