

# Political Affairs Digest

*A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community*  
**Scottish Council of Jewish Communities**  
**SCoJeC**

## Contents

Home Affairs  
Israel

Other Relevant Information  
Relevant Legislation  
Consultations

## Home Affairs

### Westminster Hall Debate

#### Organ Donation: Opt-out System

*col 199WH Dan Jarvis (Labour):* ... I understand that some people have concerns that an opt-out process raises the risk that a person will have their organs taken against their will and against their families' wishes, which in turn could cause unnecessary distress to the families of the deceased. I also understand that such concerns may be more prevalent within some ethnic and religious groups and that some members of our Muslim and Jewish communities have different interpretations of the religious legitimacy of deceased donation. I completely get that. I understand their views and have the utmost respect and sympathy for them. However, I firmly and wholeheartedly believe that not only do the benefits of an opt-out system far outweigh the risks, but that the risks can be mitigated through a public awareness campaign tailored to different ethnic and religious communities and through the use of in-hospital safeguarding measures. Any new system would have to ensure there are safeguards in place to ensure that no one's organs are donated against their wishes; that the opt-out system applies only to those over the age of 18; and that for those under 18 it continues to be the case ... that it is the family who has the final decision, because it is vital that nobody feels as though they are being coerced.

*col 200WH Fiona Bruce (Conservative):* ... Presumed consent certainly seems an attractive proposition, but perhaps I may enter a note of caution, to aid our early deliberations on the matter. One of the key legal principles I was taught as a student lawyer was that silence is no reply, which means that, much as we might like to draw conclusions from silence, there are good reasons why it may be inappropriate to do so. Introducing the principle of presumed or deemed consent would involve a major change with respect to organ donation. It would effectively mean that even if someone does nothing at all—does not sign an organ donor register, or opt out or in—a consequence will be triggered. The person's silence triggers a quite major action. Their organs could later be taken and transplanted. Consent is deemed, although they have done nothing. Informed consent is an important principle, undergirding the relationship between the citizen and the state ... It is critical to explore whether, for example, it is right in this instance to undermine the principle of informed consent by introducing presumed consent. Is it possible that that could create a precedent that might be appealed to in future for less enlightened purposes? ...

col 203WH Where someone has signed the opt-out register, conversations cannot even begin. That means that more than 174,000 of the Welsh population have effectively been removed as potential donors. Previously, in the absence of express direction to do otherwise, those people's families, as their living representatives, might have been happy to donate their loved ones' organs at their death. ...

col 210WH **Sharon Hodgson (Labour):** ... There are issues, though, when it comes to black and minority ethnic communities. NHS Blood and Transplant reported that 66% of people from BME communities in the UK refuse to donate their organs, despite being more likely to need a new organ because of a predisposition to certain illnesses, such as diabetes and hypertension. ...

According to the Organ Donation Wales website, a public awareness campaign before the change in the law came into effect resulted in the numbers of organs transplanted increasing from 120 to 160. NHS organ donation statistics have shown an 11.8% increase between 2014-15 and 2016-17 in people in Wales opting in to donate their organs—the highest increase among England, Wales and Scotland. However, a written answer from the Minister present today, based on NHS Blood and Transplant figures, stated that “there has been no notable change in Welsh deceased donation figures since the change in legislation”.

This is backed up by NHS organ donation statistics, which show that despite the opt-out system in Wales, there were more deceased organ donors in England and Scotland. ...

col 212WH **The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Jackie Doyle-Price):** ... Obviously, we want to encourage as many people as possible to make clear their intention to donate after death and to have that conversation with their families. ...

There is much to celebrate, but there is also much more to do, not least because 457 people died last year while on the active transplant waiting list. That ignores the 875 people who were removed from the list because they had become too ill to receive a transplant. ...

Our biggest challenge is black, Asian and minority ethnic donors, for two reasons. First, black and Asian people are more at risk of illnesses that may require a transplant, such as high blood pressure and diabetes, and secondly, the consent rate for those communities is half that of the white population. The same is true for blood, so we need many more blood donors from the black community. There is a constant need for that because of the prevalence of sickle cell anaemia, but we know that only 1% of the nation's blood donors are black. So we need to do much more not only in organ donation but in blood donation. ...

The crucial point that affects donation is the conversation in the room between medical professionals and bereaved families. We have seen examples of families refusing consent because they are not convinced that their relatives wanted to donate and it feels safer to say no. Equally, we have seen that being overruled. We find that the highest rates of donation are achieved when we have specially trained nurses who have that conversation with the family in a sensitive way. ...

