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3 June 2021

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**Online antisemitism in German and French grew substantially during
the COVID-19 pandemic, ISD findings show**

LONDON -- The uncertainties and anxieties related to the COVID-19 pandemic have been noticeable in many ways around the world in the last year, often being weaponised by a broad range of extremists, conspiracy theorists and disinformation actors in online spheres. **Antisemitism** is often at the center of these challenges, with the virus only adding to a deeply concerning trend which has seen eight in ten European Jews experiencing antisemitic abuse online, according to 2018 EU polling.

The **Institute for Strategic Dialogue** (ISD) took an inside-look at this growing phenomenon in Europe, focusing on COVID-19 related antisemitic content and found an alarming 13x and 7x respective increase of antisemitic posts between January 2020 and March 2021 in German- and French-language accounts across popular social media platforms Twitter, Facebook and Telegram. These findings, released Thursday, are featured in our report for the **European Commission**.

Drawing on social listening tools and natural language processing, combined with qualitative analysis, the report, ***The Virus of Antisemitism: Mapping French & German online antisemitism during the COVID-19 pandemic***, authored by Milo Comerford, Senior Policy Manager, and Lea Gerster, Analyst, at ISD, analyses over 180,000 antisemitic posts from over 500 accounts and channels. The study provides insight on the impact of the pandemic on online antisemitism in France and Germany, analysing the platforms where such content is found, as well as the most prominent **antisemitic narratives**.

Conspiracy theories about Jews ruling international financial, political and media institutions dominated the narratives analysed by researchers – comprising 89% of a coded sample of German antisemitic posts and 55% of French – while overt Holocaust denial was still visible across platforms despite being illegal in both France and Germany.

The report makes a range of policy recommendations on the basis of these findings, laying out the importance of a comprehensive framework for digital regulation, the need for increased awareness of the diverse manifestations of antisemitism contained within the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's working definition, as well as the importance of measures to address the proliferation of 'grey zone' legal but harmful antisemitic content, beyond illegal hate speech.

Commissioned by the European Commission, this report will help shape and evidence the EU's upcoming strategy on countering antisemitism, which will be presented at the end of 2021.

You can find the report on our website [here](#) and on the European Commission's website [here](#).

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