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NOA Guidelines for Fostering Jewish Life For Municipalities and Communities

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INTRODUCTION

Fostering Jewish life is not just about fighting antisemitism—it's about building a stronger, more inclusive Europe for everyone.

AN INCLUSIVE APPROACH

This document was created to facilitate the work of cities and municipalities in their dialogue with local Jewish communities and institutions. Its goal is to **aid in supporting and promoting Jewish life, heritage and culture**, keeping in mind that “Jewish life” is not a monolith and that individuals define their identities in ways that resonate with their personal, familial, or cultural experiences. The guidelines outlined here complement the EU strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life (2021-2030)¹ and support its practical application. They are framed around creating the conditions necessary to achieve a social context in which Jewish identity, with all its diversity, can be freely expressed without fear of repercussions rooted in bias or hate. In addition, they aim to empower Jewish communities to express their cultural significance while playing an active role in creating an inclusive and democratic Europe at every level.

Fostering Jewish life is both a strategy and an indicator of success in the fight against antisemitism. Yet while security remains a prime concern, these recommendations go beyond focusing on defensive measures. Instead, they represent a proactive vision for fostering Jewish culture and heritage, helping reduce negative narratives and stereotypes, and ensuring the vital presence of Jewish life in the future of European society. In that capacity, the document is relevant not only to local communities but also to broader efforts to strengthen social cohesion, such as the EU Anti-Racism Action Plan and the implementation of the EU Citizens Panel on Tackling Hatred recommendations.

These guidelines are informed by previous work of the [NOA-Networks Overcoming Antisemitism](#) project, an innovative effort to develop concrete and collaborative initiatives to combat antisemitism and foster Jewish life in Europe. In particular, they draw on recommendations from the [NOA National Report Cards](#), which benchmark policy measures to counter antisemitism in Member States based on the most up-to-date European policy standards. They also draw upon previous European Commission-funded research

undertaken by the [European Coalition of Cities against Racism \(ECCAR\)](#)² and multiple initiatives undertaken by [CEJI-A Jewish Contribution to an Inclusive Europe](#). In addition, they reflect the needs of Jewish citizens as expressed in two major European surveys³ and a targeted survey by NOA.⁴ The recommendations are designed to be adaptable across different national contexts, providing flexible, practical solutions that can be implemented easily, ensuring a broad impact.

FOSTERING SHARED EXPERIENCES

In a world increasingly challenged by polarisation and fragmentation, fostering spaces for dialogue, shared responsibility, and mutual respect is not only a moral imperative but a strategic necessity. When cities and communities embrace this ethos, they become laboratories of innovation and solidarity, capable of addressing not only the needs of today but the aspirations of tomorrow. This collaborative approach serves to strengthen the social fabric and bolster democratic resilience by **ensuring that no voice is marginalised** and that diverse contributions enrich the collective experience. By involving Jewish communities in decision-making processes, promoting cultural initiatives, and ensuring Jewish heritage remains a living, evolving part of European identity, local authorities can create the conditions for a more inclusive and dynamic society.

THE LEGACY OF JEWISH HERITAGE

Jewish history is not just a chapter of the past but a vital thread in the fabric of Europe's present and future. This document calls for all stakeholders—Jewish and non-Jewish alike—to recognise the **cultural richness and intellectual contributions** that Jewish people have made to Europe for centuries and continue to offer. In contexts where Jewish culture is marginal or absent, **educational and heritage initiatives** take on a more important role that extends far beyond preservation. Indeed, they become acts

² This research is internal and unpublished.

³ The [Sixth Survey of European Jewish Community Leaders and Professionals](#) (JDC-ICCD, 2024) and the [Jewish People's Experiences and Perceptions of Antisemitism Report](#) (EU-FRA, 2024).

⁴ The qualitative-quantitative NOA survey results reflect responses from community representatives of 16 countries during the month of July 2024.

¹ [EU Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life](#) (2021 - 2030).

of resilience and transmission, reactivating the value of Jewish presence as a vital element of cultural and historical identity. These efforts do not simply memorialise the past; they create opportunities for new connections, fostering a living dialogue between the Jewish narrative and broader society. In this way, engagement with Jewish history becomes a catalyst for intercultural understanding, shared enrichment, and the renewal of local identities.

However, these efforts also bring profound questions about the preservation of memory to the forefront. How do we ensure that histories and contributions are not erased when the communities that sustained them are no longer present? This challenge is not unique to Jewish heritage but reflects a broader issue in **how societies handle the legacies of marginalised or displaced groups**. Addressing these questions requires not only technical solutions but also a moral commitment to coming to terms with shared histories.