**To read the full transcript see**

<http://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-07-13/debates/17071358000002/OrganDonationOpt-OutSystem>

## House of Commons Written Answers

### Social Media: Hate Crime

*The following four questions all received the same answer*

**John Mann (Labour) [3682]** To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions she has had with social media companies on the adoption of a consistent approach to reporting and removing hate speech across all platforms.

**John Mann (Labour) [3683]** To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and

Sport, what recent discussions she has had with social media companies on educating their employees on (a) antisemitic, (b) Islamophobic and (c) racist images or discourse on their platforms.

**John Mann (Labour)** [3684] To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions she has had with social media companies to agree a single working definition of hate crime between all platforms.

**John Mann (Labour)** [3685] To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions she has had with social media companies to ensure that they comply with their terms of service on removing offensive content including hate speech from their platforms.

**Matt Hancock:** We regularly meet major social media companies to discuss online harm and other issues.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-07-07/3682/>

and

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-07-07/3683/>

and

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-07-07/3684/>

and

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-07-07/3685/>

#### **Places of Worship Security Funding Scheme**

**Andrew Gwynne (Labour)** [2481] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Jewish places of worship from each denomination had applied for funding under the Places of Worship Security Funding Scheme by 1 June 2017 in each region.

**Sarah Newton:** Jewish places of worship are unable to apply under the places of worship security scheme as a separate commitment was already in place to fund Jewish community sites via a grant administered through the Community Security Trust (CST).

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-07-03/2481/>

**TOP**

## **Israel**

### **Scottish Parliament Motion**

**S5M-06719 Pauline McNeil (Labour): Dr Denis Rutovitz** – That the Parliament congratulates Dr Denis Rutovitz on receiving an honorary degree from the University of Edinburgh; understands that he has worked for many years at the Medical Research Council Human Genetics Unit and founded the charity Edinburgh Direct Aid in 1992 in response to the horrors of the war in Bosnia; notes the excellent work that the charity has carried out and that Denis personally led the majority of its aid convoys until the end of that conflict in 1996; understands that, since then, the charity has been active in Kosovo, Syria, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Kenya; applauds Denis's humanitarian work in Gaza, which includes taking medical aid there and establishing links between doctors in Gaza and in Scotland, and considers him to be richly deserving of this honour.

## Other Relevant Information

### Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)

#### **Participants discuss educational guide for policymakers on responding to anti-Semitism at joint OSCE/ODIHR-UNESCO meeting in Paris**

Some 50 experts, including representatives of governments and international organizations, met to discuss effective practices and educational approaches to addressing anti-Semitism at an event organized by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and UNESCO on 13 July 2017 at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris.

The main focus of the discussions was the development by ODIHR and UNESCO of a guide for educational policymakers. The guide will offer comprehensive approaches for responding in classrooms to the challenge of anti-Semitism. It will draw on approaches already developed by international and national stakeholders.

“Education is one of the most powerful means for building a society free of anti-Semitism and other forms of discrimination,” said Jan Henrik Fahlbusch, ODIHR Adviser on Combating Anti-Semitism. ...

The participants explored current discussions of how anti-Semitism is understood and how it is manifested. Along with examining effective practices, key policies and sustainable methods for addressing anti-Semitism through education, they also highlighted the educational contexts in which it can be addressed, such as through human rights education and UNESCO's Global Citizen Education programme.

“Anti-Semitism is a human rights issue. It has a negative impact on the society as a whole, not only on the group affected,” said Karel Fracapane, Senior Project Officer at UNESCO Education Sector. “Preventing anti-Semitism through education should, therefore, be an effort to equip young people with the skills to reject anti-Semitic views, as well as all forms of prejudice, while understanding better the specifics of anti-Semitism over time, including today.” ...

**To read the full press release see**

<http://www.osce.org/odihr/329201>

TOP

## Relevant Legislation \*\* new or updated today

### UK Parliament

#### **European Union (Withdrawal) Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2017-19/europeanunionwithdrawal.html>

#### **Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2017-19/marriageact1949amendment.html>

## Scottish Parliament

### Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Repeal) (Scotland) Bill

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/105269.aspx>

TOP

## Consultations

\*\* new or updated today

### **Caste in Great Britain and Equality Law** (closing date 18 September 2017)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/caste-in-great-britain-and-equality-law-a-public-consultation>

### **Workplace Diversity (Wales)** (closing date not stated)

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/wtucdiversity>

TOP

The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) is Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation SC029438