

Online Antisemitic Narratives Romania Country Report



Building Tolerance,
Understanding and
Dialogue across
Communities

Key Findings

By analyzing 7.012 pieces of content posted during 2023-2024, including articles, posts, and comments, it is possible to bring in insight into the current Romanian antisemitic discourse and how it has unfolded in response to both internal and external events.

The findings exhibit a consistency in the conspiratorial narrative, a rise in new antisemitism following the events of October 7th, the persistence of classic antisemitic stereotypes, and the role of specific media outlets concerning the public opinion. Below are the key findings from the analysis of 7.012 pieces of content:

- Antisemitic: 1.605 pieces of content (22.9%)
- Potentially Antisemitic: 256 pieces of content (3.7%)
- Not understandable: 366 pieces of content (5.2%)
- Not antisemitic: 4.785 pieces of content (68.2%)

Throughout the monitoring process, antisemitic content was categorized into seven main narratives so as to better understand its forms and themes. These include: classic stereotypes, which perpetuate traditional stereotypes and prejudices about Jewish individuals or communities; traditional religion-based narratives, drawing on theological arguments or historical accusations; conspiratorial content, which associates Jewish people with hidden agendas and global manipulation; Holocaust denial or distortion, seeking to undermine, falsify or misrepresent historical truths; new antisemitism, targeting the State of Israel or Zionism as a guise for broader prejudice; hate speech, including explicit insults or dehumanizing language; and call for violence, inciting or endorsing harm against Jewish individuals or communities.



Table of Contents

Introduction.....	4
1. The extent of antisemitic content in the national dataset.....	5
1.1 The extent of antisemitic content in the dataset.....	5
1.2 Distribution of the content examined.....	5
1.3 Antisemitism in the different types of media.....	6
2. Overview and extent of the different types of antisemitic content.....	7
2.1 Content with antisemitic narratives.....	7
2.2 Antisemitic content beyond narratives.....	8
3. Types of antisemitic content in the data examined.....	9
3.1 Content of antisemitic narratives.....	9
3.1.1 Conspiratorial antisemitism.....	9
3.1.2 New antisemitism.....	10
3.1.3 Classical stereotypes.....	11
3.1.4 Traditional, religion-based antisemitism.....	12
3.1.5 Holocaust Denial and Distortion.....	13
3.2 Antisemitic content beyond narratives.....	14
3.2.1 Antisemitic hate speech.....	14
3.2.2 Antisemitic violence.....	14
3.3 Topics provoking antisemitism.....	14
3.4 Code words used for Jews, examples.....	15
4. Conclusion.....	16
5. Methodology.....	17
5.1 Data collection.....	17
5.1.1 Keywords.....	17
5.1.2 Sources monitored.....	17
5.1.3 Monitoring period.....	18
5.1.4 The amount of data analysed.....	18
5.2 Coding the data.....	19
5.2.1 Conceptual framework.....	19
5.2.2 Finalising the methodology and creating a methodology guide.....	19
5.2.3 Training of the coders.....	20
5.2.4 The coding process.....	20
6. Bibliography.....	21
Introduction to the BOND project.....	23

Introduction

The research aimed to analyse changes in online antisemitic narratives following 7 October 2023— Hamas’s terror attack on Israel and the subsequent war. These events led to a rise in antisemitism across Europe, making it necessary to examine how online antisemitic narratives had evolved. The development of the research methodology and categories were completed in late 2023 and early 2024, and the research began in the spring of 2024.

Recognising and defining antisemitism in relation to Israel, i.e. distinguishing between legitimate and illegitimate criticism of Israel, has become particularly challenging since 7 October. Our research is based on the working definition of antisemitism of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s (IHRA)¹, which is accepted by 43 countries and several international organisations including the EU and most of its member states.

The research was conducted simultaneously in four countries—Hungary, Italy, Poland, and Romania—using the same methodology. It focused on textual content, including articles, comments, and Facebook posts. The content was collected using social listening software from the websites and Facebook pages of the most relevant national media outlets across five media categories: independent (mainstream) media, biased/hyper-partisan media, mainstream tabloids, left-wing sites, far-right pages, and fake news/conspiratorial sites. The scraping process was guided by keywords designed to detect antisemitic content. Four core keywords—Jew, Israel, Holocaust, and Zionism/Zionist—were used in all countries in their respective local languages. Additionally, country-specific keywords were included. In languages where these words could have different endings, their base forms were followed by an asterisk (*), enabling the collection of results for all variations and endings.

The research focused on the period from 1–15 April in both 2023 and 2024, with nearly 7,000 pieces of content analysed in each country. All content was examined by the national research teams and classified as either antisemitic, potentially antisemitic (content that could be interpreted as both antisemitic and not antisemitic), not understandable, or not antisemitic. Drawing on publicly available resources—such as

studies, research reports, and scientific articles— five main categories of antisemitic narratives were defined: classic antisemitic stereotypes, conspiratorial antisemitism, traditional religion-based antisemitism, Holocaust denial and distortion, and new antisemitism (antisemitism based on the criticism of Israel). In addition to these, two supplementary categories were established: hate speech and calls for violence against Jews. Each antisemitic and potentially antisemitic content was thoroughly analysed and assigned to one or more of these categories.

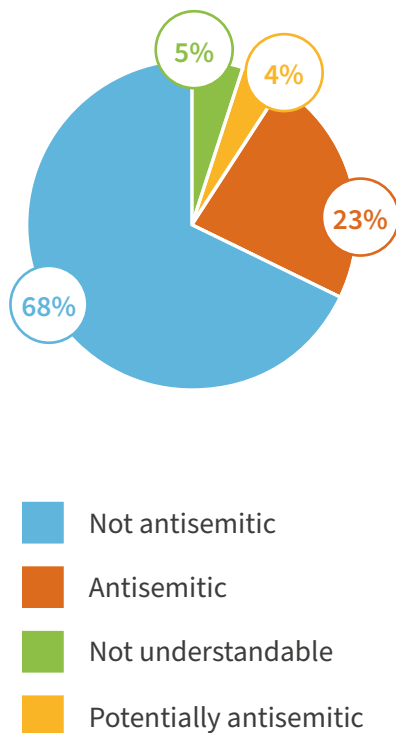
¹ IHRA working definition of antisemitism: <https://holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definition-antisemitism>

1. The extent of antisemitic content in the national dataset

1.1 The extent of antisemitic content in the dataset

Antisemitic and potentially antisemitic content was present in 27% of the Romanian dataset. Out of a total of 7012 pieces of content, 1605 were labelled as antisemitic, 256 as potentially antisemitic, 4785 as not antisemitic, and 366 as not understandable.

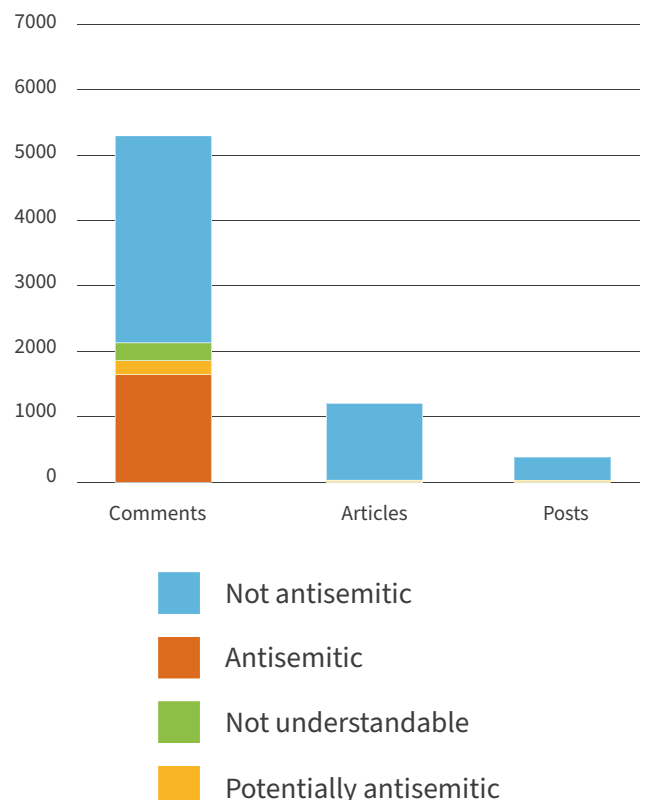
Figure 1: Proportion of antisemitic content in the full dataset



