

**NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ON COMBATING ANTISEMITISM (2023-2027)**

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## I. Introduction

The Republic of Bulgaria is a party to all core international human rights instruments and aims to ensure the full protection of human rights on its territory. This includes ensuring that all Bulgarian citizens can freely declare their ethnic, religious, linguistic or other affiliation. The protection of rights and freedoms is guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria, the national legislation and the country's international legal obligations.

The Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria defines the rights, dignity and security of persons as the highest principles. Hence, respect for equality and protection from discrimination are stipulated at the highest legislative level<sup>1</sup>. In the context of protection against discrimination and prevention of manifestations of racism, antisemitism, xenophobia and intolerance, the main role is played by the Protection against Discrimination Act, which establishes the independent Commission for Protection against Discrimination, the Religious Denominations Act, as well as the National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues at the Council of Ministers, which supports the development and implementation of state policy on ethnic and integration issues.

The historical experience of the Republic of Bulgaria reaffirms the spirit of tolerance and serves as the basis for achieving prosperity and security in a society. The citizens of the Republic of Bulgaria can rightly be proud of the dignified and humane behaviour of their ancestors who preserved the lives of more than 48, 000 Bulgarian Jews during the Second World War (1939-1945). In recognition of this historical fact, since 2003, on the 10th of March, the Republic of Bulgaria commemorates the Day of the Salvation of the Bulgarian Jews and the Victims of the Holocaust and Crimes against Humanity<sup>2</sup>. On the occasion of the commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the rescue of Bulgarian Jews, in 2013, the National Assembly adopted a special Declaration<sup>3</sup>, in which it *"pays tribute to the contribution of Bulgarian society and state to the modern history of humanity and its values"*, while also honouring the victims of the Holocaust, *"objectively assessing the historical events that led to the deportation of 11 343 Jews from Northern Greece and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia"*.

### 1. State of Play

The Jews in Bulgaria at the beginning of the Second World War numbered over 48,000. Despite the accession to the Tripartite Pact, the antisemitic legislation adopted and implemented during wartime, and the restrictions on Bulgarian Jews, Bulgaria found a way to preserve the lives of these fellow citizens. It was the only country in continental Europe in which the Jewish community grew naturally (by birth, not by immigration) during the Second World War. After the end of the war, with the establishment of the communist regime in power and the founding of the State of Israel, about 90% of Bulgarian Jews left Bulgaria and settled in the newly founded Jewish state. However, their descendants retain a strong connection with their ancestral homeland to this day.

According to official data from the latest population and housing census by the National Institute of Statistics<sup>4</sup> of the Republic of Bulgaria, conducted between 7 September and 10 October 2021, 1 736<sup>5</sup> identified themselves as professing the Jewish faith. Taking into account the official statistics, one should not exclude the possibility of Bulgarian Jews who, for numerous reasons, did not identify themselves as Jewish during "2021 Census"<sup>6</sup>. According to the Organization of the Jews in Bulgaria "Shalom", Bulgarian Jews are more than 4 000 people.

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<sup>1</sup> Article 6, Paragraph 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria states that "All citizens shall be equal before the law. There shall be no restrictions on rights or privileges based on race, nationality, ethnicity, sex, origin, religion, education, beliefs, political affiliation, personal and social status or property status."

<sup>2</sup> Decision No 105 of the Council of Ministers of 19 February 2003 on the designation of a Day for the Rescue of the Bulgarian Jews and the Victims of the Holocaust and of the Crimes against Humanity.

<sup>3</sup> The full text of the declaration of the Forty-first National Assembly is available at: <https://parliament.bg/bg/declaration/ID/14359>

<sup>4</sup> The toolkit (census forms and instructions) used during Census 2021 has been developed taking into account current UN recommendations for facilitation of the census cycle.

<sup>5</sup> The results for the ethnocultural characteristics of the population from the "Census 2021" are available at: [https://infostat.nsi.bg/infostat/pages/module.jsf?x\\_2=344](https://infostat.nsi.bg/infostat/pages/module.jsf?x_2=344)

<sup>6</sup> The "Religion" subsection of the census forms allows the person being counted to identify alone his or her belonging to a group historically distinct and characterized by the practice of certain religious rites.

Regardless of the exact number of Bulgarian Jews, it should be pointed out that there is an integrated Jewish community and a number of non-governmental organizations in the Republic of Bulgaria that work to preserve and study the language and traditions of Jews, celebrate holidays and cultural events, develop ties with the State of Israel, preserve cultural heritage, etc. The National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues, whose activities include the coordination of actions of State organs and NGOs on issues relating to the rights of Bulgarian citizens belonging to different ethnic groups<sup>7</sup>, works with all legally registered organisations. Members of the National Council for Cooperation are also representatives of organizations of the Bulgarian Jews, who make up an integral part of its composition.

There is a public school in Sofia where Hebrew is taught – 134th “Dimcho Debelyanov” High School<sup>8</sup>. By Order No. RD 09-5835/07 December 2017<sup>9</sup> of the Minister of Education and Science, new curricula for the study of mother tongue /languages/ has been approved, including Hebrew.

## 2. Contemporary challenges and antisemitism

The Republic of Bulgaria considers the respect and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of belief and religion, as well as active cooperation with civil society, as a fundamental guarantee for maintaining tolerance and respect between believers of different faiths and between believers and non-believers, as well as for curbing the spread of religious fundamentalism and related extremist actions.

