



Bundesverband RIAS e.V., Postfach 580 350, 10413 Berlin

Press release

European Commission and International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance publish a *Handbook for the Practical Use of the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism*

Berlin (08.01.2021) – A new handbook illustrates where and how the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism is already being implemented by European, national or regional authorities and civil society organisations in the European Union and the United Kingdom: The *Handbook for the Practical use of the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism* was presented by the Federal Association of Departments for Research and Information on Antisemitism (Bundesverband RIAS) on Friday.

In May 2016, addressing the Catalanian parliament a politician called the president of Barcelona's Jewish community a "foreign agent" from an alleged "Zionist lobby" that defines the Parliament's agenda. In December 2017, after US government's decision to move the US embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, individuals threw firebombs at the synagogue in Gothenburg. In November 2020, a Hungarian official and museum director called Jewish Shoah survivor George Soros a "liberal leader", accused Soros of turning Europe into a "gas chamber" and claimed that he controls people as if they were pawns on a "worldwide chessboard".

These examples – included in the *Handbook* – illustrate: Antisemitism shapes everyday life of Jews in Europe and occurs in all political spectrums. The *IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism* helps recognising manifestations of antisemitism in various contexts, including public life, social media, schools, the workplace, media and the religious sphere.

The *Handbook* explains and illustrates all dimensions of the *IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism* based on 22 antisemitic incidents and criminal offenses across Europe. Based on 71 data sets from 27 EU Member States and the UK, the *Handbook* presents 35 good-practice examples of the definition's practical application in the areas of law enforcement, judiciary, education, government funding, sports, and civil society. For this purpose, the *Handbook* authors surveyed Jewish communities, representatives of civil society, members of the European Commission's antisemitism working group, and experts from IHRA and the EU Fundamental Rights Agency.

The *Handbook* commissioned by the European Commission and published jointly with the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, with support of the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union, was prepared by the Bundesverband RIAS which conducted the research. You can find the *Handbook* on the website of the Bundesverband RIAS under https://report-antisemitism.de/documents/IHRADefinition_Handbook.pdf or on the website of the European Union under <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2838/72276>.

Statements:

Benjamin Steinitz, Bundesverband RIAS Executive Director and Co-author:

“The IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism is essential for civil society efforts combating antisemitism, since it describes all of the different facets of present-day antisemitism, including

those forms that target Israel conceived as a Jewish collectivity. Consistently using this definition for training police and judiciary, as well as teachers and other public service personnel would improve sensitivity for current manifestations of antisemitism and ensure a common frame of reference with Jewish and civil society perceptions of antisemitism.”

Katharina von Schnurbein, European Commission coordinator on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life:

“The non-legally binding IHRA working definition of antisemitism serves as a basis for recognizing and addressing all forms of contemporary antisemitism. Antisemitism constitutes a threat to the Jewish community and to democratic values. In a very practical way, this handbook will help state authorities and civil society way to prevent and address antisemitic incidents, support victims, improve data collection of incidents, and increase awareness.

Michaela Küchler, IHRA chairwomen and Federal Foreign Office Special Representative for Relations with Jewish Organisations, Issues Relating to Antisemitism, International Sinti and Roma Affairs, and Holocaust Remembrance:

“The IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism helps to reach a common understanding of antisemitism. It has raised awareness, especially among policymakers, that this dangerous phenomenon exists in all societies. However, we still have much work to do in terms of sensitizing individuals and institutions to the existence of antisemitism. The IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism can serve as a useful educational tool in this regard - and for action. This handbook assembles good practices and examples for action.”

Felix Klein, Federal Government Commissioner for Jewish Life in Germany and the Fight against Antisemitism:

“After intensive preparations, the practitioners’ handbook on the IHRA definition is now ready to use. By outlining the definition’s use in the EU as well as explaining and illustrating the definition, the manual provides genuine added value. I am very pleased that this helpful manual will now make it easier to apply the IHRA definition.”

The Federal Association of Departments for Research and Information on Antisemitism was founded in October 2018. Its aim is to guarantee a uniform civil society recording and documentation of antisemitic incidents throughout Germany through www.report-antisemitism.de.

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