

Publication: The World News (online)

Date: 24.10.19

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Resurgence of anti-Semitism in Europe poses an existential threat to Jews, warns top rabbi



The chief of Europe's main Orthodox rabbinical alliance says that a resurgence of anti-Semitism on the continent 'poses an existential threat to the Jewish community.'

Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmit gave the warning at the Conference of European Rabbis in Rome on Thursday.

It comes just two weeks after a deadly attack on a German synagogue which claimed the lives of two passers-by.

Goldschmid told the Associated Press: 'The last survivors and the last perpetrators are about to leave our world and the Holocaust is changing from being something that is living memory to being part of history.'

He added: 'Certainly, it is also the political turmoil in Europe today, which is unsettling all the agreements and values which were agreed in 1945, after World War II.'





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Goldschmidt said a myriad of factors - ranging from attacks on Jews and encroachments on Jewish life like a Belgian law outlawing the Kosher slaughter of animals - have made Europe less safe for Jews than 20 years ago (pictured in July 2012)

The rabbi was presenting the Moshe Rosen Award to the founder of the Catholic charity Sant'Egidio, Andrea Riccardi.

Goldschmidt said the award recognizes non-Jews who promote dialogue, understanding and tolerance to ensure a Jewish future in Europe, which he said: 'I believe is at risk.'

Founder of Catholic charity Sant'Egidio Andrea Riccardi attends the International Cooperation forum, in Milan in 2012

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During that period, the number of Jews in Europe has diminished, he said, from 2 million to 1.5 million today, largely through emigration.

Riccardi is being recognized for work by the 51-year Sant' Egidio community to construct a dialogue between lay Catholics and Jews, reaching beyond Vatican efforts to mend relations with Jews dating from the 1962 Second Vatican Council.

The Sant-Egidio community believes that preserving the memory of the Holocaust is critical to constructing a united Europe, and for the last 25 years has marched with the Jewish community on the anniversary of the Oct. 16, 1943 deportation of Roman Jews to Nazi German death camps.

Sant' Egidio has also helped create a memorial to deported Jews at the Milan Central train station, and has participated in memorial walks in Antwerp, Belgium and Pecs, Hungary.

'I think that it needs to be recognized that this is a difficult moment, because nationalism is giving rise again to a politics of hatred,' Riccardi told AP. 'And the first chapter, not the only one, but the first chapter of political hatred is anti-Semitism.'

'This must make us worry, and it should wake us up.'

Riccardi said the trend can be countered by keeping alive the memory of the Nazi Holocaust that killed 6 million European Jews, creating solidarity between the Jewish and Christian communities in daily life, and investing in a common culture.





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A visitor wears a traditional Jewish kippah as he enters Germany's lower house of parliament Bundestag in Berlin

'Anti-Semitism is like a storm, at a certain point it explodes. We need to act at the first signs,' he said.

The Moshe Rosen award was named for the late chief rabbi of Romania who safeguarded his community during communism.

The first recipient two years ago was former French President Nicolas Sarkozy and last year the award went to Lithuanian novelist, Ruta Vanagaite, for her work challenging conventional thinking in a book about her country's involvement in the Nazi killing machine that exterminated 95% of the Jewish population.

<https://twnews.co.uk/uk-news/resurgence-of-anti-semitism-in-europe-poses-an-existential-threat-to-jews-warns-top-rabbi>