1.2 Distribution of the content examined

The vast majority of the downloaded content were comments, and most antisemitic content appeared in them. Antisemitic content appeared in comments. About 75.4% of the downloaded content was comments (5288), about 19.2% were articles (1346), and only about 5.4% were Facebook posts (378). Antisemitic narratives appeared predominantly in comments, of which over 29% (1567) were antisemitic, 4.6% (247) were potentially antisemitic, 59% (3115) were not antisemitic, and about 6.8% (359) were not understandable. Regarding articles, 96% (1296) were not antisemitic, 2.7% (37) were antisemitic, and 0.6% (9) were potentially antisemitic. Nearly all posts were not antisemitic, with only one categorised as potentially antisemitic and three as not understandable.

Figure 2: Distribution of the different types of content examined in the full dataset



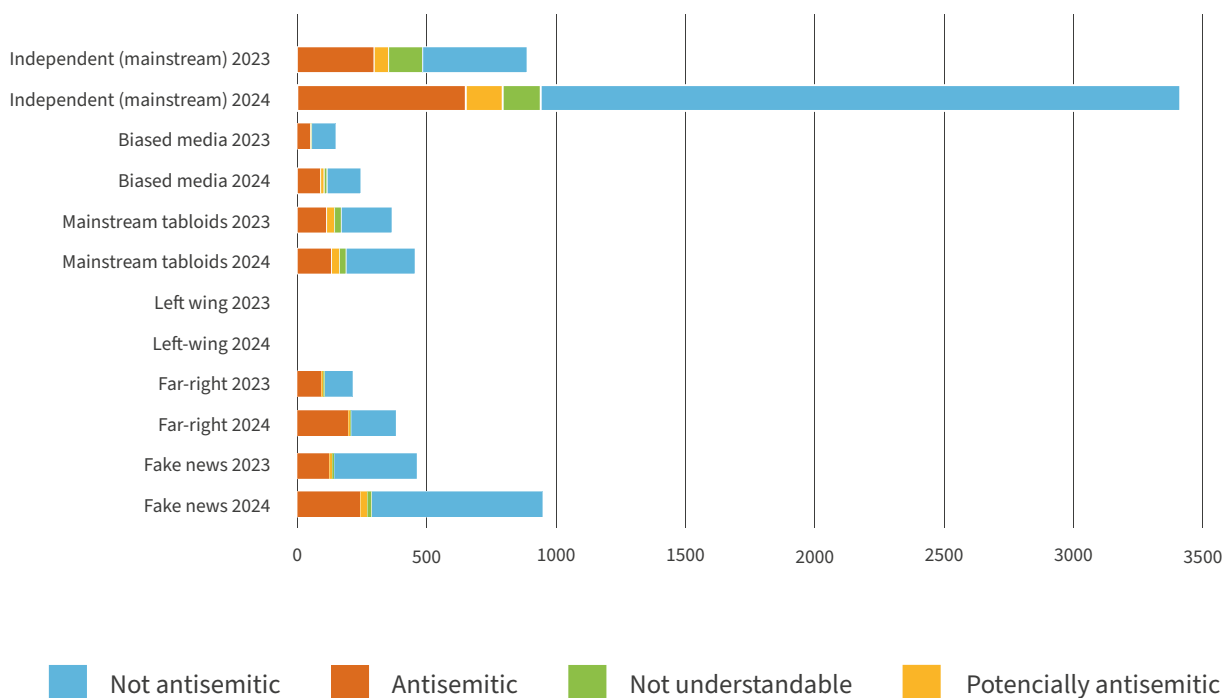
1.3 Antisemitism in the different types of media

Most of the antisemitic content was found in comments on independent (mainstream) pages, followed by fake news media sites. With more data in 2024, the number of antisemitic content also increased, but their proportion remained more or less the same in most media categories, except biased media pages, where it increased slightly, and mainstream media sites, where it decreased slightly.

Antisemitic (including both antisemitic and potentially antisemitic) content was the most prevalent on independent media sites quantitatively (1025 pieces), but proportionally it was about a quarter of the data (24.8%). Proportionally antisemitic content was

the most common in far-right pages (58.8%), while number-wise it was less (297 pieces) than in the previous category. These were followed by biased/hyper-partisan sites (30.7%) and on a quite similar level with fake news/conspiratorial sites (23%), and mainstream tabloids (21.7%). However, when looking at the total amount of antisemitic content, larger differences emerged: data from the fake news/conspiratorial sites contained the highest number of antisemitic narratives (327), followed by mainstream tabloid sites (147), and biased/hyper-partisan pages (65). Only one not antisemitic content appeared on the left-wing site.

Figure 3: Presence of antisemitic content within the different media categories



2. Overview and extent of the different types of antisemitic content

2.1 Content with antisemitic narratives

The conceptual framework of the research identified the following five main antisemitic narratives. Within each of these main narratives, sub-narratives were also defined.

- **Classic stereotypes:** Narratives historically rooted in antisemitic prejudice. These encompass hatred of Jews based on their existence as human beings, not simply as adherents of the Jewish religion. It does so through contradictory logic that sees Jews as both overly powerful and weak or even subhuman. Classic stereotypes include for example that Jews are evil, greedy, disloyal or liars.²
- **Traditional, religion-based antisemitism (anti-Judaism):** Traditional religion-based Judeophobia, or traditional antisemitism, refers to anti-Jewish sentiments rooted in beliefs associated with either the perceived Christian or Jewish religion and traditions. Traditional, religion-based antisemitic narratives include for example blood libel/child murder, deicide or Jews are Satanic.³
- **Conspiratorial antisemitism:** Conspiracy theories have perpetuated antisemitic beliefs by suggesting that Jews wield undue influence for personal gain and conspire to dominate spheres such as the media, politics, and the economy. Many of these theories are rooted in the antisemitic myth of the “hidden hand,” and blame Jews, or actors perceived to be Jewish, for the world’s worst tragedies, such as instigating wars or even causing COVID-19. Conspiratorial antisemitic narratives include for example Jewish power/control, Judeo-Communism, Great Replacement Theory⁴ or New World Order Theory^{5,6}.
- **Holocaust denial and distortion: Holocaust denial or distortion seeks to deny or misrepresent the historical facts of the Nazi genocide of the Jewish people.** Holocaust denial includes denying the scale or methods used by the Nazis and their allies during the Holocaust. Holocaust denial and distortion promote the false idea that Jews invented or exaggerated the Holocaust and they profited from it. Holocaust denial and distortion narratives include for example blaming Jews for the Holocaust or depicting the Holocaust as a positive event.⁷
- **New antisemitism:** New antisemitism refers to the expression of anti-Jewish sentiment directed at Israel. A key function of new antisemitism is to enable the expression of antisemitic views in a way that appears politically acceptable. We define new antisemitism using Natan Sharansky’s 3D test: demonisation, double standards and delegitimation. New antisemitism includes for example Nazi/Apartheid/Colonialism Analogy, claiming that Israel is a terrorist state or that Israeli bears influence on media.⁸

² Matthias J. Becker et al., „Antisemitic Comments on Facebook Pages of Leading British, French, and German Media Outlets”, *Humanities & Social Sciences Communications* 9, 2022 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9520959/#Fn3>; Matthias J. Becker et al., „Decoding Antisemitism”, Palgrave Macmillan, 2024, p. 11, 13; ADL Antisemitic Myths. <https://antisemitism.adl.org/>

