

2024 - 5784

# ANNUAL REPORT ON ANTISEMITISM IN ITALY 2023

By the CDEC Foundation's Observatory on antisemitism



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## OBSERVATORY ON ANTISEMITISM: MISSION, OBJECTIVES AND WORKING METHODOLOGY

**The Observatory on Antisemitism is a sector of the Contemporary Jewish Documentation Center - CDEC Foundation, founded in 1975, which monitors antisemitism in its many manifestations on a daily basis, focusing particularly on the different features of the phenomenon, its different backgrounds and expressions.** The monitoring activity ensures coverage of the entire national territory. In Italy, the Sector offers a unique service and is used for historical, sociological, and journalistic studies and surveys.

The Sector compiles and records actions of antisemitism (physical or verbal assaults, writing and graffiti, online insults, public speeches, etc.), processes data on incidents of anti-Jewish hostility, conducts surveys of public opinion, and carries out targeted studies. Particular attention is paid to monitoring online antisemitism for the new complex reality of antisemitism 2.0.

The Observatory on Antisemitism classifies as an incident of antisemitism any intentional act directed toward Jewish people, organizations, or property, where there is evidence that the action has antisemitic motivations or content, or that the victim was targeted because he or she was Jewish or believed to be Jewish. In this regard, the Observatory endorses the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism.<sup>1</sup>

The Observatory is made aware of incidents of antisemitism through the mainstream media and reports to the Antisemitism Hotline.<sup>2</sup> The actual number of antisemitic incidents is higher than the number recorded because the reporting or visibility of incidents varies according to type; it is easier to get news of the more serious ones while verbal or written offenses are more rarely reported.

The Observatory's archive has the richest library of antisemitic books published from 1945 to the present in Italy. It also maintains numerous collections of antisemitic magazines, an extensive collection of photographs, audio and video recordings.

The website [www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it](http://www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it) is updated daily with articles, news and research from the domestic and foreign press, Internet sites and blogs. It features newspaper articles, studies, research, reports, debates, public statements, and scientific surveys. **During 2023, the site had 107 thousand page views and 53 thousand users.**

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<sup>1</sup> [www.holocaustremembrance.com/it/resources/working-definitions-charters/la-definizione-di-antisemitismo-dellalleanza-internazionale](http://www.holocaustremembrance.com/it/resources/working-definitions-charters/la-definizione-di-antisemitismo-dellalleanza-internazionale)

<sup>2</sup> [www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it/antenna-antisemitismo/](http://www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it/antenna-antisemitismo/)

The Observatory is a member of ENCATE (European Network for Countering Antisemitism through Education),<sup>3</sup> the Facing Facts network<sup>4</sup> and the National Network for Countering Hate Speech and Hate Phenomena.<sup>5</sup>

The Observatory serves institutions, schools, educators and students, scholars, social communicators and facilitators, and the broader public. Its goal is to raise awareness of anti-Jewish prejudice, educate on respect for diversity, and support the law enforcement actions carried out by anyone.



<< The Middle East crisis, with its harboring of hatred, has also caused the phenomenon of antisemitism to resurface from its karstic river, which, today as yesterday, feeds on commonplaces and a distorted view of history. It derives from subcultures that resist time and reason, real 'warehouses of hatred, never emptied of their toxic goods,' as Senator Liliana Segre recently defined them. This kind of discourse must be responded with the clearest condemnation, without ambiguity, without convenient explanations.>>

- Sergio Mattarella, President of the Republic.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> <https://encate.eu/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.facingfacts.eu/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.retecontrolodio.org/>

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.ansa.it/sito/notizie/politica/2023/12/18/mattarella-condannare-lantisemitismo-basta-ambiguita\\_2ab4d887-c4a6-433e-b3a0-f36e5618ac7c.html](https://www.ansa.it/sito/notizie/politica/2023/12/18/mattarella-condannare-lantisemitismo-basta-ambiguita_2ab4d887-c4a6-433e-b3a0-f36e5618ac7c.html)

## TABLE OF CONTENT

1. Chapter I: The social, economic and cultural context .....	p. 6
2. Chapter II: Antisemitic incidents .....	p. 16
3. Chapter III: Antisemitism on social media .....	p. 31
4. Chapter IV: The Youth – Jews and antisemitism .....	p. 41
5. Chapter V: Best practices on countering antisemitism .....	p. 45

# CHAPTER ONE: THE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

## 1.1 The social context

The report on antisemitism in Italy is introduced by general observations regarding society, its changes, and the population's perception of security and well-being. This is in the belief that social malaise, poverty, and discomfort are the root of resentment, racist, xenophobic and antisemitic sentiments.

For many years we have been witnessing a series of crises: the Covid, wars, the fear of world conflict; rising energy costs, the cost of living, inflation. And the climate crisis. There are many problems, concerns and uncertainties that lead people to revise their plans and prospects.

In 2019, Censis called the country "a collectivity that has lost its sense of investment in the future." In 2020, the year of Covid19, Italy was scared: 73.4 percent of Italians indicated fear of the unknown and consequent anxiety as the prevailing sentiment. In 2021, they spoke of "an eternal present." In 2022, Censis described a country "living in a state of latency." Demos spoke of a "suspended" time, a "timeless time." Previous concerns were replaced by the war in Ukraine, inflation, and the energy crisis. Today, Censis describes Italy as a sleepwalking.

According to Demos, the main global risks capable of affecting lives in the near future are: environmental destruction (53 percent), climate change (51 percent), the outbreak of new wars for 41 percent, and globalization, the influence on life and the economy of what happens in the world (34 percent).

### LE PAURE GLOBALI: SERIE STORICA

Con che frequenza le capita di sentirsi preoccupato per quanto riguarda...  
(Valori % di quanti rispondono "Frequentemente" preoccupati)

	2023	2022	2021	2020
La distruzione dell'ambiente e della natura	53	58	57	66
Il riscaldamento globale e il cambiamento climatico	51	-	--	--
Lo scoppio di nuove guerre nel mondo	41	49	27	30
La globalizzazione, l'influenza sulla vita e sull'economia di ciò che capita nel mondo	34	39	33	41
Essere vittima di disastri naturali: terremoti, frane, alluvioni	31	23	24	27
L'insorgere di nuove epidemie	25	36	46	44
Gli atti terroristici	19	23	24	29

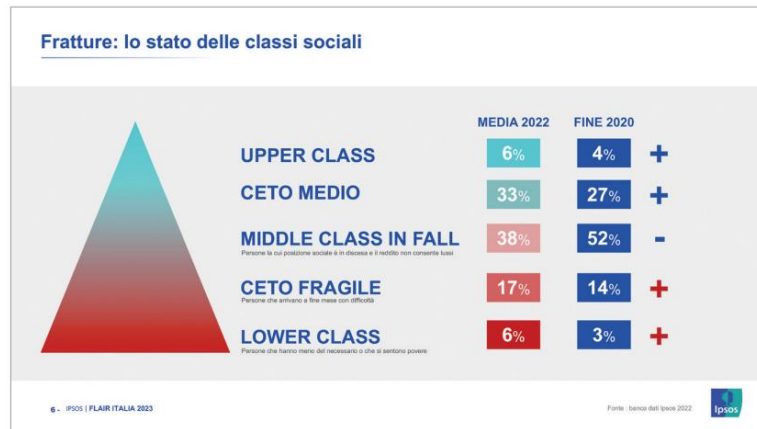
Fonte: Osservatorio Europeo sulla Sicurezza, sondaggio Demos & Pi per Fondazione Unipolis, Luglio 2023 (N. Casi: 1.004)

## Social inequalities

According to a Ipsos's survey today, the most widely perceived problem by Italians is social inequality, the stalled social mobility, and the weakening of the middle class; these are emergencies that create disorientation, frustration, and anger.

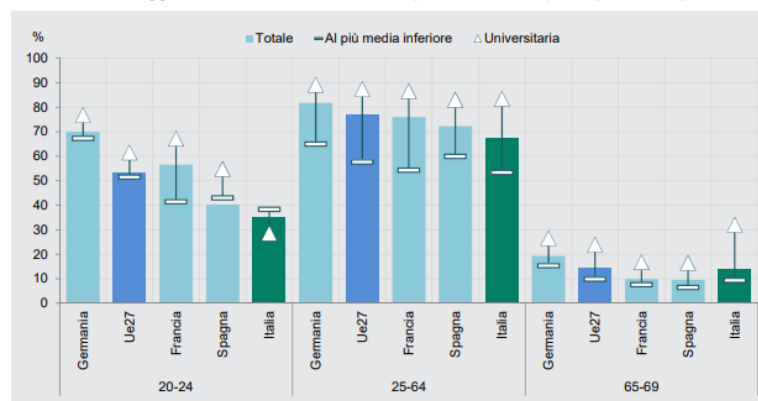
81% of Italians have a perception of growing poverty. 36% of them affirm that they have good economic conditions, the remaining 64% say otherwise. The pandemic, inflation, and labor market

changes strongly affected Italians. Overall, 34 percent of Italians have seen their income and level of well-being decline. In the middle class, signs of difficulty and descent were felt by 9% of people, while in the working class it touched 34%. Thus, in total, 64% of the country is in poor or declining economic status.



In 2022, nationwide employment is about 9 percentage points lower than the European average and more than 14 points lower than in Germany.

**Figura 2.4** Tasso di occupazione per fascia d'età e livello di istruzione nell'Ue27 e nelle maggiori economie dell'Unione europea. Anno 2022 (valori percentuali)

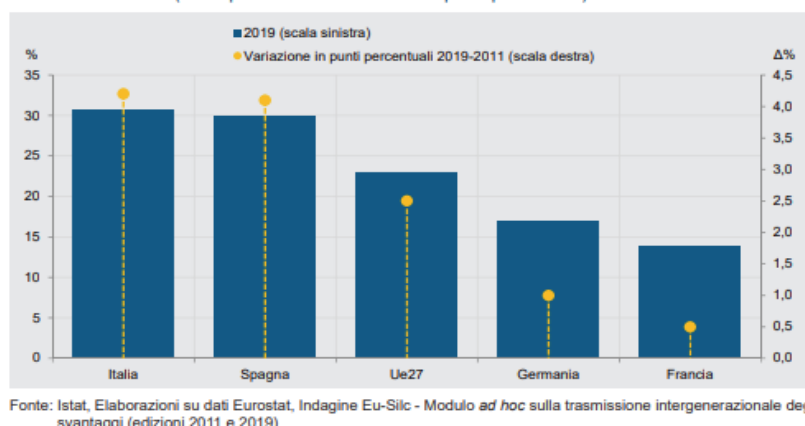


Italian wages are among the lowest in Europe and have declined over the past 30 years. They are 12 percent lower than in 2008 in real terms. The average wage, at purchasing power parity among all countries in the world, is just above the 35,000-euro. The OECD average is above 46,000 euros. Since 1990, Italian salaries have decreased by 2.9 percent, French and German salaries have increased by about 30 percent, and American salaries by almost 40 percent. According to the latest data published by Istat, in the first half of 2022, the gap between price increases and changes in contractual wages has reached nearly 6 percentage points.

Istat reports growing social inequality. Absolute poverty is increasing in Italy, just over 2.18 million households (8.3 percent of the total from 7.7 percent in 2021) and more than 5.6 million individuals (9.7 percent up from 9.1 percent in the previous year) were in absolute poverty in 2022. This worsening is largely attributable to the sharp rise in inflation, the impact of which was

particularly high for the poorest households. Households in absolute poverty are in 70 percent of cases households with only Italians (nearly 1.526 million, an incidence of 6.4 percent) and for the remaining 30 percent households with foreigners.

**Figura 1.19** Adulti 25-49 anni a rischio di povertà che all'età di 14 anni vivevano in famiglie in cattive condizioni finanziarie nelle maggiori economie dell'Ue27. Anni 2011 e 2019 (valori percentuali e variazioni in punti percentuali)



Social mobility seems to work only for the affluent classes, while for the working-class and lower-middle classes the social slide is in place. 41% of Italians feel excluded or partially excluded from society. A figure that rises to 63% in the working classes and 48% among 18-30-year-olds. Rising prices, precarization and fear of losing jobs, and rising bills are being strong felt: fear of losing their jobs involves 67% of the working class, 56% of young people under thirty, 49% of women, and 50% of residents in the south (Istat Annual Report).

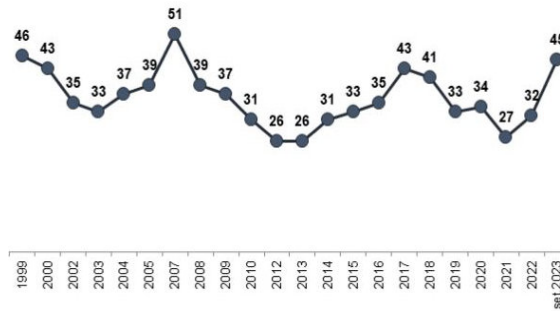
Economic shocks, job insecurity, and perceptions of uncontrolled immigration push people to seek identity references based on the primacy of Italians and xenophobic and racist subcultures. Therefore, aversion to immigration is growing again: 40% of Italians feel discomfort toward migrants, 62% think our country should not welcome them. The least welcoming are the over-40s, with over 65%. Negative sentiments toward immigration are felt both by the middle (65%) and working class (59%). The growth of xenophobic sentiment in the middle class and their persistence in the working class shows a strong correlation with social crisis and decetomization (Ipsos).

