



March 1st, 2022

Ursula von der Leyen  
European Commission President  
European Commission  
Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 200  
1049 Brussels  
Belgium

Dear President von der Leyen,

We are writing to express our concern that the Commission has failed to adequately respond to ongoing antisemitic incitement under the Palestinian Authority and the demonization of Israel by international activists in a clear attempt to deny the legitimacy of the world's only Jewish state. The Commission's passivity in these cases contradicts the EU's stated commitment to resolutely confront antisemitism in all its forms and to mainstream the fight against this oldest hatred across all policy areas.

For several years we have now witnessed with great dismay that textbooks issued by the Palestinian Authority incite schoolchildren to hate Jews and emulate terrorists. The EU-commissioned study by the Georg-Eckert Institute published last June confirmed previous [reports](#) of antisemitism, glorification of terror and the erasure of Israel on maps in Palestinian schoolbooks. The Institute's director, Prof. Dr. Eckhardt Fuchs, [told](#) the European Parliament in September 2021 that while some Palestinian textbooks follow UNESCO standards, "in other subjects they do not. Here you find incitement to hatred, antisemitic parts and this we have said very clearly," Prof. Dr. Fuchs explained.

This situation is simply intolerable, even more so as the EU is paying the salaries of the school teachers using this hateful material. This is a glaring violation of the most basic EU values and contradicts our common goal of working toward peace and the creation of a democratic Palestinian state.

Years of negotiations with the PA and repeated Commission pledges of "zero tolerance" for antisemitism have unfortunately failed to bring about the desired change. Palestinian children continue to be abused as they are being taught to hate. Asking the PA to revise these books is not an imposition but a self-evident and non-negotiable duty.

While we wholeheartedly support EU funding for the PA, EU taxpayer money must never be misused for incitement. We therefore call on you to finally take action to uphold EU values for peace, tolerance and democracy. As you are deliberating the annual support package for the Palestinian Authority, we urge you to include the possibility of a reduction of funding in case the PA continues to refuse to make the necessary changes in the textbook. Such conditionality is also in line with what the European Parliament has called for in its most recent budget discharge report.

We are also disappointed about the Commission's failure to resolutely reject a recent Amnesty International report, which libels the region's only true democracy as an apartheid state. The report absurdly claims that from its very inception in 1948—out of the ashes of the Holocaust—Israel supposedly instituted a system of “Jewish domination.” In other words, Amnesty, which infamously and quite tellingly refuses to campaign against rising antisemitism, says that the world's only Jewish state is an apartheid state even within its internationally recognized borders.

The IHRA working definition, which the EU has endorsed, clearly states that criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic. But it helpfully explains when that line is crossed and cites the following as one example of Israel-related antisemitism: “Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor.” This libelous report, which manipulates and distorts the truth, is doing exactly that.

And yet, when asked about this assault against a key ally of the EU, the Commission [failed](#) to reject the report's outrageous lies. Even worse, in his answer, the spokesman called for the respect of human rights and accountability for any violation, thus suggesting that the Commission may agree with the report. We therefore urge you to speedily clarify the statement and to clearly distance the EU from this odious report as several EU member states have already done.

Yours sincerely,

1. MEP Anna-Michelle Asimakopoulou (EPP, Greece), Transatlantic Friends of Israel President
2. MEP Lukas Mandl (EPP, Austria), Transatlantic Friends of Israel Chair
3. MEP David Lega (EPP, Sweden), Transatlantic Friends of Israel Vice President
4. MEP Petras Auštrevičius (Renew, Lithuania), Transatlantic Friends of Israel Vice Chair
5. MEP Dietmar Köster (S&D, Germany), Transatlantic Friends of Israel Vice Chair
6. MEP Alexandr Vondra (ECR, Czech Republic), Transatlantic Friends of Israel Vice Chair
7. MEP Bert-Jan Ruissen (ECR, the Netherlands)
8. MEP Sara Skytvedal (EPP, Sweden)
9. MEP Andrey Kovatchev (EPP, Bulgaria)
10. MEP Frédérique Ries (Renew, Belgium)
11. MEP Tomáš Zdechovský (EPP, Czech Republic)
12. MEP Željana Zovko (EPP, Croatia)
13. MEP Fulvio Martusciello (EPP, Italy)
14. MEP Niclas Herbst (EPP, Germany)
15. MEP Miriam Lexmann (EPP, Slovakia)
16. MEP Ondřej Knotek (Renew, Czech Republic)
17. MEP Marion Walsmann (EPP, Germany)
18. MEP Lena Düpont (EPP, Germany)
19. MEP Antonio López-Istúriz White (EPP, Spain)
20. MEP Tomas Tobé (EPP, Sweden)
21. MEP Anna Fotyga (ECR, Poland)
22. MEP José Ramón Bauzá Díaz (Renew, Spain)

23. MEP Esteban González Pons (EPP, Spain)
24. MEP Ilana Cicurel (Renew, France)
25. MEP Nicola Beer (Renew, Germany)
26. MEP Sabine Verheyen (EPP, Germany)
27. MEP Katrin Langensiepen (Greens, Germany)
28. MEP Milan Zver (EPP, Slovenia)
29. MEP Monika Hohlmeier (EPP, Germany)
30. MEP Stefan Berger (EPP, Germany)
31. MEP Lóránt Vincze (EPP, Romania)
32. MEP Ljudmila Novak (EPP, Slovenia)