³ Ildikó Barna et al., „Survey of Antisemitic Prejudices in the Visegrád Countries - Research Report”, Tom Lantos Institute, 2022, p. 13. <https://tomlantosinstitute.hu/files/en-205-sapvc-20220420-done-rc-online-new.pdf>

⁴ The Great Replacement Theory is a conspiracy theory rooted in the belief that the white race is under threat of extinction at the hands of Jews and other minorities. This theory also known as white replacement theory or white genocide theory, claims there is an intentional effort, led by Jews, to promote mass non-white immigration, inter-racial marriage, and other efforts that would lead to the “extinction of whites.” <https://www.ajc.org/translatehate/great-replacement>

⁵ The New World Order theory is a conspiracy theory claiming that a small group of powerful individuals working in secret to establish all-powerful control. The conspiracy theory behind the New World Order involving Jewish leaders is based on the idea that Jews have formed a power structure in which they control every aspect of humankind — the economy, media, and political landscape. <https://www.ajc.org/translatehate/New-World-Order>

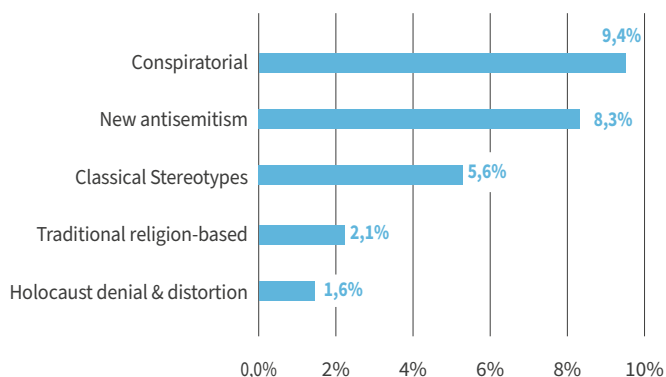
⁶ Ildikó Barna et al., „Survey of Antisemitic Prejudices in the Visegrád Countries - Research Report”, Tom Lantos Institute, 2022, pp. 13-14. <https://tomlantosinstitute.hu/files/en-205-sapvc-20220420-done-rc-online-new.pdf>

⁷ IHRA Working Definition of Holocaust Denial and Distortion (2013). <https://holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definition-holocaust-denial-distortion>

⁸ ADL Antisemitic Myths: Anti-zionism <https://antisemitism.adl.org/anti-zionism/>

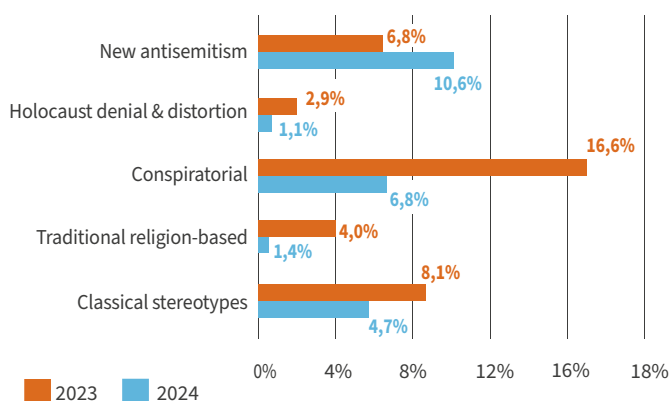
The most prevalent narrative category in the Romanian data was conspiratorial antisemitism, appearing in 31% (657 pieces) of the examined content. This was followed by new antisemitism, present in 28% (584 pieces). Classical stereotypes ranked third with 18.6% (392 pieces), while traditional religion-based appeared in 7% (146 pieces), and Holocaust denial and distortion in 5% (110 pieces).

Figure 4: Proportion of antisemitic narrative categories in the full dataset



The amount of the analysed data increased in general in 2024, and so did the amount of antisemitic content. However, the proportion of most narrative categories declined, except for new antisemitism. The number of new antisemitic narratives rose nearly fourteen times, resulting in a five times increase proportionally (from 2.1% to 10.6%). Proportionally conspiratorial antisemitic narratives decreased the most (from 16.6% to 6.8%).

Figure 5: Proportion of antisemitic narrative categories in the dataset for 2023 and 2024 (separately)



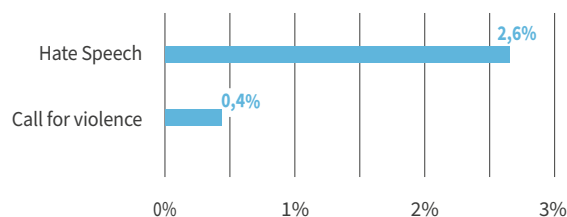
2.2 Antisemitic content beyond narratives

Besides narratives, two other types of antisemitic content were examined by the research: hate speech and calls for violence.

- **Hate speech:** Hateful content aimed against Jews and/or based on antisemitic narratives.
- **Call for violence:** Content that incites violence of any kind against Jews.

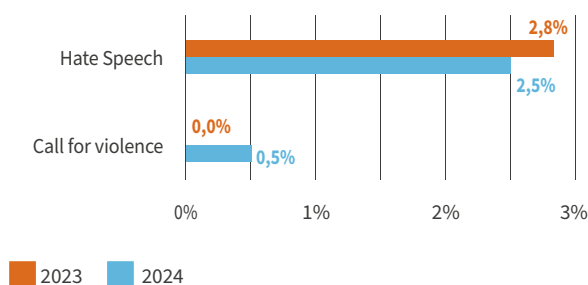
Hate speech was relatively common in the Romanian dataset, appearing in 2.6% (183 pieces) of content. Content calling for violence against Jews was less common, appearing in around 0.4% (28 pieces) of the data, and appearing only in 2024.

Figure 6: Proportion of antisemitic categories beyond narratives in the full dataset



The amount of hate speech also increased in 2024, but proportionally it remained largely unchanged. As call for violence did not appear in 2023, in 2024 it increased both quantitatively and proportionally (appearing in 0.5% of the data from 2024).

Figure 7: Proportion of antisemitic categories beyond narratives in the dataset for 2023 and 2024 (separately)



3. Types of antisemitic content in the data examined

3.1 Content of antisemitic narratives

3.1.1 Conspiratorial antisemitism

Conspiratorial antisemitism increased sharply, especially with the *Jewish control/power* sub-narrative (177 to 258), which claims that Jews secretly control global politics, finance, or media, often manipulating world events for their benefit. Other prominent conspiracies included the *New World Order theory* (6 to 31), suggesting that a secret elite, often linked to Jews, is working to create a global government, eroding national sovereignty. While mentions of the *Illuminati* (19 to 14) and *Soros* (27 to 12) saw a decrease, both still feature prominently in conspiracies: the *Illuminati* sub-narrative claims a hidden group, often involving Jews, is orchestrating world affairs, and the *Soros* conspiracy centers around George Soros, who is accused of using his wealth to destabilize governments or advance a political agenda, framed through antisemitic lenses. The *Great Replacement theory* (37 to 25) dropped slightly, but it still suggests that Jewish influence is part of a plot to replace native populations and weaken traditional societies. *Covid-19*-related conspiracies (4 to 10) saw an increase, with false claims linking Jews to the creation or spread of the pandemic for control or financial gain. Mentions of *Judeo-Communism* (17 to 26) also grew, suggesting that Jews are behind communist movements aimed at subverting capitalist societies. Additionally, the *Zelensky* sub-narrative, focused on accusations that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky was part of a larger Jewish conspiracy, once prevalent (63), dropped significantly to 29.

The general theme of the conspiratorial antisemitic pieces of content suggests that Jews secretly control economic, political, and media systems. Jews are depicted as manipulative, controlling and exploiting, especially in relation to financial and political spheres, in order to serve their own interests.

