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Belgian kosher slaughtering ban goes into effect

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The Conference of European Rabbis slammed the law as “another sad day for Europe’s darkening skies” for Jews.





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By Batya Jerenberg, World Israel News

The southern Walloon region of Belgium joined its northern counterpart on Sunday in banning kosher slaughter in the country, provoking an outcry by the Conference of European Rabbis (CER).

The northern Flanders region had implemented the law banning the killing of animals without pre-stunning them on January 1 of this year. Animal-rights activists maintain that this is a more humane method of slaughter, but religious Jews and Muslims cannot eat this kind of meat as it contravenes the laws of kashruth and halal.

The CER said the law is as an attack on religious freedom and called for “mobilizing the international community” to fight against it.

“It is regrettable once again that out of the heart of Europe, a place which should serve as an example for all countries on the continent, comes a call for a war on religious freedom of minorities. The EU capital once again casts a dark stain over Europe’s darkening skies,” said CER President Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt.

Goldschmidt also referenced the bleakest period of European history for the Jews, saying, “It was only 75 years ago that the Third Reich, in cruel hypocrisy, banned kosher slaughter in the name of ‘humanity,’ brutally slaughtered millions of Jews and destroyed Europe. We will fight with the Jewish community in Belgium against these unfortunate decisions with all the tools at our disposal.”

Only the Brussels region of the country has not passed similar legislation, but this may only be a matter of time.

To both forestall such a move and overturn the anti-Jewish law when it was first passed in 2017, the Belgian Federation of Jewish Organizations applied to Belgium’s Constitutional Court, which passed the case on to the European Court of Justice.





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The hope is that the court will demand the law's annulment on the basis of its violation of both Jews' and Muslims' religious freedom, a ruling that could affect many countries in the European Union.

Several European countries have passed laws demanding the stunning of animals before they are killed for their meat, but they made exceptions in cases of religious slaughter. Others, such as Denmark and Sweden, have no such exceptions, and Jews there must import their kosher meat.

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