According to Demos (\*), citizens' anxiety over the rise of immigrants has increased over the past year. Today the share of those who consider them "a danger to public order and people's safety" has reached 45%. The highest level since 2007 when it had reached 51 percent, a figure that subsequently declined significantly, until falling to 26 percent in 2012-13. It has started to grow again later around 2017-18, a growth that coincides with the increase in arrivals of refugees and the general election campaign in Italy, when Salvini's Lega built its electoral success on the fear of the foreigner. According to a Demos poll, in the end of 2023, almost two-thirds of Italians felt that they would like to be amongst "their own". Up by more than 10 points over the past year.



#### LA PAURA DELLO STRANIERO

Quanto si direbbe d'accordo con la seguente affermazione? "Gli immigrati sono un pericolo per l'ordine pubblico e la sicurezza delle persone".  
(valori % di quanti si dicono "moltissimo" o "molto" d'accordo – serie storica)



Fonte: sondaggio Demos per La Repubblica – Settembre 2023 (base: 1010 casi)

#### VOTA INFORMATIVA

Il sondaggio è stato realizzato da Demos & Pi per La Repubblica. La rilevazione è stata condotta nei giorni 18-20 settembre 2023 da Demetra con metodo mixed mode (Cati - Cami - Cawi). Il campione nazionale intervistato (N=1.010, rifiuti/sostituzioni/inviti: 4.996) è rappresentativo per i caratteri socio-demografici e la distribuzione territoriale della popolazione italiana di età superiore ai 18 anni (margine di errore 3.1%).

Documentazione completa su [www.sondaggiipoliticoelettorali.it](http://www.sondaggiipoliticoelettorali.it)

## The vulnerability of the youth

One in seven minors drop out of school early, more young people do not achieve basic skills by the end of their education career. Economic poverty and educational poverty feed off each other and are transmitted from generation to generation. 23.1 percent of 15–29-year-olds in Italy are in the NEET limbo, out of any pathway to work, education or training. The percentage is the highest in the EU, more than double that of France and Germany. 12.7 percent of students do not make it to graduation, dropping out of school early. This situation mainly affects boys with the most economically and socially fragile families behind them. In recent decades, demographic dynamics, the postponement of life-cycle stages, the spread of precarious and fragmented work paths, and reduced levels of social mobility have contributed to undermining many young people's chances of realizing their opportunities and discouraging their participation at various levels (political, social, cultural), as shown by several recent studies (Chen et al., 2018; European Commission, 2018; OECD, 2018a and 2018b).

In 2022, nearly 1 in 2 young Italians (18/34 years old) show at least one sign of deprivation in one of the key domains of well-being (Education and Work, Social Cohesion, Health, Subjective well-being, Territory). In this set, more than 1.6 million (or 15.5 percent of 18–34-year-olds) are multi-deprived, that is, they show signs of deprivation in at least 2 domains. In Italy, the intergenerational transfer mechanism of poverty is greater than in most European Union countries: in fact, almost a third of adults (25–49 years old) at risk of poverty lived in families in critical financial condition when they were 14 years old. Young people (57%), the working-age population (31%), and the elderly (12%) are deemed the most penalized today according to a 2023 Censis's survey.

According to a Censis re-elaboration of Istat data and Censis surveys, the new forms of youth dissent are summarized in the table below:

**Tav. 2 - Le nuove forme del dissenso giovanile**

Forme del dissenso	Fenomeni
Rifiuto	Il 21,8% dei giovani di 18-34 anni pensa che alle prossime elezioni politiche non voterà  1,7 milioni di giovani tra 15 e 29 anni (il 19,8% del totale) non lavorano, né studiano, né partecipano ad attività formative. Siamo al secondo posto in Europa, preceduti solo dalla Romania, mentre la media Ue è dell'11,7%
Fuga	Il 60,6% dei giovani tra 18 e 34 anni dichiara che, se ne avesse la possibilità, se ne andrebbe dall'Italia  Dal 2012 al 2021 si sono trasferiti all'estero 336.592 giovani di 25-34 anni
Rivendicazione	Il 30,5% dei giovani tra 18 e 34 anni è favorevole alle azioni degli attivisti che violano le opere d'arte per sensibilizzare l'opinione pubblica sull'emergenza climatica

Fonte: elaborazione Censis su dati Istat e indagini Censis, 2022 e 2023

## Disinformation, disorientation

Today about 47 million Italians, 93% of the total, routinely inform themselves on at least one of the available sources, 83.5% on the web and 74% in traditional media. On the opposite side, there are about 3.3 million, or 7% of the total, who have given up having timely information about what is happening, while 700,000 Italians do not inform themselves at all.

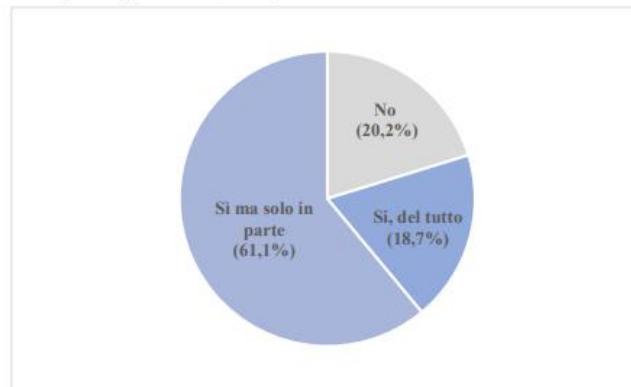
Faced with a flood of news, concerns are growing. 76.5 percent of Italians believe that fake news is increasingly sophisticated and difficult to detect, 20.2 percent believe they lack the skills to recognize it, and 61.1 percent think they have only some of it. Only a minority of 18.7% believe with certainty that they are able to recognize them.

**Tab. 2 – Italiani che pensano che le fake news sono sempre più sofisticate e difficili da scoprire, per età (val. %)**

<i>"Le fake news sono sempre più sofisticate e difficili da scoprire"</i>	18-34 anni	35-64 anni	65 anni e oltre	Totale
<b>D'accordo</b>	<b>71,9</b>	<b>75,6</b>	<b>81,5</b>	<b>76,5</b>
<i>di cui:</i>				
- Molto d'accordo	22,2	25	48,6	31,1
- Abbastanza d'accordo	49,7	50,6	32,9	45,4
<b>In disaccordo</b>	<b>28,1</b>	<b>24,4</b>	<b>18,5</b>	<b>23,5</b>
<i>di cui:</i>				
- Poco d'accordo	21,5	21,1	9,7	18
- Per niente d'accordo	6,6	3,3	8,8	5,5
<b>Totale</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Fonte: indagini Censis, 2023

Fig. 2 – Italiani che ritengono di avere le competenze necessarie per distinguere le fake news (val. %)



Fonte: indagine Censis, 2023

## 1.2 - Antisemitism

In recent years, antisemitism has also increased worldwide due to the economic crisis, conspiracy thinking, uncertainty, globalization as an identity threat, and social frustration. But today especially it is magnified by the Israel/Hamas war.

Antisemitism expresses itself in different forms that change according to the situation and the political, economic, social context. Phases of latency alternate with active ones in which antisemitism becomes visible again and regains public dictability. While for years it has been argued that antisemitism is a phenomenon of the past made secondary by the emergence of other forms of discrimination, these days we are witnessing its return all over the world. Compared to the past, antisemitism today manifests itself in many ways: from anti-Israel marches (within which there are those who call for the death of Jews), to Islamist or radical right-wing terrorist acts against Jews and synagogues, to stereotypes or tropes that become viral on social media, reinforcing Judeophobia and anti-Jewish attitudes.

Current antisemitism is the consequence of multiple concomitant factors:

- **The decades-long emergence of conspiracy thinking as a key to understanding the world.** Conspiracy theories are shared by those who are hostile to institutions and the system, those who think that journalists, politicians and scientists are corrupt; they are prevalent especially in areas of right-wing extremism but also on the left; they convey discourses of revenge against the system they want to demolish. Conspiracy often finds its answers in antisemitism. In conspiracy rhetoric, Jews are represented as a lobby, as one of the strong powers capable of covertly influencing world politics and society. Conspiracism increases with disintermediation and information clutter.
- **The portrayal of Israel and Zionism as expressions of capitalism** that has been spread by "antagonist" movements for decades. Antisemitism disguises itself as pro-Palestinian solidarity and in general the portrayal of Israel as an outpost of the West, persecutor of the world's poor, using anti-Jewish tropes. Demonization of the state described as "racist" influences antisemitism in civil society.

- **The growth of the Islamic ideology, which connects religious and political reasons to oppose Israel, leading sometimes to equating Jews with supporters of Israeli policies.** In Italy, this stream is becoming more prominent, as can be seen in the language and attitudes of second-generation Italians of Arab and North African origin during the pro-Palestinian protests of the past few months.
- **The growth of Holocaust denial rhetoric and the instrumental and distorted use of the memory of the Shoah against Jews.** Such as the reappropriation of Shoah memory (use of stumbling stones by Casa Pound).

The October 7 attack and subsequent war in Gaza resulted in a heavy anti-Israel backlash. Especially by some pro-Palestinian, far-left, and antagonist movements, reactions that often took on the features of a more general anti-Jewish hostility.

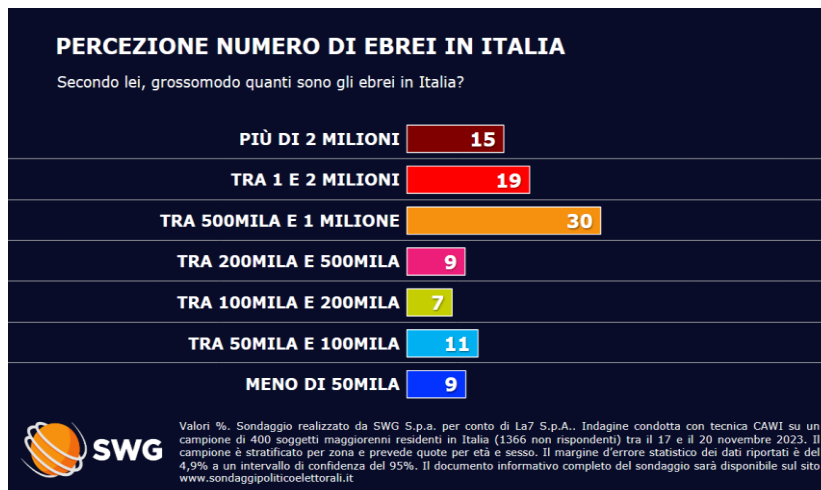
After October 7, expressions of hostility increased in many parts of the world. Israel's military response had an extremely strong, emotionally dramatic media resonance and visibility that produced almost compact reactions. European squares filled with demonstrators sympathetic to the Palestinian cause, hostile to Israel. Rapidly, incidents—even serious ones—of antisemitism increased.

The rise in antisemitic actions seems to express pre-existing, subterranean feelings of hostility toward Israel and Jews that re-emerge with virulence in the face of dramatic events such as war.

About 10 percent of Italians share overt antisemitic views, but anti-Jewish bias can be expressed in many ways such as: vandalization of stumbling stones in Rome, houses marked with the Star of David, insulting and threatening phone calls, Molotov cocktails thrown at a synagogue in Berlin. This language and virulence are rooted in feelings of hostility and resentment that remain under the radar until they find an opportunity to express themselves.

With the war in Israel, the reactions highlight the partiality and superficiality of information and judgments about a long-lasting conflict such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. More than a third of Italians (36 percent) say they know little or nothing about what has happened since the Oct. 7 Hamas attack; 40 percent consider themselves fairly well informed, and only about a quarter (24 percent) think they know about the matter in depth (Ipsos). While there is very little knowledge about the Jews, prejudices are widespread and shared.

Still on the topic of awareness, a recent poll (SWG) confirms the historical over-representation of the number of Jews in Italy. A number that for 64% of Italians stands between 500 thousand to over 2 million. An imagined "power" compared to the real presence of about 30 thousand Jews in the country.



In 2021, the Action and Protection League published a survey<sup>7</sup> that provides an interesting and nuanced picture of antisemitic prejudice in 16 European Union countries. Using empirical social research tools, it explores the presence and intensity of anti-Jewish prejudice in European societies.

Scholars agree that the presence of prejudice does not automatically translate into discrimination and violence, events more related to a tradition of social and political violence, or the presence of extremist individuals/groups in a society. Data analysis reveals an entrenched presence of antisemitic prejudice in Europe, with regional and religious variations depending on the areas of analysis.

Contemporary antisemitic prejudices are mainly expressed in three forms. The first includes traditional prejudices and stereotypes that attribute unfavorable characteristics to Jews and are suited to express hatred. The second form is expressed in the denial or relativization of the Shoah. Finally, the third form is manifested in the manifestation of anti-Israel views that go beyond the limits of political criticism where Israel is condemned for certain acts never attributed to other states and where condemnation spills over from the Jewish state to all Jews.

On first-form antisemitism, one in three Italians (35 percent) still share this type of prejudice despite years of work by institutions and civil society.

Antisemitism defined by scholars as "affective," which concerns statements about personality traits, characteristics, behaviors and the historical and political roles attributed to Jews, was measured by questions about feelings toward Jews living in the country: the degree of resentment, sympathy and willingness to accept a Jew as a neighbor.

Considering together the results of the cognitive and affective dimensions, the researchers created an aggregate index of primary antisemitism according to which 9 percent

<sup>7</sup> Andras Kovacs, Gyorgy Fischer, "Antisemitic Prejudices in Europe: Survey in 16 European Countries" Part 1 and 2, Action and Protection League (2021). Available at: <https://apleu.org/european-antisemitism-survey/>. For a more detailed analysis of this survey, see the 2021 Annual report: <https://www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it/approfondimenti/relazione-annuale-sullantisemitismo-in-italia-2021/>

of Italians are moderately antisemitic and 10 percent are strongly antisemitic. For a not insignificant total of 19%.

