Joint Statement at the occasion of the 12th EU-Israel High-level Seminar on combatting racism, xenophobia and antisemitism

On 17 – 18 December, the European Union and the State of Israel held their **12th High Level Seminar on combating racism, xenophobia and antisemitism** in Brussels. The EU-Israel seminar is a unique annual forum that brings together European and Israeli civil servants, policymakers, companies, international organisations and civil society to discuss best practices and ways forward in addressing racism, xenophobia and antisemitism.

Hosting the High-Level Seminar, Věra **Jourová**, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, said: "*" One week ago, we published the results of a survey of European Jews, which deeply saddened me: 9 out of 10 Jews in Europe say that Antisemitism has increased over the past five years. On a daily basis, Jews have to hide their religion and fear to be harassed on the streets and online. Fighting the scourge of Antisemitism, also when it hides behind antizionism, here in Europe and worldwide is a joint endeavour of the European Union and the State of Israel. We are aware about the fundamental importance Israel plays for the majority of Jewish communities in Europe be it culturally, religiously or by family ties. The voices of European Jews are at the centre of our efforts and their well-being must be the first priority when dealing with Antisemitism."*

Akiva Tor, Head of Bureau for World Jewish Affairs and World Religions, MFA, said *"In the view of Israel – the information superhighway is an unprecedented tool for the spread of knowledge, free expression and global interconnectedness. But we can't close our eyes to the unprecedented challenges to human dignity and public safety due to the ubiquity of unfiltered cyberhate and web antisemitism. More steps are required by the internet industry and governments and a greater commitment is still needed."*

In four working sessions, the forum discussed thematic priorities to address Antisemitism among them data collection on antisemitic incidents and experiences of Jewish communities; security of Jewish communities; hate speech online and eventually education and training to counter antisemitism.

The European Union and the State of Israel committed to further collaboration in protecting Jewish communities, institutions as well as cultural heritage around the world and in multinational organisations. Furthermore, both sides stressed the need to promote the IHRA working definition of antisemitism as a useful tool for educating and training as well closer cooperation with Jewish communities on national and local level.

The forum took place this year on the backdrop of a unanimous declaration by all 28 EU Member States on combating Antisemitism and protecting Jewish communities, adopted on 6 December by the EU Council. Similarly, the EU Fundamental Rights Agency survey on Jewish people's experiences and perceptions of Antisemitism in 12 EU Member States highlighted the urgent need to address Antisemitism in a holistic way.

On 29 November 2018, the EU acquired a Permanent International Partnership with the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. The participation of the EU in this international body will allow for closer cooperation on combating Holocaust denial and preventing racism, xenophobia and Antisemitism.

The programme of today's Seminar can be found on the page on combatting Antisemitism
The opening of the Seminar can be viewed on EbS