



REPORT ON SECURITY AND AWARENESS MEASURES IN THE WESTERN HUB

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Scope and Purpose

The purpose of this document is to summarize the results from the recent EUCARE survey to help interested parties (1) better understand the regional and country-specific security risks posed to the Jewish community and its institutions, (2) find opportunities for collaboration, and (3) identify relevant solutions and tailor materials to address the country-specific security needs.

Disclaimer

This document is prepared for project EUCARE, co-funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Commission. Neither the European Union nor the European Commission can be held responsible for them.

The observations made and the views expressed by the survey analysts are dependent on the quality and completeness of the input data as well as on the cooperation and transparency of the key stakeholders. Although some research may have been conducted to validate and/or complete select areas of the analysis, most of the latter is dependent on the expertise of the individual country security heads.



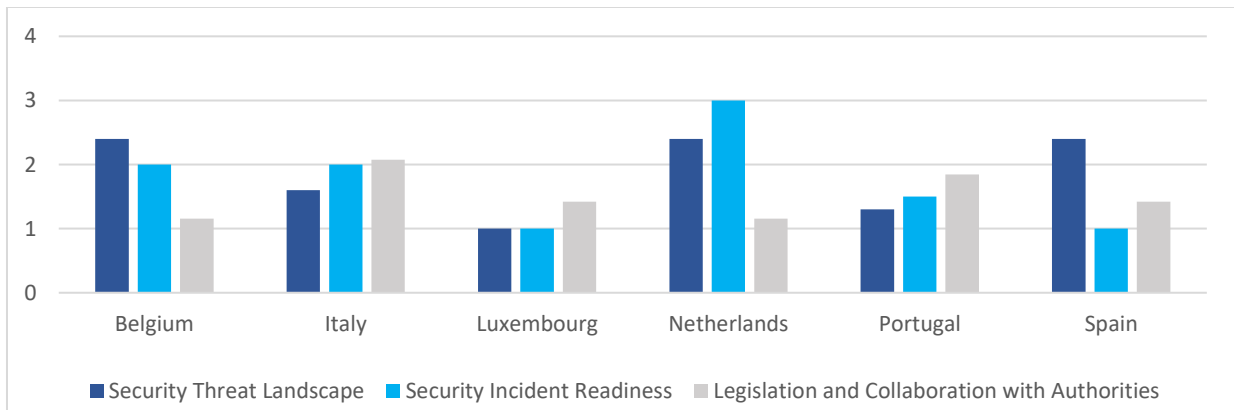
Executive Summary

Summary: Security Posture Ratings

The overall security posture of the Jewish community in the Western Hub is rated as “Improvement Needed” with an average score of 1.7 across three main focus areas – Security Threat Landscape, Security Incident Readiness, Legislation and Collaboration with Authorities. While the Netherlands is in the lead position, Belgium and Italy are slightly above the average, with Spain, Portugal and Luxembourg being in the “Major Improvement Needed” category.

Hub Security Posture
IMPROVEMENT NEEDED

Country	Average score across main focus areas	
Belgium	1.9	Improvement Needed
Italy	1.9	Improvement Needed
Luxembourg	1.1	Major Improvement Needed
Netherlands	2.2	Improvement Needed
Portugal	1.5	Major Improvement Needed
Spain	1.6	Major Improvement Needed



Ratings ¹

¹ Security Threat Landscape: No risk (0), Low risk (1), Medium risk (2), High risk (3)
 Security Incident Readiness: No readiness (0), Low-level of readiness (1), Medium-level of readiness (2), High-level of readiness (3)
 Legislation and Collaboration with Authorities: None (0), Insufficient (1), Fair (2), Good (3), Excellent (4)



Summary: Security Threat Landscape

The Western Hub countries – Belgium, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain – are currently the home of more than 140,000 Jews. Most members, facilities, religious sites, educational and other institutions, are concentrated in the big cities. While the Netherlands has the largest community to safeguard, three countries compete in terms of Jew population fragmentation and geographic spread as well as number of physical assets to worry about – Belgium, Italy and the Netherlands.