Ultimately, educational and cultural programmes, along with memory activism,⁵ may hold the key to transforming absence into presence, reminding us that heritage is not only about what we preserve but also about how we use it to inspire the future.

We hope these guidelines will encourage further reflection and provide a roadmap for concrete actions at the local level and beyond. By collaborating, engaging and embedding these principles into structures and infrastructures, cities and municipalities can ensure that Jewish life is not just remembered or preserved but actively thrives. In turn, Jewish communities can and will continue to contribute to the democratic and cultural development of Europe, helping to shape a future defined by dignity, inclusion, and freedom for all.

⁵ For an example, see [MultiMemo – Multidirectional Memory: Remembering for Social Justice](https://www.noa-project.eu/report-cards/).

Celebrating Jewish life ensures that Europe not only preserves its past but also builds a vibrant and inclusive future.

Note: Following each guideline section, there are icons to indicate which NOA National Report Card Policy Areas the recommendations drew from. For more information, see: <https://www.noa-project.eu/report-cards/>



Culture and Heritage



Intercultural Dialogue



Education



Media



Hate Crimes



Religious Freedom



Hate Speech



Security



Holocaust Remembrance



Sport

WHAT IS “JEWISH LIFE” AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

WHAT DOES “JEWISH LIFE” MEAN?

- **A living, evolving heritage.** Jewish life is a rich tapestry of traditions, cultures, and identities that evolve over time. It encompasses religion, heritage, culture, ethnicity, and nationhood, reflecting the diversity and complexity of Jewish experiences.
- **No single definition.** There’s no official definition of Jewish life, creating space for dialogue and exploration. This openness allows individuals to define their Jewish identity in ways that resonate with their personal, familial, or cultural experiences.
- **Beyond antisemitism.** Jewish life is not just about responding to external challenges—it’s about celebrating and bolstering the thriving culture, values, and traditions that enrich Europe’s diversity.
- **A vital part of Europe’s cultural fabric.** Jewish life is an integral part of Europe’s history. Promoting Jewish contributions strengthens Europe’s democratic and cultural foundations, creating a shared vision of heritage and progress.

WHY IS A JEWISH CONTRIBUTION ESSENTIAL FOR EUROPE?

- **Jewish culture can drive change.** Jewish values include the importance of transforming the world for the better. This perspective inspires progress and innovation.
- **A complex and enriching identity.** The diversity of Jewish culture offers an additional pluralistic perspective to Europe, helping to shape a society that values openness and inclusion. This multifaceted identity fosters mutual understanding and innovation.
- **Contributing to a better Europe.** Jewish communities actively bring bold ideas, cultural depth, and a vision of shared responsibility for a more united European society.
- **Reinforcing resilience and unity.** Amid rising concerns about safety and antisemitism, Jewish communities in Europe are demonstrating resilience, strengthening connections both within and outside their circles, and contributing to a more cohesive and diverse European society.

HOW TO COMBAT ANTISEMITISM AND FOSTER JEWISH LIFE IN EUROPE?

- **Support efforts to fight antisemitism.** Creating a society where Jewish identity can be freely expressed, without fear of bias or hate, is both a strategy and a measure of a democratic society.
- **Empower Jewish communities.** Jewish communities are vital contributors to a diverse and inclusive society. Supporting Jewish-led cultural and educational activities is a key part of fostering a pluralistic Europe.
- **Engage in education, cultural and heritage initiatives.** It is important to not simply memorialise the past but also create opportunities for dialogue and engagement, which foster intercultural understanding and mutual enrichment. This is especially important in contexts where Jewish culture is marginal or absent.
- **Follow guidelines from informed sources.** These recommendations are built on surveys, research, and practical insights from across Europe, ensuring they respond directly to the needs of Jewish communities. They draw on best practices for fostering inclusion at the local level.
- **Communicate openly with Jewish communities about their needs.** It is essential to remain vigilant to the risks posed by external trigger events, hate speech and conspiracy theories. Proactive initiatives and long-term dialogue frameworks will build resilience in times of crisis.

GUIDELINES & RECOMMENDATIONS

1. CITIES AND THE JEWISH ECOSYSTEM



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Create permanent institutional dialogue forums** between urban authorities and representatives of the local Jewish institutions in every city with a significant Jewish presence (keeping in mind that in many cities, Jewish life is represented by a diverse range of voices). The forum should meet regularly and address the needs and wishes of the local communities, including them in local policy work where appropriate. Inclusion must be substantive, not merely symbolic.
- **Develop cross-training educational programmes** between local administrators and Jewish communities. To ensure greater sensitivity and a collaborative approach to decision-making, the local administrators should be trained on the cultural and religious specificities of Jewish communities. Jewish communities should also learn about the communication and other needs of public administrations.