Regarding Holocaust denialist and trivialization attitudes, Italians share a high percentage of moderate antisemitic sentiments (33%). These numbers reflect the increasing trivialization and use of Holocaust symbols in public discourse.

In Italy, secondary antisemitism affects 35% of the Italian population (33%) in a moderate form and 2% in a stronger form. It can therefore be concluded that secondary antisemitism in Italy is greater than primary antisemitism, and that this overall figure is of great concern.

The percentage of respondents expressing Israel-related antisemitic hostility is higher than the presence of traditional and secondary antisemitic sentiments. This could be explained by the fact that many respondents have found an "acceptable" way to express their antisemitism publicly through hostility to Israel. The overall European average comes to 49% (strongly + moderately antisemitic), Italy's is 45% (7% strongly and 38% moderately antisemitic).

### **1.3 - Polls on the conflict**

Ipsos in a Nov. 2 poll published in *Corriere della Sera* surveyed Italians' reactions to Israel's offensive in Gaza: 58% of Italians say that the offensive is a humanitarian catastrophe that a democracy cannot cause. In contrast, 30 percent of those surveyed justify the offensive by considering it an understandable reaction after the horror caused by Hamas, and 12 percent have no opinion about it.

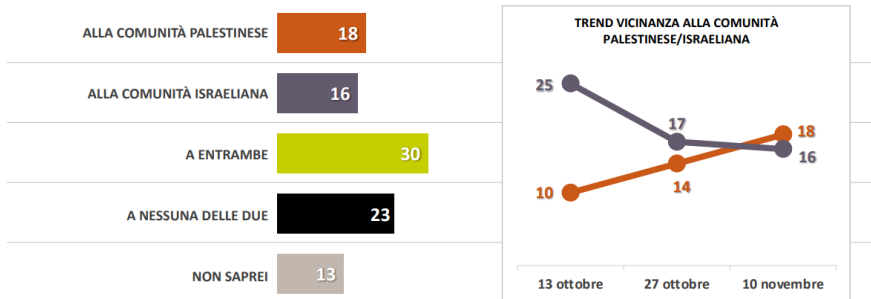
Israel's decision to intervene in the Gaza Strip after the horrific events of Oct. 7, with the aim of striking Hamas, provokes confusion: 46 percent call it disproportionate while not denying Israel the right to defend itself, while only a little over a quarter believe it was an understandable reaction. Beliefs vary by political orientation, with center-left voters siding overwhelmingly with the view that it was an overreaction. In the center-right, the view that justifies Israel's action grows, but to a lesser extent. Finally, Italians seem reluctant to side with one side or the other. An absolute majority (52 percent) believe that mediation between the parties should be initiated today aimed at avoiding an escalation of the conflict. "Partisan" attitudes, as mentioned, are the minority. But while 6 percent believe that Italy should support Israel without hesitation, 15 percent think instead that the Palestinians should be supported while condemning Hamas, and a small minority (2 percent) would support the Palestinians, without condemning Hamas.

	TOTALE intervistati	Fdl	Lega-Fi-Noi moderati	Pd	Elettori			indecisi/astensionisti
					M5S	Altre liste		
<b>Lei personalmente quanto si sente preoccupata/o da questo conflitto?</b>								
• molto preoccupata/o	35%	30%	41%	47%	38%	38%		31%
• abbastanza preoccupata/o	45%	51%	36%	46%	48%	40%		45%
• poco o per nulla preoccupata/o	20%	19%	23%	7%	14%	22%		24%
<b>In questo momento, qual è per lei l'aspetto più preoccupante di questo conflitto?</b>								
• il possibile allargamento del conflitto ad altri Paesi	33%	40%	29%	43%	34%	31%		29%
• le sue conseguenze umanitarie sulla popolazione civile	29%	21%	22%	39%	41%	42%		24%
• il rischio di una ripresa degli attentati terroristici di matrice islamica in Europa	17%	20%	27%	9%	12%	14%		18%
• le sue conseguenze economiche	12%	17%	18%	7%	10%	11%		11%
• (non sanno, non indicano)	9%	2%	4%	2%	3%	2%		18%
<b>Secondo lei la risposta militare di Israele nella Striscia di Gaza...?</b>								
• è una reazione sproporzionata rispetto al diritto di Israele di difendersi	46%	38%	43%	65%	56%	58%		38%
• è una reazione comprensibile da parte di Israele, dopo l'orrore causato da Hamas	27%	45%	36%	18%	25%	31%		20%
• (non sanno, non indicano)	27%	17%	21%	17%	19%	11%		42%
<b>A suo parere l'Italia in questo conflitto dovrebbe...?</b>								
• appoggiare Israele	6%	10%	12%	4%	6%	9%		2%
• adoperarsi per una mediazione tra le parti che possa evitare un'escalation del conflitto	52%	66%	58%	59%	54%	56%		41%
• condannare Hamas, ma appoggiare la causa palestinese	15%	13%	8%	23%	20%	24%		12%
• appoggiare la causa palestinese, anche senza condannare Hamas	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	4%		2%
• (non sanno, non indicano)	25%	10%	20%	12%	18%	7%		43%

On Nov. 10, a SWG survey highlights how the progression of the war is shifting public opinion:

### Il progredire degli scontri erode il sentimento di vicinanza nei confronti degli israeliani e tende a rafforzare le preferenze per i palestinesi

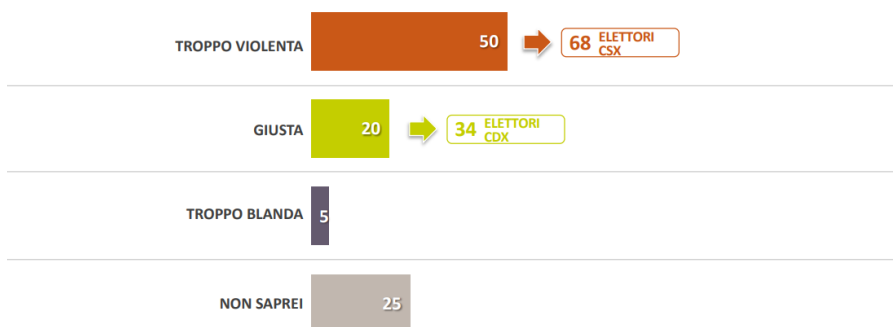
Personalmente, in questo momento lei si sente più vicino:



SWG **NOTA INFORMATIVA:** valori espressi in %. Date di esecuzione: 8 - 10 novembre 2023. Metodo di rilevazione: sondaggio CAWI su un campione rappresentativo nazionale di 800 soggetti maggiorenni. Tutti i diritti riservati 4

### Prevale un atteggiamento critico verso le modalità dell'offensiva militare dell'esercito israeliano dopo l'attacco di Hamas

Ritiene la reazione di Israele all'attacco di Hamas:



SWG **NOTA INFORMATIVA:** valori espressi in %. Date di esecuzione: 8 - 10 novembre 2023. Metodo di rilevazione: sondaggio CAWI su un campione rappresentativo nazionale di 800 soggetti maggiorenni. Tutti i diritti riservati

## CHAPTER II: ANTISEMITIC INCIDENTS

The *Observatory on Antisemitism* registers as an incident of antisemitism any intentional act directed against Jewish persons, organizations, or property, where there is evidence that the action has antisemitic motives or content, or that the victim was targeted because he or she was Jewish or believed to be Jewish. On that note, the Observatory endorses the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism.

This chapter presents a summary of the data recorded and analyzed by the CDEC Foundation's Observatory on Antisemitism in 2023, data that is not exhaustive of the phenomenon in Italian society. Since acts of antisemitism, like other forms of hatred and intolerance, are often under-reported the data presented here, although still representing a significant increase in numerical terms, are certainly not exhaustive of the Italian reality.

### The data

During 2023, the CDEC Foundation's Observatory on Antisemitism received 923 reports. After careful analysis, 454 of them were recorded as incidents of antisemitism.

469 reports were not recorded because they reported acts that were not considered antisemitic (270), already recorded (86) or unclear (113).

The data for 2023 (454) is far higher than that recorded in 2022 (241). Never had such a high number of incidents been recorded over the course of 12 months, of which 216 were recorded between October and December.

After the terrorist acts committed by Hamas on Oct. 7, there was a radical shift back to a similar climate to that of 1982 during the First Lebanon War, when Italy experienced the most serious upsurge of antisemitism since the end of World War II,<sup>8</sup> reaching its peak with the bomb placed and blown up in the offices of the CDEC Foundation<sup>9</sup> and the bloody attack on the Synagogue in Rome by Palestinian terrorists.<sup>10</sup>

Most of the cases registered by the Observatory on Antisemitism generally fall into the typology of Defamation and Insults, i.e., antisemitic narratives/prejudices/stereotypes applied to virtual reality (e.g., offensive postings on the social web) or the offline world (e.g., antisemitic speeches in public spaces).

This trend is well-established, but since October 7 there has been a clear break with the past, with about half of the acts against Jews taking place offline: death threats written on the

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<sup>8</sup> Adriana Goldstaub (a cura di), "La guerra nel Libano e l'opinione pubblica italiana: confusione - distorsione - pregiudizio - antisemitismo (6 giugno - 8 ottobre 1982)", CDEC, Milano, 1983 <https://www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it/approfondimenti/la-guerra-nel-libano-e-l-opinione-pubblica-italiana-confusione-distorsione-pregiudizio-antisemitismo-6-giugno-8-ottobre-1982/>

<sup>9</sup> Faldone numero 6 - 1982, archivio Osservatorio antisemitismo Fondazione CDEC.

<sup>10</sup> Faldone numero 7 e 8 - 1982, archivio Osservatorio antisemitismo Fondazione CDEC.



interior walls of places frequented by Jews, mezuzah ripped from the door, threatening letters sent to Jewish communities, assaults (verbal and physical) on students in schools and universities, sharp increase in the activity of BDS groups<sup>11</sup> in some universities, harassment and pressure against Jewish students.



Milan, Nov. 13, 2023, mezuzah snatched from the door of a study, and a knife stuck in its place (Observatory's Archive)

There is a general hardening of speech. The level of aggression increases as social acceptance for Israel-related antisemitism spreads: if "Zionists" are equal/worse than Nazis, it is licit and democratic to oppose them. As also stated by a leading U.S. academic, invoking "genocide of the Jews" may be permissible, "depending on the context".<sup>12</sup>

Forse i nazisti avevano capito chi sono veramente gli ebrei. Vi abbiamo regalato una terra non vostra, sottraendola ad un altro popolo; lì doveva sorgere la Patria del Popolo Ebraico, benestante e pacifica, avete provocato l'inferno. Da decenni non fate che combattere, scacciare i palestinesi dalle loro case, occupare, commettere crimini e vi guardate bene dal rispettare le regole del diritto internazionale. Ogni volta per coprire le vostre mancanze ed i vostri crimini usate come alibi le vittime dell'Olocausto. Posso ricordarvi che li avete venduti i vostri morti, accettando dalla Germania

Nov. 2, 2023. Excerpt from a threatening letter sent to a Jewish community (Observatory on Antisemitism CDEC Foundation archive)

<sup>11</sup> BDS, an acronym for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions against Israel, is an international movement deemed antisemitic according to the Working definition of antisemitism by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance - IHRA

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it/articoli/polemiche-per-le-risposte-delle-rettrici-dei-piu-prestigiosi-college-usa-harvard-luniversita-della-pennsylvania-e-il-massachusetts-institute-of-technology-in-unaudizione-alla-camera-sui-recen/>

### Incidents recorded from January to December

Month	Number of incidents
January	28
February	24
March	31
April	29
May	23
June	19
July	37
August	20
September	27
October	77
November	72
December	67
<b>Total</b>	<b>454</b>

For a complete list of incidents of antisemitism, see

<https://www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it/notizie/episodi-di-antisemitismo-in-italia/?anno=2023>

In the Observatory on Antisemitism database, the incidents are anonymized to safeguard the privacy of the victims.

**259** incidents concern antisemitism on the Internet, while **195** consist of acts that took place **physically**, including **one** assault and **40** cases of threats.

**The 259 cases of antisemitism on the web are only those reported to the Observatory on Antisemitism by users and processed. The Observatory directly monitors and processes infinitely more posts and incidents of antisemitism on the web throughout the year. In 2023 we directly analyzed about 3500 of them.** Antisemitism on the web cannot be, as posts are continuously reproduced and reposted, many are removed directly from social platforms. However, it is important to analyze the content of the posts received since their examination offers insights to monitor new trends and changes in the language, patterns, and level of aggression.