However, no society is immune to intolerance and hatred. One of the strongest forms of intolerance – because of the millions of victims of the Holocaust – is antisemitism. As we move away from the end of World War II, the last survivors – who can share their experiences and warn of the mistakes that must not be repeated – are leaving this world. At the same time, in a world of ever-growing digital technology, the lines between freedom of expression, freedom of religion or belief, intolerance, discrimination and hate speech are becoming increasingly blurred. Although extreme manifestations of ethnic and religious violence are absent in the Bulgarian society, the rise in the number of such crimes internationally cannot remain unnoticed. In this context, the extremely violent and deadly attacks at the Ozar Hatorah school in Toulouse (2012), the Jewish Museum in Brussels (2014), the Hypercashier supermarket in Paris (2015), the synagogue in Pittsburgh (2018) or the synagogue in Halle (2019) can be noted.

In an attempt to describe the disturbing growing trends and manifestations of hatred against Jews, in 2016 the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA)<sup>10</sup> provided the following working definition of “antisemitism.”

*"Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities"*<sup>11</sup>

This term is not legally binding, but it has a pivotal role in focusing the attention of state authorities on countering, curbing and exposing antisemitic manifestations so that the tragedy and horror of the Holocaust cannot be repeated. Member states of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, including the Republic of Bulgaria, have adopted and use this working definition<sup>12</sup>.

In view of the various manifestations of antisemitism and the need to coordinate the efforts of various state bodies in countering and preventing it, the practice of designating coordinators to combat antisemitism has been established internationally and nationally. Such coordinators or special representatives on combating antisemitism and/or coordinators for freedom of religion or belief have

<sup>7</sup> The Rules of Procedure of the NCCEII are available at: <https://nccedi.government.bg/bg/node/109>

<sup>8</sup> In the primary and lower secondary stages, Hebrew is studied in elective and optional classes as a second foreign language. In high school stage, Hebrew is a second foreign language.

<sup>9</sup> The list of approved mother tongue curricula is available at: <https://web.mon.bg/bg/2221>

<sup>10</sup> The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance is a leading intergovernmental organization dedicated to providing political and public support for the study, research and preservation of the Holocaust remembrance at national and international levels.

<sup>11</sup> The full working definition in Bulgarian is available at <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/bg/resources/working-definitions-charters/rabotna-definicija-na-mezhdunarodniya-syuz-za-pochit-km>

<sup>12</sup> Resolution No.633 of the Council of Ministers of 20 October 2017 adopting the working definition of antisemitism adopted by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance and designating a national coordinator on combating antisemitism.

both international organizations – the European Union, the Council of Europe, the United Nations, and a number of their member states. The Republic of Bulgaria designated its first National Coordinator on Combating Antisemitism in October 2017 and in November 2022<sup>13</sup> this function was institutionalized at the level of the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, appointed by order of the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Although the Republic of Bulgaria does not experience systematic and extreme manifestations of antisemitism<sup>14</sup>, the country is not immune to the growing trend of antisemitism in Europe and beyond. In an opinion poll conducted in January 2022, the majority of Bulgarian Jews surveyed said they had directly witnessed antisemitic acts – 17% often and 57% rarely<sup>15</sup>. Most antisemitic manifestations in the Republic of Bulgaria take the form of statements, inscriptions on public and residential buildings, distribution of souvenirs with Nazi symbols, etc., and there are also cases of vandalism against buildings and symbols associated with Jews. In the context of the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic, Bulgaria has also seen an increase in antisemitic rhetoric and spread of conspiracy theories online.

Chapter III “Crimes against the rights of citizens” of the Criminal Code also regulates the prosecution of hate speech. The legislator has provided for penalties regarding incitement to and advocacy for discrimination, violence or hatred on the grounds of race, nationality or ethnicity through speech, the press or other mass media, damage to the property of such persons and the criminalization of the establishment or leadership of organizations or groups directed against persons on those grounds. Hate crimes shall be reported in accordance with the general procedure of the Criminal Procedure Code.

The national legislation is aligned with the provisions of EU Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA<sup>16</sup>. The Criminal Code provides for racist or xenophobic motives as a qualifying factor in murder<sup>17</sup> and causing bodily harm<sup>18</sup>, which entails the imposition of heavier penalties on the perpetrator. Also, the current Criminal Code contains provisions criminalising the advocacy for fascist or other anti-democratic ideology<sup>19</sup>, and incitement to such crime is also punishable.

### **3. National Action Plan on Combating Antisemitism**

The contemporary challenges in fighting antisemitism have placed the topic high on the agenda of international organizations, where the Republic of Bulgaria is also a member. The centre of the discussions is focussed on the adoption of strategic documents to provide guidelines on combating antisemitism and on how to outline specific measures to counter it.

Internationally, a fundamental document in the fight against racism, antisemitism and ethnic hatred is the 2000 Declaration of the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust – Education, Remembrance and Research (known as the “Stockholm Declaration”), supported also by the Republic of Bulgaria as one of the 46 participating countries<sup>20</sup>. Following the adoption of the Stockholm Declaration, the Republic of Bulgaria gave its support also to the Krakow Declaration of the European Ministers of Education (2000). As a follow-up to the recommendations of these declarations, Holocaust education programs are being implemented in the Bulgarian school system, and in secondary schools, the subject is addressed through the curricula of various subjects<sup>21</sup>. The Recommendations for Teaching and Learning about the Holocaust developed in 2019 by the IHRA and the guidelines developed by ODIHR/OSCE and UNESCO “Tackling Antisemitism through

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<sup>13</sup>Resolution No. 874 of the Council of Ministers of 4 November 2022 amending and supplementing Resolution No.633 of the Council of Ministers of 2017 adopting the working definition of antisemitism adopted by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance and designating a national coordinator on combating antisemitism.

