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## JEWISH LEADERS OUTRAGED AS BELGIUM'S SHECHITA BAN GOES INTO EFFECT

"This is another sad day for Europe's darkening skies," said Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt, president of the Conference of European Rabbis.

BY ROSSELLA TERCATIN / SEPTEMBER 2, 2019 16:14 🇮🇱

1 minute read.



*A slaughterer transports beef carcasses at the Biernacki Meat Plant slaughterhouse in Golina near Jarocin, western Poland July 17, 2013. The abattoir in this small town in western Poland has a special dormitory to house the more than 30 Jewish men designated by Israel's chief rabbi to oversee the pr. (photo credit: REUTERS/KACPER PEMPEL)*





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**L**egislation that effectively bans ritual slaughter in the French-speaking region of Wallonia in Belgium went into effect on Sunday, with Local and European Jewish leaders expressing concern on what they see as a severe limitation on religious freedom in the heart of the European Union.

"While we have succeeded in curbing legislative attempts on the matter in many European countries, in the European Parliament and in other EU institutions, we are at war, and we call on the international community to mobilize," said Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt, president of the Conference of European Rabbis. "This is another sad day for Europe's darkening skies."

Although the decision was passed in the name of animal welfare, critics point out that the bill was also supported by far-right movements as an anti-Muslim measure.

Ritual slaughter has already been banned in some EU countries, such as Sweden and Denmark, and other nations on the European continent, such as Switzerland and Norway.

A similar provision has already been in force in the Flanders region since January 1.

The bill passed by the Wallonia Parliament states that animals must be stunned before being killed, a technique not acceptable in both Jewish and Muslim ritual slaughter. A clause of the bill provides that in case of ritual slaughter, reversible stunning can be employed.

While this is considered acceptable within some sectors of the Muslim community, any form of stunning is completely unacceptable for producing kosher meat.

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The ban [has already been challenged](#) before the Belgium Constitutional Court, which referred the decision to the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg.

"We feel cautiously optimistic, since Luxembourg judges in the past decided against violation of religious freedom and human rights," said Chief Rabbi of Brussels Albert Guigui. "We will continue to fight resolutely against this decision until it is annulled."

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