Sixty seven percent of the responders assess four of the five main security threats (Antisemitism, Vandalism, Cybersecurity and Extremism) facing their communities as "Medium" or "High" risk. The Cybersecurity-related threats are not understood well enough across the region, which is understandable, given the countries' historical focus on physical security. In this category, however, all countries agree that the risk is "Low" or "Medium".

Security threat	Number
Antisemitism	67% of the countries assess the risk as "Medium" to "High"
Vandalism	67% of the countries assess the risk as "Medium" to "High"
Terrorism	67% of the countries assess the risk as "Medium" to "High"
Cybersecurity	100% of the countries assess the risk as "Low" to "Medium"
Extremism	67% of the countries assess the risk as "Medium" to "High"

Although a clear methodology and guidelines have not been supplied to help the survey responders make the afore-mentioned risk assessments, the scores have been influenced by a number of factors, including social, geo-political and ethnic ones, as well as information from both internal and external sources.

From a geo-political and ethnic perspective, the situation in Belgium, Spain and Italy seems to bear a greater charge than in the other countries for several reasons. First off, approximately 70% of the Jews are concentrated there. Second, all three geographies have observed regular anti-Semitic activity incited by two or more radical groups and political formations with far-



right ideologies. Third, both Belgium and Spain have a concentration of radical ethnic communities in proximity to Jewish religious or other sites.

Category	BE	IT	LU	NL	PT	ES
Radical group	Schild Vrienden, Nation		BDS			Bastion Frontal, Devenir Europeo, Identitas
Political party ²	Vlaams Belang			Forum voor Democratie		
Political party		Forza Nuova, Fiamma Tricolore				

Table outlines main radical groups and political formations to monitor.

Another factor that expands the surface for acts of intolerance as well as ethnic or religious-based confrontation across the region, is that in some areas (e.g. the Belgian cities of Brussels and Antwerp) community members are more religious, wearing paraphernalia that could easily identify them as Jews. That visibility is further emphasized in Antwerp, where the concentration of the Jew population is greater.

With respect to acts of intolerance, several displays of anti-Semitic sentiment are more prevalent than others across the Western Hub countries – graffiti in public places and hate speech in the online realm via social media platforms such as Telegram, YouTube, Twitter and TikTok. In Italy, a significant amount of the incidents materialize on the internet. In Spain, despite most anti-Semitic offenses being acts of vandalism, the country has also observed harassment, insults and threats. Furthermore, it is the country’s perception that the local Jewish communities have been targeted less frequently than in other European countries, likely due to local extremist groups having other priorities such as independence movement or Islamophobia. While violence is rare in Luxembourg, physical assaults and insults in public spaces and are not uncommon for Belgium.

² Political parties currently represented in parliament

All countries, except Portugal, believe that there has been a rise in anti-Semitic activity in the past 3-5 years. Portugal’s view is that the situation in the country has stabilized. The Netherlands has registered an overall 15% growth between 2018 and 2022. Besides an increase in physical aggressions, Belgium has witnessed an adverse change in the number of online offenses, but has experienced difficulty tracking the latter. Both Spain and Belgium have observed spikes in local confrontations during armed conflicts in the Middle East. Another alarming trend registered in Belgium is the rise of acts of intolerance from the Ukrainian refugees in Antwerp.

Summary: Security Incident Readiness

Half of the Western Hub countries believe that their communities are "Moderately prepared" to face security incidents. The Netherlands perceives its readiness level as "Very prepared", while Spain and Luxembourg as "Somewhat prepared".

Focus area	Number
Overall security preparedness	67% of the countries assess it at "Moderately prepared" or above, while the rest – at "Somewhat prepared";
Physical security	67% of the countries rate it at "Fair" or below;
Security protocols / procedures	100% of the countries have such, 67% with full coverage; 67% of the countries believe all employees / volunteers are aware; 83% of the countries believe their members are partially aware;
Security service	67% of the countries have one, 25% with full coverage; 50% of the countries rely on a mix of professionals and volunteers, while the rest – volunteers alone;
Security trustees	83% of the countries have such in some of their facilities;
Security awareness	83% of the countries have had some training initiatives;
Incident management system	67% of the countries have one;

Four countries have adopted a platform of some sort to track security incidents. Defining a list of common incident types for each of the five threat categories, deploying an incident management system to capture and correlate incidents with local, regional and global geo-

political events, and being able to regularly report on the evolving threat landscape, is fundamental to managing the country-specific security posture.