<sup>14</sup> <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2021/antisemitism-overview-2010-2020>

<sup>15</sup> See more at <https://alpharesearch.bg/post/996-obshtestveni-naglasii-kum-antisemitizma-i-ezika-na-omrazata-mnenieto-na-shirokata-obshtestvenost-i-na-evreiskata-obshtnost.html>

<sup>16</sup> EU Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA of 28 November 2008 on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by criminal law.

<sup>17</sup> Article 116, Paragraph 1, Subparagraph 11 of the Criminal Code.

<sup>18</sup> Article 131, Paragraph 1, Subparagraph 12 of the Criminal Code.

<sup>19</sup> Article 108 of the Criminal Code.

<sup>20</sup> This Declaration served as the founding document for the establishment of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. The full text of the Declaration is available at:

<https://www.government.se/contentassets/66bc8f513e67474e96ad70c519d4ad1a/the-stockholm-international-forum-conferences-2000-2004>

<sup>21</sup>The Recommendations for teaching and learning about the Holocaust are available at: <https://web.mon.bg/bg/100915>

Education – Guidelines for Policy Makers" have been translated into Bulgarian and are used by Bulgarian teachers and educators in their work.

During its presidency of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in 2004, the Republic of Bulgaria placed a strong focus on combating intolerance, racism and antisemitism<sup>22</sup>. This priority has been pursued through the organisation of three major key fora: in Berlin<sup>23</sup> (28-29 April 2004) on combating antisemitism, in Paris<sup>24</sup> (16-17 June 2004) on the link between racism, xenophobia and antisemitic propaganda on the internet and hate crimes, and in Brussels<sup>25</sup> (13-14 September 2004) on tolerance and combating racism, xenophobia and discrimination. The outcomes of these conferences lead to the development and adoption of new OSCE commitments on combating antisemitism<sup>26</sup>. An additional important step taken during the Bulgarian OSCE Presidency is the appointment by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria of three Personal Representatives<sup>27</sup> to promote action in the field of non-discrimination and tolerance in OSCE Member States.

In 2017-2018, Bulgaria participated in the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights' project "From Words to Deeds in Addressing Antisemitism", which provided a translation into Bulgarian of the practical guide "Understanding Antisemitic Hate Crimes and Responding to the Security Needs of Jewish Communities", adapted for implementation in Bulgaria. In October 2019, the OSCE Presidency's Personal Representative for Combating Antisemitism paid a first visit to Bulgaria to learn about the measures taken by Bulgaria in the field of combating antisemitism.

The European Commission's "Strategy on Combating Antisemitism and Fostering Jewish Life" (2021-2030)<sup>28</sup>, which invites Member States to develop national strategic documents on combating antisemitism, is a key document within the EU. In the EU Council Conclusions of 4 March 2022, this commitment is acknowledged by all EU Member States, which commit to develop national action plans by the end of 2022<sup>29</sup>. As of June 2023, 14 EU Member States have adopted national strategies or other framework documents in the area on combating antisemitism<sup>30</sup>, and the others are also expected to complete this process shortly.

Countering antisemitism is also one of the priorities of the first Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the EU (January-June 2018)<sup>31</sup>, which has raised the topic further on the European agenda<sup>32</sup>. During the Bulgarian presidency of the Council of the EU, roundtables have been organized in the country and abroad<sup>33</sup>, and the Republic of Bulgaria has also actively participated in the preparation of the EU Council Declaration on the fight against antisemitism and the development of a common security approach to better protect Jewish communities and institutions in Europe. The declaration was adopted during the Austrian Presidency of the Council of the EU on 6 December 2018.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> See <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/e/2/24196.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> See <https://www.osce.org/cio/35389>

<sup>24</sup> See <https://www.osce.org/cio/37720>

<sup>25</sup> See <https://www.osce.org/cio/38336>

<sup>26</sup> See <https://www.osce.org/secretariat/14443>

<sup>27</sup> These are Anastasia Crickley, President of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, Gert Weisskirchen, Professor of Higher Education and Member of the German Parliament, and Ambassador Omür Orhun, Head of the Turkish Delegation to the OSCE (200-2004).

<sup>28</sup> The full text of the Strategy is available at: [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/BG/ALL/?uri=COM%3A2021%3A615%3AFIN&pk\\_campaign=doc&pk\\_keyword=No2Antisemitism&pk\\_source=EUR-Lex&pk\\_medium=tw](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/BG/ALL/?uri=COM%3A2021%3A615%3AFIN&pk_campaign=doc&pk_keyword=No2Antisemitism&pk_source=EUR-Lex&pk_medium=tw)

<sup>29</sup> The full text of the EU Council Conclusions on combating racism and antisemitism is available at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/bg/press/press-releases/2022/03/04/council-adopts-conclusions-on-combating-racism-and-antisemitism/>

<sup>30</sup> The list is available at: [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/racism-and-xenophobia/combating-antisemitism/eu-strategy-combating-antisemitism-and-fostering-jewish-life-2021-2030/national-strategies-combating-antisemitism\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/racism-and-xenophobia/combating-antisemitism/eu-strategy-combating-antisemitism-and-fostering-jewish-life-2021-2030/national-strategies-combating-antisemitism_en)

<sup>31</sup> Source Programme of the Republic of Bulgaria for the Presidency of the Council of the EU (January - June 2018).