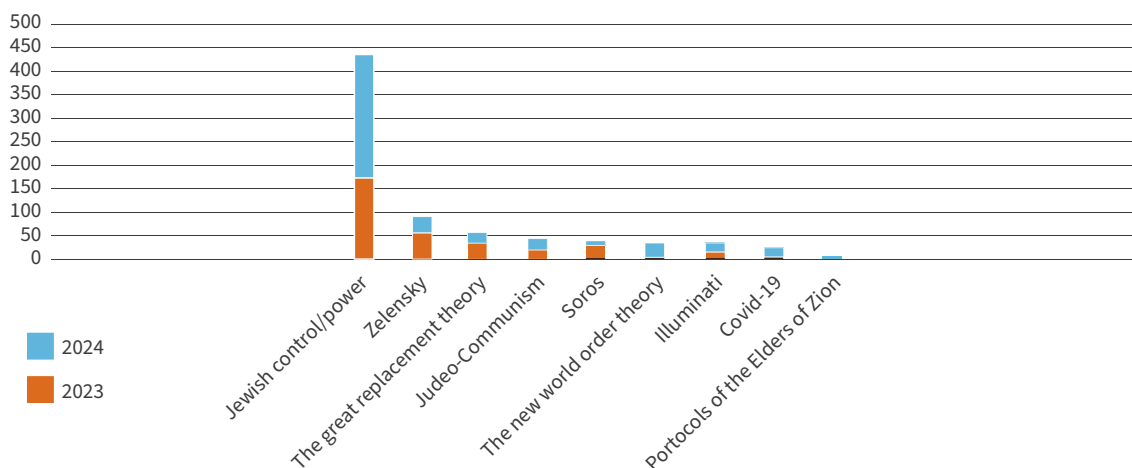
A predominant narrative in the Romanian sector involves the idea that Jews control or significantly influence Romanian politics. For example, there have been persistent accusations that Jews manipulate political figures or parties, especially those in power. (e.g. “Nicolae Ciucă is the servant of the Khazarian satanists who turned the Holy Romania into a colony,” “Jews control the people in positions of power like Mircea Geoană,” “Marcel Ciolacu is the servant of America and the Kykes,” “the Jewish freemasons are numerous in all the parties, but AUR”).

In 2023, the antisemitic messages with a conspiratorial undertone centered on the Russo-Ukrainian war or on accusations about the Jews’ desire to divide Christians and destroy Christianity. (e.g. “Israel wants to outlaw Christianity,” “Christianity is manipulated by Jews”) The moment the Israeli-Palestinian conflict began, however, brings to the forefront a new face of this category, namely accusations of Jewish control and power in the US. Along these lines, criticism of US support for Israel is becoming increasingly common, and Romania is not immune from similar accusations.

The bulk of this category is represented by the *Jewish control power* sub-narrative. The next most prevalent narrative, though with fewer occupancies, is equally significant and encompasses conspiracy theories about President Zelensky and his Jewish ethnicity.

The conspiratorial narrative had a steady dynamic across both years. In 2023, there were 507 pieces of conspiratorial antisemitic content, and this number increased to 550 in 2024. (e.g. “When will we get rid of all kinds of Jewish experiments, such as communism, democracy, plandemic, the great reset, globalization, new world order, the EU and its subsidiaries, NATO with the related scumbags, bilderberg, davos, g7”).

Figure 8: Sub-narratives of the antisemitic narrative category: New antisemitism



3.1.2 New antisemitism

New antisemitism targeting Israel spiked alarmingly in 2024, especially in the sub-narratives of *demonization* (6 to 178), *delegitimization* (3 to 52), and *colonialism analogies* (1 to 43), indicating an increase in public hostility toward Israel. Other notable sub-narratives also saw significant rises, including accusations of *Israel as a terrorist state* (11 to 84), *collective responsibility* (3 to 38), and *Israel being solely responsible for the Arab-Israeli conflict* (2 to 49). These shifts reflect a troubling trend toward the vilification of Israel and its supporters, with broader generalizations affecting the Jewish community as a whole. The *apartheid analogy* (4 to 27) compares Israel’s policies toward Palestinians to South Africa’s racial segregation system, suggesting Israel practices systemic oppression. The *collective responsibility* sub-narrative holds all Jews collectively accountable for Israel’s actions, fostering widespread blame on individuals based on their ethnic or religious identity. The *Nazi analogy* (3 to 44) draws comparisons between Israeli actions and those of Nazi Germany, while the *taboo of criticism* (6 to 30) refers to the belief that criticism of Israel is often shut down unjustly, while denying the right of refers to rejecting Israel’s right to exist or defend itself. These sub-narratives have intensified the atmosphere of hostility and polarization surrounding discussions of Israel in the public sphere.

New antisemitism often recontextualizes traditional antisemitic tropes in the context of political issues Jewish states’ policies and Israel, sometimes blending these types of criticism with globalist conspiracies.

Unlike other narrative categories, the new antisemitic content presented the most substantial increase, in

response to the events of October 7th. In 2023, there were 38 cases of new antisemitic comments, whereas in 2024, the number has increased to 546.

As a general expression, the new antisemitic narrative in Romania is largely rooted in the disagreement with Israel’s actions subsequent October 7th. However, the 584 pieces of content considered antisemitic went beyond mere criticism of the Israeli policies, embodying broader anti-Zionist and anti-Israeli rhetoric. This discourse blurs the line between political critique and outright antisemitism, fact that determined a high degree of difficulty in classifying them.

As previously mentioned, among the subcategories of the new antisemitism narrative, the most encountered ones were: demonisation, Israel perceived as a terrorist state, and the assertion that Israel is solely responsible for the Arab-Israeli conflict, followed closely by delegitimization, the colonialism analogy and claims about the influence on the media.

The pieces of content that were classified in the demonisation section, portray Israel as a malevolent force, as a villain or a historical oppressor. (e.g. “the genocidal criminal state of Israel,” “the exponents of the Zionist regime are possessed by an evil spirit”) The sub-narrative labeled Israel is a terrorist state also saw an increase following the October 7th events. It embodies a series of critical comments about the Israeli actions in the region, which cross into antisemitism if the statements portray Israel as inherently malevolent or uses it as a proxy to promote hostility against Jews. (e.g. “in Israel you get eaten if you say things against the terrorist regime there,” “Israel is a terrorist state run by criminals”) The Israel is solely responsible for the Arab-Israeli conflict sub-

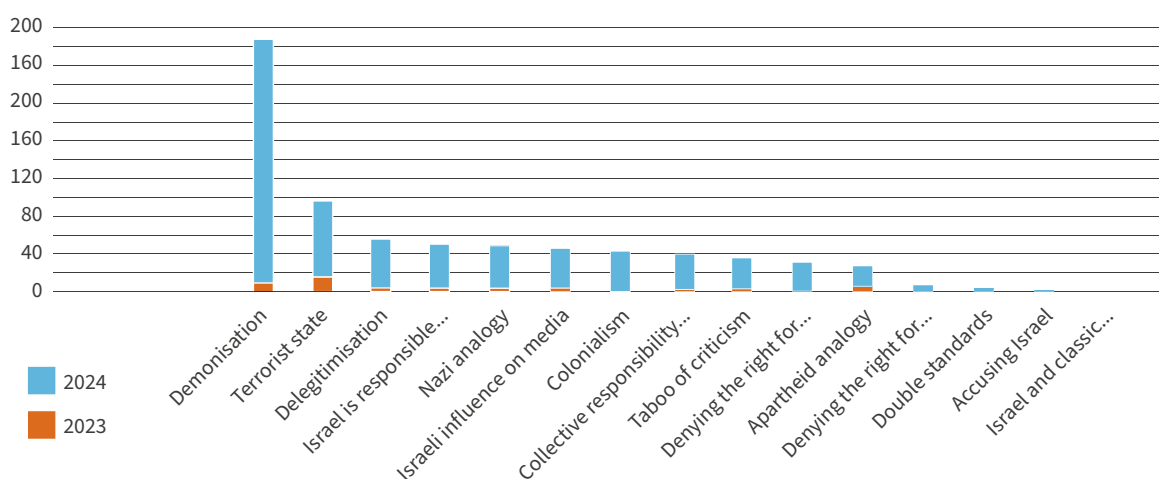
narrative includes comments that imply a reductive perspective that places all blame for the long-standing and complex regional conflict exclusively on Israel. (e.g. “Israelis are responsible for all bad things that happen in the Middle East,” “the challenges in the area are manufactured only by Jews and their Jewish American mates”).

