



DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION TO ISRAEL

Author: [REDACTED]

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Member States

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UNCLASSIFIED

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To: MD Le Gal

Subject: ISRAEL – HOMs discuss EU-IL relations – EC Coordinator on Combating Antisemitism and Fostering Jewish Life warns on growing antisemitism in Europe (29.05.2025)

Summary:

During the internal exchange, a number of HOMs noted how the position of their governments towards the Israeli government was hardening, also due to the growing pressure by public opinion in their countries, itself the consequence of IL actions in Gaza.

Also in light of growing IL messaging in this respect, including at the antisemitism conference hosted by FM Sa'ar the previous days, they warned against the temptation of labelling criticism towards the IL government as "antisemitism".

During her briefing, EC Coordinator on Combating Antisemitism and Fostering Jewish Life Katharina Von Schnurbein, warned HOMs about the growing antisemitism in Europe in the wake of the October 7 2023 attack and the ensuing war in Gaza.

Detail:

Internal part

1. HOD recalled the latest developments following the FAC meeting and the decision by the HRVP to launch a review of the Association Agreement between the EU and Israel, further explaining, at the request of some HOMs, the next (known) procedural steps. Some EUMS ([REDACTED]) noted how the review should also look at the proposed anti-NGO law under exam at the Knesset.
2. A number of HOMs ([REDACTED]) noted how the position of their governments (who could not be accused of having an anti-IL bias) towards the Israeli government was hardening, also due to the growing pressure by public opinion in their countries, itself the consequence of IL actions in Gaza. Against the backdrop of growing IL messaging in this respect, including at the antisemitism conference hosted by FM Sa'ar the previous days, they further warned against the temptation of labelling criticism towards the IL government as "antisemitism".
3. Concern was also expressed about recent statements by PM Netanyahu about "establishing a sterilised zone in Gaza" ([REDACTED]) and by members of the government about resettling Gaza ([REDACTED]), while the importance of ensuring that our criticism towards the government is not perceived as being anti-IL was underscored ([REDACTED]).

Exchange of views with EC Coordinator on Combating Antisemitism and Fostering Jewish Life Katharina Von Schnurbein

4. EC Coordinator on Combating Antisemitism and Fostering Jewish Life Katharina Von Schnurbein (KVS) recalled the growing antisemitism in Europe, at the highest level since the Holocaust. KVS welcomed the fact that 24 EUMS had adopted national strategies for combating antisemitism. She underscored also the need to fight incidents of antisemitism that are not illegal via counter speeches.
5. Noting how the first anti-IL protests in Europe began already on October 7 2023, KVS shared with HOMs the suspicion that Hamas or other extremist groups were behind those. KVS challenged some reports by the UN on the humanitarian situation in Gaza, such as a statement by the WFP warning of a humanitarian crisis already on October 8, 2023. She also mentioned how Hamas skilfully managed within just one week to shift the media attention from the massacre it committed on October 7 to protests against the Israeli actions in Gaza and all this even before a single Israeli soldier had entered the Strip.
6. KVS warned against new forms of antisemitism, which she described as "ambient antisemitism", i.e. creating an atmosphere in which Jews feel uncomfortable, even in European Institutions, noting, for instance, the "bake sales for Gaza".
7. KVS stated that news on IL providing food in Gaza are ignored by the UN and the media, and warned against the risk that review of the Association Agreement is based on "rumours about Jews", as opposed to facts.
8. KVS also mentioned what she referred to as "conspiracy theories" spread in social media about how "Jews or the Mossad succeeded in putting the Israeli singer in second place" at the recent Eurovision Song Context.
9. In the ensuing Q&A, a number of HOMs (██████████) asked how to draw the line between antisemitism and the legitimate criticism of Israel.
10. Some (████) expressed discomfort in looking at the humanitarian situation in Gaza through the lenses of antisemitism, noting how, while there have been instances of wrong statements by the UN, the IL side dismisses every accusation on attacks on hospitals as "blood libels", while HOMs heard from doctors, human rights organisations, the UN and from UNSC Kaag herself about the seriousness of the humanitarian situation in Gaza, and these are facts and to bring them up is not anti-Semitic.
11. █████ inquired about the report on anti-semitism published by Diaspora Minister Scicli, which █████ warned against even considering, in view of the extreme views of said Minister. █████ wondered how to deal with a reality in which accusations of genocide against Israel are being considered by international jurisdictions.
12. KVS replied by clarifying how criticism of IL is not antisemitism, even if the IL government says it is; qualifying as dangerous the IL extreme right "flirting" with European far right parties. She insisted on the need to build a "trust based" dialogue with IL. She said that international Human Rights Organisations apply "double standards" in relation to the IL-PAL conflict. She warned against the temptation to "reopen" the IHRA, as it would be very difficult to agree on it again.
13. KVS noted how the public discourses in IL and Europe are as far apart as they have ever been, and how losing IL would be a loss for Europe, and we should also reflect on the consequences for Europe when looking at the review of the EU-IL association agreement. She added that the focus in Europe is only on Gaza, with the hostages

being almost forgotten, wondering why already 2-3 days after October 7 we started mentioning IHL, before Israel had undertaken any operation in Gaza.

14. Noting how Jews in Europe are being blamed for what happens in Gaza, KVS concluded by insisting on the need to focus on facts.

SIGN-OFF: TZANTCHEV

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