<sup>32</sup> For more information see: <https://www.mfa.bg/bg/3090>

<sup>33</sup> See <https://www.mfa.bg/bg/news/18344> and <https://www.mfa.bg/bg/news/20142>

<sup>34</sup> The full text of the declaration is available at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/bg/press/press-releases/2018/12/06/fight-against-antisemitism-council-declaration/>

In October 2021, during the International Forum on Holocaust Remembrance and Combating Antisemitism in Malmö, the Republic of Bulgaria declared at the highest level a national commitment to develop and adopt a National Action Plan on Combating Antisemitism<sup>35</sup>.

The present National Action Plan on Combating Antisemitism (2023-2027), hereinafter referred to as the National Action Plan, is a response to the commitments of the Republic of Bulgaria to the international community and an expression of the will of the State and society to resolutely and effectively oppose all manifestations of antisemitism. As a country that prides itself in the tradition of tolerance in its society, the low levels of antisemitism and the high degree of integration of the Bulgarian Jews in all spheres of public life, inspired by the unique example of its ancestors who saved the Bulgarian Jews during the Second World War, the Republic of Bulgaria cannot remain aside from this process.

## **II. Strategic and operational objectives**

The National Action Plan on Combating Antisemitism (2023-2027) takes into account the variety of documents adopted and achievements in the field internationally<sup>36</sup>. It launches the process of developing a comprehensive strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria to counter all forms of discrimination, intolerance and hate speech so that all Bulgarian citizens are duly protected and enjoy their human rights.

The specific objectives of the National Action Plan are aimed at strengthening the safeguards to prevent any discrimination based on religion by increasing the capacity and expertise of Bulgarian institutions, raising public awareness and expanding academic research.

### **1. Strategic objectives**

Building on the traditional tolerance and humanity of Bulgarian society, the National Action Plan aims to achieve a sustainable response to discrimination, hate speech, racism and xenophobia, including antisemitism, in order to guarantee security, stability, civil rights, the rule of law and the preservation of historical heritage. It also aims to raise the public awareness of the Bulgarian Jews as an integral and equal part of Bulgarian society.

### **2. Operational objectives**

The National Action Plan will be implemented through three operational objectives: (a) countering contemporary manifestations of antisemitism; (b) preserving and maintaining traditions and cultural heritage; and (c) education, research and commemoration. For each of these operational objectives, there are measures planned in order to achieve the implementation of the objectives.

The necessary funds for the specific activities and measures for the implementation of a National Action Plan on Combating Antisemitism will be provided within the budgets of the respective first-level spending Units responsible for the implementation of the respective initiatives.

## **III. Preparation consultation process**

The National Action Plan on Combating Antisemitism (2023-2027) has been developed within the framework of the project “*Strategic Cooperation between Bulgaria and Norway in Support of Bulgaria’s International Commitment to Combat Antisemitism and Preserving Jewish Heritage*” funded by the Bilateral Fund of the Financial Mechanism of the European Economic Area and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism, implemented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The development of the initial draft national plan was entrusted to a team of experts including representatives of government institutions, the academia and the NGO sector. The starting point for

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<sup>35</sup> The final document with the commitments of the countries participating in the International Forum on Holocaust Remembrance and Combating Antisemitism held in Malmö, Sweden on 13 October 2021 is available at: <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/sites/default/files/Outcome%20Document%20Malmo%CC%88%20Forum%20211130.pdf>

<sup>36</sup> In developing the draft National Action Plan, account has been taken of the European Union’s Strategy on combating antisemitism and Support Jewish Life (2021-2030), the EU Council Conclusions of 4 March 2022 on combating racism and antisemitism, the EU Council Declaration of 6 December 2018 on combating antisemitism and the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief’s Action Plan.

the development of the project is the sociological survey /nationally representative sample/ on “Public Attitudes towards Antisemitism and Hate Speech in Bulgaria”<sup>37</sup> and a survey on the same issues among the Jewish community conducted in early 2022.

All state institutions competent in the field of combating antisemitism, as well as the organisations of Bulgarian Jews, have contributed to the elaboration of the measures. Norway's experience – as one of the first countries to adopt a plan on combating antisemitism was also used, with input from the Norwegian Centre for Holocaust and Minority Studies. A roundtable discussion on the draft national plan was organised on 12 May 2023<sup>38</sup>, and suggestions that were received are also reflected in the text.

The National Action Plan has been developed in accordance with the highest international human rights standards, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966, ratified by the Republic of Bulgaria in 1970), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1966, ratified by the Republic of Bulgaria in 1992) and the European Convention on Human Rights (1950, into force for the Republic of Bulgaria since 1992).

#### **IV. Communication plan**

After its adoption, the National Action Plan on Combating Antisemitism (2023-2027) will be presented, by the National Coordinator on Combating Antisemitism and the experts participating in the delegation of the Republic of Bulgaria to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, in international fora where the Republic of Bulgaria is a member and at events dedicated to the fight against antisemitism.

Information on the National Action Plan will be published on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as on the websites of the ministries and departments committed to implementing the measures. The plan will have a separate section on the website “Jewish Heritage in Bulgaria”<sup>39</sup> developed within the project described in item III.