Delegitimization involves questioning or denying Israel’s right to exist as a legitimate state, and regarding the Middle East conflict that escalated in 2024, the antisemitic comments often claim that the Jewish state has no historical or moral foundation. (e.g. “Israel is a randomly and wrongly invented country”, “Jews have no right to the promised land”)

The *colonialism analogy* likens Israel to a colonial power, implying that it is occupying land that does not belong to it. (e.g. “Israel is full of colonists who steal, rob and kill”) This type of narrative depicts the conflict with an imperial domination overtone, rather than a complex geopolitical issue.

The sub-narrative that suggests an *Israeli influence on the media* claims that Israel and some Jewish figures control or influence the media not only in Romania, but also worldwide, in order to manipulate the public opinion regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict. (e.g. “Israel owns the media”).

Figure 9: Sub-narratives of the antisemitic narrative category Conspiratorial antisemitism



3.1.3 Classic stereotypes

In Romania, classic antisemitic stereotypes have fluctuated significantly between 2023 and 2024. The sub-narrative of *Evil* (33 to 118) saw a drastic increase, while accusations of *Greed/wealth* (44 to 45) and *Deceit and lie* (36 to 39) remained relatively stable. The stereotype of *Disloyalty/dual loyalty* grew (8 to 18), and *Jew as the “other”* also rose (15 to 23). However, the *Taboo of criticism* remained unchanged (8 to 8).

This category includes classic stereotypes about the Jew being *evil, greedy, deceitful, disloyal* or dangerous to society, the enumeration representing also some of the subcategories of this narrative. It often reinforces the idea that Jews are inherently problematic members of society.

In Romania, these age-old stereotypes are oftentimes invoked in economic contexts, with Jews being accused of financial crises or portrayed as hoarding wealth insatiably (e.g. “no one ever saw a poor Kyke”). These

presumptions are specifically evident in the financial industry or business discourse, where Jews are often considered to be manipulative and predatory. The year 2023 reveals that the *greed/wealth* sub-narrative was much more prevalent among antisemitic views.

Within this category, there is a worrying rise in the year 2024, particularly in the *evil* sub-narrative. In the context of the Romanian space, this stereotype has often been associated with the idea that Jews are an evil force, involved in conspiracies to control economies, governments or media institutions. This myth of the Jew as “evil” is often linked to the idea that Jews would seek to undermine the majority societies in order to impose their own agenda, being perceived as manipulators or even as a “threat” to national identity. Usually, this narrative goes alongside conspiratorial accusations of *Jewish control/power*. (e.g. “the US is 100% under the control of the Jews, more than 50% of US senators are Jews,” “Zionists form the 1% “elite” who, through criminal means, own the world’s resources”).

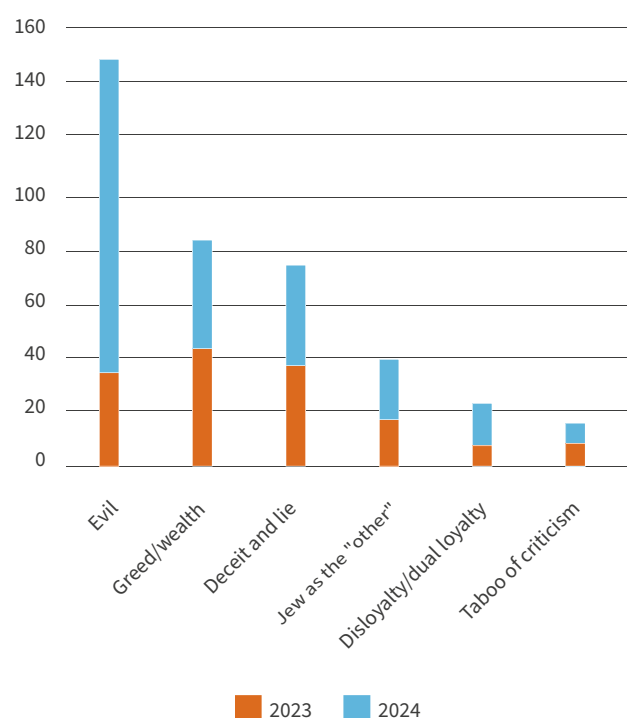
The *deceit and lie* stereotype portray Jews as inherently untrustworthy, accusing them of using deception and manipulation for personal or communal gain. (e.g. “Jews are wolves in sheep’s clothing,” “nothing you see or are told in Israel is what it seems, they are two faced liars”).

The antisemitic comments in the *disloyalty/dual loyalty* sub-narrative often align with conspiratorial claims, suggesting that Jews prioritize a global agenda over national loyalties. (e.g. “in Romania, many Israeli swindlers deceived people,” “snitching Jews should go to hell”).

The *taboo of criticism* sub-narrative asserts that freedom of expression is restricted when addressing topics related to Jews or Israel. Antisemitic comments often claim that such topics are deliberately censored, frequently linking these allegations to broader conspiracies like “Jewish control of the media”. (e.g. “Stanzas have been taken from the Lord’s Proclamation, not to anger the Jews,” “Jewish attack on free speech continues”).

Coded predominantly under the “Jew as the other” category were messages and posts that enhanced the us versus them mentality, as well as messages that blamed Jews for the antisemitism that has always existed.

10. Figure: Sub-narratives of the antisemitic narrative category: Classic antisemitic stereotypes



3.1.4 Traditional, religion-based antisemitism

Traditional religious-based antisemitism remains present, with *deicide* accusations (15 to 9 cases) and *blood libel* (5 to 3) decreasing. The *blood libel* sub-narrative refers to the false accusation that Jews engage in blood-related rituals. The *Jew as Satan/devil* stereotype remains significant (29 to 21). However, the sub-narrative *Jews as the “other”* surged significantly (24 to 45).

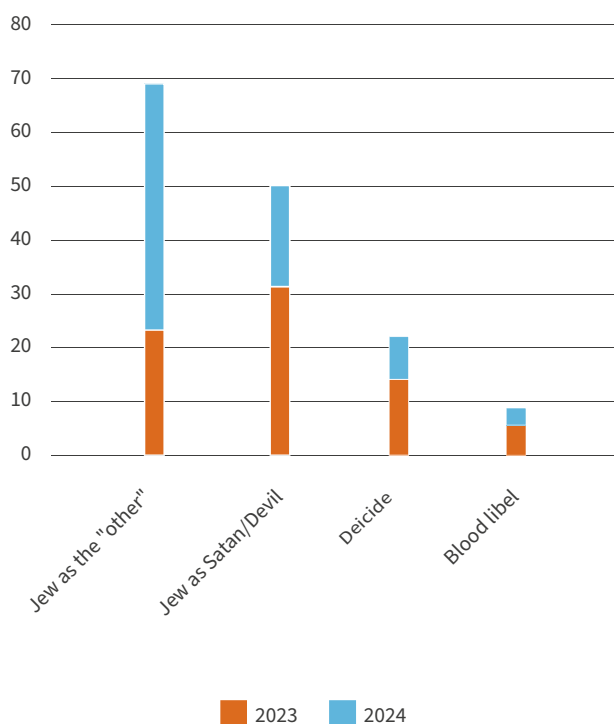
The traditional religion-based antisemitic narrative has four subcategories: *deicide*, *blood libel/child murder*, *jews as Satan/Devil*, and *Jew as the other (in religious sense)*. The activity regarding this narrative was also constant during 2023 (74 antisemitic pieces of content) and 2024 (72 antisemitic pieces of content), only a slight decrease can be noticed.

