

# Addressing Anti-Semitism, Intolerance and Discrimination through Education - Regional Conference for Policymakers, Teacher Trainers and Educators

## Conference agenda<sup>1</sup>

3-4 November 2021, 9:00 – 12:45 CET

An event organized by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

The COVID-19 pandemic has created the conditions in many societies across the globe conducive to the spread of rhetoric that scapegoats, dehumanizes, and demonizes certain minority groups for being the cause of the virus and responsible for its spread. As ODIHR's report on *OSCE Human Dimension Commitments and State Responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic*<sup>2</sup> notes, organized hate groups are exploiting the pandemic to engage in disinformation and misinformation about a number of vulnerable and already discriminated groups to spread fear and mistrust, and increase intolerance and divide communities, thereby undermining human rights and social cohesion. Social media has amplified hateful messages and conspiracy theories that often target and scapegoat Jews and Jewish communities, leading to a situation where open antisemitism has become increasingly mainstreamed, including among young people, including in countries without a Jewish population. Many conspiracy theories evoke old anti-Semitic stereotypes and tropes, painfully reminiscent of Nazi propaganda, as well as using new ones. This underscores the urgency to effectively counter anti-Semitism in our societies as well as intolerance, discrimination, and hate more broadly.

Various OSCE commitments address the role of education in combating anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance and discrimination. For example, the Basel Declaration on Enhancing Efforts to Combat Anti-Semitism, adopted in December 2014 by the OSCE Ministerial Council, called on participating States to “promote educational programmes for combating anti-Semitism and provide young people with opportunities for human rights education including on the subject of anti-Semitism”, and on ODIHR to “facilitate the exchange of best practices among participating States (...)”. The 2005 OSCE Ministerial Council Decision from Ljubljana on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination includes the commitment to “encourage public and private educational programmes that promote tolerance and non-discrimination, and raise public awareness of the existence and the unacceptability of intolerance and discrimination”. In this regard, participating States are to “consider drawing on ODIHR expertise and assistance in order to develop methods and curricula for tolerance education in general (...)”.

At the international level, the rise of anti-Semitism and the need to prevent it through education was clearly highlighted during the high-level conference “The power of education for countering racism and discrimination: The case of anti-Semitism” organized by UNESCO on 26 September 2018 during the United Nations General Assembly. The Secretary General of the United Nations declared on this occasion that “anti-Semitism threatens all people’s human rights” and “is a menace to democratic values, to social peace and stability” and asked Member States to “develop education programmes that address anti-

<sup>1</sup> This conference is generously funded by the Government of Bulgaria and through OSCE/ODIHR’s “Words into Action to Address Intolerance” project with funding from the Government of Canada, Germany, the United States of America as well as other OSCE participating States.

<sup>2</sup> Available at: <https://www.osce.org/odihr/human-rights-states-of-emergency-covid19>.

Semitism in a framework of human rights and global citizenship”.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, in 2019, the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief Ahmed Shaheed drew attention to the fact that “(...) antisemitism, if left unchecked by Governments, poses risks not only to Jews, but also to members of other minority communities. Antisemitism is toxic to democracy and mutual respect of citizens and threatens all societies in which it goes unchallenged.”<sup>4</sup>

Educational systems are an essential element in any comprehensive effort to address anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance and discrimination. Schools and teachers, in particular, can play a significant role in raising young people’s awareness of the nature of anti-Semitism and its effect and in building their resilience to prejudice, extremist narratives, conspiracy thinking, and the toxic ideologies that drive discrimination and hatred. Educators also have a duty to create school environments that are safe and inclusive of all students, including Jewish students. This important work for our societies depends on the commitment of educators to perform this crucial task and on the opportunities they have to build their knowledge and skills, as well as on the existing frameworks that foster such commitment.

In their common effort to address anti-Semitism and discrimination, ODIHR and UNESCO have jointly developed two educational materials: [Addressing Anti-Semitism through Education: Guidelines for Policymakers](#) (2018), and [Addressing Anti-Semitism in Schools: Training Curricula](#) (2020). In addition, ODIHR also published a set of ten materials to support teachers in the classroom: [Addressing Anti-Semitism through Education: Teaching Aids](#) (2019).

