**Antisemitism is a test of the European idea**

**The European Union has an obligation to defend and emphasise our fundamental values, including respect for human dignity, freedom, equality, and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. For these reasons, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) strongly supported the establishment of the European Commission's Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life at its March plenary.**

Any form of antisemitism is incompatible with European values and norms and poses a threat to the future of a democratic Europe. "The EESC firmly believes that antisemitism is a test of the European idea, the rule of law, fundamental rights, and democracy," explains rapporteur **Ákos Topolánszky**.

To more effectively implement the strategy, the Committee recommends that a permanent unit be established at Council level to monitor and combat antisemitism, reinforcing the work of the European Commission and the European Parliament. In addition, the EESC endorses the working definition of antisemitism adopted by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) and strongly encourages all Member States to adopt it and use it as the foundation for their policy action.

**Fostering Jewish life**

The Committee applauds the strategy for seeking not only to address antisemitism but also to foster Jewish life, and work towards public policies and community cooperation promoting mutual acceptance.

The EESC deems it essential to understand the roots and causes of all forms of violence against Jewish individuals and communities in order to be able to take effective action, not only through criminal justice, but also through a more effective system of action at community and societal level. This includes support for awareness-raising campaigns on non-discrimination, support for training target groups on recognising and responding to hate speech and hate crime, and support and funding for monitoring, data collection and reporting activities.

Moreover, as an integral part of the European identity, Jewish culture must be made more accessible to citizens and the general public. The Committee calls on the EU institutions, the Member States, the social partners and civil society organisations to properly present and celebrate the Jewish community's role in the EU as an essential and inalienable part of a common culture.

**Social media**

The Committee believes that all constitutional and EU legal instruments should be consistently used to tackle antisemitic content in the media, while improving knowledge and understanding of Jewish life through more balanced and sensitive reporting.

In most cases, the representation of Jewish communities and their members in traditional and social media is very limited, focusing primarily on the impact of antisemitic violence and terrorism, as well as the collective memory of the Holocaust in Europe. However, there is a need to also present positive content beyond this as recognition of the importance of social coexistence.

**International aspects**

As a final point, the EESC encourages the European Commission to give the fight against antisemitism and the strategic agenda for the promotion of Jewish life a strong external dimension in all aspects of the cooperation with third countries and international organisations. The Committee points to the instruments of our neighbourhood policy and development cooperation, as well as the instruments for bringing EU candidate countries closer to the EU, as appropriate mechanisms for combating antisemitism and promoting Jewish life.