



Ursula von der Leyen  
President of the European Commission  
Rue de la Loi 200  
1049 Brussels

Brussels, 10 June 2021

Dear President von der Leyen,

In your wonderful address to American Jewish Committee's (AJC) Virtual Global Forum Wednesday evening you said: *"We will take action if European money is used to call into question Israel's right to exist."*

Madam President, the time to take action is now. We, the undersigned Members of the European Parliament, are writing again to express our gravest concerns about Palestinian Authority-issued textbooks. According to [Germany's BILD \(8 Jun 2021\)](#) and the [Jerusalem Post \(9 June 2021\)](#), the EU-commissioned Georg-Eckert-Institut (GEI) study confirmed all the worst findings of previous studies: With the help of EU funds, delivered through the PEGASE instrument, Palestinian children are indeed being indoctrinated with textbooks that deny Israel's very existence and that across all grades and subjects preach antisemitism, incitement, and the glorification of violence and terrorism.

As we laid out in our earlier letters to the Commission, including on 7 October 2020 and 5 May 2021, the previously documented incitement ([here](#) and [here](#)) should have been sufficient evidence to take immediate action, as Norway has done last year by withholding some funding to the Palestinian Authority until it finally replaces these terrible textbooks. The leaked passages of the GEI study now prove beyond any reasonable doubt that Palestinian textbooks continue to incite against Jews and Israel, thus violating fundamental EU values and our declared goal to help advance peace and a two-state solution.

Moreover, there is the specific issue of anti-Jewish incitement. We are unfortunately witnessing also here in Europe the rise of murderous antisemitism and we commend you for your leadership and the Commission's plans to draw up a comprehensive EU Strategy to combat this oldest hatred. But if the December 20 Council Declaration, endorsed by the Commission, on "mainstreaming the fight against antisemitism across all policy areas" means anything, it certainly means that we can never ever allow EU taxpayer money to fund antisemitism at home or abroad.

As you are aware, our concerns are shared by a significant majority in the European Parliament. The EP's discharge report "2019 Discharge: EU general budget - Commission and executive agencies 2020/2140(DEC)" reiterates its "concerns about hate and violence being taught in Palestinian textbooks and that the salaries paid to teachers and public servants in



the education sectors must be made conditional on educational material and course content complying with UNESCO standards.”

This is not a request we make lightly. It is precisely because we strongly support the goal of a negotiated two-state solution that we have reached the difficult conclusion that the EU has no choice but to apply the principle of conditionality and to withhold some funding. It is impossible to imagine a future where Palestinians and Israelis will live in peace and security next to each other as long as Palestinian children are being taught to hate.

We’re also very troubled that the report hasn’t been published yet and that we lawmakers have to learn about it through the media. We therefore urge the prompt official publication of the study. But it has to be accompanied with decisive action by the Commission. If even now we still fail to take concrete action, we are afraid this will not only gravely undermine our ability to play a constructive role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict but hurt our overall credibility in the international arena.

Yours Sincerely

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| 1. Lukas Mandl (EPP, Austria)             | 2. Anna-Michelle Asimakopoulou (EPP, Greece) |
| 3. Petras Auštrevičius (Renew, Lithuania) | 4. Alexander Vondra (ECR, Czech Republic)    |
| 5. Dietmar Köster (S&D, Germany)          | 6. Frédérique Ries (Renew, Belgium)          |
| 7. Sarah Skyttedal (EPP, Sweden)          | 8. Fulvio Martusciello (EPP, Italy)          |
| 9. Tomáš Zdechovský (EPP, Czech Republic) | 10. Jan-Bert Ruissen (ECR, the Netherlands)  |
| 11. Tomas Tobé (EPP, Sweden)              | 12. Miriam Lexmann (EPP, Slovakia)           |
| 13. Marion Walsmann (EPP, Germany)        | 14. Andrey Kovatchev (EPP, Bulgaria)         |
| 15. Lóránt Vincze (EPP, Romania)          | 16. Ilana Cicurel (Renew, France)            |
| 17. David Lega (EPP, Sweden)              | 18. Niclas Herbst (EPP, Germany)             |
| 19. José Ramón Bauzá Díaz (Renew, Spain)  | 20. Monika Hohlmeier (EPP, Germany)          |
| 21. Ljudmila Novak (EPP, Slovenia)        | 22. Nicola Beer (Renew, Germany)             |