For this narrative, was often selected the *deicide* subcategory. (e.g. “the Kykes crucified Jesus and chose the thief, this defines their entire history”) However, *Jew as the other* subcategory was chosen even more often, as many comments focused on themes of extreme segregation stemming from the perceived “higher status” that Jews are believed to claim. This presumption is often linked to the notion that Judaism inherently fosters a sense of superiority. Some of the comments in this sub-narrative involve accusations portraying Jews as deviating from or opposing Christian beliefs, often labeling them as enemies of the faith. (e.g. “heretic, pagan, Antichrist worshipper jews,” “the suffering of Jews is a result of their own wrongdoing and as a punishment from God,” “Jews are evil and sinners”) These narratives are particularly encountered in certain Christian fundamentalist circles and among extreme nationalist groups; these two groups generally converge.

The *blood libel* sub-narrative in Romanian antisemitism refers to the longstanding, false accusation that Jews engage in some obscure rituals. This blood libel myth has had a historical presence, with notable prevalence during the interwar period and under the influence of fascist ideologies. In the recent years, this accusation shows a slight decrease in occurrences of the *blood libel* sub-narrative, from 2023 to 2024 (from 5 to 3), which may suggest that its usage has diminished. (e.g. “shocking history of Zionism, occultism and satanism surrounding red heifer sacrifice rituals,” “occult and satanic Jewish practices”).

It is noticeable the presence of *Jews as Satan/Devil* type of views in 2023. This sub-narrative included messages calling Jews inherently Satanist in terms of their religion and traditions, being placed in opposition to Christianity. Likewise, content pieces arguing that the anti-Christ is/will be Jewish were included here. (e.g. “the money sent to the Nazi Khazar Satan-Yehova worshippers goes to the manufacture of adrenochrome”, “anti-Christ will be Jewish”).

Figure 11: Sub-narratives of the antisemitic narrative category: Traditional, religion-based antisemitism



3.1.5 Holocaust Denial and Distortion

The Holocaust narrative saw a rise in regard to *denial or distortion* (15 to 27) and *Holocaust as a positive event* (1 to 6), while *Nazi analogies* dropped (31 to 11). Instances of *blaming Jews* for the Holocaust doubled (3 to 6) but remained in small numbers. Narratives attempting to *blur the responsibility* for the Holocaust, which seek to shift or dilute culpability by attributing it to broader or alternative factors and minimizing the accountability of the primary perpetrators, declined from 19 to 7. Mentions of *Judeo-Communism*, meanwhile, emerged minimally (0 to 2).

This category connotes the rejection or diminishment of the Holocaust, often questioning the magnitude of the atrocities or insinuate a manner that minimizes the suffering of the victims.

In the Romanian landscape, this narrative is oftentimes tied to nationalist movements that seek to minimize

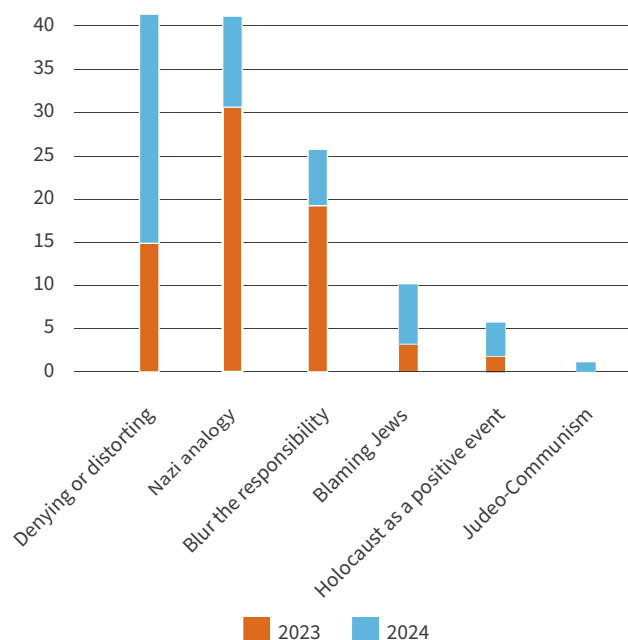
or even negate the role of Romania in the Holocaust. This narrative often emerges in far-right media pieces of content, where the Holocaust is portrayed as a fabricated story or as an event exaggerated for political reasons. The number of these type of pieces of content increased from 53 in 2023 to 57 in 2024.

The first subcategory, *Denying or distorting the Holocaust*, shows the largest jump between the two years, with a significantly higher representation in 2024. This may reflect the growing prevalence of outright denial or attempts to manipulate historical facts to downplay the magnitude and reality of the Holocaust, in the context of the Israel – Palestine conflict.

The sub-narrative, *Blaming Jews*, increased from 3 to 6 pieces of content. (“the massacre was carried out by Soviets, mostly Ukrainians and Jews”) Similarly, the notion of *Holocaust as a positive event* grew slightly from 1 in 2023 to 6 in 2024. (“The Jews have destroyed everything. If Hitler and Antonescu had been alive, the world would have been free of thieves”) All of these sub-narratives seek to undermine the historical truth of the Holocaust, distorting its significance and impact.

The use of *Nazi analogies* has risen sharply in 2024, making it one of the most prominent categories. This involves drawing inappropriate or exaggerated comparisons between Nazi policies and modern political or social issues, often as a rhetorical device. Such analogies trivialize the Holocaust, eroding its unique historical significance and desensitizing audiences to the atrocities committed during that period.

Figure 12: Sub-narratives of the antisemitic narrative category: Holocaust denial and distortion



3.2 Antisemitic content beyond narratives

3.2.1 Antisemitic hate speech

Out of 7,012 analyzed pieces of content, 183 were classified as hate speech. A majority of these comments carried also a conspiratorial shade.

Most of the pieces of content falling into this category were racial slurs such as the most common example “jidan”. Another type of content included in the range of this category consisted of expressions using the word Jew as an insult. These were most commonly found in the following media categories: Far-right pages, Fake news/conspiratorial sites. However, the comment sections of all media categories were not free from such antisemitic remarks.

Hate speech without any sub-narratives refers offensive or abusive statements about Jews.

Out of 7,012 analyzed pieces of content, 183 were identified as hate speech, with a significant portion carrying a conspiratorial undertone. The majority of this hateful content consisted of racial slurs, with “jidan” being the most frequently encountered example. Another common form of antisemitic expression involved using the term “Jew” as an insult. These instances were most prevalent on far-right pages and fake news/conspiratorial sites, which frequently serve as breeding grounds for such rhetoric. However, it is important to note that antisemitic remarks were not confined to these platforms; hateful comments appeared across the comment sections of all monitored media categories, highlighting the pervasive nature of this issue.

The main topics generating such reactions are: the Israel-Palestine conflict, Zelensky and the war in Ukraine, but also other domestic political issues.

3.2.2 Antisemitic violence

A total of 28 comments fell under the category of call for violence. Notably, all these comments were posted in 2024 and were directly linked to discussions surrounding the events that followed October 7th in the Middle East.

Most of the pieces of content in this category were exclamations chanting the death or disappearance of the Jews/state of Israel.

As mentioned before, this category contains the smallest number of antisemitic comments and as the new antisemitism narrative, it is tied to the October 7th event.

The majority of the content in this category consisted of violent exclamations calling for the death or disappearance of Jews and the state of Israel. These statements often took the form of inflammatory rhetoric, inciting harm or advocating for the annihilation of Jewish individuals and the dissolution of Israel.

3.3 Topics provoking antisemitism

The data suggests that antisemitism can arise in response to a broad spectrum of topics, demonstrating a concerning adaptability of antisemitic narratives. However, certain themes were more likely to provoke antisemitism, often reflecting historical stereotypes and prejudices. For example, discussions around finance, banking, or perceived global influence frequently triggered antisemitic tropes about Jewish control or manipulation. These responses often invoked conspiratorial themes, reinforcing age-old stereotypes.

