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Conference of European Rabbis cautions Israel

Chief Rabbi Goldschmidt, President of the Conference of European Rabbis (CER), has cautioned Israeli politicians not to engage with far-right political parties in Europe no matter what their position is on Israel.

Chief Rabbi Goldschmidt said: "If a party is intrinsically racist, bigoted against large parts of society and intolerant of minorities, if Jews are not the target now, they will be in the near future. Israel is uniquely placed to put diplomatic pressure on a State and she needs to be careful, take the lead from local communities and analyse a party's approach and make a long-term decision. It is not worth a short-term endorsement or for Israel to receive political support, only to put the Jewish community at risk.

"Pittsburgh has driven home what an atmosphere of extremism can lead to. It only leads one rogue to take a climate of hate to an horrific and tragic conclusion. Israel must play its role and withhold its support from far-right Parties."

Chief Rabbi Goldschmidt's comment came following a meeting with the Committee for Immigration, Absorption and Diaspora Affairs at the Knesset where he identified bans on religious practice, Islamic extremism and extreme politics as threats to European Jewish Communities. The Conference has also appointed a new Ambassador to combat far-right hate who will coordinate the CER's activity in this area going forward.



Chief Rabbi Goldschmidt

PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA

Felix Klein, the German government's commissioner for anti-Semitism, addressed the Rabbis at a Gala dinner hosted in Tel Aviv, attended by various European Ambassador's to Israel and hosted a lunch with the World Zionist Organisation and its

Chairman Mr Yitchak (Buzhi) Herzog.

During the week, CER also met with MKs who celebrated the introduction of a new bill, instituted by CER, to protect diaspora Agunot (women who remain married to their husband in Jewish law because their

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husbands refuse to grant them their requisite divorce document) which came in early this year. There are already 30 women, living outside of Israel, who have benefited in just six months.

The meetings were part of the CER's bi-annual Standing Committee which has taken place in Israel. Chief Rabbi Goldschmidt said: "It was important for CER to visit Israel and we hope are meetings will ensure that European Jewry is within the mind of the Israeli Government and supported by their decisions. We would like to pay tribute to all those who gave up their time to meet with us and look forward to working with them again in the future."