Summary: Legislation and Collaboration with Authorities

Focus area	Number
Legislation	83% of the countries assess it as "Fair" or better
Collaboration with authorities	83% of the countries assess it as "Good" or better

Recommendations

- Provide a list of key physical security improvement areas for those assets that have the greatest need, using a risk-based approach.
- Define strategic priorities / improvement areas for the upcoming 1-2 years.
- Define common security incidents for each security threat group – Antisemitism, Vandalism, Terrorism, Cybersecurity and Extremism – adopting best practices from Belgium, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands ,and risk assessing each threat group, leveraging a simple likelihood / impact framework (e.g. Netherland).
- Although it would be difficult to attribute many cybersecurity-related attacks against community IT infrastructure to threat actors with anti-Semitic motivations, start capturing that information.
- Assess pros and cons of local systems for incident tracking and reporting, and build on those to provide regional, country-specific and temporal views of the evolving security threat landscape.
- Determine whether other employees and volunteers need to be made aware of the relevant security protocols in place (relevant for those countries where not all employees and volunteers have been trained).
- Track awareness program participation and assess effectiveness bi-annually.



- Strengthen collaborative efforts with the Police even more, and establish / boost collaboration with the Prosecutor's Office across the region, subject to an observed pattern of anti-Semitic offenses being dropped at that level.
- Roll out a regional threat intelligence program, using a common threat intelligence platform for data collection (especially from social media and news feeds), processing, analysis, and sharing.
- Re-run the survey in 12-18 months, fine-tuning the questions, optimizing the rating scales, and providing additional guidance around each rating score.



Background

Community

This section provides a general overview of the country-specific communities. Information from questions 1-7 and 36-38 is summarized here, covering member statistics, key events celebrated, and other. The data may have been modified from the original responses, based on follow-up discussions and independent research, to provide a more granular picture as well as to establish a stronger baseline for comparison. See Appendix D for a list of what some of the numbers below for each country are comprised of.

Questions 1-7 (combined): How many Jews, communities, synagogues, schools and institutions do you have in your country, and where is the highest concentration?

Country statistics	Belgium	Italy	Luxembourg	Netherlands	Portugal	Spain
Jews (country view)	30000	25000	1500	40000-50000	4000+	40000
Jews (other sources ³)	28800-45000	27000-48000	700-1300	29700-63000	3500-6500	12900-50000
Communities ⁴	25+	21	2	32	6	3
Community centers	23			32		
Synagogues ⁵	45	40	2	45	6	27
Schools	10	10		3	1	3
Institutions ⁶	29	40	3	29	3-4	15

There are well over 140,000 Jews in the six countries that comprise the Western Hub. Most members and respectively community centers, synagogues, schools and other institutions are concentrated in the big cities.

In terms of membership, the Netherlands stands out, not only because of the sheer number of members, but also because the Jewish community across the country seems more

³ The statistics come from three sources – WJC, EJC and the Institute for Jewish Policy Research, the latter describing the size of the Jewish population against four main categories – “Core” population, population with Jewish parents, “Enlarged” population, and “Law of Return” population.

⁴ Includes federations / umbrella organizations + local communities

⁵ Active houses of worship

⁶ Institutions other than communities, community centers, synagogues or schools



consolidated. Belgium and Italy are with more communities, observing a greater fragmentation of their Jewish populations. With respect to the overall number of community centers, synagogues, schools and other institutions, Belgium takes the lead place, followed by the Netherlands and Italy.

Political and Ethnic Factors

This section highlights the political and ethnic factors that have to be taken into consideration when assessing the country-specific threats. Information from questions 39-42 is summarized here, covering radical political parties, organizations, and other ethnic communities in proximity.

Question 39: Are there radical political parties in the country?