## Type of incidents

Defamation and insults	331 (91 <i>offline</i> , 240 <i>online</i> )
Threats to people/organizations	40 (21 <i>offline</i> , 19 <i>online</i> )
Vandalism	10
Graffiti	67
Discrimination	3 (all <i>offline</i> )
Antisemitism on mass media	2 (1 <i>offline</i> - 1 <i>online</i> )
Assaults	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>454</b>

## Origin of reports

Non-Jewish or undeclared	165
Members of the Jewish Community	269
Media (es. Il Corriere della Sera, Il Mattino, Il Messaggero, FirenzeToday, repubblica.it)	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>454</b>

## Location of antisemitic incidents

Of the 454 incidents of antisemitism recorded during 2023, in 176 cases it was possible to locate the cities where they took place:

Alice Bel Colle (Novi Ligure), Ancona, Anzio (2), Bergamo, Biella, Bologna (6), Bordighera, Bosio (AL), Brindisi (2), Castelfidardo (AN), Castelfranco Veneto (TV), Catania (2), Chieti, Chiusi (SI), Ciampino (2), Città di Castello (PG), Colle Val D'Elsa (Siena), Cremona, Crevalcore (BO), Ferrara (2), Florence (10), Fiumicino (RM), Forni di Sopra (UD), Genoa (2), Lana (Alto Adige), Lanciano (CH), L'Aquila, Lavello (PZ), Livorno (5), Lugo (RA), Luino (VA), Massa (2), Milan (33), Mirandola, Mondragone (CE), Monte San Giovanni Campano (FR), Monza (2), Naples (9), Ortelle (LE), Padua (8), Parma, Pesaro, Pistoia (2), Poggibonsi (SI), Polistena (RC), Ponte a Ema (FI), Reggio Emilia (2), Riva del Garda (TV), Rome (34), Salerno, Saluggia (VE), Sequals (UD), Sesto San Giovanni (2), Siena, Sondrio, Stresa, Tora e Piccilli (CE), Turin (4), Trieste (2), Verona (2), Viterbo, Volterra.

## Social media platforms (tot. 259)

Facebook: **96**

Twitter: **54**

YouTube: **16**

Telegram: **10**

TikTok: **19**

Instagram: **19**

LinkedIn: **1**

Rumble: **1**

VK: **1**

WhatsApp: **2**

Zoom: **1**

TV channel: **2**

Undefined social media: **5**

Website: **30**

E-mail: **2**

### **Victims of acts of antisemitism.**

**350** incidents involve Jews as a **collective** and/or Jewish institution described based on Judeophobic tropes: racist, rich, cheap, prone to domination and conspiracy. Following are some of the most commonly used words to refer to Jews: Zionists, Nazi-Zionists, Ashenazis, Kazars, Talmudists, Kabbalists, Lubavitch noses, Etruscan noses,<sup>13</sup> Freemasons, Illuminati, Judeo-Nazis, Jewish Nazis, Soros, Rothschilds, Rockefellers.

The use of the epithet **Ashkenazi** to refer to Jews is used frequently to demonize Jews according to the usual narrative canons (racist, exclusivist, etc.) and avoid the accusation of antisemitism: "I do not harbor hostility toward Jews but only against the fake Ashkenazi Jews hated by the Jews themselves."<sup>14</sup>

The word Ashkenazi in recent years has gradually lost its original meaning<sup>15</sup> to take on that of a negative and all-powerful Jew who warps their plot from behind the scenes. Jacob Rothschild, George Soros, Volodymyr Zelensky and Elly Schlein are allegedly members of the sprawling "Ashkenazi cabal." The distorted use of the term Ashkenazi is no longer confined only within extremist areas, it has gradually become popularized by entering common discourse and political polemics, just think of the countless posts and articles where the "aschenazi" origin of PD Elly Schlein's politics is emphasized-almost always in a malicious way.

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<sup>13</sup> In February during an interview with the publication The Post International: <https://www.tpi.it/politica/elly-schlein-pd-vinco-io-lo-dicono-i-neri-intervista-20230203976802/> Elly Schlein claims that her nose resembles an "Etruscan shape"; since then, antisemitic extremists have used the phrase "Etruscan nose" to refer to and mock Jews.

<sup>14</sup> Phrase excerpted from books and speeches by a Judeophobic polemicist and one of the theorists of "cruel Ashkenazi false Jews."

<sup>15</sup> Ashkenazis are defined as Jews who, after the Diaspora, settled in central, northern and, later, eastern Europe developing Yiddish as their language.

The conspiracy-antisemitic use of the term Ashkenazi has its roots in the ideology of the far-right "red-brown"<sup>16</sup> and conspiratorial ideology that force the contents of Arthur Koestler's book "The Thirteenth Tribe. History of the Kazars from the Middle Ages to the Jewish Holocaust," UTET, 2004.

The term **Zionist** is also often used in the same way as **Ashkenazi**, i.e. to identify Jews but avoiding being accused of antisemitism and giving their views "democratic and anti-racist" connotations.

**104** incidents involve Jewish individuals (or deemed as such) and/or Jewish entities (or deemed as such), which are also stereotyped and demonized according to established negative generalizations. The main victims continue to be public figures often the focus of media attention.

Anti-Jewish hatred in extremist circles increasingly takes on characters akin to biologism, one thinks of the attribution of the "big nose" (or "Etruscan nose"), the tendency to conspiracy, and the drive to hate Gentiles ("hatred of humankind") as inherent and hereditary traits of Jews.

Some of the main targets were (some targeted multiple times): Liliana Segre, Elly Schlein, David Parenzo, Tobia Zevi.

## **Gender of victims**

F: <sup>17</sup> 31

M: 36

Jews as a collective: 387

## **Ideological framework**

The **454** incidents recorded in 2023 by the Observatory, fall into the following five classifications developed on the basis of the Handbook for the practical use of the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism.

The ideological framework often intersect (e.g., anti-Judaism and anti-Zionism, neo-Nazism and conspiracy, etc.) and the classification was made according to the prominent theme.

Traditional anti-Judaism (Christian and Islamic): **25**

Neo-Nazi/neofascist anti-Semitism, denial and trivialization of the Shoah: **90**

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<sup>16</sup> By extreme right-wing red-brown we refer to that ideological area that has as its reference point the neo-Nazi Claudio Umar Amin Mutti and his publishing group Edizioni all'Insegna del Veltro from Parma.

<sup>17</sup> A misogynistic component often emerges in the attacks against Jewish women, which is expressed blatantly; women as often referred as "b\*tches" and/or "wh\*res".

Israel-related anti-Semitism (anti-Semitic stereotypes reflected on Israel): **156**

Hatred of Jews as such: **120**

Jewish power over politics and finance (Judeophobic conspiracism): **63**

## **Events triggering anti-Jewish acts and Judeophobic discourse on the Web from January to December**

There is an increase in antisemitic incidents and discourse when Jews and/or Jewish entities (or those thought to be Jewish) are the focus of media attention, regardless of what they do.

Triggering events fall into two groups: macro events (such as the war in Ukraine or the conflict between Hamas and Israel) or limited events (often web-related) as in the case of ultra-Orthodox Jews<sup>18</sup> in Jerusalem spitting at the feet of a nun or, again in Jerusalem, the case of Orthodox boys arguing with evangelical women, events that are small in real life but have a large media impact precisely because of the dynamics of the web (posting, sharing, commenting, re-posting, etc.).

Jewish holidays likewise open opportunities for aggressive speech on the internet. In the month of September with Rosh ha Shanah and Yom Kippur when some Jews or Jewish institutions post greetings, mocking or hateful comments are posted following a classic pattern; the publication of a post (by David Parenzo, Emanuele Fiano, UCEI, etc. ) are followed by insults that mix a bit all the facets of antisemitism, those who prefer the anti-Zionist dimension, those who prefer the Shoah denialist/distortionist dimension, those who employ the most distasteful stereotypes (greed, congenital meanness, etc.) those who instead lump a bit of everything together.

The haters who rage during trigger events usually do not hide; they are provocative and want to be recognized. The use of aliases is often only because they have been banned multiple times from platforms.

The most frequent triggers were in 2023:

- **Coronavirus** (January to December)
- **War against Ukraine** (January to December)
- **Miscellaneous statements by Liliana Segre** (January to December)
- **Public statements by Elly Schlein** (January to December)
- **January 27/Remembrance Day** (January)
- **Easter/Pesach** (April)
- **Pride** (June)
- **Kidnapped**, Marco Bellocchio's film on the Edgardo Mortara kidnapping affair (June)

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<sup>18</sup> Jews identifiable as such, especially religious people who wear dark garments, bear beards and peyots, are the main victims of antisemitic hatred, as they are susceptible to the crudest mockery.

- **Signing at the Viminale of the Declaration of Intent to strengthen measures to counter antisemitism in soccer** (June)
- **Hamas terrorist attacks and Israeli army reaction** (October – December).

### **Antisemitic discourse, rhetoric and symbolism from online incidents and content recorded from January to December - ANALYSIS and COMMENTS**

The main ideological background of antisemitism in Italy continues to be that of the far right (neo-fascism and neo-Nazism), although in the last three months of the year we have seen a very strong increase in Israel-related antisemitism (expressed by progressive-minded circles) and traditional anti-Jewish themes (deicide, blood libel, ritual cannibalism, control of finance).

The underlying background that fuels aversion to Jews is largely based on conspiracy theories modeled in the image of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion and similar libellry. As a side note, the democratic-liberal system and the open society are portrayed - with varying nuances - as a deception hatched to the detriment of ordinary people by Jews/Zionists/Ashenazis. Opponents of democracy pose as free, heterodox and open-minded people in opposition to dogmatic thinking (propagated by "schoolbooks," "big newspapers" by "regime TV," etc.) and oligarchic thinking that intoxicates, enslaves and exploits the people through Covid, War on Ukraine, Great Reset, Great Replacement, etc.

Old religious prejudices persist, consider a performance (May 7, 2023) of the Passion of Jesus in the Kreuz Kirche in Lana, South Tyrol,<sup>19</sup> where Jews are on stage in modern Orthodox garb while the other protagonists wear Roman-era clothes, in which the message is (perhaps) being passed that today's Jews are Christ-killers (Jews kill Jesus in every generation).

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it/episodi-di-antisemitismo-in-italia/antigiudaismo-in-una-rappresentazione-della-passione/>; <https://www.passionsspiele.it/>



New narratives are periodically developed but they are always rooted in ancient tropes. For example, linked to the war against Ukraine and in extreme right-wing circles the thesis of "Nazi Jews supporting Ukrainian Nazism" has been formulated: president Zelensky but also Israelis or "Ashkenazis" are called "Nazis" i.e., standard-bearers of a racist and exclusivist Jewish ideology ("Zionism is Nazism in Jewish sauce"). In the view of these antisemites, Hitler's National Socialism would be "good" as a response to the Nazism of the Jews, while "the new Ashkenazi Nazism" would be to be fought because it is a product of Jewish exclusivism (xenophobia, hatred against humankind, etc.) nourished by Talmud.

This new narrative shares Putin's talking point of a war against Nazism. In this regard, it is interesting to see the numerous posts on social media accusing Liliana Segre, David Parenzo or Elly Schlein of being "Nazis" and supporters of "Ukrainian Nazism."

Remembrance Day/27 January, as always, is characterized by vandalism and cyber-attacks on places and symbols of Holocaust Remembrance and opposition to Nazi-fascism. These insults, especially online, have the tones of coarse derision. In the real world, too, vandalism against Memory has the tones of mockery and provocation. Irrision/distortion/banalization of the Shoah is not the sole prerogative of the radical right but also present in Arab-Islamic extremism and in sectors of the extreme left that, on the occasion of January 27, speak of the real Shoah (the Palestinian one) perpetrated by "Nazi-Zionists."





Irony/distortion/banalization of the Shoah, since March 2020 also continue to be employed in antivaccinationist function: “The real holocaust you [the Ashkenazis] have been trying for three years all over the world with all races and in particular the Italian one...shame on you but karma will take its course the 30 blood money will not serve you.”

The prime target of Holocaust-related antisemitism has been, for the past six years or so, life senator Liliana Segre, a survivor of the Auschwitz death camp, accused of being a “liar,” of saying nothing in favor of the Palestinian “new Jews,” of being conniving with the Zionist massacres but also accused of “collaborationism” with the “Nazi-vaccinationism” of today, with the “Nazi-Ukrainians” and with Nazi-fascism (sic) in the past.

With the emergence of Elly Schlein (“Soros’s lesbian protégée, the lesbian aschenazi who wants the destruction of Italy and Italians”) as a national

level politician, the trope of powerful “Ashkenazis” has become widely known, often spread in a devious way and through coded language. There is no shortage of telematic memes recalling the congresswoman’s “Ashkenazi” roots.

Schlein is also targeted based on certain antisemitic physiognomy tropes that ascribes to Jews hereditary somatic (and psychological) traits such as, for example, the hooked nose. Schlein, Parenzo, Zevi, Netanyahu, Zelensky are allegedly “big noses,”<sup>20</sup> and posts are often published on social media where these people are portrayed, in a style reminiscent of the dark days of the fascist fortnightly “The Defense of Race,” in such a way as to emphasize their somatic features (sometimes even with doctored photos) “Zionist.”

Events in the Middle East and involving Israel always give the cue to a cruel and bloody antisemitism that recovers (even from secularists) anti-Jewish stylistic features by reshaping them to the Israeli reality. One thinks of the theme of “organ-harvesting Zionists.”

Interestingly, in a secularized society such as the Italian one, this legacy of anti-Jewish prejudices of Christian origin in certain situations resurfaces overbearingly.

When a short clip was circulated on the social web in April showing three Orthodox Jews in Jerusalem passing in front of a nun and spitting between her feet (an event nonetheless to be condemned), a torrent of anti-Jewish animosity was unleashed: *miserable Jews ugly to look at; f\*cking Jews; let’s set them on fire again; Jews manipulate the world and enslave us through*

<sup>20</sup> *Nasoni*, literally big noses, is a term used to insult and identify Jews.