In order to support participating States in fulfilling their commitments related to education, ODIHR and UNESCO are organizing an online regional conference<sup>5</sup> designed to enhance the efforts of policymakers, teacher trainers, teachers and other educators, including from civil society, to develop effective policies, practices, and pedagogical approaches that address anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance and discrimination. This conference builds on a series of similar regional and international events organized within ODIHR’s “[Words into Action](#)” (WIA) project and in the framework of UNESCO’s programme on [Global Citizenship Education](#). The meeting will examine various policy measures government officials can take, offer a comprehensive framework for teacher and school director training, as well as practical materials and resources which teachers and educators can use.

*The event will be conducted in English and Russian, with simultaneous interpretation, and over Zoom.*

## Provisional Agenda

Day 1 Wednesday, 3 November, 2021	
Opening session	
9:00 – 9:25	<b>Welcome remarks (10 min)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Kateryna Ryabiko, First Deputy Director, OSCE/ODIHR;</li><li>• Krista Pikkat, Director, UNESCO Almaty</li></ul>

<sup>3</sup> Secretary-General's remarks to High-Level Event on the Power of Education for Countering Racism and Discrimination: The Case of anti-Semitism, 26.09.2018, available at: <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2018-09-26/secretary-generals-remarks-high-level-event-power-education>

<sup>4</sup> Report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, presented before the UN General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session, 20 September 2019, A/74/358, p. 2, <https://undocs.org/A/74/358>.

<sup>5</sup> Covering the following participating States: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

	<p><b>Keynote addresses (15 min)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alla Gerber, President of the Holocaust Foundation, and Co-Chair of the Holocaust Research and Education Center</li> <li>• Ahmed Shaheed, UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief</li> </ul>
<p><b>Session 1: Understanding and recognizing anti-Semitism</b></p> <p><i>The purpose of this session is to introduce the concept of anti-Semitism and its various contemporary manifestations, including online and in the form of Holocaust denial and distortion</i></p>	
<p><b>9:25 – 10:20</b></p>	<p><b>Understanding and recognizing anti-Semitism – a brief introduction (40 min)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Robert Rozett, Senior Historian, Yad Vashem International Institute for Holocaust Research</li> </ul> <p><b>Q&amp;A session (15 min)</b></p> <p><u>Moderator:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mikolaj Wrzecionkowski, Adviser on Combating Anti-Semitism, ODIHR</li> </ul>
<p><b>10:20 – 10:30</b></p>	<p><b>Break</b></p>
<p><b>Session 2: Panel Discussion: Holocaust education and addressing anti-Semitism, intolerance and discrimination</b></p> <p><i>The purpose of this panel discussion is gain insights and understanding from recognized experts and practitioners on the importance of Holocaust education, including the needed connections with education to address anti-Semitism, and as part of human rights and global citizenship education, as well as to learn about various practices around Holocaust education in different states</i></p>	
<p><b>10:30 – 11:40</b></p>	<p><b>Panel discussion (30 min)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ilya Altman, Co-Chair of the Holocaust Research and Education Center, Professor, and Director of the International Center for the History of the Holocaust and Genocides at the Russian State University for the Humanities</li> <li>• Jane Jacobs, Director of the International Relations Section, International School for Holocaust Studies, Yad Vashem</li> <li>• Mikolaj Wrzecionkowski, Adviser on Combating Anti-Semitism, ODIHR</li> </ul> <p><i>Question(s) for panellists</i></p> <p><b>Breakout room discussion (20 min)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What are the challenges and opportunities to advance Holocaust education and measures to address anti-Semitism, intolerance and discrimination through education in your region, country or locality?</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Plenary discussion (20 min)</b></p> <p><u>Session introducer and panel moderator:</u></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Karel Fracapane, Programme Specialist, Section of Global Citizenship and Peace Education, Division for Peace and Sustainable Development, Education Sector, UNESCO</li> </ul>
<b>11:40 – 11:45</b>	Break
<p><b>Session 3: Addressing anti-Semitism, intolerance and discrimination: education policies and pedagogical strategies</b></p> <p><i>The purpose of this session is to provide an overview as well as concrete examples of educational policies, strategies and initiatives to address anti-Semitism as well as intolerance and discrimination more broadly. It will present specific ODIHR and UNESCO publications and their underlying philosophy. The session topics will be discussed within the broader human rights and global citizenship education frameworks and from a gender perspective.</i></p>	
<b>11:45 - 12:45</b>	<p><b>Interactive presentations (45 min)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Addressing Anti-Semitism through Education: Teaching Aids</i> Presentation by Delia Niță, Associate Project Officer, “Words into Action to Address Intolerance” project, ODIHR</li> <li>• Conspiracy theories: how to counter them through education, including through media and information literacy and critical thinking Presentation by Isabel Tamoj, Junior Professional Officer, Section of Global Citizenship and Peace Education, UNESCO</li> </ul> <p><b>Q&amp;A from the audience (15 min)</b></p> <p><b><u>Moderator:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tome Shekerdjiev, Project Officer, “Words into Action to Address Intolerance” project, ODIHR</li> </ul>