PRACTICAL TIPS

- **Ensure all relevant stakeholders are invited to the institutional dialogue forums** and that these are included in local action plans against racism and antisemitism. Bringing together multiple Jewish communities, institutions, NGOs, and even private companies that are stakeholders in the cultural, social, or economic life of the Jewish population ensures a more holistic and effective approach. Involving non-Jewish organisations broadens the impact and creates new opportunities for collaboration.
- **Organise periodic joint workshops** on urban governance issues involving both public officials and representatives of Jewish and other communities to strengthen long-term cooperation.
- **Organise joint leadership programmes** to develop future community leaders collaboratively and foster structural dialogue.
- **Establish a dedicated digital platform** for continuous monitoring of initiatives, joint projects, and discussion groups. This will offer Jewish citizens a transparent space to share their views, concerns, or proposals in real-time.



BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLE

A mid-sized city creates a permanent institutional forum where municipal authorities and representatives of diverse Jewish organisations meet quarterly. Jewish representatives are involved from the earliest stages of planning and help shape the agenda. Jewish communities engage in internal structured dialogue to align themselves on shared priorities before engaging with city authorities, thus presenting unified, constructive proposals that make it easier to consider solutions. These meetings lead to tangible outcomes, such as improved urban planning around synagogue accessibility, enhanced security measures, greater cooperation around cultural events, and increased trust and mutual understanding.



2. INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE AND MULTIRELIGIOUS SOCIETY



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Create a local interreligious council** involving various secular and belief communities, including Jewish, Muslim and Christian, amongst others. This council would be a meeting place to discuss common challenges and work together on cultural, social and urban planning projects.
- **Encourage interreligious and intercultural collaboration** through incentives and support for projects that promote peaceful coexistence and cultural co-creation, such as festivals, conferences, and social solidarity initiatives. To ensure authenticity, encourage partnerships between Jewish institutions and cultural policymakers.



PRACTICAL TIPS

- **Create annual intercultural events** that gather various communities together and are open to all, such as cultural festivals or dialogue weeks that promote mutual understanding.
- **Organise visits and facilitate exchanges** for delegations of religious and cultural communities to better understand each other's practices and traditions. Participation in joint initiatives based on shared values, such as social solidarity projects, builds trust and promotes collaboration across faiths.
- **Develop a digital exchange platform** that facilitates ongoing communication between different religious communities to enhance interreligious dialogue.



BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLE

A metropolitan city facilitates an interfaith council involving representatives of Jewish, Christian, Muslim, and other religious groups. Jewish organisations take an active role, hosting events in synagogues and engaging other faith communities in meaningful discussions. Joint initiatives, such as social solidarity projects, are proposed to build trust and promote collaboration across faiths. The council successfully organises an annual "Festival of Faiths" featuring cultural exchanges, shared meals, and workshops that encourage mutual learning.



3. JEWISH CULTURE AND LOCAL SOCIETY



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Create opportunities for Jewish communities to participate** in civic projects, including volunteering and cultural promotion activities.
- **Support initiatives for mutual cultural enrichment** that allow Jewish communities to share their culture and traditions with the rest of the population through formal and informal events and educational activities in schools and public spaces.
- **Support the preservation and promotion of traditional Jewish languages**, such as Yiddish, Ladino, Judeo-Arabic, etc., as vital elements of Jewish cultural identity and a way to connect to historical roots in specific regions.



PRACTICAL TIPS

- **Create an interactive “urban cultural map”** that includes the history of Jewish presence and legacy in various neighbourhoods, with a focus on traditions, history and places of relevance.
- **Support the European Days of Jewish Culture** in September by promoting existing municipal initiatives or creating new ones in collaboration with Jewish communities.
- **Organise participatory heritage workshops**, such as cooking or art, in collaboration with schools or local cultural centres to foster cultural enrichment that is accessible to all.
- **Offer language workshops** in collaboration with Jewish cultural institutions to introduce the public to traditional Jewish languages and their historical significance.



BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLE

A city develops an interactive cultural map that includes the history of its Jewish neighbourhoods, complemented by guided tours, educational workshops, storytelling evenings, and art events. Programmes such as commemorative activities, art exhibits, and storytelling evenings highlight the intersection of Jewish and other cultural histories. At the same time, a Jewish cultural institution opens its events to the wider public, including non-Jewish participants, and partners with local schools and cultural centres to promote shared learning. Jewish and non-Jewish institutions collaborate on the cultural map, creating an inclusive platform that showcases Jewish past and present cultural contributions to the city’s identity.