*banks; you are walking soaps; Jews are the ruin of the world; f\*ck Remembrance Day... f\*ck these bastards; the ovens and gas chambers should be turned back on; Deicides. Frequent are also the vulgarities: how I'd like to sh\*t in your mouth with a diar.....son of mother bastard...*

Offenses and insults became even more crude and bloodthirsty after Oct. 7 ("*What is happening in Gaza is not even comparable to the Holocaust*"; "*If they had exterminated you all that time we would live in a better world... You are worse than Hitler you suck,*" Facebook Dec. 11 and 12, 2023)



Milan, October 13, 2023 flyer found in the vicinity of the Jewish school (archives Observatory on antisemitism Fondazione CDEC)

Star of David = Shit, death to the Jews

Pride in June triggered yet another wave of telematic antisemitism, LGBTQIA+ pride marches are described as a triumph of global depravity promoted by "Zionists" (*Pride is funded by world Zionist Jews; sponsors of pride are pro-Zionist corporations; Zionism and Luciferian Judaism firmly believe in the normality of depravity*), the purpose of which would be unchanged since the spread of the Protocols, namely to subvert Christian society in order to establish a Jewish kingdom, which today manifests itself as the Great Reset/Great Replacement.

On the occasion of Pride, too, we reached one of the high points of verbal violence of the semester: put a rope on your neck, vomit, sh\*t, hang yourself, watch out f\*cking f\*g, burn sick pedophiles,<sup>21</sup> reopen the ovens.

Another tactic employed is that of branding Jews (or allegedly so) with "Zionism" who have practically no connection with the State of Israel, or who never speak about this issue; think of Senator Segre painted (and not only by extremists) as a Zionist fanatic or Sara Funaro,

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<sup>21</sup> Jews and homosexuals are often lumped together by haters in accusations of being pedophiles and/or practicing violence of various kinds on children. <https://www.facingfacts.eu/blog/il-discorso-dodio-sulle-piattaforme-social-online-un-caso-intersezionale-di-antisemitismo-e-omobitrofobia-nel-contesto-italiano/>

mayoral candidate in Florence, immediately branded as a Zionist, servant of Israel, etc. by an "anti-Zionist" TikToker.

## Aftermath of October 7

After the massacres carried out by Hamas on October 7, solidarity in Italy with the murdered Jews was short-lived. As early as Oct. 10, demonstrations (which soon became weekly) against Israel began, promoted by Arab-Islamic organizations and associations of the antagonist left, with the participation of thousands of people. Islamism took to the streets and the web its antisemitism disguised as "anti-Zionism," with its agenda hoping for the erasure of the State of Israel and its people (*From the river to the sea Palestine will be free*).

After the first actions of the Israeli army, the mainstream media started talking about Israel's "revenge" on the "defenseless Palestinian population," feeding the archaic anti-Jewish prejudice of the "law of retaliation".<sup>22</sup>

Daily updates of Palestinian deaths then began, reporting only on the elderly, women and, especially, children, with the latter referred to by one newspaper as "of the Jesuses killed by Israel".<sup>23</sup>

Even the Catholic Church has been criticized in Jewish circles by its ambiguity,<sup>24,25</sup> when some of its members re-proposed some of the cornerstones of anti-Judaism, including the idea that Jews tend toward vengeance and cruelty, as even claimed by a senior clergyman during a widely watched TV broadcast.<sup>26</sup>

Events involving Israel always give rise to a fierce antisemitism that reclaims (even from secularists) anti-Jewish tropes refashioned on the "Zionist" reality, but this kind of strong language has not reached this level since 1982.

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<sup>22</sup> See: Roberto Della Rocca «Il vostro è un Dio della vendetta, il nostro un Dio dell'amore» Relazioni tra ebrei e cattolici, in *L'ebreo inventato*, La Giuntina, Firenze, 2021.

<sup>23</sup> «6.150 Gesù uccisi da Israele» <https://www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it/episodi-di-antisemitismo-in-italia/quotidiano-pubblica-un-titolo-antigiudaico/>

<sup>24</sup> I Rabbini italiani: "Il papa mette sullo stesso piano aggressori e aggrediti. Da lui gelida equidistanza" <https://www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it/articoli/i-rabbini-ditalia-contestano-le-ambiguita-di-papa-bergoglio-nellincontro-con-le-famiglie-israeliane-e-palestinesi/?hilitate=vescovi>

<sup>25</sup> Teologia e la vecchia storia dell'ebraismo vendicativo <https://www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it/articoli/rav-riccardo-di-segni-riflette-sulla-riemersione-di-alcuni-miti-antigiudaici-dopo-gli-attentati-di-hamas-del-7-ottobre/>

<sup>26</sup> "Rav Arbib risponde a Monsignor Ravasi" <https://www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it/articoli/rav-arbib-risponde-a-monsignor-ravasi/>



Social media posts, Observatory's archive

On the right "It seems that Israel is harvesting organs from Palestinians' corpses"

In a secularized society such as Italy's, the legacy of anti-Jewish prejudices of Christian origin in certain circumstances resurfaces strongly, even by Muslims, as is evident on the web and in "pro-pal" demonstrations with Palestinian "Christology."

We are not able to assess in percentage terms the origin of antisemitic threats in political or social grounds. The abundant use of swastikas and references to the Shoah are not sufficient elements to define political affiliations. Street demonstrations have been attended by both far-left groups and neo-fascists, who share similar rhetoric in this context. The same can be said of religious extremism (Islamist or Catholic fundamentalist) who share anti-Jewish language and themes.



Facebook Dec. 2023 (CDEC Foundation's Observatory on Antisemitism archive)

The October 7 horrific massacres and the resulting conflict offer two disturbing indications: on the one hand, the strong entrenchment of the antisemitic imaginary with its dreary libels (from decide to ritual cannibalism), which are ready to be revived - with renewed violence - when Israel is involved, and on the other hand, the weakness of the structures that, in recent decades, have been designed with the intention of countering antisemitism. Twenty-three years of Remembrance Day and EU and international body initiatives are showing all their fragility: it takes little for these defenses to collapse, allowing anti-Jewish prejudices to resurface.



Observatory's archive

**Problematic areas: school, spread of conspiracy theories, online haters**

**School**

Students and teachers are often protagonists and/or victims of unpleasant incidents: assaults, harassment and forms of antisemitic bullying,<sup>27</sup> Internet chats where very young people share neo-Nazi and violent multimedia content.

In the recorded incidents, the use of neo-Nazi and Shoah-related imagery (*Hitler, swastikas, ovens, soaps, etc.*) is frequently found.

From the accounts received by the Antisemitism Hotline, particularly that of a Florentine mother, it emerges that the problem is broader than what it appears, antisemitic insults among young people seem to be quite widespread and (perhaps) are received as something "normal," even by young Jewish victims of harassment.

<sup>27</sup> A young boy in Turin in February was verbally assaulted by peers with the phrase, "too bad we're not living in the past otherwise we could have burned you." <https://www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it/episodi-di-antisemitismo-in-italia/torino-atti-di-antisemitismo-a-scuola/>

On top of this there are TikTokers, often very young people, who create and spread content (viewed by thousands of users) mocking the Holocaust and its victims. The phenomenon is not only related to TikTok, but this is perhaps the favorite platform of young people, is fashionable, and reaches a very high number of likes.

Neo-Nazi provocations are also on the rise. In June Florentine students insulted ("servant of Israel") the principal of Michelangelo High School with a graffiti in front of the school, and also in June Roman high school seniors took pictures of themselves doing the Roman salute in front of their school and then shared the images on the web.

Since October, many schools and universities have been the stage for harsh anti-Israel demonstrations with marches, occupations and violent slogans. Among the multiple incidents that have generated a hostile and intimidating climate toward Jewish and/or Israeli students are Palestinian terrorist Leila Khaled's<sup>28</sup> online participation in a series of "pro-Pal" lectures, or threats ("I'll throw you out the window"<sup>29</sup>) against students by fellow students.

Teachers also play their part, a Milanese teacher interrupted a play dedicated to the Shoah with a denialist rant, another teacher, also from Milan, is an activist (also on television) of conspiracy, homophobic and antisemitic polemics. Or the case of a professor, also from Milan, who has sympathy to the Nazis and has been sharing antisemitic and homophobic discourses for years and who, despite multiple protests, is still teaching.

After Oct. 7, many teachers, researchers and academics, began posting harsh criticism against Israel on their social profiles, often bordering on antisemitism.<sup>30</sup> Also frequent in these cases is the distorting use of the Shoah, with comparisons between Israel and Nazi Germany or between Adolf Hitler and Benjamin Netanyahu.

## Online haters

Over the past few years, the cyberspace of hatred has been consolidating: propagandists of antisemitism who - on a daily basis - in an often aggressive and provocative manner, post and share material against Jews.<sup>31</sup> Some haters have been active for decades and have been able to create a dense network of collaborators and followers who spread their material, expanding their audience.

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<sup>28</sup> <https://www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it/articoli/elena-loewenthal-commenta-la-partecipazione-in-video-di-leila-khaled-ad-un-evento-pro-pal-organizzato-alluniversita-di-torino/?hilite=loewenthal>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it/episodi-di-antisemitismo-in-italia/italia-centro-sud-studentessa-ebrea-riceve-insulti-e-minacce/?hilite=finestra>

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it/episodi-di-antisemitismo-in-italia/roncade-treviso-insegnante-posta-su-instagram-un-commento-antisemita/>

<sup>31</sup> For an in-depth analysis of some of the main telematic haters, their connections and propaganda tools, see: *Sempre (((Loro)))*: panoramica dell'antisemitismo nei social network italiani, in *L'antisemitismo e le sue metamorfosi*, Santerini M. (a cura di), La Giuntina, Firenze, 2023.

The roster of these propagandists is growing steadily and progressively, not only in number but especially in level of legitimacy (think of the doctor who authored an antivaccinationist book with tens of thousands of copies sold).

The new way of doing information based on the model of social platforms (simplicism, populism, aggressive language, etc.) is helping these people to gain ever wider legitimacy.

From the old polemicists, marginal ones who got a hearing only in well-circumscribed circles (far right, esotericism, anti-Zionism, etc.), we have moved on to the new ones: youtubers who have channels with 200 thousand subscribers and 21million views, pamphlettists with 30 thousand copies sold or conductors who philosophize on their own or others' social media against "Ashkenazi" Jews.

These polemicists are often real showmen who master the cameras and communication techniques and captivate large and diverse audiences. Their approach is simplistic and populist, resting on anti-elitism and the notion that "they" (and those who follow them) are free, anti-dogmatic and open-minded in opposition to an oligarchic and orthodox world that deceives and exploits "the people." They are great "vulgarizers," reworking complex issues in a simplistic and communicative key while managing to tune in to the general public, which often stays away from politics deemed a caste.

Almost none of these characters focus on "pure" antisemitism, yet hatred against Jews is always an essential ingredient of their actions, albeit disguised as: alien gods of the Bible, Zionist-Ashkenazi-kazar-fake-Jewish power figures, etc.

### **CHAPTER 3: Online antisemitism**

2023 has been marked by a sharp increase in antisemitic incidents and online hate speech globally, particularly in the aftermath of the October 7<sup>th</sup> massacre carried out by Hamas. Social media plays an important role on this issue, both the pandemic and the current wars have been livestreamed, leading to an online war of narratives, manipulation of reality, and the rapid spread of fake news and conspiracy theories that once read are difficult to be "unlearned". A recent poll conducted by Ipsos shows that "more than 85% of people are worried about the impact of online disinformation and 87% believe it has already harmed their country's politics," this lead Audrey Azoulay, director general of Unesco, to affirm that "information and hate speech online – accelerated and amplified by social media platforms – posed 'major risks to social cohesion, peace and stability'".<sup>32</sup>

The sharp upward trend of antisemitic incidents is overwhelming CSOs that deal with its recording and the monitoring of social media. The conflict is also the first big test of the effectiveness of the European Union's DSA (Digital services act), which Very Large Online

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<sup>32</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2023/nov/07/85-of-people-worry-about-online-disinformation-global-survey-finds>

Platforms need to be full compliance since August 25<sup>th</sup>. The agency in charge of ensuring the full application of the DSA in Italy is AGCOM.