**Day 2**  
**Thursday, 4 November, 2021**

**Session 4: The work of educational partners in addressing anti-Semitism, intolerance and discrimination**

*The purpose of this session is to raise awareness of the work of important partners outside the school realm, such as museums or civil society and community organizations in addressing anti-Semitism, intolerance and discrimination. It will also present how such actors cooperate with schools and support teachers, how educational systems can benefit from their work, as well as highlight good practices*

<b>9:00 – 10:00</b>	<p><b>Speakers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rabbi Alexander Boroda, Director General of the Jewish Museum and Tolerance Center, and President of the Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia</li> <li>• Mariam Gavtadze, Founder of the Tolerance and Diversity Institute in Georgia and Member of the OSCE/ODIHR Panel of Experts on Freedom of Religion of Belief</li> <li>• Anna Bokshitskaya, Executive Director, Russian Jewish Congress</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Steven Stegers, Executive Director, EuroClio – European Association of History Educators</li> </ul> <p><b>Q&amp;A from the audience (20 min)</b></p> <p><u>Moderator:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delia Niță, Associate Project Officer, “Words into Action to Address Intolerance” project, ODIHR.</li> </ul>
<b>10:00 – 10:10</b>	<b>Break</b>
<p><b>Session 5: Teacher training frameworks</b></p> <p><i>The purpose of this session is to present the UNESCO &amp; ODIHR publication “Addressing Anti-Semitism in Schools: Training Curricula” and to provide an understanding of what such training should contain</i></p>	
<b>10:10-11:35</b>	<p><b>Presentation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Addressing Anti-Semitism in Schools: Training Curricula” Presentation of the training curricula by Ruth-Anne Lenga, Programme Director and Arthur Chapman, Associate Professor in History Education, Centre for Holocaust Education, University College London.</li> </ul> <p><b>Group exercises</b></p> <p><u>Moderator:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Heather Mann, Consultant, Section of Global Citizenship and Peace Education, Division for Peace and Sustainable Development, Education Sector, UNESCO</li> </ul>
<b>11:35 -11:45</b>	<b>Break</b>
<p><b>Session 6: Follow-up national plans</b></p> <p><i>The purpose of this session is to allow participants to plan and coordinate in view of national-level strategies and actions to counter anti-Semitism and discrimination in education</i></p>	
<b>11:45 – 12:35</b>	<p><b>Breakout rooms (30 min)</b></p> <p>Guiding questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) How can education to address anti-Semitism, intolerance and discrimination be integrated into school curricula and lesson plans? What is already in place that you can build upon?</li> <li>2) What are the training needs of teachers and educators and how can we address these? What would be the priority action areas?</li> <li>3) How can antisemitism, intolerance and discrimination be addressed through lifelong learning and informal education?</li> <li>4) What partnerships could be built to advance efforts to address anti-Semitism, intolerance and discrimination through education? Do you see any opportunities for synergies in the sub-region?</li> </ol> <p><b>Group Plenary (20 min)</b></p> <p><u>Moderator:</u></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Jane Lawson, Project Officer, EStAR Project, ODIHR</li></ul>
<b>12:35 – 12:45</b>	<p><b>Closing Remarks and evaluation questionnaire</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Karel Fracapane, Programme Specialist, Section of Global Citizenship and Peace Education, Division for Peace and Sustainable Development, Education Sector, UNESCO;</li><li>Kishan Manocha, Head, Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Department, ODIHR</li></ul>