



Commission holds Colloquium on combatting antisemitism and anti-Muslim hatred, as survey shows 50% of Europeans believe religious discrimination is widespread

Brussels, 1 October 2015

On 1-2 October, the European Commission hosts the first Annual Colloquium on Fundamental Rights, in Brussels.

First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** and Commissioner Věra **Jourová** will lead discussions on how to fight antisemitism and anti-Muslim hatred in Europe and foster tolerance and respect in our societies.

The challenge is highlighted by [data](#) from the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights on antisemitic offences, published yesterday, and by a new [Eurobarometer](#) survey on discrimination, published today.

Statistics published in the Eurobarometer survey on discrimination show that:

- 50% of Europeans believe discrimination based on religion or beliefs is widespread (up from 39% in 2012);
- 33% believe that expressing a religious belief can be a disadvantage when applying for a job (up from 23% in 2012);
- Muslims suffer from the lowest levels of social acceptance among religious groups, with only 61% of respondents stating that they would be fully comfortable with a colleague at work being Muslim, and only 43% being fully comfortable if their adult children had a relationship with a Muslim person.
- The EU Fundamental Rights Agency survey on discrimination and hate crime against Jews shows rising antisemitism in Europe; 73% of respondents felt that antisemitism online has become worse over the last five years.

Looking ahead to the Colloquium, First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** said: *"European society is going through a period of turmoil and crisis which is challenging the very values on which our Union is built. The horrific events in Paris and Copenhagen at the beginning of this year have made clear the need for urgent action. In these times of crisis, the capacity of our society for tolerance and inclusion is put to the test. Antisemitism and anti-Muslim hatred, although very different in history, origins and impact, are both manifestations of this challenge. Our collective responsibility to live together in tolerance and respect is particularly important at a time when we have a moral obligation to give refuge to people of various religions and cultures who arrive on our shores. Diversity must never be seen as a threat. It is our common responsibility to create and nurture an inclusive society."*

Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, Věra **Jourová** added: *"Every victim of hate crime or discrimination is one victim too many. One in five people in the EU from a religious minority say they have experienced discrimination or harassment on the grounds of religion or beliefs in the past 12 months. This is unacceptable. I call upon Member States to properly apply European legislation and take action against racist and xenophobic hate speech and hate crime. This Colloquium is about sharing concrete experiences and ideas from across the EU, and deciding how we will move forward together. Hate speech has no place in our society – whether physically or online. I will be working hard with national governments, EU institutions and the private sector, including IT companies, to counter online hate speech."*

The European Union is based on the fundamental value of equality. This implies freedom from discrimination on any grounds, including discrimination on grounds of religion. The principle of non-discrimination is translated into the legislative framework through several instruments which are directly applicable in Member States or which require national implementation. The Colloquium will review the state of play of the legislative body, and also look at other policy options and supporting actions to fight antisemitism and anti-Muslim hate crime and hate speech online, fight discrimination and foster tolerance and respect.

Participants at the Colloquium will include members of the Jewish and Muslim communities, national and local authorities, NGOs, companies, media representatives and individuals. They will exchange best practices on the fight against antisemitism and anti-Muslim hatred and discuss steps for further action.

The Colloquium will draw on input from a [public consultation](#) carried out in April and May ahead of the event. Respondents highlighted the different origins of antisemitism and anti-Muslim hatred, the need for both holistic and tailored responses, calls for better application of existing legislation, and efforts to promote better education and dialogue between communities. Participants will focus on preventing antisemitic and anti-Muslim hate crime, tackling hate speech online, the role of local authorities, education and grassroots projects, and the current state of non-discrimination policies.

For more information:

[Q&A on the Fundamental Rights Colloquium](#)

[Fundamental Rights Colloquium](#)

[Programme](#)

[Full Eurobarometer](#)

[Eurobarometer Factsheet](#): "Social acceptance and discrimination on the grounds of religion and ethnicity"

[EU Agency for Fundamental Rights overview of available data on antisemitic offences](#)

[EU Justice – Fundamental rights](#)

IP/15/5737

Press contacts:

[Tim McPHIE](#) (+ 32 2 295 86 02)

[Christian WIGAND](#) (+ 32 2 296 22 53)

[Melanie VOIN](#) (+ 32 2 295 86 59)

General public inquiries: [Europe Direct](#) by phone [00 800 67 89 10 11](#) or by [email](#)