4. EDUCATION AND SOCIAL LEARNING



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Promote Jewish heritage in non-formal education settings** via the inclusion of Jewish history and culture in festivals, adult education programmes, public lectures, and lifelong learning initiatives, highlighting the contributions and value of a Jewish presence in European society.
- **Encourage collaboration and partnerships** between educational institutions and Jewish communities, civil society organisations, universities, and adult learning centres to co-create educational programmes that explore Jewish life today and emphasise shared cultural history.
- **Support school initiatives** (where national legislation allows) and advocate for the development of school programmes and activities that explore Jewish history and culture. Involve Jewish scholars and educators in shaping curricula.



PRACTICAL TIPS

- **Organise public workshops and educational initiatives**, such as public talks and interactive programmes on Jewish history, culture, and contemporary issues, in collaboration with community centres, academic institutions, and local cultural institutions.
- **Promote Jewish participation in public events**, encouraging community involvement in existing public festivals and events to foster intercultural dialogue. Additionally, support specific Jewish-themed events to offer broader opportunities for the public to engage with Jewish culture and heritage.
- **Facilitate educational opportunities in schools** where possible, promoting guest lectures, workshops, or special events designed to raise awareness about Jewish people, culture and history.

- **Maintain engagement with cultural institutions**, supporting museums and cultural centres in their efforts to present Jewish heritage through exhibitions and educational programming, ensuring their role in informal education remains strong.



BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLE

Jewish communities collaborate with schools, universities and lifelong learning programmes to co-create educational materials on Jewish history and traditions, ensuring accuracy and relevance. They co-organise guest lecturers and field trips to Jewish historical sites, enriching the educational experience for all.

If a municipality creates a Holocaust education programme, local Jewish organisations are consulted to ensure the programme covers the rich historical contexts of Jewish life before and after the Holocaust and doesn't narrowly focus on victimisation narratives.



5. SHARED SPACES



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Commit to preserving and enhancing Jewish heritage**, such as synagogues and other ritual spaces, cemeteries, and ancient Jewish neighbourhoods. This includes restoration projects that should remain sensitive to Jewish cultural and religious practices and involve the community.
- **Put into place urban accessibility policies** that consider the needs of Jewish communities in terms of safe access to services and places of worship, especially during religious holidays. Encourage the use of municipal community spaces for events like celebrating Sukkot or lighting Hanukkah candles.
- **Ensure that expressions of antisemitism are not tolerated in public spaces.** All hate speech, symbols and graffiti should be swiftly removed. This will increase confidence in local government and a sense of safety for everyone.
- **Integrate Jewish heritage into cultural tourism** by developing a vision for Jewish cultural tourism that integrates both historical heritage and contemporary Jewish life. Cities should highlight Jewish contributions to local and European history and not reduce them to mere folklore.
- **Develop sustainable and community-led tourism** by collaborating with local Jewish communities, museums, civil society organisations and businesses. This will help combat the oversimplification or commodification of Jewish heritage and promote responsible tourism that preserves cultural sites and respects local customs.



PRACTICAL TIPS

- **Create Jewish historical trails within the city** that allow citizens and tourists to explore the Jewish presence and its heritage in an accessible, sustainable and engaging way.
- **Integrate Jewish culture into urban planning** by working with architects, artists, urban planners, and Jewish communities to develop public spaces that reflect and include Jewish life, preserving memory while fostering a dialogue between past and present in a pluralistic society.
- **Encourage cities to join the European Routes of Jewish Heritage**, which can help elevate local Jewish heritage sites, promote cultural tourism, and strengthen the city's role in preserving Jewish history within a European framework.
- **Engage local Jewish communities in developing tourism initiatives**, which can ensure that their perspectives are integrated, including on topics like over-tourism.



BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLE

A city partners with Jewish institutions to restore a historic synagogue and integrate it into a municipal cultural centre. The Jewish institutions collaborate with other stakeholders to make the heritage site accessible and relevant to the broader community, while city planners consult Jewish experts to ensure cultural sensitivity. Together, they engage community members in workshops to gather input and build support for the initiative and a sense of shared responsibility. The space hosts exhibitions, educational programmes, and interfaith dialogue, becoming a vital part of the city's cultural fabric.



