

Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

SCoJeC

Contents

[Home Affairs](#)

[Relevant Legislation](#)

[Holocaust](#)

[Consultations](#)

[Israel](#)

Home Affairs

House of Commons Written Answers

Social Networking: Antisemitism

Nusrat Ghani [61016] To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what recent discussions he has had with social media companies on anti-Semitic content on their platforms.

Marcus Jones: Formal negotiation with the internet industry to tackle online hate crime, including anti-Semitic content, has been led by officials from across government, primarily within the Cyber-Hate Working Group and latterly within the Internet Sub-Group of the European Commission High Level Group on Hate Crime. Both of these have led to voluntary agreements being drawn up concerning the code of conduct of industry bodies and their response to complaints from members of the public, for example:

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/files/hate_speech_code_of_conduct_en.pdf

The Government's Hate Crime Action Plan, published last July, includes a commitment to bring Ministers from across Whitehall together with industry bodies, victims and academics to discuss challenges and future opportunities to collaborate.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-01-20/61016/>

Internet: Hate Crime

Nusrat Ghani [61017] To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what data his Department holds on the volume of anti-Semitic and other hate material available (a) online, (b) on Twitter and (c) on Facebook.

Marcus Jones: Incidences of illegal hate crime online should be reported to the police who are supported by third party organisations such as the Community Security Trust. National statistics on hate crime are published annually. In addition, figures produced by the National Police Chiefs' Council provide a breakdown of police recorded religious hate crimes and show that in 2015/16, 786 anti-Semitic hate crimes were recorded by police forces in England, Wales and Northern Ireland:

http://www.report-it.org.uk/files/faith_hate_crime_true_vision_2015-16_v2.pdf

Data is not available to show how many of these offences were committed online. As part of the Government's Hate Crime Action Plan, officials from across Whitehall are working with academics who are analysing social media platforms to better understand the nature and extent of the harm caused by online hate crime and the effectiveness of counter-narrative measures.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-01-20/61017/>

Hate Crime

Matthew Offord [60575] To ask the Attorney General, what guidance his Department provides to ensure the consistent prosecution and assessment of hate crime by the regional Crown Prosecution Service offices.

Robert Buckland: Hate crime creates fear and can have a devastating impact on individuals and communities. The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) is committed to tackling hate crime in any form. In 2015-16, the CPS prosecuted 15,442 hate crime prosecutions, the highest number to date.

The CPS has published Public Policy Statements on all monitored strands of hate crime as a public consultation to demonstrate its understanding and commitment and to encourage public confidence. These statements were developed in partnership with community stakeholders, an approach which is being delivered nationally.

The CPS policy for dealing with hate crime cases is delivered by consistent application of national legal guidance. Legal guidance is available on all strands of monitored hate crime and incorporates relevant case law and good practice. It assists prosecutors to assess the issues in hate crime cases, make the right charging decisions and build robust prosecutions. The CPS ensures the policy and legal guidance is applied nationally by delivering national training to ensure effective application. The hate crime training is mandatory for all prosecutors.

There are Hate Crime Coordinators in every CPS Area and they meet twice a year to share best practice and inform national guidance. Since January 2015, the CPS has also operated a Hate Crime Assurance Scheme to ensure consistency in prosecuting cases. To assist the consistent prosecution and assessment of hate crime, the CPS nationally and locally, seeks the practical input of individuals with experience and expertise in supporting victims of hate crime.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-01-18/60575/>

House of Lords Written Answer

Universities: Radicalism

Lord Murphy of Torfaen [HL4673] To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to ensure the balance of enabling free speech in universities whilst mitigating the potential risk caused by extremist speakers.

Viscount Younger of Leckie: Universities are legally required to take reasonable steps to ensure freedom of speech for staff, students and visiting speakers. This includes publishing a code of conduct setting out how they do this. They must balance this duty alongside their other legal responsibilities including the statutory Prevent duty which requires them to have due regard to avoid the potential risk of people being drawn into terrorism.

