



ANTISEMITISM IN ACADEMIA: SOURCES AND SOLUTIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE OSCE

The following recommendations were adopted by participants at the international conference ‘*Antisemitism in Academia: Sources and Solutions*’, convened by the Magenta Foundation on February 23 & 24, 2006 in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

The Magenta Foundation has the honor to submit these recommendations to the OSCE.

Preamble

Antisemitism¹ has no place in higher education. However, in recent years universities on both sides of the Atlantic have had to grapple with this problem. We’ve witnessed reports of speakers in academic settings employing classic antisemitic stereotypes, demonising Jews, and demonising Israel. We have also seen the growth of petitions to boycott and exclude Israeli professors, students, and universities from academic exchange programs. Divestment campaigns and the rhetoric surrounding them are also problematic.

It is our conviction that academic freedom must be protected. However, we recognize that there is a clear distinction between voicing legitimate criticism of the policies of the State of Israel and antisemitism, and as such, anti-Zionism. Painful, deep-rooted antisemitism, including distortion and denial of the Holocaust exacerbates the problem.

In this context and in view of the EUMC/ODIHR Working Definition on Antisemitism, anti-Zionism is an increasing concern.

We fear that this age-old disease may poison a new generation. There is a dearth of information about the promotion of antisemitic hatred through academic sources and in the classroom. Society-at-large must counteract this problem; Jews alone cannot combat antisemitism in academia. The OSCE and its participating states, university leadership, student organizations, and civil society have a responsibility to ensure a climate that allows free debate, promotes academic integrity, and rejects bigotry and harassment in all their forms.

¹ Our use of the term antisemitism is in accordance with the Working Definition on Antisemitism as adopted by the EUMC and ODIHR in January 2005.

Recognizing the recommendations adopted by the OSCE through a series of conferences over the past few years, including the Berlin and Cordoba Declarations, as well as the comprehensive study and guidelines on Holocaust education and remembrance, and in consideration of its newly created Tolerance and non-Discrimination Programme, we encourage the OSCE and its participating states to consider the following recommendations.

- Prepare standards and guidelines on academic responsibility and the protection of students from harassment, discrimination, and abuse in the academic environment, including antisemitism and racism.
- Encourage universities to have clear and well-publicised grievance procedures for reporting and addressing problems related to antisemitism and racism.
- Monitor language in the promotion of boycott and divestment movements to ensure that they don't violate the EUMC/ODIHR Working Definition on Antisemitism. Monitor and publicize when violations of that definition occur.
- Further to the recommendations of the OSCE Paris Conference on Hate on the Internet, take measures to counter the promotion of hatred through the abuse of Internet services provided by universities.
- In order to document and monitor the extent of the problem, conduct research into the promotion and tolerance of antisemitism in academia.
- Support the growth and development of the newly created academic field of Hate Studies, which considers the human capacity to demonise and dehumanise the other and thus has implications for promoting tolerance.
- Develop model curricula that promote the use of critical thinking in learning environments, equipping students with the tools to recognise and evaluate racist and antisemitic sources of information.
- Further to the guidelines developed by the OSCE, take measures to counter the trivialisation and distortion of the Holocaust.
- Encourage universities to develop training in their standard curricula that promotes tolerance and diversity. As a preventive measure, this training should also be promoted at primary and secondary levels of education through school curricula and in teacher education.
- Promote joint efforts that bring together diverse groups committed to dialogue and civil discourse, especially when conflict in the Middle East threatens to create a climate of harassment or fear within the university. Student groups in particular should be recognized as important partners.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Magenta Foundation by Dr. Karen Mock, Conference Chair, and Ronald Eissens, General Director of Magenta Foundation, Amsterdam, February 24, 2006.