Although Italy's response does not provide specifics, there are two primary extreme-right political parties in the country, namely "Forza Nuova" and "Fiamma Tricolore"⁷. The Netherlands has pointed out the "Forum voor Democratie (FvD)"⁸. The party, however, appears to be in decline⁹. In Belgium, "Vlaams Belang" (far-right, extreme) and "Schild Vrienden"¹⁰ are considered to be radical, the latter being a nationalist youth movement rather than a political party. While Luxembourg does not have a radical political party, the closest Portugal has to one is "Chega". Spain has mentioned several far-right, extreme nationalist, pro-Fascist or neo-Nazi parties that have been historically active – "Alianza Nacional", "Plataforma per Catalunya (PxC)", "Front Nacional de Catalunya (FNC)", "Falange Espanhola", "Democracia Nacional (DN)" and "Movimiento Social Republicano (MSR)". None of these,

⁷ <https://civic-nation.org/italy/society/radical-right-wing-political-parties-and-groups/#>
<https://www.counterextremism.com/threat/forza-nuova>

⁸ https://www.houseofrepresentatives.nl/members_of_parliament/parliamentary_parties

⁹ <https://ecpr.eu/Events/Event/PaperDetails/58970>

¹⁰ https://www.belgium.be/en/about_belgium/government/federal_authorities/federal_parliament
<https://www.brusselstimes.com/312358/a-beginners-guide-to-belgiums-political-parties>



however, are of relevance as they have either been disbanded or are without parliamentary representation¹¹.

Question 40 (reworded): Are there radical organizations with anti-Semitic activity, and where are they located?

In Luxembourg, the pro-Palestine “BDS”¹² (Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions) movement stands out. In Belgium’s Flanders region, “Schild Vrienden”¹³ has been observed to be more active, while in the Wallonia area – “Nation”. In the big cities of Spain (Madrid, Valencia, Barcelona, Malaga and Alicante), three radical organizations with anti-Semitic activities have noted – “Bastion Frontal”¹⁴, “Devenir Europeo”¹⁵ and “Identitas”.

Question 41 (reworded): Is there a concentration of radical ethnic communities in proximity to Jewish religious and other sites?

Three of the six countries are not aware or have nothing of significance to share. According to Spain, there is a concentration of radical ethnic communities in proximity to Jewish sites in the peripheral areas of the big cities, close to football stadiums, as well as in quarters with a low-medium purchasing power. While in Belgium such a concentration could be witnessed in Brussels and Antwerp, Portugal has pointed out the Martim Moniz area, which is 2.5 to 3.5 kilometers away, depending on the transportation method, from the Lisbon Synagogue.

Question 42 (reworded): Are the sites of other religions located in close proximity to the Jewish ones?

In Italy and Luxembourg, Christian churches are mainly located in close proximity to Jewish religious sites. In the Netherlands, where the bulk of the Jewish population is concentrated,

¹¹ <https://www.senado.es/web/composicionorganizacion/gruposparlamentarios/composiciongruposparlamentarios/index.html>

¹² <https://bdsmovement.net>

¹³ 2023-05 (BE): *The Brussels Times*, <https://www.brusselstimes.com/485765/schild-vrienden-case-to-be-heard-on-12-september>

¹⁴ 2021 (ES): CARR, <https://www.radicalrightanalysis.com/2022/01/25/proscribing-the-far-right-is-spain-doing-enough>

2022-05 (ES): OIET, <https://observatorioterrorismo.com/analisis/observatorio-de-violencia-y-terrorismo-de-extrema>

¹⁵ 2023-06 (ES): *Murcia Today*, <https://murciatoday.com/spanish-and-german-neo-nazis-share-tactics>