6. SACRED TIME



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recognise and value Jewish holidays** by including them in the local calendar and taking them into consideration when planning public events, such as elections and consultations.
- **Include Jewish holidays in city and educational policies** (where possible) by offering flexibility during major Jewish holidays.
- **Practice inclusive planning** for municipal events, consider dietary and other accessibility needs.



PRACTICAL TIPS

- **Create awareness campaigns** that explain to local people the meaning of Jewish holidays and the importance of respecting other people's traditions.
- **Organise public celebrations** open to all citizens to raise awareness of Jewish traditions and make them a shared part of city life.
- **Work with schools and companies to create inclusive calendars** that respect Jewish holidays, offering flexibility to students and workers.



BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLE

Jewish organisations actively engage with local governments, schools and companies to ensure Jewish holidays and other religious customs are considered in a way that respects the broader community's needs. A municipality adjusts its public calendar to accommodate major Jewish holidays so that no public exams or elections are scheduled during these times. Schools and workplaces are encouraged to offer flexibility, and public campaigns raise awareness about the importance of respecting sacred times.



7. DATA COLLECTION AND USAGE



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Create a permanent observatory on Jewish life** that serves to collect real-time data on the presence and integration of Jewish communities and monitors implemented policies.
- **Promote crowdsourced data projects** which directly involve citizens in the participatory collection and mapping of data relating to the Jewish community, using digital platforms to ensure transparency and active participation.
- **Stay up-to-date on the latest hate incident data** using reports and communication mechanisms provided by National Equality Bodies and antisemitism monitoring civil society organisations. This is essential for understanding local trends and assessing the risks facing Jewish communities.



PRACTICAL TIPS

- **Create an online dashboard** that allows citizens to easily visualise the collected data, facilitating their access to information.
- **Collaborate with local universities** to develop research and data analysis projects, improving the capacity for planning based on factual evidence.



BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLE

A city establishes an online dashboard to track policies related to Jewish life. Data collection is transparent, with Jewish communities actively involved in defining the methodology and understanding how the data will be used. Trust-building measures, such as neutral third-party data management, help ensure successful collaboration. The dashboard integrates crowdsourced reports from local residents and Jewish organisations and makes the results easily accessible to academic institutions, local governments, NGOs, and the public. This tool is used to monitor antisemitic incidents, highlight cultural events, and ensure accountability in implementing inclusion measures.



ABOUT THE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS (FAQS)

1. Who is this document for?

While the focus is on local authorities, these guidelines are addressed to anyone who wishes to support and contribute to fostering Jewish life in Europe. In addition, they can be used in local or national action plans against racism and antisemitism.

2. Why focus specifically on Judaism and not all minorities?

Judaism has a unique, millennia-long history in Europe and has deeply influenced the continent's architecture, culture, science, and politics. Antisemitism is also a distinct, long-standing issue that requires focused attention. We, therefore, need specific responses that address this context and allow Jewish voices to guide how their cultural heritage is presented.

3. Do these recommendations affect the security of Jewish sites or communities?

The safety of Jewish communities and sites remains a top priority. It is essential to be aware of the impact of external trigger events and the risks they pose. These recommendations bolster security by encouraging open communication and adding a proactive approach to promoting Jewish life and culture that can reduce negative narratives and cultural gaps which contribute to antisemitism.

4. In my country, cities don't have jurisdiction over certain areas like education. What can I do?

There are still many ways to support and promote Jewish life through partnerships, advocacy, and influence. For instance, while formal education might be a national or regional responsibility, cities can advocate for inclusion, support informal education, foster collaboration and offer public spaces for Jewish educational activities, such as lectures, exhibitions, or cultural festivals.

5. Is this only for cities with an active Jewish community?

The recommendations are primarily for cities with a current or historical Jewish presence. However, even in cities without an active Jewish community, there are ways to engage, focusing on the cultural influence Jewish history has had on cuisine, traditions, languages and dialects, local history, etc. In this case, it's essential to collaborate with

regional, national, or international institutions that manage Jewish heritage and Jewish CSOs specialising in memory activism.

6. Why should we handle this instead of the European Commission?

In a democratic system, it's vital to stimulate reflection on priorities and engage in constructive debate. These recommendations aim to ensure that local stakeholders take an active role in shaping policies that impact their communities.

7. How does digitisation help promote Jewish heritage?

Digitisation makes Jewish heritage more accessible, especially for dispersed or movable artefacts like manuscripts.

8. How can we ensure data protection for Jewish communities involved in surveys or research?

It's crucial to implement strict data governance strategies that prioritise transparency and security. This ensures trust and accountability, protecting sensitive information while allowing for the proper use of data to improve urban policies and community support.