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Top Jewish Groups Welcome EU Council Declaration on Fight Against Antisemitism

 by Algemeiner Staff



The European Council's meeting room in Brussels. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

Top Jewish groups in Europe and around the world have welcomed the European Council's approval of a declaration on the fight against antisemitism.

The [declaration](#), promoted by Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz, received unanimous backing from the Brussels-based EU body on Thursday.

Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt, president of the Conference of European Rabbis, said, "Following a difficult year for European Jewry, the unanimous adoption of this declaration is a significant milestone and shows that Europe is united in wanting to fight antisemitism in all its forms. It is the many divisions in our society that have caused the rise of extreme politics and increased levels of antisemitism and racism in all its forms. Decision makers and influencers across Europe need to work together to ensure that faith communities are properly protected."

European Jewish Congress President Dr. Moshe Kantor described the declaration as "unprecedented."





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“This declaration is an important step in the fight against antisemitism because it provides a positive and concrete roadmap for the safeguarding of Jewish communities and strengthens the legislative tools for governments to fight hate and intolerance,” he said. “Now we hope that each EU member state will take the required and appropriate action, and that the European Commission and the European Parliament will monitor the progress made by each state against antisemitism.”

“One of the most urgent calls for action in the declaration,” Kantor noted, “is to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism to assist law enforcement agencies in their efforts to identify and investigate more efficiently antisemitic manifestations in all their forms.”

“Today, we hope that the implementation of the provisions contained in this declaration will severely restrict the space for hate and that our Jewish communities will feel more safe in Europe,” he added. “Member states have a responsibility to guarantee the security of all their citizens, and today’s declaration is a clear signal that Europe has recognized the current threat to its Jewish communities and is ready to take action.”

World Jewish Congress President Ronald Lauder said, “Just days after polling revealed that antisemitism continues to haunt Europe, and with the memory of the Holocaust fading, this declaration is a clear recognition by the governments of all EU member states that serious action, both politically and practically, is needed to deal with the clear and specific challenges posed by this ancient hatred. We look forward to continuing to engage with both the EU institutions and the governments of the EU member states to inform this serious work going forward.”

“This declaration will serve as an important point of reference in the years to come,” Lauder went on to say. “I hope that the European Council will now also appoint a coordinator on combating antisemitism, to follow up on this important first step. Jewish citizens of Europe have the right to the same sense of security and wellbeing as any other European citizens.”

Daniel Schwammenthal – director of the American Jewish Committee’s Transatlantic Institute – said, “The EU has taken a historic step toward fighting all forms of hatred targeting Jews. Significantly, the 28 EU member states have jointly recognized the severity of continuing threats to Jews, the need to protect Jewish institutions and communities, and the value of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism.”





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Anti-Defamation League CEO and National Director Jonathan Greenblatt said, “We welcome this statement by the EU and we want to see the declaration followed with concrete action. The EU was created to create harmony between the nations of Europe, and by extension includes all of their people. Now that there’s been a clear acknowledgement of the situation facing Jewish communities across Europe, governments need to take steps to ensure that European Jewish communities are safe and have a future that enables them to live openly and worship freely as Jews.”

“Jewish communities are experiencing anxiety and fear due to increasing antisemitism across Europe,” Greenblatt continued. “European governments must ensure greater security for European Jewish communities and take measures to enhance their ability to live openly and freely as Jews.”

Mark Weitzman — director of government affairs for the Simon Wiesenthal Center — said the declaration “could be a significant step in committing the EU to both fighting antisemitism and providing for the security of Europe’s Jews.”

Dr. Shimon Samuels — the Simon Wiesenthal Center’s director of international relations — said, “The declaration affirms that ‘Jewish citizens are, always have been and always will be, an integral and inseparable part of our European societies, as full citizens with a right to a sense of security and well being.’ But words alone are not enough. We take note that the declaration also calls on its member states to take specific steps to finance, enhance and upgrade security for Jewish communities and institutions, as well as increasing education about the Holocaust, antisemitism and Jewish life. The extent that the member states of the EU actually institute these steps will signal how the Jewish people’s future in Europe will unfold.”

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