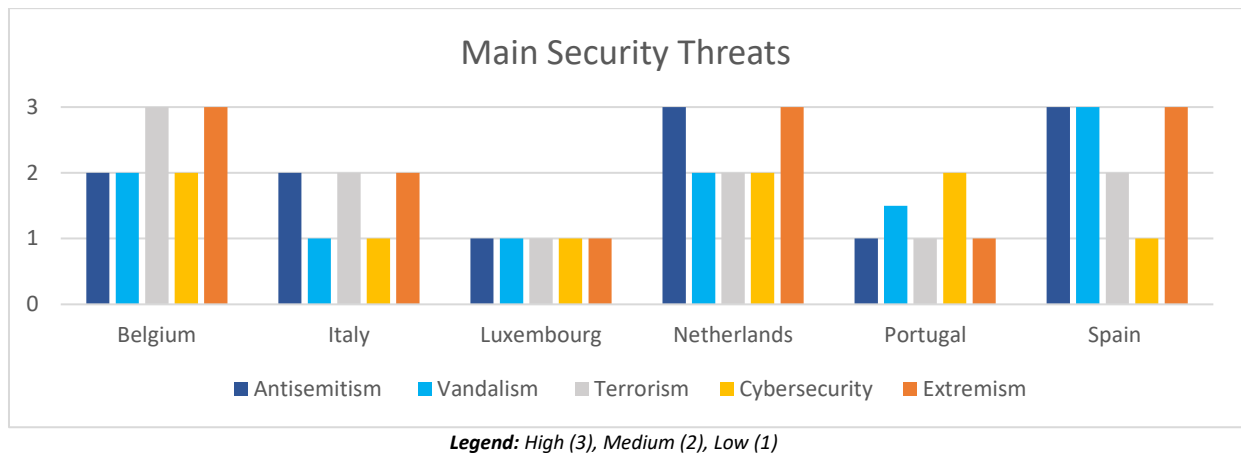
such occurrences are less common than in other cities. In Belgium, Spain and Portugal, Muslim communities are nearby. For instance, in Melilla and Ceuta (Spain), more than 55% of the population is Muslim, i.e. it is inevitable not have the sites of different religions close to each other. In Lisbon (Portugal), two Muslim sites are roughly two miles away from the Shaare Tikvah Synagogue. Brussels and Antwerp (Belgium) also have Muslim communities in the vicinity.



Assessment: Security Threat Landscape

This section provides an overview of the country-specific threat landscape, summarizing information from questions 22-28 and 31.

Questions 22-26: What are the major security threats faced by your community?

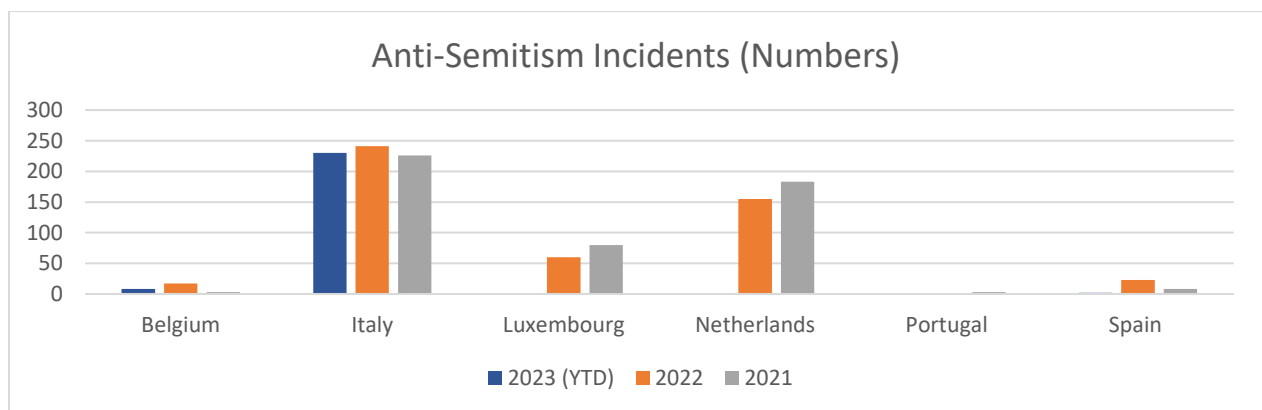


“Extremism” seems to be the most prevalent threat across the region, with Belgium, Spain and the Netherlands giving it a “High” rating, while Italy – a “Medium” one. The threat of “Antisemitism” is next in order, with two countries (Spain and the Netherlands) assessing it with a “High” score, while two others (Belgium and Italy) – with a “Medium” one. Spain seems highly concerned about three of the five main threats, namely “Antisemitism”, “Vandalism” and “Extremism”. Luxembourg is on the other end of the spectrum with “Low” concerns about any threat. Portugal’s main concern is “Cybersecurity”-related.

