

Motion

# Finding unity in challenging times

signed by: European Union of Jewish  
Students (EUJS)

co-signed by: Estonian National Youth  
Council (ENL), Ecumenical Youth Council in  
Europe (EYCE), International Federation of  
Liberal Youth (IFLRY), International Young  
Naturefriends (IYNF), German National  
Committee for International Youth Work  
(DNK), Youth of European Nationalities  
(YEN)

The Hamas terrorist attack in Israel on October 7th has once again escalated the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, increasing regional instability and further challenging the already difficult peace negotiations. As a consequence of the Hamas terrorist attack and the Israeli military response, thousands of Israeli, Palestinian, and foreign civilians have lost their lives and, to date, more than 100 Israeli civilians are still held hostage in Gaza.

Beyond the tragic loss of life and the intensification of conflict directly in Israel and Gaza, Hamas' terrorist attack has had global repercussions. From the early hours of October 7th, Europe started experiencing an alarming increase in hate speech and hate crime, with evidence showing that Jewish and Muslim communities are particularly affected. Blamed for the events in the Middle East, Jewish and Muslim communities in Europe became targets of a new form of antisemitism and anti-muslim hatred that is challenging the democratic values that are the so-called pillars of our societies.

Data collected from October 2023 reveals a concerning reality that should not leave us indifferent. Between October 7th and the beginning of November 2023, there have been 657 reports of antisemitic incidents in the UK,<sup>1</sup> 1,515 in France,<sup>2</sup> and 994 in Germany.<sup>3</sup> In Italy, over 80% of Jewish students have changed their daily routine following October 7th.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, between October 7 and November, anti-Muslim hatred re-emerged with 230 Islamophobic incidents occurring in the UK,<sup>5</sup> and 170 in Germany<sup>6</sup> From October to December 2023, over 120 Islamophobic incidents occurred in France.<sup>7</sup> Synagogues, Mosques, Jewish cemeteries, and Holocaust memorials around Europe have been vandalised. In addition to verbal and physical incidents, a significant amount of false information and manipulated content has been circulating online.

As the European Youth Forum, we feel the duty to play our part and stand united against any form of antisemitism, anti-Muslim hatred, xenophobia, and racism. As the unique diversity within the EU and CoE is a core part of European identity, it is our duty to protect the memory of the past and work together to ensure a bright future without space for hatred.

The Israel-Hamas war has reopened a wound in the hearts of millions of Jews, Muslims, Israelis, Palestinians, and Arabs. Amidst the already grievous consequences of the war, social media is exacerbating the polarisation of the debate, morphing it into an arena where issues are oversimplified into stark dichotomies. This environment not only fails to encourage nuanced discussions but also fosters an atmosphere of animosity, pushing individuals towards hostility against those holding divergent perspectives. The rift we are witnessing is creating effects that, in the long term, could seriously damage Europe and the respect of our common values.

Solely recognising the pain that affected individuals are experiencing is not sufficient. Together, we must actively promote understanding and build bridges amongst people to facilitate discussions aimed at promoting peace and respect. As a united voice, we need to look beyond our differences and, starting from our similarities, engage in conversations to build a stronger and more cohesive Europe.

Therefore, acknowledging that:

- A two-state solution is the only viable path toward long-term peace and security, dignity, and opportunity for Israelis and Palestinians alike.
- The terrorist attack on Israel by Hamas and the subsequent Israeli response has resulted in thousands of victims among Israeli, Palestinian,

1 Metropolitan Police, 3 November 2023. Accessible at: <https://news.met.police.uk/news/we-will-take-positive-action-at-every-opportunity-474791>

2 French Ministry of the Interior, 5 November 2023. Accessible at: <https://twitter.com/Europe1/status/1724326154323001490?s=20>

3 *Antisemitic reactions to October 7*, RIAS report-antisemitisme.de. Accessible at: [https://www.report-antisemitism.de/documents/RIAS\\_Monitoring\\_Bericht\\_30-11-2023\\_Englisch.pdf](https://www.report-antisemitism.de/documents/RIAS_Monitoring_Bericht_30-11-2023_Englisch.pdf)

4 Unione Giovani Ebrei d'Italia, 29 November 2023. Accessible at: [https://milano.repubblica.it/cronaca/2023/11/29/news/antisemitismo\\_ebrei\\_crescono\\_casi\\_giovani\\_dopo\\_attacchi\\_hamas\\_cambio\\_abitudini\\_vita-421537636/](https://milano.repubblica.it/cronaca/2023/11/29/news/antisemitismo_ebrei_crescono_casi_giovani_dopo_attacchi_hamas_cambio_abitudini_vita-421537636/)

5 Ibid. 1

6 CLAIM, 4 December 2023 Accessible at: [https://www.claim-allianz.de/aktuelles/news/pressemitteilung-gewaltvolle-uebergrieffe-drohungen-diskrimi\\_nierungen-zahl-antimuslimischer-vorfaelle-bundesweit-erneut-gestiegen/](https://www.claim-allianz.de/aktuelles/news/pressemitteilung-gewaltvolle-uebergrieffe-drohungen-diskrimi_nierungen-zahl-antimuslimischer-vorfaelle-bundesweit-erneut-gestiegen/)

7 French Ministry of Interior, 26 February 2024. Accessible at: [https://www.bfmtv.com/police-justice/les-actes-antimusulmans-ont-fortement-augmente-2023-en-particulier-depuis-les-attaques-du-hamas-en-israel\\_AN-202402260841.html](https://www.bfmtv.com/police-justice/les-actes-antimusulmans-ont-fortement-augmente-2023-en-particulier-depuis-les-attaques-du-hamas-en-israel_AN-202402260841.html)

and foreign civilians, and has led to a humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

- The current war has displaced thousands of Israeli and Palestinian civilians in Israel, Gaza, and abroad.
- Since October 7, European countries have been dealing with a spike of antisemitism and anti-Muslim hatred that is threatening the well-being of entire communities.
- Hate crime and hate speech go against the European fundamental values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and respect for human rights, as enshrined in Article 2 of the Treaty.
- The spread of fake news, disinformation, and misinformation can have a range of harmful consequences, such as threatening our democracies, polarising debates, and putting the health, security, and environment of EU and CoE citizens at risk.

The European Youth Forum:

- Commits to open a constructive dialogue with affected communities aimed at fostering understanding and sharing knowledge.
- Calls upon universities, national and international institutions to implement measures aimed at countering discrimination resulting from recent tensions in the Middle East. Ensure public spaces are safe for everyone, fostering an environment of inclusivity and tolerance.
- Reiterates its dedication to safeguarding the democratic values of the European Union and Council of Europe, and protecting the memory of the past from distortion and denial, particularly the memory of the Holocaust.
- Urges the European and international institutions to take all appropriate measures to guarantee the safety of the European Jewish and Muslim citizens, including providing immediate protection to schools and places of worship.
- Encourages the European and international institutions to take all necessary steps to ensure that

social media platforms abide by the rules set out in the Digital Services Act and, where applicable, the EU Code of Practice on Disinformation.







Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



The European Youth Forum is funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union, the Council of Europe or the European Youth Foundation. Neither the European Union nor any other granting authority can be held responsible for them.

