



BRISMES

British Society for Middle Eastern Studies

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Michelle Donelan, MP
Minister of State for Universities
Sanctuary Buildings, 20 Great Smith Street
Westminster
London SW1P 3BT

By Email: michelle.donelan.mp@parliament.uk

4 August 2021

Dear Ms. Michelle Donelan, Minister of State for Universities

Thank you very much for your letter of 18 June, 2021 regarding the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism and its use by higher education institutions in the UK. Like the UK government, BRISMES abhors antisemitism and all other forms of racism. Moreover, as the leading UK association dealing with higher education and the Middle East, we are fortunate to have among our ranks prominent experts who have spent many years studying these issues both in the UK and in international contexts. Following your detailed letter, we held a number of discussions within our organization to think about ways we might act upon our commitment to root out antisemitism and racism on UK campuses.

As a result of these discussions and of our belief in the significance of ongoing dialogue among stake holders dedicated to combatting the increasing manifestations of racism in higher education institutions, a group of us would like to meet with you. We would like to share with you some of the ideas that came up in our discussions as well as our continuing concern about the impact the IHRA definition may well have on inclusivity, equality and diversity, and on manifestations of racism on UK campuses more generally.

Please do let us know if this is a possibility, and if yes, when our representatives could meet with you.

Yours sincerely,

Professor The Baroness Afshar OBE

President, BRISMES

On behalf of the BRISMES Committee on Academic Freedom

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