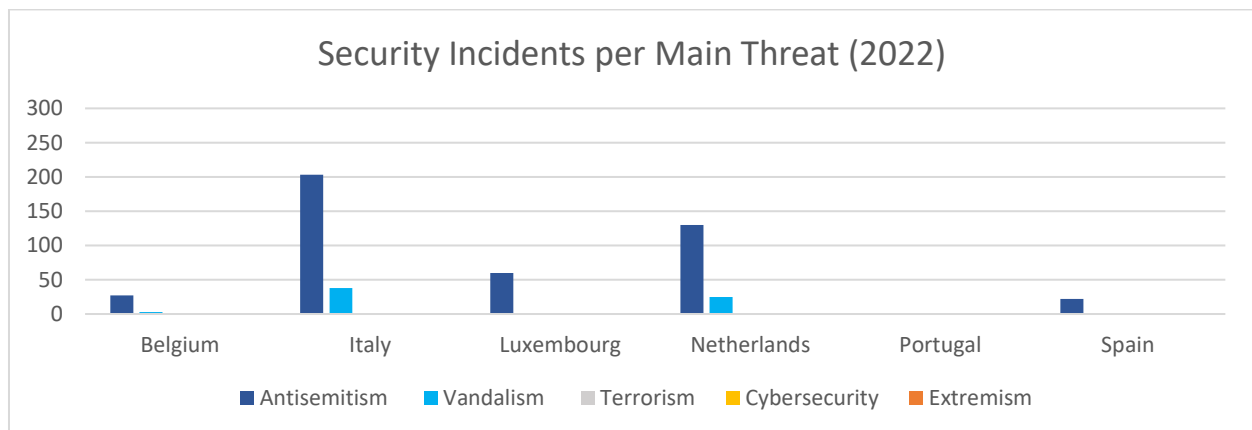
Questions 27 (reworded): What is your evaluation of the antisemitism trends in the last 3-5 years?

Five of six countries believe that there has been a rise in anti-Semitic activity in the past 3-5 years. Portugal’s response is that the situation in the country is stable.

Data from multiple sources¹⁶ corroborates those perceptions for three of the countries (Italy, Belgium and Spain) in the period from 2021 through 2022. Although the Netherlands’ data shows a decrease between 2021 and 2022, alternating periods of ups and downs have been observed since 2018, leading to an overall 15% increase over time. In Portugal, the situation has become slightly more favorable since 2021. Despite the fact that this year’s figures are partial, it seems (based on historical public references) that those for Italy and the Netherlands may well overpass the numbers from 2022.



ADL Anti-Semitism Worldwide Report for 2022¹⁷ and Other Sources



¹⁶ 2021-06 (NL): BLEW, <https://www.blew.nl/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/BLEW-Dreiqingsrapport-2020.pdf>
 2023-06 (NL): CIDI, <https://www.cidi.nl/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/CIDI-Monitor-Antisemitische-Incidenten-2022.pdf>
 2022-04 (NL): CIDI, <https://www.cidi.nl/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/CIDI-Monitor-Antisemitische-Incidenten-2021.pdf>
 2023-09 (BE): Antisemitisme.be, <https://antisemitisme.be/fr/incidents>
 2022-07 (LU): EJC, <https://eurojewconq.org/news/communities-news/luxembourgq/luxembourg-sees-antisemitic-incidents-rise-64-in-one-year>
 2023-09 (IT): CDEC, <https://www.cdec.it> (observoantisemitismo.it)

¹⁷ 2023-04 (WW): ADL, https://www.adl.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/2023-04/AntisemitismWorldwide_e.pdf

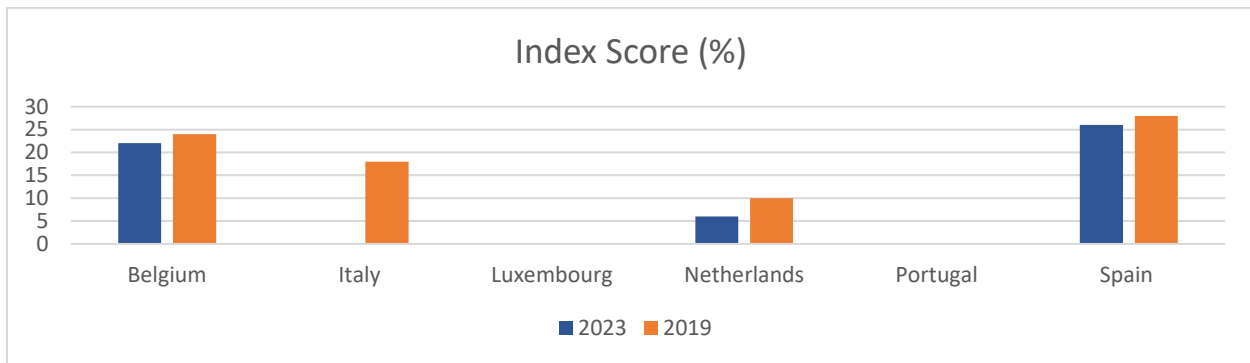
Legend: Antisemitism (incl. physical attacks, hostility in public places, insults, defamation, discrimination, graffiti and graphics in traditional media or on the web), Vandalism (incl. destruction of property, desecration of a religious site, graffiti and graphics on physical property), Extremism (incl. incidents attributed to followers of far-right or far-left ideologies)