At the global level, the ADL (Anti-Defamation League) registered a sharp increase of antisemitic content on mainstream platforms. "We analyzed a sample of 162,958 tweets and 15,476 Facebook posts from September 30 to October 13 (a week before to a week after the initial Hamas attacks) and found a surge in antisemitism on X amounting to a 919% week-over-week increase. Our Facebook data showed a more modest 28% increase. While we were not able to gather a large enough sample on Facebook for that increase to reach statistical significance due to limitations in data access, the difference from X is stark enough to warrant comparison."<sup>33</sup>

In January, VOX - Osservatorio Italiano sui Diritti published the seventh edition of the Intolerance Map. From January to October 2022, 629,151 tweets were collected, of which 583,067 were rated negative (93 percent); in 2021, 69 percent of tweets were negative. The researchers found that the percentage of negative tweets made up the majority of the messages collected among all studied groups: disabled 98.8%; homosexuals 94.1%; Jews 97.7%; women 89.9%; Muslims 99.9%; immigrants 79.2%. An increase in negative tweets regarding Jews was measured on Memorial Day and whenever antisemitic attacks against Jews occurred: 39,236 Jewish-related tweets were collected, and of these VOX found that 98% (38,329) were negative.<sup>34</sup>

Furthermore, in the report "Online Content Moderation - Current challenges in detecting hate speech" published by FRA, researchers found that from the 53% of the 1 573 relevant and manually analyzed posts collected (out of 344 132) in German, Italian, Bulgarian and Swedish were considered hateful. The posts include elements of incitement to violence, discrimination or hatred; denigration; offensive language; negative stereotyping; or any other hateful content, such as supporting hateful ideologies. The research also found that the lack of a commonly agreed definition of 'hate speech' creates a challenge for the classification and the removal of hateful content. "Furthermore, hatefulness is often interpreted differently, so the same speech may be assessed in different ways. The coder's background, for example their sex, age and ethnic origin, can also affect whether they code certain types of speech as hateful or not. For example, research indicates that men often deem online content targeted at women to be less offensive than women do." The research found that automated detection of online hate has increased considerably but it still undetects an considerable share of hateful content, while also finding that "manual human-based assessment of posts is costly and time consuming and requires extensive training of coders. [...] At the same time, manual coding is also subject to human disagreement and error, including as a result of bias [...]."<sup>35</sup>

**At the Observatory, we conduct online monitoring of open source<sup>36</sup> antisemitic content, and in 2023 we have collected over 3500 screenshots. The number of screenshots is not**

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<sup>33</sup> <https://www.adl.org/resources/blog/online-antisemitism-increased-after-hamas-attack>

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.voxdiritti.it/la-nuova-mappa-dellintolleranza-7/>

<sup>35</sup> [https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/fra-2023-online-content-moderation\\_en.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-online-content-moderation_en.pdf)

<sup>36</sup> "Open-source intelligence (OSINT) is the practice of collecting and analysing information gathered from open sources to produce actionable intelligence. This intelligence can support, for example, national security, law



**indicative of the real amount of antisemitic content available in Italian, as our monitoring is conducted manually and is focused on a qualitative rather than quantitative assessment of the phenomenon.** During 2023, the Observatory has also experience using the software Tangles for the monitoring of social media, in partnership with the EU-funded project Stand-Up<sup>37</sup>. While the monitoring is carried out on several platforms, it is focused in some that were selected based on their accessibility for research purposes, their popularity and the assumed magnitude of hate speech on them. The data collected by the Observatory is used to inform its research, content that is believed to violate the platform policies or Italian laws are reported to the platforms and the most severe posts are reported to UCEI (Union of the Italian Jewish Communities) and OSCAD (Observatory for Security Against Acts of Discrimination).

The characteristics of offensive anti-Jewish posts are analyzed in the previous section. It is not always easy to point out the ideological background of the user who is posting antisemitic content, but often their profiles or the language they use might give us some hints, such as the presence of Fascist or Nazi symbols in their profile, the use of codes such as 88, the raised hand and black heart emoji, the guy with the mustache or Austrian painter, etc. Some users mix different ideologies in their posts, using references to Nazism, current conspiracy theories, Israel-related antisemitism, etc. The use of emojis and codes is often a tactic employed by users to evade moderation of social media, these codes are not always easy to decipher even to human moderators, and often these posts use a mix of linguistic elements such as emojis, images, text, and sound, making its deciphering and moderation extremely complex. Some researchers have named this tactic *algospeak*: “Algospeak refers to code words or turns of phrase users have adopted in an effort to create a brand-safe lexicon that will avoid getting their posts removed or down-ranked by content moderation systems.”<sup>38</sup>

The narratives that we have found this year are quite similar to that of the past couple of years, that is the making fun of Jews or Jewish culture/tradition (especially of Ultra-orthodox Jews), using their pictures as memes or creating profiles with Jewish names for online trolling; the dehumanization of Jews; the Jewish power trope, which is often used connected to conspiracy theories of Jews controlling the banks, the media, politics, and so on, and not rarely transferred to Israel/Zionists, i.e., the Zionists control the media, politics, etc.; Holocaust inversion and trivialization: grossly comparing issues of very different magnitude with the anti-Jewish policies put in place during Nazi-Fascist era (for ex. the Green pass), or accusing Israel of carrying out a Holocaust (or something worse than the Holocaust); the trope that Jews/Israel use the Shoah as an excuse: “siete voi le merde nazista e vi nascondete dietro la Shoah”; and comparing Israel/Zionism with Nazism, which has especially increased after October 7<sup>th</sup>.

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enforcement and business intelligence. OSINT investigates open (source) data collected for one purpose and repurposes it to shed light on hidden topics.” <https://data.europa.eu/en/publications/datastories/open-source-intelligence>

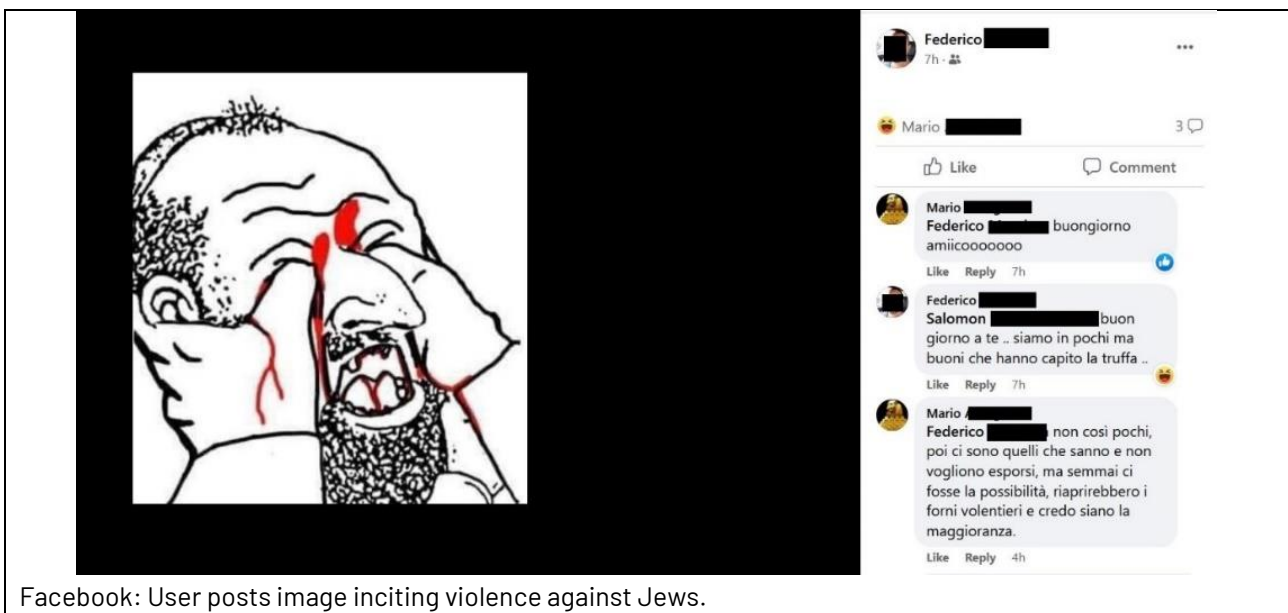
<sup>37</sup> <https://stand-up-project.eu/>; <https://www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it/approfondimenti/report-sullantisemitismo-nel-calcio/>

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2022/04/08/algospeak-tiktok-le-dollar-bean/>  
<https://www.siamomine.com/la-lingua-per-ingannare-lalgoritmo>

Jewish symbols and Jewish history are often used against Jews, with users not always understanding how hurtful and offensive that can be; for example, accusing Jews of being like the Nazi, learning so well from the Nazi that now they are even worse, and so on. The Star of David, one of the most recognizable Jewish symbols, is often used against Jews in photomontages; Jewish-LGBTQIA+ activists when waving the rainbow flag with it (Keshet Magen David) have been harassed both online and on Pride parades, being accused of committing genocide or pinkwashing Israel.

After October 7<sup>th</sup>, we have seen users celebrating the massacre carried out by Hamas or antisemitic incidents connected to it that took place abroad (“Viva Hamas”, “one less Zionist”, “Hitler era un apprendista confronto a voi” etc); also worrying are the calls for violence and vandalism, sometimes masked as “black humor” that are posted online. A TikTok user, for example, posted a picture slideshow, in which they said “bro, let’s throw bricks at K kosher supermarkets”, to which several users answered with 88 [Heil Hitler], “A.H. was right”, “raus”, “only if they are Zionists”, etc. Another worrying trend is the use of artificial intelligence to create antisemitic images or to create images with the potential of inflaming the war narrative. This trend, which was already taking pace before the war, sharply increased after October, with images being constantly created and reposted by users (especially trolls) on different platforms.

Following you will see a collection of examples of antisemitic posts found online in 2023:



Facebook: User posts image inciting violence against Jews.



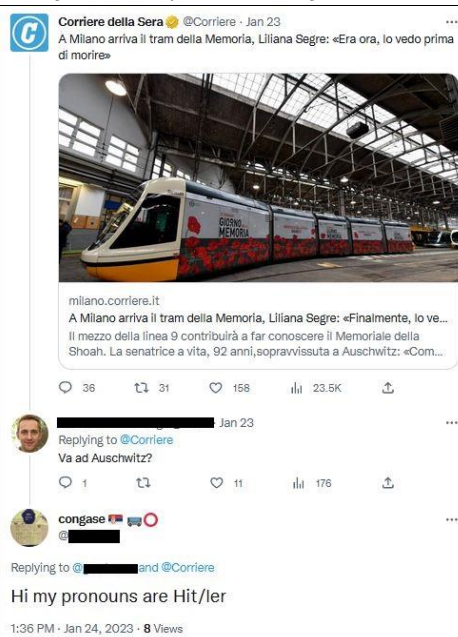
Facebook: Troll posts meme implying Jews make money from the Holocaust.



X/twitter: User responds to a news story about Senator Segre with a picture of a gallows.



Facebook: Antisemitic troll posts a collage where he compares journalist Gad Lerner to a historic antisemitic cartoon.



X/twitter: Example of "black humor" – "Does it go to Auschwitz?"



Zitta puttana ebrea ti ammazziamo a pugni nel culo.

[Translate post](#)

8:40 PM · Jun 2, 2023 · 9 Views

X/twitter: threat with antisemitic and misogynistic background. "Shut up you Jewish wh\*re, we will kill you will punches on you ass"

17h

Le razze non esistono.



6

2 comments

"The races do not exist"

In 2023, Elly Schlein was one of the main targets of antisemitic debate in Italy. After she claimed that she did not have a Jewish nose, but "Etruscan," the latter word was used by trolls as a code to refer to Jews.

7h

WHO IS BEHIND THE RISE IN TRANSGENDERISM?



12

1 comment 2 shares

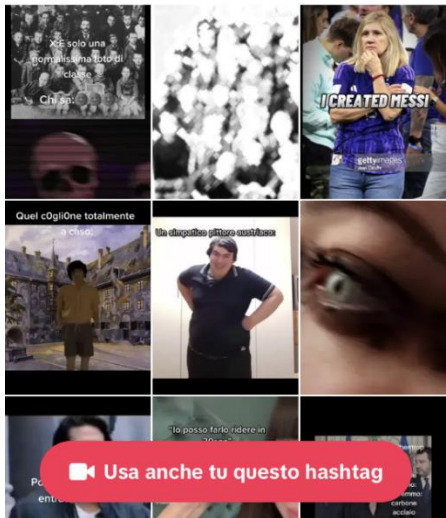
Facebook: Antisemitic and transphobic conspiracy post suggesting that Jews are behind the rise in "transgenderism."

10:53 AM 30%

#pittoreaustrico

1,0M visualizzazioni

Aggiungi ai Preferiti




Usa anche tu questo hashtag

"Austrian painter" is used on social media as a code for Hitler. On Tiktok the hashtag has more than a million views and several profiles use this code on the username.

3:01 PM 89%

ebrei nel 1945



7 commenti

riaccendiamoli

4g Rispondi

Alessandro

però capito se lo facciamo noi ci danno dei nazisti, un'altra diaspora a sto punto gliela auguro

4g Rispondi

Sempre detto che 6 milioni non sono abbastanza

4g Rispondi

Aggiungi un commento...

TikTok: The video of some ultra-Orthodox Jews spitting at Christian pilgrims in Jerusalem has been reposted on several platforms, stimulating various antisemitic comments such as "let's set them on fire", "I've always said that 6 million were not enough", ...

**Tweet**

Al #RomaPride il carro più bello era quello di @DavidKeshet, anche perché sopra c'era il mio amico @follettin89 ❤️🧡💚💙💜💖💗💘



1 2 9 293

**Nazionalromanismo** @Alss1488 · 1h  
Quanta merda tutta insieme

2 28

1h  
No, dai, smettiti di guardarti allo specchio ❤️🧡💚💙💜💖💗💘

1 25

**Nazionalromanismo** @Alss1488

Israele merda come tutti sti froci che girano

Translate Tweet

7:00 PM · Jun 10, 2023 · 24 Views

X/twitter: In response to photos of the Keshet Magen David float at Pride in Rome, a user posted several antisemitic and homophobic comments; in some comments he "invited" a user to kill himself.

June 24 at 9:49 AM · 🌐

Non importa dove, non importa come... Ma con chi!  
Buone vacanze!



Antonio [redacted] Andrea [redacted] and 171 others 27 5

"It doesn't matter where, it doesn't matter how... but with whom! Great holidays!"  
Facebook: artificial intelligence generated image depicting Hitler and Anne Frank on the beach.

**Gad Lerner** @gadlernertweet · 21h

Esultiamo per la libertà restituita a #PatrickZaki ma senza dimenticare che è stato perseguitato in un processo-farsa. E dipendere dalla benevolenza interessata e ricattatoria di un dittatore come #alSisi non promette nulla di buono per il futuro delle democrazie



699 384 2,072 90.4K

[redacted] @ [redacted]

Ammazzati demente ebreo

Translate Tweet

11:53 AM · Jul 20, 2023

"Kill yourself stupid Jew"  
X/Twitter, antisemitic comments and incitement to suicide directed at Gad Lerner.