The Prevent guidance for Higher Education sets out that universities should have policies in place for the management of external speakers and events. This includes guidance on how universities balance their duty to promote free speech whilst mitigating the potential risk to safety or welfare that may be posed by

extremist speakers.

The Department for Education's regional Prevent coordinator network provides additional support to universities to enable them to assess the potential risks from certain speakers and how to take mitigating action to ensure that ideas and opinions can be heard, challenged and debated.

The statutory Prevent duty is monitored by the Higher Education Funding Council for England who report to us that institutions are properly balancing the need to protect their students, whilst ensuring that freedom of speech on campus is not undermined.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-01-16/HL4673/>

Department for Communities and Local Government

New hate crime package to target groups at need

Ahead of Holocaust Memorial Day 2017, Communities Secretary Sajid Javid has ... announced £375,000 of new funding to further encourage the reporting and prevention of hate crime.

The new package will be targeted at a range of existing organisations, working with faith and minority communities that have historically faced challenges in reporting hate crime. These include race and faith groups and those working at challenging the prejudice towards people from alternative subcultures. ...

Mr Javid will announce the new funding in a speech at The Anne Frank Trust Annual Lunch to mark Holocaust Memorial Day in London today, before hosting the UK Commemorative Ceremony for Holocaust Memorial Day.

Communities Secretary Sajid Javid said: Holocaust Memorial Day is a stark and important reminder of what can happen when hate and intolerance spirals out of control and specific groups are targeted simply because they are different.

These funds build upon what government is already doing through the [Hate Crime Action Plan](#) to challenge the misperceptions that lead to hate crime and support victims from marginalised communities to stand up and report incidents.

Let me be clear. Hate crime has no place whatsoever in British society. We will not stand for it. All communities must be able to live their lives free from fear of verbal or physical attack.

Minister for Faith and Integration Lord Bourne said: This new funding will support communities most at risk that may find reporting and preventing hate crime challenging for a variety of cultural and historical reasons.

Every community in Britain should feel confident in standing up to the perpetrators of hate crime and make it clear that hate and intolerance is entirely unacceptable.

The package will provide funding to the following organisations: [Sophie Lancaster Foundation](#), ... [True Vision](#) ... [The Traveller Movement](#) ... [Show Racism the Red Card](#) ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-hate-crime-package-to-target-groups-at-need>

Scottish Government

Review of hate crime legislation

... The independent review will be chaired by the Right Honourable Lord Bracadale, one of the most senior members of the Scottish judiciary.

The review begins this month and will consider:

- Whether current laws are appropriate and consistent
- If hate crime legislation needs simplified, rationalised or harmonised

- If new categories of hate crime for characteristics not currently legislated for, such as age and gender, need to be created

Announcing the review in the Scottish Parliament, Minister for Community Safety and Legal Affairs Annabelle Ewing said: “Racism, intolerance and prejudice of all kinds are a constant threat to society, and while Scotland is an open and inclusive nation, we are not immune from that threat.

“While we already have robust and comprehensive laws in place, we need to make sure that legislation is up-to-date and able to counter all forms of hate crime. ...

Lord Bracadale said: “... I intend to meet key community representatives and those involved in applying the law, as well as carrying out a public consultation, to ensure that the views of those with a direct interest will be heard and considered as part of the review.”

Equalities Secretary Angela Constance added: “... “Any incidence of hate crime must be dealt with appropriately and consistently. I welcome the review of legislation, which will ensure those who find themselves victims of hate crime have appropriate legal protection.”

To read the full press release see

<http://news.gov.scot/news/hate-crime-legislation-review>

[TOP](#)

Holocaust

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Baroness Anelay hosts Holocaust Memorial Day event

... This event, held each year, provides an opportunity not only to focus on the horrors of the Holocaust, but to also consider how the UK can further promote Holocaust education and remembrance.

... those present heard from Holocaust survivor Dorit Oliver-Wolff, who shared her remarkable journey from surviving the Second World War to becoming a celebrated performer. Dorit was born a Hungarian Jew and danced in front of the future king of Yugoslavia at just four years old; by six years old she was hiding from German soldiers rounding up and transporting her fellow Jews to concentration camps around Europe. ... There was also time for remembrance and reflection during the El Maleh Rahamim (prayer for the souls of the departed).