Antisemitism and anti-Semitic vandalism do continue to be more prevalent across the region than any of the other threat groups. According to Spain, the local Jewish communities have experienced much fewer acts of anti-Semitism than those of other European countries, which could also be seen in the chart above. This local trend could be explained with extremist groups having other priorities such as independence movement or Islamophobia. Extreme-left groups (associated with pro-Palestinian causes) do however become more active during conflicts between Israel and other Middle Eastern countries, directing their violent actions towards the local Jewish communities.

Belgium has also observed a correlation between armed conflicts in the Middle East and an increase in local confrontations. Although the country has observed a slight decline in overall anti-Semitic offenses, it has registered a spike in physical aggressions, from 3-4 on average in a given year to 17 in 2022. Another alarming trend is the increase in acts of intolerance from the Ukrainian refugees in Antwerp.

On the positive side, comparison of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) index scores, which measure survey participants' attitudes towards a list of predefined anti-Semitic stereotypes, shows a favorable improvement across three of the six countries between 2019 and 2023. For the others, there is partial or no data, which for Portugal and Luxembourg is somewhat justifiable with the overall size of their Jewish communities as well as the number and essence of the observed incidents over the past years.





ADL Index (2023 vs 2019) ¹⁸

Questions 28 (reworded): Where/how does anti-Semitic activity materialize?

Although opinions vary somewhat between countries, several expressions of anti-Semitic sentiments are more prevalent than others across the region, including graffiti and graphics in public places and hate speech in online media.

According to a 2021¹⁹ study by the Netherlands' Utrecht Data School (UDS), carried out on behalf of the Dutch Jewish Council (CJO) and the Center for Information and Documentation Israel (CIDI), more than 70% of the online anti-Semitism in 2020 has occurred in three social media platforms – Telegram, YouTube and Twitter, and less frequently in Facebook, Reddit or other web resources. Rapid dissemination, liking, and sharing of anti-Semitic posts and comments has also been witnessed in TikTok.

In Italy, per public data from the country's Osservatorio Antisemitismo²⁰, a significant number of the incidents occur in the online realm. Belgium has also seen an increase in internet-conveyed acts of intolerance against its Jewish communities, but it is difficult to monitor that. In Spain, although most incidents are acts of vandalism against synagogues, Israeli companies or Spanish ones that have partnered with Israeli business entities, the country has also observed harassment, insults and threats, especially in the Melilla and Barcelona areas. While

¹⁸ The ADL Index Score represents the percentage of adults in a surveyed country who answered "probably true" to the majority of the anti-Semitic stereotypes tested.

¹⁹ 2023-06 (NL): CIDI, <https://www.cidi.nl/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/CIDI-Monitor-Antisemitische-Incidenten-2022.pdf>

²⁰ 2023-09 (IT): CDEC, <https://www.cdec.it/observoantisemitismo.it>

violence is rare in Luxembourg, insults in public spaces are not uncommon for Belgium, which has also registered an increase in physical assaults.

Questions 31 (reworded): Do local radical groups organize events on a regular basis?