Resistenza è con [redacted] Resistenza è [redacted]

17 h · 🌐

Il giudeo che diceva di sputare nel piatto dei NO VAX. Poi dobbiamo sorbirci i piagnistei di questa gente sulla Shoah. Il suo non era forse "incitamento all'odio"?! 🤔



10 Condivisioni

Facebook: A user posts a threat to journalist David Parenzo.

Posts collected after October 7th



55 Condivisioni:

Facebook: The image of parachuting Hamas terrorists has become a symbol on social media. Several users use it (via photos, emoji, etc.) to show their support for Hamas.



Scambierei la vita di 1000 presidenti di sinagogne con una vita di un bambino palestinese. Altre 999. Translate post 12:37 AM · Oct 22, 2023 · 101 Views

X/Twitter: User justifies/celebrates the killing of a Detroit synagogue president, wishing for 999 more to be killed.



8

Facebook: Example of a violent image created by artificial intelligence.



e altri 6


Facebook: A user created a pedopornographic image with artificial intelligence depicting Anne Frank surrounded by several men. The use of A.I. to create pornography/pornography and deep fakes is an issue that has yet to be addressed by lawmakers.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>39</sup> <https://penntoday.upenn.edu/news/what-deepfake-porn-and-why-it-thriving-age-ai>

Nel dicembre 2023, l'Unione Europea ha approvato l'A.I. Act: <https://www.vanityfair.it/article/eu-ai-act-legge-europea-intelligenza-artificiale>

13 novembre alle ore 23:11 · 🌐

Che poi la soluzione in Palestina sarebbe così semplice..



👍 2

Facebook: Troll profile publishes a post claiming that the solution for Palestine is very simple. The post alludes to death camp crematoria.

7 ottobre alle ore 19:57 · 🌐

DUE SECONDI MAGNIFICI!!!



👍 4

"Two amazing seconds"  
Facebook: User publishes a post celebrating the kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers by Hamas.

Guardatevi allo specchio malati mentali

Translate post



10:39 AM · Nov 26, 2023 · 31 Views

"Look yourselves in the mirror you mentals"

X/Twitter: A user posts an AI-generated image depicting an Israeli military man as a pig. Example of zoomorphism that recalls medieval antisemitic representations such as that of the Judensau.<sup>40</sup>

**The DSA enters in force**

As previously mentioned, the Observatory reports the antisemitic content found to the social media platforms. Since its entering in force, we have seen an improvement on the

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it/articoli/judensau-la-scrofa-degli-ebrei-analisi-della-storica-anna-foa/>

removal of the report content, but more must be done to ensure that social media platforms are a safe space for its users and that illegal content is automatically removed.

As per the DSA, VLOP are required to publish a transparency report.<sup>41</sup> These reports are fundamental for governments and the civil society to have a grasp of how VLOP's deal with illegal content published in their platforms. From the overview below, we can see that platforms have a great disparity of moderators with proficiency in Italian, with the lowest number of moderators being that of X (2 people).

- **Meta (Facebook and Instagram).** The Facebook team removes “millions of violating pieces of content and accounts [everyday]. In most cases, this happens automatically, with technology to detect, restrict, and remove content and accounts that may go against our Community Standards, Advertising Standards, and Commerce Policies. In other cases, our technology selects content for human review.” 2,822,565 pieces of hate speech related content in the European Economic Area was removed from the end of April to September, but antisemitic content might also fall under other areas such as bullying, Violent and Graphic Content, Violence and Incitement, and so on. “The team working on safety and security is made up of around 40,000 people. About 15,000 of those are content reviewers - and they include a mixture of full-time employees, contractors, and outsourced support.”<sup>42</sup> The methodology used by Instagram is mostly the same as that of Facebook. 1,521,669 pieces of hate speech related content in the European Economic Area was removed from the end of April to September, but antisemitic content might also fall under other areas such as bullying, Violent and Graphic Content, Violence and Incitement, and so on.<sup>43</sup> There are 179 Italian speaking content moderators for Facebook and Instagram.<sup>44</sup>
- **TikTok** affirms that it employs 40,000 trust and safety professionals globally and that it “takes the vast majority of action proactively against illegal and other harmful content [...]. During September 2023, we removed 4m items of violative content under our Policies, which is 7 times more than the volume of violative content removed following a user report. [...] TikTok has more than 6,000 people dedicated to moderating content, covering at least one official language for each of the 27 European Union Member States.” According to the report, TikTok has 439 people dedicated to content moderation in Italian.<sup>45</sup>
- **Google** affirms that they “protect users from harm through built-in advanced protections, policies, and a combination of scaled technology and specially trained human reviewers. These mechanisms enable us to prevent distribution of harmful and illegal content before it reaches users; detect and evaluate potentially violative

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<sup>41</sup> <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news/very-large-online-platforms-and-search-engines-publish-first-transparency-reports-under-dsa>

<sup>42</sup> <https://transparency.fb.com/sr/dsa-transparency-report-oct2023-facebook/>

<sup>43</sup> <https://transparency.fb.com/sr/dsa-transparency-report-oct2023-instagram/>

<sup>44</sup> <https://transparency.fb.com/sr/dsa-transparency-report-oct2023-facebook/>

<sup>45</sup> <https://sf16-va.tiktokcdn.com/obj/eden-va2/fsslreh7uuls/DSA%20Report%20October%202023/Draft%20Transparency%20report%20-%202025%20October%202023.pdf>



content; and respond to bad actors and abusive content in an appropriate way." Google has removed 13,288 pieces of Harmful / Dangerous content and 4,522 of Hateful / Abusive from YouTube from 28 August 2023 to 10 September 2023. Google has 91 people moderating content in Italian on YouTube, and 2,651 on multi-services.<sup>46</sup>

- **X (formally known as Twitter).** X was acquired by Elon Musk in the end of 2022, and it has since been through severe changes in their policies and the handling of hateful content. X affirms that it wants "people on X to feel they are able to freely express themselves, while also ensuring that conversations on X are safe, legal and unregretted. [...] X is reflective of real conversations happening in the world, and that sometimes includes perspectives that may be offensive, controversial, and/or narrow-minded to others." X has 2,294 people working in content moderation, of those, 2 have proficiency of Italian.<sup>47</sup>

## CHAPTER IV: THE YOUTH – JEWS AND ANTISEMITISM

2023 has been a difficult year for the Jews in the diaspora, and a cohort that was specially affected was the youth. Since October 7<sup>th</sup>, the Observatory has been contacted and registered several antisemitic incidents where the victims were young Jews, besides the overall hostile environment that young Jews and Israelis are facing in schools and universities. These incidents range from offenses/hostility against Jews to threats, in the online and offline world. The perpetrators of the incidents were classmates, and in a case a teacher. UGEI (Youth Union of Italian Jews) has been very active in the past few months, they have opened a reporting channel for antisemitic incidents, and this data has been shared with the Observatory and UCEI, and they have been in touch with Italian and foreign students that needed assistance. Moreover, it should be added that even before October 7, posts on UGEI's social profiles, especially those posted on their TikTok profile (@AskAJew), one could often find offensive comments (ranging from classic antisemitism to calls for violence).

In 2019, FRA published a report with data on their latest survey on the perception of antisemitism by Jews disaggregated by age. Interestingly, young Jews (16-34) are the group that reported the highest proportion in regard to having experienced antisemitism over the past twelve months: been a victim of at least one antisemitic experience in the past 12 months (45%); experienced at least one antisemitic harassment incident in the past 12 months (44%).

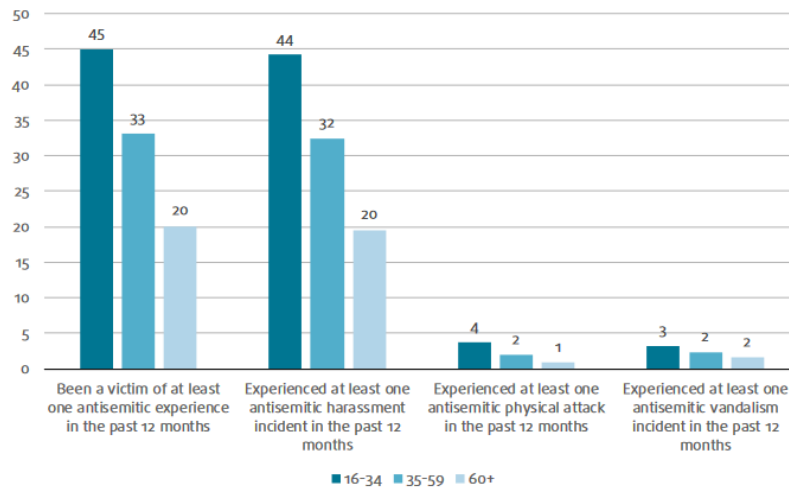
Nel 2019, la FRA (Agenzia dell'UE per i diritti fondamentali) ha pubblicato un rapporto con i dati della sua ultima indagine sulla percezione dell'antisemitismo da parte degli ebrei, disaggregati per età. Remarkably, young European Jews (18-34 years old) are much more likely to have experienced antisemitic harassment or violence than older Jewish respondents: "have been the victim of at least one antisemitic experience in the past 12 months" (45%); "have experienced at least one incident of antisemitic harassment in the past 12 months" (44%).

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<sup>46</sup> [https://storage.googleapis.com/transparencyreport/report-downloads/pdf-report-27\\_2023-8-28\\_2023-9-10\\_en\\_v1.pdf](https://storage.googleapis.com/transparencyreport/report-downloads/pdf-report-27_2023-8-28_2023-9-10_en_v1.pdf)

<sup>47</sup> <https://transparency.twitter.com/dsa-transparency-report.html>

Figure 22: Proportions of Jewish Europeans who have experienced various forms of antisemitism over the past twelve months, by age band (%)<sup>a,b,c,d,e</sup>



Furthermore, according to the same survey “81 % of the young Jewish Europeans surveyed say that antisemitism is a problem in their countries, and much the same proportion (83 %) believes it to have increased over the past five years. [...] Young Jewish Europeans are likely to point to the internet and social media as the context in which antisemitism is most problematic today, and where an increase can most be seen in recent years. Close to 90 % of those surveyed hold these positions. [...] Young Jewish Europeans are considerably more likely to have experienced antisemitic harassment or violence than older Jewish respondents.”<sup>48</sup> FRA conducted a new survey in 2023, the results should be published in the first semester of 2024, but the data collection ended before the current antisemitic wave, thus the data will not represent accurately the perception of Jews of the issue.

As mentioned above, the situation has changed dramatically since October 7. Since then, two surveys have been conducted in Italy among Jewish youth, one focusing on Israeli students (carried out by an Israeli student on Oct. 29) and one on Jewish students in general (carried out by UGEI between Nov. 10 and 11). The following data are the result of independently developed and conducted surveys, and their results, while not statistically representative, can give us some insight into the perceptions and concerns of young Italian and Israeli Jews at this time.

In the first survey,<sup>49</sup> “80% of Israeli students said they have tried to hide Jewish symbols or their Israeli identity in the university; 75% said they were afraid to speak Hebrew aloud at the university or on the street; 70% said they did not go to a pro-Israel demonstration because they were afraid; Nearly 70% said they do not tell people they are Jewish or Israeli; Nearly half said they did not go to a Chabad center, synagogue or Jewish community memorial service because they were afraid; Thirty-five percent of students said they removed external symbols: Kippa, Star of David, etc.” Furthermore, 60% of the students skipped a class in the previous week because they were afraid of going to university; 32% affirmed that they are afraid of

<sup>48</sup> [https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/fra-2019-young-jewish-europeans\\_en.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2019-young-jewish-europeans_en.pdf)

<sup>49</sup> 2023, Report authored by Israeli students, restricted document

another student studying in the same class as them; and about 35 % of them came across with a post uploaded by a student that included: antisemitic messages, Nazi symbols, or calls for violence. This data shows that overall, Israeli students were feeling unsafe at universities, and that because of the current situation they had to hide their Jewish and Israeli identity.

234 young Jews took part in UGEI's survey,<sup>50</sup> with most of them residing in Rome and Milan, the two cities with the biggest Jewish communities in Italy, as well as the two main university and economic hubs. Almost 60% of the respondents are between 18 and 24 years old, and 65% of them are students, the other 35% are young professionals. 62% of the respondents believe that being Jewish can be a reason for being discriminated in the work or study place; the youngest cohort is the one that agrees the most with this statement (68%), and the oldest one the least (48%); students agree with the statement in a highest rate (67%) than young professionals (55%). 99% of the respondents believe that antisemitism is rising; and 58% of them feel often/always judged because they are Jewish, with more professionals (64%), and the middle and older cohorts agreeing with it (65% and 64% respectively).

Have you witnessed and/or been a victim of antisemitic incidents in the past month? 60% of 30-35 years old said yes, 55% of 25-29 and 46% of 18-24; 63% of professionals and 43% of students; and when analyzed by city of residence<sup>51</sup> young Jews from Turin and Rome had the highest agreement rate (72% and 56%, respectively), followed by Milan and Florence (both 40%). 86% of the respondents changed some or many habits to feel safer: the middle cohort 25-29 has the highest agreement rate (91%). 78% of them evaluated as inadequate or poor the answer of institutions to the antisemitic incidents. When asked what they have changed, many affirmed that now they think before telling someone they are Jewish, often deciding not to do so; stopped wearing or hid Jewish/Israeli symbols (Magen David, Kippah, things with the Israeli flag, etc) and taking out the Mezuzah from the house's entrance doorpost; some avoided going to Synagogue in the aftermath of the massacre; and so on. When asked to describe their mental health from October 7 to the present most respondents answered it with negative adjectives such as worried, tired, overwhelmed, sad, anxious, lonely, and so on.