Certain themes, regardless of context, consistently incited antisemitic responses: most of the antisemitic conspiratorial instances were generated by issues in Romanian politics. Almost any problem could be linked to the presence of a Jew who either corrupts politicians or is himself part of the political scene, which facilitates the fulfilment of his despicable purposes.

Topics touching on Jewish religious practices or cultural differences sometimes spurred discriminatory or prejudiced responses. Misunderstandings or mischaracterizations of Jewish customs were also a common source.

Conversations regarding Israel, particularly its policies or conflicts in the Middle East, were highly likely to provoke antisemitism. Antisemitic rhetoric often blurred distinctions between criticism of Israeli politics and prejudice against Jewish people more broadly.

Unexpectedly, neutral or unrelated topics, such as discussions about holidays, celebrities, philanthropy, or even certain foods associated with Jewish culture, occasionally provoked antisemitic remarks.

Antisemitic narratives showed an ability to adapt to contemporary issues, such as public health debates or digital currency discussions, repurposing older prejudices for new contexts.

3.4 Code words used for Jews, examples

The selection of the keywords for analysis in Romania targeted the most frequently used terms which describe Jewish individuals and groups, spanning references from ethnicity and religion to, notably, words with pejorative charge. The study utilized seven primary terms along with additional related words from the same lexical field. The first five terms in the sequence are neutral, referring to Jewish individuals. As opposed, the last two terms carry a derogatory overtone, reflecting a pejorative connotation aimed at denigrating the Jewish community.

1. “evreu” – This term, meaning “Jew,” originates from the Hebrew root [ע.ב.ר.] with its literal sense “to cross”. The term aligns with the English equivalent, “Hebrew” and it is commonly used to denote ethnicity. Here are some examples of antisemitic remarks including the codeword “evreu”: “the Jew lies even when asking a question,” “Jews can’t help being wretched”.
2. “ovreu” – An alternative to „evreu” with a similar neutral meaning.
3. “iudeu” – “Jew,” “Judean,” “from Judea,” derived from Latin *Iudaeus*, Greek *Ioudaios* or Hebrew יְהוּדִי (*Yehudi*). (e.g. “Who is this Judean? He should be kicked out of Romania”).
4. “Israel,” “israelian” – Referring to “Israel,” “Israeli” (e.g. “Israel must fall”, “Israel is a bunch of criminal racists and country thieves”).
5. “zionist” / “sionist” – “Zionist” (e.g. “It’s time to eliminate the Zionist criminal fanatics and country thieves”).
6. “mozaic” – “Mosaic” (regarding the religious paradigm – “the Mosaic Covenant/Law,” for example; relating to Moses). In the comments section the term is usually employed in religious discussions.

7. “jidan” – “Kyke,” “Jew,” “Judean” (derived from the Slavic “jid” – jew, plus the augmentative suffix “-an”, used as a pejorative term; “jidov” - also “Jew,” “Judean,” but in some regions: *cockroach*, whose ankles have a yellow, foul-smelling discharge. These terms are considered highly offensive and derogatory. It is often associated with conspiratorial or dehumanizing rhetoric. (e.g. “since forever the Kykes have done only evil deeds, a nation of wretched people”).
8. “khazar” - a semi-nomadic Turkic people who converted to Judaism. (e.g. “the attack of the Nazi terrorist satanist Khazarians, [...] the terrorists led by Bibi Satanyahu”).

The last term, “khazar”, exhibited particular challenges during the monitoring process. Some of the comments revealed a distinction between Jewish identity and Khazarian origins, where the latter is not genuinely Jewish, but rather a pretender. In contrast, other pieces of content insinuated that “Khazar” was synonymous with “Jew”, blurring the lines between the two. Examples of antisemitic content include: “Khazars and snake people - the worst of the Jews”, “Romania is full of Kykes, Khazars, Jews.” Nevertheless, the term is used preponderantly in contexts that suggest an antagonistic undertone.

Notably, “sionist” frequently appeared in conspiratorial contexts with negative connotations, and the most prevalent derogatory terms were “jidan” and “khazar.”

4. Conclusion

The analysis of Romanian antisemitic discourse during 2023-2024 reveals a multifaceted and evolving issue, deeply influenced by internal sociopolitical dynamics and global events. The persistence of conspiratorial narratives highlights a deeply rooted tendency to scapegoat Jews for economic, political, and societal challenges. The significant rise in new antisemitism, particularly following the October 7th events, reflects the fluid nature of such rhetoric, where traditional stereotypes are recontextualized to align with contemporary geopolitical narratives, such as anti-Zionist rhetoric that equates legitimate political critique with antisemitism.

While far-right and conspiratorial platforms emerge as dominant propagators of antisemitic content, mainstream medias' substantial share of problematic comments indicates the need for enhanced moderation and awareness even in ostensibly neutral spaces. This underscores how antisemitic rhetoric transcends ideological boundaries, appearing not only in overtly biased outlets but also infiltrating mainstream discourses through unmoderated public interactions.

The growing prevalence of Holocaust denial, trivialization through Nazi analogies, and violent rhetoric post-October 7th points to a dangerous shift in the discourse, where historical revisionism and incitement to violence gain traction. The overwhelming presence of such content in the comment sections highlights social medias' dual role as a platform for public expression and a conduit for unchecked hate speech.

These findings underscore the urgent need for a comprehensive response encompassing public awareness, educational initiatives, and stricter content moderation to address and mitigate the spread of antisemitism in Romanian digital and media spaces.



5. Methodology

The research aimed to examine antisemitic narratives in online textual content - such as comments, articles and Facebook posts - before and after 7 October 2023. We analysed content from websites and Facebook pages of previously defined media outlets. The content was collected using social listening software based on pre-defined keywords, covering the same period in both 2023 and 2024. The research was conducted in four countries (Hungary, Italy, Poland and Romania) by national research teams coordinated by Political Capital, using the same methodology.

Definition of antisemitism

The basis of the research was the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism: *"Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities."* A detailed explanation of the definition, along with illustrative examples, is available on the IHRA website⁹.

5.1 Data collection

In our research, we analysed online textual content: articles, posts and comments from websites and Facebook pages. The data was collected using social listening software, SentiOne. SentiOne scrapes data in a given timeframe, from the given media sources based on the given keywords.

5.1.1 Keywords

We defined four keywords that we used to identify potentially relevant content in all countries: 1) Jews, 2) Israel, 3) Holocaust, 4) Zionism/Zionist. In addition, we included specific keywords relevant to each country. In Romania, these were: *jid, lud, mosaic, ovre and khazar*. In languages where these words could have different endings, we used the base form of the keywords followed by an asterisk (*). This approach allowed SentiOne to identify results for all variations and endings of the keywords.

5.1.2 Sources monitored

With input from the national research teams, Political Capital identified six categories of online media to monitor content from: 1) independent (mainstream) media, 2) mainstream tabloids, 3) (hyper-)partisan/biased media, 4) right-wing/far-right sites, 5) fake news/conspiratorial sites, 6) left-wing/far-left sites. We collected pages for each category in all countries, including media outlets' websites and Facebook pages. In all countries, we selected the three media outlets per category with the most results for our keywords in the same time period. In Romania, we monitored the following media outlets' websites and Facebook pages:

- **Independent (mainstream) media:** Digi 24, Cotidianul, Hotnews. These represent news outlets that operate outside direct governmental while maintaining a significant audience reach and influence. The monitored Romanian media platforms represent diverse political and audience perspectives, essential for evaluating how antisemitism is addressed, ignored, or perpetuated in mainstream narratives.
- **Far-right pages:** Incorect Politic, Activenews, Diana Iovanovici-Șoșoacă, Senator. These pages often promote nationalist, xenophobic, or extremist ideologies, including antisemitic narratives. Analyzing these pages helps track the spread, evolution, and influence of such narratives within fringe and potentially mainstream discourse.
- **Mainstream tabloids:** Click!, Fanatik, RomaniaTV. These pages focus on sensationalist and entertainment-driven content, often prioritizing headlines that grab attention. These tabloid sites influence monitoring by showcasing how antisemitic stereotypes can be subtly embedded in sensationalist content, reaching large audiences and potentially normalizing harmful narratives.
- **Fake news/conspiratorial sites:** Stripesurse.ro, SACCSIV, Flux 24. These pages spread misinformation and promote unverified or extremist narratives, often exploiting societal fears. Their monitoring is critical for identifying the role of misinformation in shaping antisemitic beliefs, tracking the dissemination of harmful ideas.

