

Experiences and perceptions of antisemitism

Second survey on discrimination and hate crime against Jews in the EU

Factsheet – Sweden

'I think that Sweden was not antisemitic at all before, that has changed, it's that which feels so difficult. Before, I wasn't at all afraid to say that I was Jewish; my children even though it was interesting when they were teenagers and they wanted to be special. Nowadays, I'm more reluctant to talk about my background. I am concerned about the future.' (Woman, 70–79 years old, Sweden)

'In my upbringing I heard my mother talk about "never tell anyone in school, where you work" that you are of Jewish descent. When I realised this myself at an adult age and I was targeted with antisemitic insults, I felt it - how much of my fear transferred from my mother's fear of antisemitism I don't know, but from my daily life as outspoken Jew, I see it, hear it and experience it. My experience should in this case be counted as "for real". Antisemitism is for real, it's a habit that routinely grows, it's there and runs wild.' (Woman, 30–34 years old, Sweden)

'None of my friends where I live or who I work with know that I'm a Jew. Our children don't know about my Jewish background, because I am terrified that they would get comments on that in school. I no longer visit the synagogue, because it's not worth it if we'd be targeted for something. The best thing was when I got married, because now my last name is "Svensson".' (Woman, 40–44 years old, Sweden)

'I never wear any Jewish symbols publicly and I always look over my shoulder when I attend a Jewish event. <...> I only want to be left in peace and be able to practice my religion.' (Woman, 40–44 years old, Sweden)

'Personally, I haven't experienced many verbal or physical antisemitic attacks because I am very restrictive about talking about my Jewishness.' (Woman, 40–44 years old, Sweden)

'The antisemitism I experienced is more subtle than can be described in a form like this. Like the bizarre silence after I spoke about being Jewish at work once.' (Man, 25–29 years old, Sweden)

The survey in a nutshell

The report presents the main findings of FRA's second survey on Jewish people's experiences and perceptions of hate crime, discrimination and antisemitism. It analyses data from the responses of 16,395 self-identified Jewish people in 12 EU Member States – Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. These Member States are home to over 96 % of the EU's estimated Jewish population.

The survey was open to individuals aged 16 years and over who consider themselves Jewish – based on religion, culture, upbringing, ethnicity, parentage or any other reason – and who, at the time of the survey, were living in one of the survey countries. The largest samples were obtained from the two countries which, according to estimates, have the largest Jewish populations in the EU – France (3,869 respondents) and the United Kingdom (4,731 respondents). Samples over 1,000 respondents were obtained in Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden. For the remaining seven countries, the sample sizes ranged from 400 to 800 respondents.

In Sweden, 1,193 respondents filled in the online survey.

Selected results for Sweden

Manifestations of antisemitism

- According to the survey findings, 82 % of the respondents in Sweden consider antisemitism to be a very big or a fairly big problem in their country (average in the 12 surveyed countries: 85 %)
- 81 % of the respondents in Sweden consider antisemitism has increased over the past 5 years (average in the 12 surveyed countries: 89 %)
- 83 % of the respondents in Sweden consider racism to be a very big or a fairly big problem in their country (average in the 12 surveyed countries: 84 %)
- 63 % of the respondents in Sweden consider intolerance towards Muslims to be a very big or a fairly big problem in their country (average in the 12 surveyed countries: 57 %), and 75 % of the respondents in Sweden consider intolerance towards Muslims has increased over the past 5 years (average in the 12 surveyed countries: 72 %)
- A large majority of respondents in Sweden (81 %) consider antisemitism expressed online as a problem in the country (average in the 12 surveyed countries: 89 %)
- The majority of respondents in Sweden (80 %) believe that antisemitism online has increased over the past five years (average in the 12 surveyed countries: 88 %)
- Most survey respondents in Sweden say they are regularly exposed to negative statements about Jews. A majority of respondents in Sweden (77 %) identify the internet as the most common forum for negative statements (average in the 12 surveyed countries: 80 %). The most frequent comment made by non-Jewish people in Sweden is according to the respondents the statement: *'Israelis behave "like Nazis" towards the Palestinians'* (43 %)

Safety and security – in Sweden

- Over a quarter of the respondents (39 %) worry about becoming a victim of an antisemitic verbal insult or harassment in the next 12 months, while one quarter (27 %) worry about being physically attacked in that same period (averages in the 12 surveyed countries: 47 % and 40 %, respectively)
- More than half of respondents (51 %) at least sometimes wear, carry or display items that could identify them as Jewish. Of those respondents who at least sometimes carry or display such items, more than half (78 %) at least occasionally avoid doing so (averages in the 12 surveyed countries: 49 % and 71 %, respectively)
- Over one third of the respondents have considered emigrating (35 %) in the past five years because they did not feel safe as a Jew in Sweden (average in the 12 surveyed countries: 38 %)
- A large majority of the respondents (81 %) believe that the Swedish government's efforts to combat antisemitism are not effective. Meanwhile, a majority of the respondents (74 %) positively assess the Swedish government's efforts to ensure the security needs of the Jewish communities (averages in the 12 surveyed countries: 70 % and 54 %, respectively)
- 85 % of the respondents said that the Arab-Israeli conflict impacts their feeling of safety in Sweden (average in the 12 surveyed countries: 69%)

Violence against Jews: experiences of harassment

- Less than half of the respondents in Sweden (40 %) experienced some form of antisemitic harassment in the five years before the survey. About one third (30 %) encountered such harassment in the 12 months before the survey (averages in the 12 surveyed countries: 39 % and 28 %, respectively).
- Comments made in person, and offensive gestures or inappropriate staring, are the most common forms of antisemitic harassment personally experienced by respondents – 19 % and 17 %, respectively, of the respondents in Sweden said they were faced with these forms of harassment in the 12 months before the survey. 13 % said that antisemitic offensive comments were posted on the internet (averages in the 12 surveyed countries: 18 %, 16 % and 10 %, respectively).
- When asked to describe the perpetrator of the most serious incident of antisemitic harassment experienced in the five years before the survey – to the extent possible and based on their perceptions – in Sweden, respondents in

40 % of the cases identified the perpetrator as someone with a Muslim extremist view, 27 % – as someone with a left-wing political view, 20 % – as a work or school/college colleague (averages in the 12 surveyed countries: 30 %, 21 % and 16 %, respectively).

Reporting

- The majority of respondents in Sweden (81 %) who experienced antisemitic harassment in the five years before the survey did not report the most serious incident to the police or to any other organisation (average in the 12 surveyed countries: 79 %)
- In 12 surveyed countries, almost half (48 %) of the respondents who did not report the most serious incident to the police said that nothing would have changed had they done so. A similar proportion (43 %) of respondents did not consider the incident to be serious enough.

Rights awareness

- A large majority of respondents in Sweden are aware of legislation that forbids discrimination based on ethnic origin or religion – 91 % of the respondents indicated knowing about antidiscrimination law when applying for a job (average in the 12 surveyed countries: 87 %)
- In Sweden, the minority of respondents (16 %) are aware of legislation that forbids denial or trivialisation of the Holocaust (average in the 12 surveyed countries: 65 %).