



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF  
NORTH MACEDONIA  
TO OSCE, UN AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL  
ORGANIZATION IN VIENNA



## Conference on Addressing Anti-Semitism in the OSCE Region

Skopje, 6-7 February 2023

### *Concept note*

#### *Background.*

OSCE participating States have repeatedly condemned anti-Semitism, beginning with the Copenhagen Document of the Conference on Security and Co-operation Europe in 1990. They have also long recognized that anti-Semitism poses a threat to stability and security in the OSCE region and committed themselves to common efforts to combat anti-Semitism throughout the OSCE area. These include pledges to enact a comprehensive set of measures to respond to manifestations of anti-Semitism in the areas of security, education, including engagement with youth, and Holocaust remembrance.

Despite efforts to address this pernicious phenomenon, anti-Semitism remains a serious problem in the OSCE region as borne out by the events of recent years.

While a precise estimate of the prevalence of anti-Semitic hate incidents and hate crimes in the OSCE region is not possible due to the lack of full and comprehensive information and data, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights' (ODIHR) hate crime reporting<sup>1</sup> notes that there has been an increase in the reported anti-Semitic attacks, thereby underscoring the very real concerns about the physical security of Jews, Jewish properties and places of worship in the OSCE region.

A particularly worrying concern in recent years has been the mainstreaming of anti-Semitic views in political and public discourse. With the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, toxic anti-Semitic narratives re-surfaced with Jews blamed for the origin and spread of the virus. Furthermore, protests against public health measures imposed by democratically elected governments have included Holocaust symbols and imagery, wrongly comparing the genocidal acts of the Nazi regime to measures aimed at containing the pandemic, thereby grossly trivializing, diminishing and misappropriating the Holocaust and demeaning and devaluing the suffering of its victims.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://hatecrime.osce.org/anti-semitic-hate-crime>

More recently, the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine has been accompanied by anti-Semitic narratives and Holocaust remembrance landmarks have fallen victim to repeated shelling.

Digital technologies have facilitated the global and rapid spread of anti-Semitism, including conspiracy theories and age-old disinformation about Jews, and accelerated the rise of Holocaust denial and distortion through open or anonymous and automated networks of hatred.

Social Media Posts containing anti-Jewish hatred and anti-Semitic conspiracy theories, as well as content that denies or distorts the Holocaust, reach millions of viewers worldwide and are often left to linger in perpetuity.

Such a worrisome development is rendered more acute against the background of continued algorithmic amplification of such content, as social media companies lack sufficient and effective content moderators with appropriate language skills and knowledge necessary to deal with reports pertaining to anti-Semitic content.

#### *Conference.*

The 2023 Skopje Conference on Addressing Anti-Semitism in the OSCE region will serve to mark the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the landmark 2003 Maastricht Ministerial Council Decision No. 4/03 on Tolerance and Non-discrimination.

In this decision, the Ministerial Council expressed concern *"about all manifestations (...) of anti-Semitism and violent extremism in all participating States"* and reaffirmed its commitment to *"promote tolerance and combat discrimination"*.

It also urged *"the relevant authorities in all participating States to continue to condemn publicly, at the appropriate level and in the appropriate manner, violent acts motivated by discrimination and intolerance"*. Finally, the Ministerial Council already twenty years ago recognized *"the need to combat hate crimes, which can be fueled by racist, xenophobic, and anti-Semitic propaganda on the internet"*.

To this end, the Conference will serve to:

1. Take stock of the progress made in relation to the implementation by OSCE participating States of their commitments to address anti-Semitism since the adoption of the 2003 Maastricht Ministerial Council Decision, with a particular focus on the themes of (i) recognizing, recording and prosecuting anti-Semitic hate crimes and addressing the security needs of Jewish communities, (ii) addressing anti-Semitism in and through education, and (iii) countering Holocaust denial and distortion and promoting Holocaust remembrance.
2. Identify current challenges and best practices in relation to addressing anti-Semitism, in particular through a regional perspective and with a focus on the role of youth.
3. Look to the future by surveying emerging trends and key areas of concern pertaining to addressing anti-Semitism, in particular online, in the mid- and long-term.