⁹ IHRA working definition of antisemitism: <https://holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definition-antisemitism>

- **(Hyper-)Partisan/biased media:** Buna Ziua Iași (BZI), 60m, 5news.ro. These pages promote content aligned with specific political or ideological agendas. Monitoring this type of media is extremely important for understanding biases that are potentially polarizing public opinion on Jewish-related topics.
- **Left-wing/far-left pages:** might intersect with or unintentionally perpetuate antisemitic stereotypes, such as conspiracy theories about Jewish influence in finance or politics. The analyzed sites might reveal how antisemitism can manifest within anti-capitalist rhetoric. However, none of these were included. The single article extracted from such a source, was not antisemitic.

5.1.3 Monitoring period

Based on our previous experiences in coding textual content into previously defined categories and the resources available to the project, we set a goal of analysing 7,000 pieces of content per country. Because we wanted to examine changes in antisemitic narratives after 7 October 2023, we chose the same time period in both 2023 and 2024. This was determined by identifying the country with the least data for our keywords and calculating how many days were needed, starting from a chosen date (in this case, 1 April), for the downloaded data in that country to exceed 7,000 pieces of content. As a result, data collection in all countries was standardised to the same timeframe: April 1 and April 15, 13:00.

5.1.4 The amount of data analysed

We filtered each dataset to include more than 7,000 pieces of content, maintaining the original proportions of keywords, sources (websites and Facebook pages), and years within the dataset. This approach resulted in the following proportions of the total downloaded dataset being analysed in each country: Romania - 100%, Hungary - 73%, Italy - 44%, and Poland - 35%.

In all countries the amount of data collected in 2024 was higher than in 2023. The smallest increase was in Hungary, where the data increased by about one and a half times in 2024. In Romania the data increased by almost three times, in Poland by almost five times and in Italy by almost seven times. In all countries most of the data consisted of comments.

The amount of data also varied between countries by media category:

- Hungary: The majority of data came from far-right pages, followed by mainstream media, biased outlets, tabloids, and minimal data from conspiratorial and left-wing sources.
- Italy: Most data came from mainstream media, followed by tabloids, biased outlets, left-wing and conspiratorial sources, with very little data from far-right pages.
- Poland: Most data came from tabloids, followed by biased outlets, mainstream media, far-right pages, conspiratorial sites and very little from left-wing sources.
- Romania: Most of the data came from mainstream media, followed by conspiratorial sites, tabloids, far-right sources, biased outlets and a small amount of data from left-wing sources.

		<i>Examined content in media categories</i>							
		Mainstream	Far-right	Conspiratorial	Biased	Tabloid	Left	Total amount of data/year	Total amount of data
Hungary	2023	671	1300	38	626	130	22	2787	7008
	2024	1410	1949	49	646	86	81	4221	
Italy	2023	704	1	9	19	142	15	890	7053
	2024	4987	38	151	284	518	185	6163	
Poland	2023	310	137	51	63	674	1	1236	7054
	2024	601	224	253	1041	3697	2	5818	
Romania	2023	809	191	469	85	293	0	1847	7012
	2024	3332	361	959	127	385	1	5165	

5.2 Coding the data

5.2.1 Conceptual framework

Using publicly available resources, such as studies, research reports, scientific articles, etc., Political Capital developed a conceptual framework to define the theoretical background of the research. In addition to stating that the research was based on the IHRA's working definition of antisemitism, the document thoroughly presented the main categories of antisemitic narratives and sub-narratives on which the research was based. All partners had the opportunity to discuss, comment on, and add to the content of the conceptual framework. The conceptual framework was also discussed with members of the BOND project's Advisory Board and external experts.

5.2.2 Finalising the methodology and creating a methodology guide

Finalising the research methodology involved multiple discussions - including consultations with an expert member of the BOND Advisory Board and several attempts to analyse and code online texts in different ways. From these efforts, the final categories for coding the data were established. Four classifications were defined for the nature of content:

1. Antisemitic – Content that contained at least one antisemitic narrative.
2. Potentially antisemitic – Content that included a narrative that could be either interpreted as both antisemitic and non-antisemitic, or it appeared

antisemitic only in light of the context (the article/post it was responding to).

3. Not understandable – Content that was incomprehensible (this category was almost only applicable to comments).
4. Not antisemitic – Content that did not include any antisemitic narratives.

Based on the conceptual framework, five main categories of antisemitic narratives were identified, each containing sub-categories:

- Classic antisemitic stereotypes,
- Traditional, religion-based antisemitism (anti-Judaism),
- Conspiratorial antisemitism,
- Holocaust denial and distortion,
- New antisemitism (antisemitism based on criticism of Israel).

Two additional categories were defined: “hate speech” and “call for violence”.

The coding process was described in detail in a methodology guide.

As part of the coding process, coders were required to document the antisemitic phrases identified in the

content. For comments, they also had to record the context - specifically, the subject of the article or post under which the comment was written.

5.2.3 Training of the coders

After sharing the conceptual framework and the methodology guide with the national research teams, Political Capital organised a meeting to explain and discuss these documents and the process and to provide space for questions. Throughout the research process, the research teams met regularly to discuss issues and questions that arose during the research process.

To ensure a common understanding of the theoretical framework and to increase the reliability of the research - within the constraints of resources and team capacities - the research process included a learning phase. During this phase, 350 pieces of content were filtered from the dataset while maintaining the original proportions of results by keyword, media category, and year. A slight overrepresentation of results for the keyword "Israel" was included, based on the assumption that identifying new antisemitism would be the greatest challenge. In each country, two members of the national research teams coded these data independently. Their results were then compared and discrepancies were discussed to reach an agreement. In cases where agreement could not be

reached, they were given the opportunity to consult with Political Capital for further clarification.

5.2.4 The coding process

Coding the data followed the same procedure across all countries. The national teams received their content in an Excel file, which included all relevant properties (e.g., comment/article/post, date of publishing, source, context, etc.). During the coding process, coders read the content itself and, for comments, also examined the context.

If antisemitic narratives were identified in the content, coders labelled it as either antisemitic or potentially antisemitic, defined the antisemitic narrative, and categorised it into a main antisemitic narrative category along with one of its sub-categories. A single piece of content could be categorised into multiple (maximum four) narrative categories, as it was possible for more than one antisemitic narrative to appear within the same text. If the content did not contain any antisemitic narratives, or if its meaning was not understandable, it was not assigned to any category.

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Introduction to the BOND project

The BOND (Building tolerance, uNderstanding, and Dialogue across communities) project¹⁰ was implemented from January 2023 to December 2024 in Hungary, Italy, Poland, and Romania. Its primary goal was to address deep-rooted prejudices, hateful attitudes, and behaviors within society, particularly those targeting European Jewry. The project also aimed to foster understanding, tolerance, and dialogue. A significant focus was placed on educating young people about Judaism and antisemitism, as well as promoting intercultural and inter-religious dialogue. Its activities included researching antisemitism, monitoring antisemitic narratives, developing educational curricula, training teachers, organising youth education and exchange programs, facilitating inter-faith and inter-community dialogue, and hosting local roundtables on tolerance and social inclusion. The project was guided by the definition of antisemitism established by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA).¹¹






¹⁰ Webpage of the BOND project: <https://www.bond-project.eu/>

¹¹ IHRA working definition of antisemitism: <https://holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definition-antisemitism>

Project Facts

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