The guiding messages of the presentation of the National Action Plan on Combating Antisemitism are:

- Preservation, strengthening and promotion of the tradition of tolerance, humanity and mutual understanding of the Bulgarian society.
- Responsible implementation of the Republic of Bulgaria’s international commitments to combat all forms of discrimination, hate speech, racism and xenophobia, including antisemitism;
- Preservation of the culture, heritage and way of life of the Bulgarian Jews as an integral and equal constituent part of the Bulgarian society;
- The need to preserve the memory of the Holocaust, even after the death of the last survivors;
- The Salvation of the Bulgarian Jews during the years of World War II and the assistance given to the emigration of Jews from other countries to Palestine are positive examples that provide powerful inspiration for the efforts to counter the contemporary antisemitism.

#### **V. Monitoring of the implementation and accountability**

The National Action Plan shall be implemented in accordance with the applicable national legislation within the framework of the adopted budgets of the First-Level Spending Units responsible for the implementation of the relevant initiatives for the year concerned. Its implementation has no impact on the state budget.

The National Action Plan sets quantitative targets and indicators in pursuit of the objective to achieve a sustainable response to manifestations of discrimination, hate speech, racism and xenophobia, including antisemitism, in order to guarantee security, stability, civil rights, the rule of law and the preservation of historical heritage.

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<sup>37</sup> See <https://alpharesearch.bg/post/996-obshtestveni-naglasi-kum-antisemitizma-i-ezika-na-omrazata-mnenieto-na-shirokata-obshtestvenost-i-na-evreiskata-obshtnost.html>

<sup>38</sup> See <https://www.mfa.bg/bg/news/37384>

<sup>39</sup> See <https://www.jewishheritage.bg/index.php/posts/>



With regard to the measures included in the National Action Plan, lead agencies responsible for their implementation have been identified. The period for the implementation of the measures is five years and will end in 2027. The evaluation of the implementation of the National Action Plan will be carried out through specialized monitoring, which will perform regular, systematic verification, control and follow-up of the progress and quality of implementation of the measures set by the responsible agencies. The funds for the implementation of the plan will be provided from the budgets of the responsible departments, as no additional payments are required to be approved under the budget of the spending units or under the EU funds account, at the expense of budgets under the state budget. See item II.2.

### **1. Monitoring of performance**

The monitoring of the implementation of the National Action Plan will be led by the National Coordinator on Combating Antisemitism<sup>40</sup>. The monitoring will be conducted in compliance with the principles of transparency, accountability and responsibility.

In the framework of the monitoring of the implementation of the National Action Plan, information will be collected on the degree of implementation of the measures, and the information obtained will be analysed and recommendations will be made to improve their implementation. The Human Rights Directorate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which also supports the activities of the National Coordinator on Combating Antisemitism, will prepare an annual report on the implementation of the National Action Plan. The preparation of the draft report will be based on information received and summarised from the responsible agencies. The draft report will also be included for discussion at a session of the National Coordination Mechanism for Human Rights.

The progress on the implementation of the National Action Plan will also be reported to the European Commission in the framework of the meetings of the Working Group on the implementation of the EU Strategy on Combating Antisemitism and Fostering Jewish Life (2021-2030).

### **2. Final evaluation of the implementation**

Following the completion of the implementation of the measures set out in the reporting period, an evaluation of the implementation of the National Action Plan on Combating Antisemitism (2023-2027) will be prepared under the guidance of the National Coordinator on Combating Antisemitism, which will provide information on the objectives achieved and the effectiveness of the measures taken. Based on the results, proposals for follow-up actions will be made.

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<sup>40</sup> Pursuant to item 2 of Resolution No. 874 of 4 November 2022 amending and supplementing Resolution No.633 of the Council of Ministers of 2017 adopting the working definition of antisemitism adopted by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance and designating a National Coordinator on Combating Antisemitism.

**VI. Annex**  
**NATIONAL ACTION PLAN**  
**ON COMBATING ANTISEMITISM 2023 - 2027**

No.	Activity	Responsible department	Deadline for execution	Performance indicator	Base value	Target value	Indicative financial resources required <sup>41</sup>	Source of funding <sup>42</sup>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<p><b>Operational Objective I: Countering contemporary manifestations of antisemitism.</b> The achievement of Operational Objective I will be reported on the basis of the quantitative indicators for increasing the degree of security of Jews in the Bulgarian society, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase by 5% in the proportion of members of the Jewish community who feel safe in their daily lives;</li> <li>- 5% decrease in the share of representatives of the Jewish community who believe that hate speech is a problem in Bulgaria;</li> <li>- 5% decrease in the share of representatives of the Jewish community who believe that there is an increase in antisemitic attitudes in Bulgaria.</li> </ul>								
<p><i>1. Active policy in the field of countering antisemitism.</i> The implementation of this activity of Operational Objective I will be reported on the basis of the quantitative indicators of campaigns implemented and citizens reached, initiatives joined.</p>								
1.	Active participation in international meetings on countering antisemitism	Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ministry of Interior Ministry of Justice Ministry of Education and Science	2023-2027	Number: - participation in international meetings - participation in initiatives - national speeches	- 10 participations - 10 speeches	- 50 participations - 50 speeches	For the <b>Ministry of Foreign Affairs</b> total for the period: BGN 100,000 For the <b>Ministry of Interior</b> total for the period: BGN 10,000 For the <b>Ministry of Justice</b> total for the period: BGN 10,000	Budgets of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Ministry of Interior. Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Culture

<sup>41</sup> The financing of the activities set out in the National Action Plan on Combating Antisemitism 2023-2027 will be implemented within the framework of the adopted budget of the First-Level Spending Units for the respective year.

