

The image of Jews and others in the Brussels-Capital Region

The Institut Jonathas publishes today the results of an opinion poll on anti-Semitism focusing exclusively on Brussels. This survey, conducted with IPSOS Belgium, follows on from [the first poll](#), carried out in 2024, also in collaboration with IPSOS, which surveyed the whole of Belgium. The results are clear: the study highlights that the population of Brussels continues to hold many anti-Semitic stereotypes “inherited from the past” of a religious or political nature; stereotypes that are sometimes expressed without apparent animosity, as “obvious truths,” and therefore all the more likely to be trivialized, particularly in digital spaces.

Some revealing figures:

- 21% of Brussels respondents consider Jews to be an unassimilable race or responsible for the death of Christ. For these two questions, the non-response rate is over 30%.
- 22% believe that they are not Belgians like everyone else,
- 25% hold them responsible for economic crises, a classic anti-Semitic trope if ever there was one.
- 40% believe that they control the financial and banking sectors,
- 70% subscribe to the idea of strong solidarity within the Jewish community, an old but widely held trope.

Although these prejudices against Jews are sometimes linked to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, they are not limited to it and are part of a more comprehensive view of otherness. In addition to anti-Semitism, the questionnaire also addresses sexist and homophobic prejudices, attitudes toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,

conspiracy theories, and certain factual knowledge. Our study thus highlights that anti-Semitic prejudices are part of a broader sociopolitical ethos characterized by moral conservatism and distrust of the principles of equality. For example, nearly half of Muslim respondents believe that a woman should obey her husband, only 31% are in favor of adoption by same-sex couples, and more than 50% subscribe to conspiracy theories such as the denial of the US moon landing.

While the study confirms that anti-Semitic views are present across all social and political groups, they are significantly more intense in certain segments structured around three main poles:

- Political extremes, both on the right and on the left, particularly among supporters of the far right and the PTB (Belgian Communist Party);
- The younger generations;
- Certain groups defined by ethno-religious factors, in particular Muslim Brussels residents and, to a lesser extent, practicing Catholics.

Effects of religion, politicization, and generation

The study emphasizes the need to avoid essentializing these different groups. Belgian Islam, in particular, is pluralistic and heterogeneous. Nevertheless, the differences observed remain statistically significant. The data nonetheless confirms the existence of a “religion effect” already highlighted in our previous survey. Muslim respondents show significantly higher levels of agreement with certain anti-Jewish stereotypes: 56% believe that Jews are too present in the media and politics (compared to 31% of the sample as a whole) and 51% hold them responsible for many economic crises. Among 18-35 year olds, nearly 40% compare Israel’s behavior to that of the Nazis, a sign of the trivialization of extreme historical parallels. Politicization also appears to be a major structuring factor. The study shows that anti-Semitism is no longer the preserve of the far right. Several distinct pockets exist today, particularly on the left. Among far-right supporters, 69% believe that Jews exploit the Holocaust and 72% believe they exploit anti-Semitism for their own interests. But certain representations are also very present among PTB supporters: 33% consider Jews to be an “unassimilable race,” and less than one in two consider tagging a Jewish site in protest against Israel to be anti-Semitic.

These results call for a collective response. The Institut Jonathas recommends strengthening historical education, digital literacy, and vigilance against discourse that justifies symbolic or physical attacks.

It also advocates for the formalization of the working definition of the *International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance* in order to better distinguish legitimate criticism of Israel from forms of anti-Zionism that revive anti-Semitic patterns. The attack on the synagogue in Liège confirms that it is no longer just anti-Semitic speech that has been unleashed, but anti-Semitic acts, this aggressive anti-Semitism that continues to rise.