



Education International  
Internationale de l'Éducation  
Internacional de la Educación

<http://www.ei-ie.org>

# ETUCE

## European Trade Union Committee for Education EI European Region

### EUROPEAN REGION- ETUCE

#### President

Larry FLANAGAN

#### Vice-Presidents

Odile CORDELIER  
Andreas KELLER  
Trudy KERPERIEN  
Dorte LANGE  
Galina MERKULOVA  
Branimir STRUKELJ



Boulevard Bischoffsheim, 15  
1000 Brussels, Belgium  
Tel +32 2 224 06 91/92  
Fax +32 2 224 06 94  
[secretariat@csee-etuce.org](mailto:secretariat@csee-etuce.org)  
<http://www.csee-etuce.org>

#### European Director

Susan FLOCKEN

#### Treasurer

Joan DONEGAN

## ETUCE Statement on the Council Declaration on mainstreaming the fight against antisemitism across policy areas

*(adopted by ETUCE Bureau on 22 February 2021)*

On 2 December 2020, the Council of the European Union adopted a [Council Declaration on mainstreaming the fight against antisemitism across policy-areas](#) which condemns any form of antisemitism, intolerance or racist hatred and calls for decisive actions at European and national level. ETUCE\* welcomes the adoption of the Council Declaration as an important step forward to pave the way for a more coordinated and holistic European strategy against antisemitism but urges the European Commission and members states to undertake effective measures for its implementation.

**Antisemitism in all its forms is a severe violation of the values of the European society, including human rights, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human dignity and diversity.** Recently, the dissemination and acceptance of antisemitism is rising across Europe. [Research](#) (2019) by the Fundamental Rights Agency on the perceptions and experiences of antisemitism among young Jewish Europeans reports that it is perceived as a problem by 81% of participants to the study, and 83% of them believe that antisemitism has grown in recent years. In addition, today, the widespread social media platforms around the world offer further channels for the propagation of extremism and antisemitism. Countering antisemitism is, therefore, one of the most urgent challenges of our time. In this context, **the role of education is crucial** not only in keeping the memory alive but also in educating students to embrace the fundamental values of our democracy, where there is no space for any form of discrimination and hatred.

Reaffirming [the Council Declaration on the fight against antisemitism \(December 2018\)](#), that called on members states to introduce education and training against all forms of intolerance and racism in the national curricula, including antisemitic prejudices and hate crime, the Council declaration (2020) defines holocaust education and education on Jewish history and identity as important tools to prevent antisemitic prejudices. Despite welcoming the Council's view, ETUCE points out that combating antisemitism in relations to its current and newly emerging forms, such as antisemitism online for example, is a **much more complex challenge that requires a holistic strategy, more articulated than merely teaching the holocaust history.** The [Joint ETUCE-EFEE-ESHA Statement on Citizenship Education & EU Common Values](#) stresses the importance of introducing a **holistic democratic citizenship education starting from an early age** as a tool to promote the values democracy, freedom, tolerance, non-discrimination, equality and solidarity which are fundamental for combating antisemitism, intolerance or racist hatred. The Council Declaration and the new [EU anti-racism action plan 2020-2025](#) entail the ambition to mainstreaming the combat against antisemitism in all policy areas. Nevertheless, ETUCE regrets that the anti-racism measures proposed in the field of education, such as the [new Skills Agenda](#) and the [European](#)

[Education Area](#), remain vague and theoretical, while the [new European Democracy Action Plan](#) attributes only a [side role to education](#). Since not all national education frameworks include holocaust education and democratic citizenship education as mandatory topics in curricula, the responsibility of teaching them is entirely delegated to **teachers who are, however, left without adequate professional and pedagogical support**. According to a [Eurydice study](#) on citizenship education, almost half of the countries across Europe do not include citizenship education in initial teacher training. In addition, the pushbacks and the limited flexible time for discussing and practicing democracy in curricula can further discourage teachers from addressing the Holocaust, human rights, and diversity of cultures and backgrounds in education. **ETUCE urges member states to implement measures supporting teachers with adequate training and up-to-date materials on how to develop pedagogically tailored methods that promote democratic citizenship, inclusion and diversity in education and address the challenges of an increasingly diverse European society.**

Several additional obstacles also prevent holocaust education and citizenship education from being well included in school curricula. The '[holocaust fatigue](#)' due to the extensive media coverage on the holocaust as well as the holocaust denial or its trivialisation, and the **absence of positive narrative on Jewish cultures** are among the major challenges. In addition, antisemitism is not an isolated phenomenon, but it is coupled with increasing trends of **racist, xenophobic, homophobic and other forms of intolerance targeted against ethnic minorities** such as Roma and Travellers, Jews, Muslims, immigrants as well as LGBTIQ persons discriminated against on the ground of sexual orientation. In this context, ETUCE highlights that **the combat against antisemitism should go hand-in-hand with tackling all forms of hate, discrimination and intolerance on any ground.**

Cooperation and dialogue among all the relevant education stakeholders are essential to developing a holistic and effective strategy against antisemitism, racism and intolerance. ETUCE urges the European Union and member states to implement and support a **meaningful social dialogue** with education trade unions in the fight against antisemitism and intolerance. Having education personnel's voice represented in the discussions on mainstreaming the fight against antisemitism across policy areas on European, national, and local levels, is an important step towards a future where any form of antisemitism, racism, hate as well as its dissemination and violence are rejected and condemned.

*\*The European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) represents 127 Education Trade Unions and 11 million teachers in 51 countries of Europe. ETUCE is a Social Partner in education at the EU level and a European Trade Union Federation within ETUC, the European Trade Union Confederation. ETUCE is the European Region of Education International, the global federation of education trade unions.*