<sup>42</sup> Within the approved budget for the respective year of the respective budget organisation.

		Ministry of Culture					For the <i>Ministry of Education and Science</i> total for the period: BGN 10,000 For the <i>Ministry of Culture</i> total for the period: BGN 10,000	
2.	Convening regular meetings of the National Coordinator on Combating Antisemitism with representatives of Jewish community organizations and other NGOs whose activities include combating antisemitism	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	2023-2027	Number: - meetings held - published press releases from the meetings - topics discussed - initiatives resulting from the discussions	- 0 meetings; - 0 published press releases from the meetings - 0 topics discussed - 0 initiatives	- 10 meetings - 10 published press releases - 10 topics discussed - 5 initiatives	Not necessary	Not applicable.
3.	Conducting awareness-raising meetings and campaigns on the content of the concept of antisemitism and raising awareness of the fight against antisemitism in sports federations	Lead Department: Ministry of Youth and Sports  Partner: Sports Federations  Commission for Protection against Discrimination	2023-2025	Number: - campaigns conducted - participants in awareness-raising campaigns	- 0 meetings with sports federations - 0 campaigns - 0 participants	- 5 meetings (1 per year) - 3 campaigns - 100 participants - 1 Memorandum of Cooperation Campaign signed	BGN 10,000	Budget of the Ministry of Youth and Sports
4.	Adoption of IHRA's working definition of "antisemitism in sport"	Lead Department: Ministry of Youth and	2023-2025	Number: - sports federations that have adopted the IHRA working	- 0 sports federations - 0 thematic press releases	- 3 sports federations - 3 thematic press releases	Not necessary	Not applicable.

		Sports  Partner: Sports Federations  Commission for Protection against Discrimination		definition of antisemitism  - thematic press releases published	published  - 0 adopted the definition	published  - 3 adopted the definition		
5.	Conducting an awareness campaign on antisemitism in digital environment, based on existing good practices for promoting media literacy	Lead Department: Ministry of Culture  Partner: Ministry of Education and Science  Council for Electronic Media	2023-2025	Number:  - campaign  - participants in information campaigns  - visits on the websites of the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Council for Electronic Media, as well as social network pages	- 0 campaigns  - 0 participants  - 0 visits	- 1 campaigns  - 1000 participants  - 3 disclosed site sections  - 1000 unique visits	BGN 5,000	Budget of the Ministry of Culture
6.	Dissemination of information related to anti- discrimination, intolerance, xenophobia and antisemitism	Lead agencies: Ombudsman  Commission for Protection against Discrimination	2023-2027	Number:  - information campaigns conducted  - participants in information campaigns  - seminars held  - trainings conducted	- 0 information campaigns  - 0 seminars  - 0 trainings  - 0 participants in information campaigns	For the <b>ombudsman:</b>  - - 1 information campaigns  - -100 participants in information campaigns  - - 1 section on the website with a link to specialized	<b>For the Ombudsman:</b> BGN 25,000  <b>For the Commission for Protection against Discrimination</b> BGN 205,760	Budgets of the Ombudsman and the Commission for Protection against Discrimination

						websites  For the <b>Commission for Protection against Discrimination:</b> - 4 information campaigns - 400 participants in information campaigns - 6 workshops - 1 workshops		
7.	Conduct a national survey on the public attitudes towards antisemitism and hate speech in Bulgaria	Lead Department: Diplomatic Institute to the Minister of Foreign Affairs	2027	Number: - opinion poll conducted	- 1 poll conducted in 2022	- 1 representative poll conducted	BGN 30,000	Budget of the DI to the Minister of Foreign Affairs
<p>2. <i>Ensuring the security of Bulgarian Jews.</i> The implementation of this activity of Operational Objective I will be reported on the basis of the quantitative indicators for the developed methodologies for reporting crimes, analysis of the current legal framework and the possibilities for their improvement, trainings conducted and officers trained.</p>								
8.	Participation in the development of a common European methodology for the reporting of antisemitic incidents, through participation in the meetings of the working group at a European level established by the “Vienna Declaration”	Lead Department: Ministry of Interior  Partner: Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Bulgaria	2023-2026	Number: - Participation in meetings - Developed methodology	- 2 participations in meetings - 0 methodology developed	- 2 participations in meetings - 1 methodology developed	BGN 5,000	Budget of the Ministry of the Interior

		Commission for Protection against Discrimination						
9.	Establishment of a national mechanism for monitoring manifestations of antisemitism, hate speech, racism and xenophobia. Development of internal working rules (instruction)	Lead Department: Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Bulgaria  Supreme Judicial Council  Council for Electronic Media  Partner: Ministry of Interior	2025	Number: - National monitoring mechanism established - Internal rules developed	- 0 monitoring mechanism - 0 developed internal rules	- 1 monitoring mechanism - 1 internal rules developed	Not necessary.	Not applicable.
10.	Enhancing the dialogue and cooperation between law enforcement authorities and Jewish community organizations and other NGOs whose activities include combating antisemitism	Ministry of Interior	2026	Number: - Meetings held - List of specific set of action	- 1 meeting per year	- 2 meetings per year - 1 list prepared	Not necessary.	Not applicable.
11.	Review of the criminal legislation on crimes motivated by prejudice, hate speech and discrimination, taking into account the international human rights standards. If necessary, draft	Lead Department: Ministry of Justice  Partner: Prosecutor's	2025	Number: - A prepared report containing an overview of the criminal legislation	- 0 report	- 1 report with proposals	Not necessary.	Not applicable.