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/baroness-anelay-hosts-holocaust-memorial-day-event>

Baroness Anelay speech at Holocaust Memorial Day event

... The Holocaust was one of the darkest periods in our history. Sometimes we would prefer to forget, because what happened is too painful to remember. But it is only by remembering that we can learn from the past and ensure that history does not repeat itself.

Continuing to raise awareness in this way is essential because intolerance and hate still afflict our societies today. Antisemitism in particular is still an issue. That is why the UK has led the international community in adopting the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of Antisemitism. We will use it to guide our work and to make clear that antisemitism has no place in our society. ...

This year’s theme reminds us that, even as the world’s Jewish communities began to rebuild their shattered lives, they continued to suffer antisemitic attacks. Shockingly, there were a number of pogroms immediately after the Holocaust, for example one in Poland where 42 Jews were murdered. Sadly, even today we cannot declare that

antisemitism has been defeated. We all of us need to be vigilant in standing up against it.

...

Our commitment must be to remember the victims who perished, respect the survivors who are still with us, and reaffirm humanity's common aspiration for mutual understanding and justice.

To read the full transcript see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/baroness-anelay-speech-at-holocaust-memorial-day-event>

European Parliament

Drawing lessons from history: Parliament commemorates Holocaust victims

... Referring to the Holocaust as "the worst tragedy in European history", Parliament President Antonio Tajani said: "Remembering is not only an act of commemoration. It is a crucial process if we want to avoid repeating the same errors."

Tajani expressed concerns over Europe's shrinking Jewish population and the persistence of crimes against Jews. He added: "Remembering the terrible mistakes of the past gives us the possibility to remind ourselves that Europe has always been able to draw lessons from history for a future based on freedom, democracy and respect for human dignity."

Dr Moshe Kantor, the president of the European Jewish Congress, said: "We, European Jews, want to remain in Europe and be loyal to it as we have always been. We count on Europe to continue to show its loyalty to us, loyalty to the idea that the Jews have a future here in Europe." ...

To read the full press release see

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/20170123STO59558/drawing-lessons-from-history-parliament-commemorates-holocaust-victims>

European Union

Statement by the High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini ahead of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day, 27 January 2017

We remember the genocide committed here, on European soil, just two generations ago. We remember the millions of Jews murdered in the Shoah, and the many other victims. As Shimon Peres, now sadly no longer with us, once said: 'We are their eyes that remember. We are their voice that cries out.' ...

We have a responsibility to remember: a responsibility towards the victims, towards the survivors. A responsibility towards the future generations. And a responsibility towards Europe, and all European citizens. ...

Anti-Semitism has not disappeared, and European Jews have too often come under attack. Discriminations based on religion and on ethnicity are worryingly on the rise. Each new generation needs to commit again to the foundations of our peaceful coexistence. ...

To read the full transcript see

https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/19241/statement-high-representativevice-president-federica-mogherini-ahead-international-holocaust_en

European Commission

Message by President Jean-Claude Juncker on the occasion of Holocaust Remembrance Day 2017

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the Wannsee conference, where with cold,

bureaucratic precision plans were laid out by the Nazi leadership to exterminate European Jews. As the years pass and as we become further removed from those events, the stronger is our duty to stand back and take the time to remember and reflect. "Memory has become a sacred duty of all people of goodwill". This is the lesson we have received from Nobel Prize Winner Elie Wiesel, who died last year after devoting his life to be a voice for the survivors of the atrocities of the Shoah.

Our duty becomes even more compelling as every year the survivors and direct witnesses of the Holocaust become fewer and fewer, leaving the younger generations with the responsibility to carry a message that cannot lose its strength. We will not cease to say "We remember"! ...

