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European rabbis want Jewish emojis with kippot

Judaism should have equal representation, Conference of European Rabbis urges international emoji-regulating body

By PAUL SHINDMAN

Today, 2:18 pm | 0

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Illustrative - Emoji use on a smartphone. (Milindri, Getty Images)

European Jewish rabbis have petitioned the official world body that regulates and approves emojis, calling on them to add ideograms that represent the Jewish faith.

In a letter to the Unicode Consortium, the nonprofit body that regulates the representation of text in computer products, the Conference of European Rabbis (CER) said Tuesday that it wants Unicode to “create a new emoji, which will symbolize the Jewish religion and its symbols.”

“There are emojis of women in the hijab and Arab clerics, and the Jews have been forgotten?” Gadi Gronich, chief of staff of the CER, said in a



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statement issued by the organization.

The letter comes in the wake of controversial comments by Felix Klein, the commissioner for combating anti-Semitism in Germany, who warned last week that **German Jews should avoid wearing a kippah** in public.

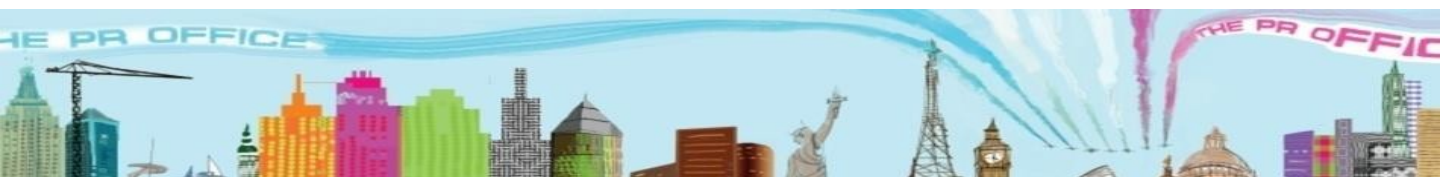
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Part of the official list of emojis from the Unicode Consortium, showing images with other head coverings, but no kippah. (Unicode Consortium screen capture)

The use of emojis — pictures of facial expressions, common objects and symbols — has become ubiquitous in electronic devices and applications. Unicode approves all the emojis that are used in smartphones and can be added to emails and documents.

The CER told the Unicode Consortium that for all that the world was aimign toward pluralism, the Jewish religion was not part of the diversity.

“If it is legitimate to present a family consisting of two men or two women, and to present the traditional attire of the Islamic religion, we believe that there is room for presenting the Jewish symbol as well,” the CER letter said, saying the move would help in the struggle to eradicate anti-Semitism.





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"The Jewish religion should not be left behind; it should be brought to the center of public discourse and made equal among the other religions," the letter said.

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