	proposals for legislative amendments	Office of the Republic of Bulgaria, Ministry Of Interior						
12.	Enhancing the professional qualifications of judges, prosecutors, investigators, judicial officers and other representatives of the professional community to effectively counter and investigate the various forms of discrimination, hate speech and hate crimes	National Institute of Justice	2023-2027	Number: -specialised training activities conducted -trained judges, prosecutors, investigators, court officials and other representatives of the professional community	Number: - 3 specialised training activities conducted - 143 trained judges, prosecutors, investigators, court officials and other representatives of the professional community	- 10 specialised training activities conducted - 600 trained judges, prosecutors, investigators, court officials and other representatives of the professional community	BGN 150,000	Budget of the National Institute of Justice
13.	Strengthening the capacity of the national human rights institutions through participation in seminars and trainings, including meetings of the “Equinet Network” and the European Network of Ombudsmen, including with the participation of NGOs whose activities include the fight against antisemitism	Commission for Protection against Discrimination  Ombudsman	2023-2027	Number: - specialised trainings conducted; - positions expressed - presentations made - accepted documents - joined initiatives	- 0 specialised trainings - 0 positions - 0 presentations - 0 documents - 0 initiatives	<b><i>For the Commission for Protection against Discrimination:</i></b> - 5 participations in meetings - 5 positions - 2 strategic documents  <b><i>For the Ombudsman:</i></b> - 1 specialised training for 30 staff members	<b><i>For the Commission for Protection against Discrimination</i></b> BGN 25,000  <b><i>For the Ombudsman:</i></b> 25,000 BGN for the training, while the initiatives do not need	Budget of the Commission for Protection against Discrimination and of the Ombudsman.

						in the institution - 2 joined initiatives of a NGO and international networks		
14.	Awareness-raising for media service providers and video sharing platforms, with a focus on countering antisemitism. Provide monitoring and analysis of the activity of public media service providers on issues related to discrimination, intolerance, hate speech and the fight against antisemitism	Council for Electronic Media	2023-2027	Number: - organised thematic meetings - participants in the meetings - reports and statements prepared	- 0 meetings - 0 participants	- 5 meetings( <i>one meeting per year</i> ) - 150 participants - 5 reports( <i>one per year</i> )	BGN 50,000	Budget of the Council for Electronic Media.
<p><b>Operational Objective II. Preservation and maintenance of traditions and cultural heritage.</b> The implementation of Operational Objective II will be measured based on the quantitative indicators for raising the awareness of the Jewish holidays, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase by 5% of the proportion of the members of the general public who are familiar with one or more Jewish holidays;</li> </ul>								
15.	Presenting the contribution of the Bulgarian citizens of Jewish origin to the development of the Bulgarian state and society	Lead Department: Ministry of Culture  Partner: State Cultural Institute, Archives State Agency, museums, etc.	2023-2027	Number: - organised campaigns - organized exhibitions - printed publications - participants in thematic campaigns	- 0 campaigns - 0 exhibitions - 0 publications - 0 participants	- 1 campaign - 3 exhibitions - 3 publications - 100 participants	BGN 30,000	Budget of the Ministry of Culture



16.	Joining Bulgaria to the European Route of Jewish Heritage <sup>43</sup> , part of the cultural routes of the Council of Europe	Lead Department: Ministry of Culture  Partners: Ministry of Foreign Affairs  Ministry of Tourism  National Association of the Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria	2024	Number: - cultural itinerary developed	- 0 routes developed	- 1 developed route	Not necessary.	Not applicable.
17.	Organisation of an open doors day at a Jewish heritage site(s) in the framework of the European Heritage Days <sup>44</sup>	Lead Department: Ministry of Culture  Partners: organizations of the the Bulgarian Jews	2025	Number: - sites of Jewish cultural heritage	- 0 Jewish cultural heritage sites included	- 20 Jewish cultural heritage sites	BGN 10,000	Budget of the Ministry of Culture
18.	Restoration and preservation of historical and cultural heritage site(s) of the Bulgarian citizens of Jewish origin	Lead Department: Ministry of Culture  Partner: Ministry of	2023-2027	Number: - restored and conserved sites	- 0 restored and preserved cultural sites of Bulgarian Jews	- 3 restored and preserved cultural sites of Bulgarian Jews	BGN 7,000,000	Budget of the Ministry of Culture

<sup>43</sup> More information is available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/the-european-route-of-jewish-heritage>

<sup>44</sup> More information is available at: <https://www.europeanheritagedays.com/>

		Regional Development  National Association of the Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria  NGOs						
19.	Developing multicultural cooperation as part of the implemented policies for promoting tolerance and respect between different ethnicities and religions	Lead Department: National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues  Religious Affairs Directorate (Council of Ministers)	2023-2027	Number: - meetings held - publications, including on websites - participants in thematic meetings	- 0 thematic meetings held - 0 publications - 0 participants in thematic meetings	- 5 thematic meetings held - 10 publications - 100 participants	Not necessary.	Not applicable.
20.	Maintaining of the Internet platform <a href="https://www.jewishheritage.bg/">https://www.jewishheritage.bg/</a> , including by expanding the thematic sections in its content	Diplomatic Institute to the Minister of Foreign Affairs	2023-2027	Number : - number of visits per month - number of publications	- 20 visits per month - 25 publications	- 100 visits per month - 150 publications for the whole period.	BGN 30,000	Budget of the DI to the Minister of Foreign Affairs

**Operational Objective III. Education, research and commemoration.** The implementation of Operational Objective III will be reported on the basis of developed training programs and trained educators, conducted thematic research, prepared analyses and concepts for further actions, as well as reporting on indicators for raising awareness among the general public regarding measures on combating antisemitism, as follows:

- Increase by 5% of the proportion of members of the general public who are aware of the phenomenon of “antisemitism”;

- Increase by 5% of the proportion of members of the general public who are aware of what was the Holocaust.

