

ENGLISH only

**OSCE Conference on Combating Discrimination and Promoting Mutual Respect and Understanding - Follow-up to the Cordoba Conference on Anti-Semitism and Other Forms of Intolerance  
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Plenary Session 1**

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## **Survey on antisemitism in Switzerland**

**There are many surveys on anti-Semitism, but very few are really reliable. In general, one just answers a few questions, and if the answers to 3 or 4 of them are negative, the person is called anti-Semitic. Very seldom are the surveys which can be considered as scientific.**

**The independent Institute GfS in Berne, Switzerland, has just undertaken such a scientific one. Over 1'000 random persons, representative according to age, sex, location and education, had each to answer 60 questions, dealing with 3 different types of questions:**

- **opinions**
- **emotions**
- **clichés.**

**The analyses of all the answers can be summarised as follows:**

**10% of the persons asked have given the most anti-Jewish answers to all the questions. What is striking is that these notorious anti-Semites live at places where there only few or even no Jews at all, like in the country side rather than in large towns. They also in general belong to the socio-economic lower layers of the population. Many of them are right-wing oriented and fear an increasing numbers of foreigners in Switzerland, what also proofs their poor knowledge about Jews**

**28% have sometimes given a positive answer, sometimes an anti-Jewish one. They are mainly influenced by some clichés, like that the Jews are interested by money and power, that they want to dominate the world, that they favour a global economic strategy.**

**A group of 15% answer that they have no problems with the Swiss Jews, but that they get often irritated by the attitude of the Israeli government, and conclude that Jews are often extremists. This opinion is also often present in the less educated people who have little or no contact with Jews.**

**37% see the Jews as a positive group, true loyal Swiss citizen, whose contribution to the prosperity of Switzerland is essential. Most of them know Jews, are in contact with them, they are often politically left-oriented and are well educated.**

**10% of the answers come from people who are uninterested in politics and have no opinion on Jews.**

**It is interesting to notice that most answers give a far too large estimation of the number of Jews living here.**

**In conclusion the negative opinions on Jews often rely only on clichés, or on what people once read or heard about Jews. It means that by correct communication and by the transmission of knowledge about Jews, it should be possible to diminish these prejudices and probably as a consequence the number of anti-Semites.**

**But one should not forget finally that there has always been a marginal group of anti-Semites in Switzerland, like everywhere else. On the other hand the emancipation of the Jews is terminated: they are now officially looked at as full and well integrated citizens. Every position is open to them, as well in the political, academic, economic, military, artistic and sports world. They feel free to live their life as Jews, if they wish to do so, as the freedom of religion is fully accepted in Switzerland.**