

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002014/26
to the Commission**

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(13 May 2026)

Subject: Antisemitism Case at the University of Coimbra: serious institutional failures, urgent questions about accountability, and EU scrutiny over fundamental rights

From late 2023, an Israeli PhD student at the University of Coimbra documented a sustained campaign of antisemitic harassment, including physical assault, explicit death threats, and the proliferation of antisemitic propaganda across university premises. When Bar Harel reported the incidents, the institution invoked ‘freedom of expression’ to justify its inaction. He withdrew from his doctorate and left Portugal in September 2025.

In 2026, the Portuguese Ombudsman found that the University of Coimbra had violated fundamental rights and administrative law, characterised the institution’s response as a grave abuse of authority, ordered formal reparations, and recommended adoption of the IHRA working definition of antisemitism. The case remains unresolved, with court proceedings still pending.

Given the manifest risks to European values and the fundamental principle of non-discrimination, we ask:

1. Does the Commission intend to include this case in its next report on the Rule of law in the EU?
2. Does the Commission consider that potential breaches of EU law may be at stake, particularly regarding non-discrimination obligations and the protection of students’ fundamental rights?
3. What concrete mechanisms is the Commission prepared to activate to ensure that higher education institutions in Member States fulfil their duties to prevent, investigate and sanction discriminatory conduct?

Supporter ⁽¹⁾

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Answer given by Mr Brunner on behalf of the European Commission
(10 September 2026)

1. The Rule of Law Report presents developments across the Member States in four key areas: the justice system, the anti-corruption framework, aspects of media freedom and pluralism, and other institutional checks and balances. The report does not focus on topics such as the one described by the Honourable Members.
2. The Commission does not comment on ongoing court proceedings.
3. Universities benefiting from EU funding must respect in full the principles of non-discrimination, transparency and inclusion and ensure that students are aware of their rights and obligations. Violating these principles can lead to the suspension and cancellation of funding.

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