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Shechita banned in region of Belgium

A BAN on kosher slaughter by the Flanders region of Belgium went into effect on New Year's Day.

Legislation prohibiting animal slaughter without pre-stunning was passed in the region's parliament in July, 2017.

Slaughter according to Islamic law is also banned under the new law.

Jewish law requires that an animal be healthy and uninjured before slaughter, but pre-stunning injures the animal and therefore cannot be used.

"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," said Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt, president of the Conference of European Rabbis and Chief Rabbi of Moscow.

"Time and again, the Jewish community is told by senior EU officials that there is no Europe without the Jews, but 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.

"We will continue to make those points to officials when we bring together hundreds of rabbis for our biennial conference in Belgium this spring."

Rabbi Goldschmidt said the ban should serve as "a wake-up call" to Jewish communities across Europe to the necessity of building ties with national governments.