### 1. Education

21.	Review of the general education curricula aimed at determining the level of knowledge about the Holocaust, including the Salvation of Bulgarian Jews during World War II, including through expert evaluation, questionnaires and worksheets for students, based on a representative sample	Ministry of Education and Science	2025	Number: - reviews prepared - questionnaires developed - developed worksheets	- 0 research conducted - 0 questionnaires developed - 0 worksheets developed	- 1 research conducted - 1 questionnaire developed - 1 worksheets developed	Not necessary.	Not applicable.
22.	Providing the necessary knowledge about the Holocaust by creating interactive resources( <i>cross-curricular links, use of documentaries and art films, meetings</i> )	Ministry of Education and Science	2026-2027	Number: - resources created, through cross-curricular links, use of films and meetings held	- 0 resources	- 1 resource created	Not necessary.	Not applicable.
23.	Developing educational programs for extracurricular activities( <i>visits to memorials, museums, monuments, synagogues, other places related to Jewish culture; participation in public initiatives calling for ethnic and religious tolerance</i> )	Ministry of Education and Science	2025	Number: - training programmes created	- 0 training programmes	- 1 training programme created	Not necessary.	Not applicable.
24.	Conducting seminars on good pedagogical practices on fighting antisemitism, on the knowledge of the history	Ministry of Education and Science	2025	Number: - seminars held - trained educators	- 0 seminars - 0 trained	- 5 seminars - 200 trained	Not necessary.	Not applicable.

	and contribution of the Bulgarian Jews at a national and regional levels							
25.	Including training lectures in the courses of the Diplomatic Institute to the Minister of Foreign Affairs to raise the awareness of the diplomatic service on discrimination, intolerance, hate speech and on countering antisemitism	Diplomatic Institute to the Minister of Foreign Affairs	2023-2027	Number: - expert lectures held - trained	- 0 lectures - 0 trained	- 10 lectures - 200 trained	BGN 2500	Budget of the DI to the Minister of Foreign Affairs
<b>2. Research</b>								
26.	Translation of the <i>IHRA Guidelines for Identifying Relevant Documentation for Holocaust Research, Education and Remembrance</i> and dissemination thereof to the relevant central and territorial executive authorities and other stakeholders	Lead Department: Ministry of Foreign Affairs  Partner: National Association of the Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria	2024	Number: - translation of the Guidelines - bodies to which the guidelines have been distributed - other stakeholders	- 0 translated guidelines - 0 bodies - 0 stakeholders	- 1 translation of Guidelines - 10 bodies of central and territorial authorities - 5 other stakeholders	Not necessary.	Not applicable.
27.	Establishing awards (special diplomas) for young historians and researchers on aspects of contemporary manifestations of antisemitism and/or events surrounding the Salvation of the Bulgarian Jews during World War II and the contribution of the Bulgarian Jews to the social, political,	Ministry of Education and Science	2025-2027	Number: - established awards - awarded historians and researchers	- 0 awards established - 0 awarded historians and researchers	- 1 established award - 2 awarded researchers/historians	Not necessary.	Not applicable.

	economic and cultural life of the country							
28.	Organising a national competition for research projects “Places and Memory” for teams of students from primary and secondary school on topics related to the history and the contribution of the Bulgarian Jews to Bulgaria	Ministry of Education and Science	2023-2027	Number: -competitions held -number of awarded teams	- 1 competition per year - 3 awarded teams	- 5 competitions held - 15 awarded teams	Not necessary.	Not applicable.
29.	Award national fellowships for thematic works dedicated to the fight against discrimination, intolerance, hate speech and antisemitism, including taking into account the Holocaust	Lead Department: Ministry of Education and Science  Partners: Research Fund  Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” and universities active in the field  Bulgarian Academy of Science	2023-2027	Number: - - national scholarships announced - - number of awarded persons	- 0 national scholarships announced - 0 awarded persons	- 2 national scholarships announced - 2 awarded persons	BGN 10,000 for the two scholarships.	Budget of the Ministry of Education and Science
<b>3. Commemoration</b>								
30.	Preparatory work of a concept with motivated proposals for the creation of a permanent museum	Led by: National Museum of History /	2026	Number: - prepared concept	- 0 prepared concept	- 1 prepared concept	BGN 50,000	Budget of the Ministry of Culture

	exhibition dedicated to the Salvation of the Bulgarian Jews during the Second World War, which is to be made part of an existing state museum	Ministry of Culture  Partners: Bulgarian Academy of Science  Archives State Agency  Sofia University “St. Kl. Ohridski”  Capital (Sofia) Municipality						
31.	Survey about the commitment of the municipalities in Bulgaria to Holocaust Remembrance, including through hosting a museum exhibit	Led by: National Association of the Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria  Partner: Ministry of Culture	2027	Number: - survey conducted	- 0 study conducted - 0 regions participated	- 1 survey conducted - 28 regions participated	Not necessary.	Not applicable.