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Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt: 'Jewish communities cannot rely on import of kosher meat'

Failure to overturn ban ritual slaughter sends message that Jews are not welcome, leading European rabbi says.

Contact Editor Arutz Sheva Staff , 22/06/20 18:03



Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt

Eli Itkin

Conference of European Rabbis President Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt on Monday issued a statement ahead of the hearing at the European Court of Justice **into the legality** of measures





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adopted by Belgium's Flanders and Wallonia regions [banning ritual slaughter](#).

The hearing is expected to take place in July.

"The supply chain for kosher meat is not secure enough for the community to have to rely solely on imports," Rabbi Goldschmidt said. "In recent months, and particularly over the recent Passover holiday, which of course came at the height of the pandemic in Europe, the supply chain was simply not robust and many communities in Belgium – and indeed throughout Europe – suffered a shortage of meat due to the lack of supplies."

"The experience of Passover served as a stark reminder that Jewish communities cannot rely entirely on the international supply chain. If the aim is to limit religious slaughter, then there are far more proportionate solutions. Shechita (kosher ritual slaughter) is a vital religious practice within the Jewish faith that forms an inherent part of our religious identity, without which Jews would be deprived of the ability to eat meat. Quite frankly, the option to import kosher meat into Belgium is unsustainable and the ban on the practice of religious slaughter is ultimately too restrictive.

"Freedom of Religion is enshrined in the European Union (EU) Charter. It is a fundamental concern of the EU and since its inception, the EU has fought to preserve a society where all faiths are welcomed. Any ban may deprive Jews of being able to eat meat – a right that all other citizens of Europe enjoy.

"The message would be clear: Jews are not welcome. Such a notion is abhorrent and so I implore the judges to look at the evidence in front of them and not allow the processes to be hijacked by intolerance under the guise of a concern for animal welfare regulations."

Tags: EU, Belgium, shechitah, Conference of European Rabbis

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