In these challenging times, memory is not only a reminder of the past, it is a compass for the future to not repeat the same mistakes and to not fall into the same traps like we have done so by allowing discrimination and hatred to spread. Elie Wiesel saw the dangerous seeds sowed by growing hatred. He recognised the threat this new tide represented and spoke up early against Antisemitism raising its ugly head again in Europe – in new forms - long before many others.

History warns us that hatred can quickly tilt into incitement and violence. For this reason, the EU has made tackling hatred and hate speech, where it arises, a priority. ...

Today, when "fake news" are easily spread, there cannot be any complacency regarding Holocaust denials. This applies regardless of the forms in which they are disguised: whether it is the so called "hard" Holocaust denial, denying that the Holocaust ever happened - criminalized by law - but also the insidious alleged "soft" Holocaust denial, which emerges in the downplaying of the scale and depth of the evil embodied by the Shoah, or the questioning of the relevance of the Holocaust for today's world as well as in the attempts to belittle the Holocaust by pointing to other situations. ...

To read the full transcript see

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STATEMENT-17-148_en.htm?locale=en

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)

Educating for the future through learning from the past

... "I am very worried about the increasing prevalence of intolerance and acts of hatred around Europe," said FRA Director Michael O'Flaherty. "To forget the victims of the Holocaust would be to dishonour them. At the same time, a keen sensitivity to the past can be harnessed for the present. This appalling episode in human history demonstrates the non-negotiable need for respect and tolerance across our societies today."

"It is important to remember that the Holocaust did not begin with murder – it began with words and progressed to the denigration of fundamental rights, culminating in genocide. This is why the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance feel so strongly about combating all forms of hate speech, including antisemitism. Hate speech does not respect national borders so we stand united with our international partners, including the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, to tackle this scourge at the roots," said Ambassador Mihnea Constantinescu, Chair of the IHRA. ...

To read the full press release see

<http://fra.europa.eu/en/news/2017/educating-future-through-learning-past>

[TOP](#)

Israel

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Minister for the Middle East statement on settlement units in the West bank

Foreign Office minister, Tobias Ellwood, said: The British Government reiterates its support for a two-state solution leading to a secure Israel that is safe from terrorism, and a contiguous, viable and sovereign Palestinian state. We have consistently been clear that settlements are illegal under international law, are not conducive to peace and their construction must stop. We condemn the increased pace of settlement activity.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/minister-for-the-middle-east-statement-on-settlement-units-in-the-west-bank--2>

[TOP](#)

Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Arbitration and Mediation Services (Equality) Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/arbitrationandmediationservicesequality.html>

Assisted Dying Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/assisteddying.html>

Cultural Property (Armed Conflicts) Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/culturalpropertyarmedconflicts.html>

Lobbying (Transparency) Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/lobbyingtransparency.html>

Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/organdonationdeemedconsent.html>

Promotion of Israeli-Palestinian Peace (United Kingdom Participation)

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/promotionofisraelipalestinianpeaceunitedkingdomparticipation.html>

**** Wales Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/wales.html>

'Ping Pong': Bill returned to Lords with amendments agreed to

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2017-01-25/debates/484863B2-E61A-46D9-AF38-052ED46C45AA/WalesBill>

[TOP](#)

Consultations ** new or updated today

**** closes in 5 days**

Welsh Assembly Inquiry into Lobbying (closing date 31 January 2017)

<http://senedd.assembly.wales/mgConsultationDisplay.aspx?id=236&RPID=1507974161&cp=yes>

Consolidation and revision of the school governance regulatory framework in Wales
(closing date 17 February 2017)
<https://consultations.gov.wales/consultations/consolidation-and-revision-school-governance-regulatory-framework-wales>

Racism at work (closing date 27 February 2017)
<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/RacismAtWork>

Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation: increasing numbers of successful donations (Scotland) (closing date 14 March 2017)
<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0051/00511160.pdf>

Adoption and Children (Northern Ireland) Bill (closing date 10 April 2017)
<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/consultations/adoption-and-children-northern-ireland-bill>

Workplace Diversity (Wales) (closing date not stated)
<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/wtucdiversity>

[TOP](#)

The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) is Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation SCO29438