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European Jewish Leader Sounds Alarm Over Impending Shechita Bans in Belgium

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A top European Jewish leader expressed alarm on Monday ahead of the impending implementation of prohibitions on the ritual slaughter of animals in two regions of Belgium.

Chief Rabbi of Moscow Pinchas Goldschmidt — the president of the Conference of European Rabbis — stated, "The banning of shechita in the Flanders region of Belgium comes in to force in the coming days. The Wallonia region, who have also passed a ban, will begin their ban in the summer of 2019. While we have known about these measures for many months, it is with true





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sadness that this first ban comes into effect.”

“That provinces within Belgium, the law making capital of Europe, have passed this type of anti-religious measure is an affront to the European values we all hold so dear,” he added. “Time and again, the Jewish community is told by senior EU officials that there is no Europe without the Jews, these bans undermine those statements and put Jewish life at risk. We urge EU leaders to address this directly to the governments of member states.”

“Words are weak when actions hurt,” Goldschmidt noted. “We will continue to make those points to officials when we bring together hundreds of rabbis for our biennial conference in Belgium this spring.”

“Today’s ban needs to act as a wake-up call to communities all over Europe that they must build ties with government at every level and set up dedicated task forces to protect religious practice. We await the results of the legal cases in Belgian with interest and continue to let the local community know that they have our support,” he concluded.

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