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RELATION PROJECT

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IN TIMES OF WAR IT IS EVEN MORE URGENT TO TEACH ABOUT COEXISTENCE AND TOLERANCE

To propose measures to fight against antisemitism in schools is the objective that unites organizations from four countries in RELATION, a project funded by the European Union.

The meeting had already been scheduled, experts from Spain, Romania and Belgium would meet in Italy, at the headquarters of the *Hallgarten-Franchetti Foundation Centro Studi Villa Montesca*, to work together and monitor the activities of the RELATION project, an initiative of research and new methodologies to fight against modern antisemitism. As planned, they got together, on Monday October 9, what they did not know was that two days before, on Saturday the 7th, the worst terrorist attack of this century against the people of Israel would take place.

“By cultivating ideologies anchored in hate, prejudice and inequality of identities, antisemitism threatens the realization of all people’s human rights. Antisemitism germinates irrespective of the presence of a Jewish population, and there is no direct correlation between the size of the Jewish population and the degree of antisemitism. Instead, it flourishes as an attitude, replicated in myth, conspiracy, imagery, media and culture, borrowing from historic tropes and reinventing itself in new guises,” notes the document *Addressing Antisemitism through Education* published by the United Nations Organization Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIDH).

In the midst of the conflict that hits not only the territories of Israel and Palestine, but also affects the European reality and puts at risk the security and guarantee of rights of all citizens, the implementation of more experiences to teach children and teenagers the basic criteria to promote understanding of the diversity of identities cannot be postponed.

As cited in the pedagogical model created for this project and available on the website: “If Sartre correctly said that ‘antisemitism is above all a passion’, it means that the fight against antisemitism needs a greater and deeper involvement of the emotional aspects: relational, practical, active and social beyond the cognitive level.”



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More than 70 teachers from primary and secondary schools in Europe are currently being trained with the group's experiential and innovative proposals; the goal by the end of the project is to reach at least 100.

All activities will remain active, as Gadi Luzzato, director of the *Centro di Documentazione Ebraica di Milano* (CDEC), said: “We are convinced that conflicts can only be overcome with intense work in education and culture, combating hate speech and keeping the channels of dialogue open.”

What does European legislation say about hate speech?

As part of the project, the University degli Studi di Milano, in collaboration with all partners, developed an exhaustive analysis of the aspects of greatest interest regarding the fight against antisemitism from a legal point of view. One of the issues that came to the surface is associated with denialism, a social and political phenomenon that was developed mainly in Europe and whose origin is linked to the questioning of the Nazi genocide.

The report, which collects data from the four participating countries, points out that “some member states have provided for the punishment of denialism in their criminal codes; and others introduced a special legislation. It must be taken into account that national laws still differ in many aspects, such as the definition of crimes and the variety of historical events whose memory they should protect”.

This legal report will also be available for those who want to consult it at www.relationproject.eu

The partners in this project financed by the European Union are:

Spain – Bet Shalom, Progressive Jewish Community of Barcelona
Italy – Fondazione Centro Di Documentazione Ebraica Contemporanea (CDEC)
Italy - Fondazione Hallgarten -Franchetti Centro Studi Villa Montesca (FCSVM)
Italy - Università Degli Studi Di Milano (UMIL)
Italy - Università Cattolica Del Sacro Cuore (UCSC)
Romania - Institutul Intercultural Timisoara (IIT)
Belgium - CEJI

To find out more about the educational activities, research and local events of the project join us on Instagram @relationproject and visit www.relationproject.eu.

For more information please write to: communications@relationproject.eu

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