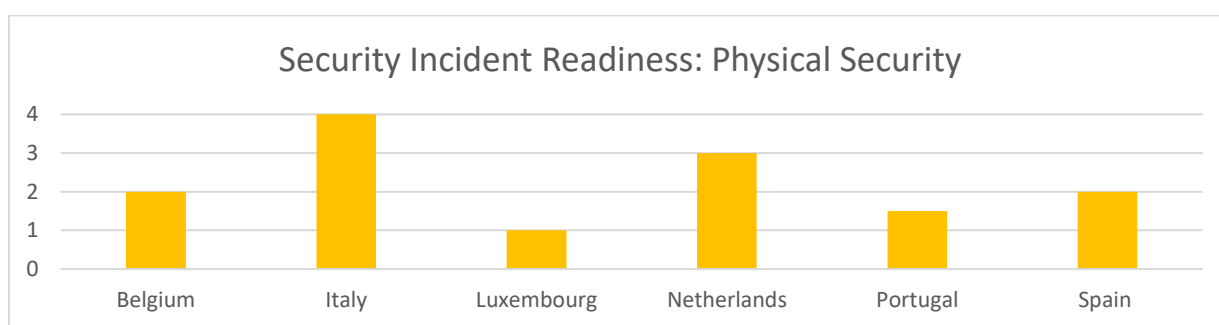
Three of the six countries have observed local radical groups running anti-Semitic events regularly. Italy claims that such events are happening on a monthly basis. Belgium has witnessed the organization of major musical events by extreme right-wing radical groups. In Spain, different extreme right-wing or pro-Palestinian factions have been active at the national level.



Assessment: Security Incident Readiness

This section provides an overview of the country-specific readiness to face various security threats and incidents, summarizing information from questions 8-21, 29-30, 32-35, covering physical security of facilities, security protocols / procedures, security service mix, security training and awareness initiatives.

Question 8: What is the level of physical security around and in your facilities?



Legend: Excellent (4), Good (3), Fair (2), Insufficient (1), Non-existent (0)

The physical security in Luxembourg consists of video surveillance, police patrols during prayer hours, and armed security guards for the offices. Intrusion alarms are soon to be installed.

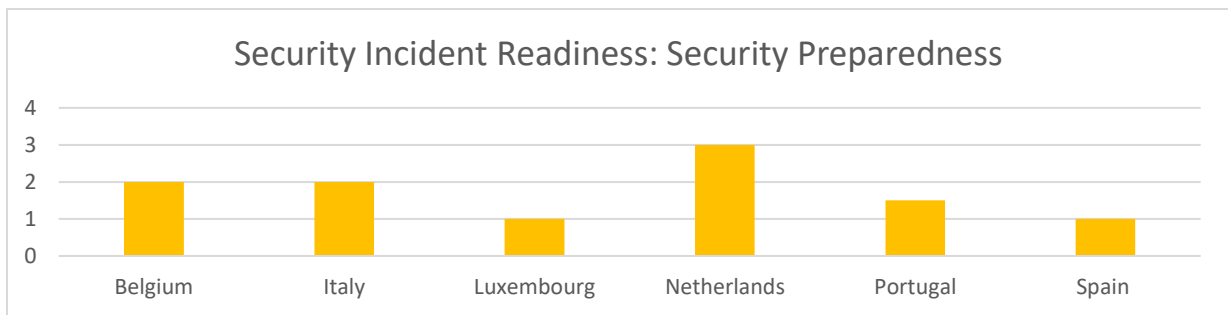
Questions 29 and 30 (combined, reworded): Are community members aware and concerned about the security threats, and if Yes to both, what are their major concerns?

All countries except Luxembourg and Spain have responded that they are concerned about security threats. While the Netherlands worries primarily about physical assaults, Italy – about anti-Semitic aggressions. Belgium’s focus is on the threats from anti-Semitism and terrorism. Although in Spain there is no immediate threat to its facilities, members are aware that not following the basic security protocols may expose the community to various security risks.



Questions 34 and 35 (combined): What platform do you use to track and report on security incidents?

With the exception of Italy and Luxembourg, the other countries do use a platform to track and report on security incidents. In the Netherlands, that platform is web-based and is called **blew.org**. Belgium is using another web-based solution – **antisemitisme.be**. Spain uses a restricted database, accessible on needs-to-know basis, to analyze annual trends. Portugal is using the **Octopus (octopus-app.com)** security incident and distress management system. In case of physical security issues, Luxembourg community members call in.



Legend: Very prepared (3), Moderately prepared (2), Somewhat prepared (1), Not prepared (0)