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Goldschmidt shechita warning

BY NATALIE ASH

The Conference of European Rabbis president has given a stark warning about kosher meat supply.

Speaking ahead of a European Court of Justice hearing into the legality of a shechita ban in Belgium next month, Chief Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt, was succinct in his words.

The Court meeting follows Belgium's Flanders and Wallonia regions ban on religious slaughter. "The supply chain for kosher meat is not secure enough for the community to have to rely solely on imports," he 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. Many communities in Belgium, and indeed throughout Europe, suffered a shortage of meat due to the lack of supplies."

Recalling that Pesach was a stark reminder that Jewish communities could not rely on the international chain, he added, "If the aim is to limit religious slaughter, then there are far more proportionate solutions. Shechita 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



Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt

PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA

and the ban on the practice of religious slaughter is ultimately too restrictive. Freedom of religion is enshrined in the 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."

Chief Rabbi Goldschmidt said there was a clear message that Jews were not welcome. "Such a notion is abhorrent," he said.

CER's chief called on judges to look at evidence in the hearing.

"Do not allow the processes to be hijacked by intolerance under the guise of a concern for animal welfare regulations," he said.