Noteworthy is a letter published by a Jewish student from Latin America who studies at Sapienza that is partially reported as following:

"From my first day at Sapienza, I was greeted with hostility and xenophobia because of my dual Jewish and Latino identity.

The environment started to become toxic because of a student, whom we will call John Doe, on a university group chat. In this context, John made disparaging comments about Americans of Latino descent and made distressing jokes about Africans and Jews in the ovens.

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<sup>50</sup> UGEI, 2023, La Percezione dell'antisemitismo dei Giovani Ebrei d'Italia, some of the data was reworked by the Observatory.

<sup>51</sup> For this disaggregation we have only took in consideration cities with 10 or more respondents. Total: 196 out of 234.

Although I reported these incidents to the university and the appropriate authorities, no action was taken. Later, John threatened me for reporting him, a threat I in turn reported and which obviously was not taken seriously.

In addition, another student, whom we will call Jane Doe, expressed extremist views and targeted Jewish students. There was one incident where she openly expressed disgust at an Israeli student just for stating his origin. On another occasion, he publicly attacked Jewish students on the same group chat and made death threats against people like me who identified themselves as Zionists.

These incidents of hostility and antisemitism left the Jewish community isolated and insecure within the university. [...]<sup>52</sup>

Two other surveys were conducted with young people before (or partially before) October 7<sup>th</sup>, about their view on Jews and the agreement rate of antisemitic tropes/stereotypes. The first is a survey was conducted by prof. Asher Colombo et al. between September 29<sup>th</sup> and October 31<sup>st</sup> with 2579 students from three universities in northern Italy; and the second by the staff of the Observatory between April and May 2023 with 673 students from the first and fifth year of three high schools in Lazio region, surveys that while not statistically representative of young Italians offer insights of great interest.

Colombo's survey aimed at measuring the degree of agreement with negative statements about Jews, ranging from traditional tropes/stereotypes to Israel related antisemitism. It emerges from the study the students that define themselves as right-wing (right + center-right) agree at a higher rate with negative statements about Jews and at a lower rate with those about Jewish contributions to society than students on the left (left + center-left); specially in regard to the tropes that Jews do not really belong or are not loyal to the country they are born (being more loyal towards Israel), and that they prefer to hang out with other Jews. The distance between left- and right-wing students is specially marked on the statements "the Jews are not Italian to their core" and "one can never fully trust the Jews". Students on the left have a higher tendency of agreeing with the statements related to Israel, like "the Israeli government behaves toward the Palestinians as the Nazi behaved towards the Jews" (60%). The students that do not see themselves neither on the left nor on the right tend to fall between these two poles.<sup>53</sup>

The second survey aimed to measure the knowledge about the Jews and the degree of agreement with a few antisemitic tropes. 27% of participants say they feel sympathy and 3% dislike the Jews; a decrease in the feeling of dislike emerges between the first and fifth years (from 5% to 1%) and an increase in sympathy (from 24% to 30%). When asked who the Jews are, 73% of respondents selected the answer a people and 66% a religion, while negative concepts such as race and sect were selected by a minority (6% and 2%). 16% of respondents partly agree or totally agree with the statement that most Jews are rich and moneylenders;

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<sup>52</sup> <https://www.ugei.it/lopinione-lettera-di-una-studentessa-della-sapienza>

<sup>53</sup> The full report is available at: <https://www.cattaneo.org/studenti-universitari-ebrei-e-israele-prima-e-dopo-il-7-10-2023/>

this statement finds a higher degree of acceptance among first-year students (21%) than among fifth-year students (13%). 43% of the students affirmed that they don't know if they agree with the statement "some people think that Jews have a lot of power and influence in the world of finance and world politics"; while 36% of them disagreed and 21% agreed. When asked whether hostility toward Jews is mainly a result of anti-Jewish sentiments or anti-Israel sentiments 37% indicate that they do not know; 25% believe hostility is a result of anti-Jewish sentiments, and 33% of both anti-Jewish and anti-Israel sentiment.<sup>54</sup>

Putting together all these surveys, it is not a surprise that young Jews feel that antisemitism is growing or that they need to be cautious about expressing their identity openly. It emerges that a considerable share of young Italians agrees to some antisemitic statements, and that for many students Jews are still seen with distrust. On the other hand, we can see that young Jews living in Italy (both Italian and foreigners) are increasingly worried about the state of antisemitism, especially after October 7<sup>th</sup>, and this is leading many of them to hide their identity in fear of harassment, as it is often the case in other Western countries.

## **CHAPTER V: BEST PRACTICES ON COUNTERING ANTISEMITISM**

Several initiatives to counter antisemitism were undertaken during 2023:

In January, the Senate of the Republic decided to reappoint the Segre Commission<sup>55</sup> for Countering Intolerance, Racism, Antisemitism and Incitement to Hate and Violence. Also in January, Prefect Giuseppe Pecoraro<sup>56</sup> was appointed as the new national coordinator for the fight against antisemitism.

In mid-May a conference sponsored by the Observatory for Security Against Discriminatory Acts (OSCAD), entitled "The Victims of Hate"<sup>57</sup>, focusing on the issue of antisemitism and other forms of intolerance and discrimination, with contributions from experts, scholars and institutional figures, including Interior Minister Matteo Piantedosi took place at the Shoah Memorial in Milan.

On June 20 in Rome at the Casina dei Vallati, a seminar for journalists was held on the theme "Contrasting antisemitism in the Italian media,"<sup>58</sup> sponsored by the Embassy of Israel in Italy together with the National Council of the Order of Journalists, Paolo Murialdi Foundation, Shoah Museum Foundation, CDEC Foundation, Union of Italian Jewish Communities and the

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<sup>54</sup> <https://www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it/approfondimenti/seconda-indagine-tra-studenti-sulla-conoscenza-degli-ebrei-atteggiamenti-e-pregiudizi/>

<sup>55</sup> <https://www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it/articoli/al-senato-si-unanime-alla-ricostituzione-della-commissione-segre-contro-intolleranza-e-razzismo/>

<sup>56</sup> <https://moked.it/blog/2023/01/26/pecoraro-coordinatore/>

<sup>57</sup> <https://www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it/articoli/milano-cronaca-del-convegno-siate-la-farfalla-gialla-che-vola-sopra-il-filo-spinato/>

<sup>58</sup> <https://moked.it/blog/2023/06/20/i-media-e-la-lotta-allantisemitismo-voci-a-confronto/>

Jewish Community of Rome. The event concluded with the signing of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's definition of antisemitism by the Order of Journalists.

A Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen measures to counter antisemitism in soccer was signed at the Viminale on June 27<sup>th</sup>.<sup>59</sup> The agreement was signed by Interior Minister Matteo Piantedosi, Minister for Sport and Youth Andrea Abodi, National Coordinator for the fight against antisemitism Giuseppe Pecoraro, and Italian Football Federation President Gabriele Gravina. The following day the Italian Referees Association joined the initiative to counter antisemitism in soccer.<sup>60</sup> Still related to soccer, in March Sky Sport aired a special on antisemitism in soccer,<sup>61</sup> and in late December the Observatory's researchers published a report on this issue.<sup>62</sup>

In July, the edited book "*L'antisemitismo e le sue metamorfosi*" curated by Milena Santerini and released by *Giuntina* publishing house was published.<sup>63</sup>

As of August 25, large online platforms must fully comply with the European Union's Digital services act (DSA).

In October, the Italian parliament approved the project to open a Shoah Museum in Rome.<sup>64</sup> In addition, the Shoah Memorial in Milan reported that during 2023 it hosted 145,000 visitors.<sup>65</sup>

The HIDEANDOLA (Hidden Antisemitism and Communicative Skills of Criminal Lawyers and Journalists) project concluded, after two years of research and training cycles, on Nov. 15 with a conference aimed at journalists and criminal lawyers.<sup>66</sup>

The launch event of the FADE project ("Fight against Antisemitism through training and awareness raising activities") which has the Office of the Presidency of the Council, UCEI, CDEC Foundation, UNAR, Reflect and Ceji - A Jewish Contribution to An Inclusive Europe as main partners, was held in Rome on Nov. 22 and aims to improve the capacity of public authorities to identify, prosecute and condemn incidents of discrimination and antisemitic hatred in a timely and effective manner.<sup>67</sup> At the same event, NOA Italy's scorecard "on government measures to counter antisemitism and promote Jewish life" was presented. NOA Italy's scorecard illustrates the current policy landscape in 10 areas: culture, education, hate crimes, hate speech, Holocaust remembrance, intercultural dialogue, media, religious

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<sup>59</sup> <https://www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it/articoli/firmata-la-dichiarazione-dintenti-contro-lantisemitismo-nel-calcio/>

<sup>60</sup> <https://www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it/articoli/lassociazione-italiana-arbitri-aderisce-alliniziativa-per-la-lotta-contro-lantisemitismo-nel-calcio/>

<sup>61</sup> <https://sport.sky.it/calcio/serie-a/2023/03/27/calcio-antisemitismo-ebrei-video>

<sup>62</sup> <https://www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it/approfondimenti/report-sullantisemitismo-nel-calcio/>

<sup>63</sup> <https://www.giuntina.it/catalogo/fuori-collana/l%E2%80%99antisemitismo-e-le-sue-metamorfosi-868.html>

<sup>64</sup> <https://www.ilpost.it/2023/10/18/parlamento-approva-museo-shoah-roma/>

<sup>65</sup> <https://www.instagram.com/p/C1h0jttMgok/>

<sup>66</sup> <https://hideandola.jus.unipi.it/2023/11/convegno-finale-del-progetto-ue-cerv-2021-hideandola-dialogo-e-cortocircuiti-tra-media-e-justizia-penale-15-novembre-2023/>

<sup>67</sup> <https://moked.it/blog/2023/11/22/antisemitismo-lapproccio-fade-per-affrontarlo-melissa-sonnino-dove-possiamo-migliorare/>

freedom, security and sports. The research shows that there is still much the Italian government can and must do to counter antisemitism.<sup>68</sup>

On Dec. 5, a demonstration to contrast antisemitism and terrorism was held in Rome and joined by several representatives from the political class and civil society.<sup>69</sup> Finally, an OSCE/ODHIR convention on countering antisemitism was held in Rome on December 13.<sup>70</sup>

Several political figures condemned the surge in the number of antisemitic incidents following Oct. 7, including Prime Minister Georgia Meloni, who described antisemitism as “a cancer that must be defeated. [...] a phenomenon that must worry us, against which we must work at every level; after the Hamas attacks we have been concerned about strengthening protection measures to Jewish communities;”<sup>71</sup> and President of the Republic, Sergio Mattarella, declared that “the Middle East crisis, with its harboring of hatred, has also caused the phenomenon of antisemitism to resurface from its karst river, which, today as yesterday, feeds on commonplaces and a distorted view of history. It derives from subcultures that resist time and reason, real 'warehouses of hatred, never emptied of their toxic goods,' as Senator Liliana Segre recently defined them. This kind of discourse must be responded with the clearest condemnation, without ambiguity, without convenient explanations.”<sup>72</sup>

On Jan. 4, 2024, it was announced that General Pasquale Angelosanto will replace Prefect Giuseppe Pecoraro in the role of National Coordinator for the fight against antisemitism.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> <https://ceji.org/i-risultati-della-noa-italian-report-card-sono-ora-disponibili/>

<sup>69</sup> <https://www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it/articoli/roma-5-dicembre-manifestazione-nazionale-contro-antisemitismo-e-terrorismo/>

<sup>70</sup> <https://www.stampaparlamento.it/2023/12/13/antisemitismo-delegazione-italiana-allassemblea-parlamentare-osce-incontra-il-rabbino-baker-e-il-prefetto-pecoraro/>

<sup>71</sup> [https://www.ansa.it/sito/notizie/politica/2023/12/11/meloni-antisemitismo-e-un-cancro-che-si-deve-sconfiggere\\_60d6a7a1-8381-4c77-af1c-f1f062d24ba3.html](https://www.ansa.it/sito/notizie/politica/2023/12/11/meloni-antisemitismo-e-un-cancro-che-si-deve-sconfiggere_60d6a7a1-8381-4c77-af1c-f1f062d24ba3.html)

<sup>72</sup> [https://www.ansa.it/sito/notizie/politica/2023/12/18/mattarella-condannare-lantisemitismo-basta-ambiguita\\_2ab4d887-c4a6-433e-b3a0-f36e5618ac7c.html](https://www.ansa.it/sito/notizie/politica/2023/12/18/mattarella-condannare-lantisemitismo-basta-ambiguita_2ab4d887-c4a6-433e-b3a0-f36e5618ac7c.html)

<sup>73</sup> [https://www.ansa.it/sito/notizie/politica/2024/01/04/meloni-angelosanto-nuovo-coordinatore-per-la-lotta-allantisemitismo-\\_b4b91bfa-fa31-4081-8f4f-497622534e4f.html](https://www.ansa.it/sito/notizie/politica/2024/01/04/meloni-angelosanto-nuovo-coordinatore-per-la-lotta-allantisemitismo-_b4b91bfa-fa31-4081-8f4f-497622534e4f.html)

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