



Conference of
European Rabbis

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Coverage update

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CER's programme of chizuk for the Three Weeks

Moshe Freedman

With the reopening and return of Jewish life in shuls, the leadership of the Conference of the European Rabbis has initiated a plan to restore communities centred on "Holiness of Life and Remembrance of the Dead." From 17th of Tammuz, and during the Three Weeks, rabbis will teach the works of Lithuanian Rabbonim with the worshippers every day in memory of COVID 19 victims. Dayan Chanoch Ehrentreu, Rosh Beis Din of Europe, President of the Conference Rabbi Goldschmidt, CEO of the Standing Committee, Dayan Menachem Gelley and the Rabbinical Director of the Conference and head of the yeshiva "Toras Chaim," Rabbi Lebel will give the rabbis a series of halocho shiurim. Rabbi Goldschmidt said: "On the days when we mourn the destruction of the Beis Hamikdosh and painfully remember the heavy blow we absorbed, we should rejoice in the return to the beis-midrash and strengthen our knowledge".

The rabbis in the communities will also learn the sefer "Ahavas Chesed" written by the Chofetz Chaim about the care for one's neighbour. "It is being learnt to increase the number of the acts of chessed in a time when many members of the community lost their livelihood, the elderly are in solitude and the fear and death has risen in many families.

In his letter to the rabbis of the communities Rabbi Goldschmidt wrote: "Today we should rejoice in the return to the botei midrashim, but we should, as the great Lithuanian Rabbis wrote, strengthen the sanctity of the shul and relations between people. At the same time, we will remember those taken from us by the COVID-19, including leading rabbis, public figures and other members of many communities. We will remember them by learning Mishnayos. We all feel it is necessary. And we pray and hope that in the plan of return to the shul that the leadership of the Conference has formulated, we will redevelop kehillas throughout the continent, support the connection we have and all of us will merit the building of our Holy City and Beis Hamikdosh.

Rabbi Lebel said: "The coronavirus period has revealed opposing phenomena. On the one hand, as a result of the closure of the shuls, Jews have moved away and must be brought back to their Jewish spiritual home. On the other hand, precisely during the days of locking the gates, a great thirst was felt and the number of participants in remote davening and learning programmes was far greater than the number of regular participants in community life and its institutions before the epidemic. Now it is necessary to pave the way to their hearts and bring them to the shuls. This is the mission of the CER: to resume Jewish life as it was across the continent".



The Great Synagogue of Frankfurt

PHOTO RAFAEL EHRLICH





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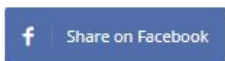
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Shechitah Goes to Court // Rabbis goldschmidt and margolin tell ami about a legal challenge to Belgium's slaughter ban

Eliezer Braun

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European Jewry is anxiously awaiting the conclusion of hearings held this past week at the European Court of Justice (ECJ) in Luxembourg. The court heard arguments regarding the legality of Belgium's ban on ritual slaughter. In 2017, the parliament of Wallonia voted to implement a measure requiring that animals be incapable of feeling pain when they are killed, and in 2019, the Flanders region of Belgium followed suit, effectively outlawing *shechitah* in the entire country.

Muslim and Jewish organizations alike decried the law as capricious and filed lawsuits to combat it. The situation is so serious that the leaders of the Conference of European Rabbis and the Muslim World League, Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt and Sheikh Dr. Mohammad bin Abdul Karim Al-Issa, issued a joint statement claiming that prohibiting faiths from practicing religious slaughter was unjustified.

"This is akin to the Eidah Hachareidis issuing a joint statement with the Vatican," Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt, chief rabbi of Moscow and president of the Conference of European Rabbis, tells *Ami*. "In this instance, I believe they are trying to curb Muslim immigration into Belgium. If the court decides that the ban does not violate religious freedom, the decision will impact Jewish life in Belgium significantly. The Jewish community in Switzerland has had to import kosher meat, which has resulted in meat prices being almost twice as high as in places where *shechitah* is allowed. Since the implementation of this law, kosher meat prices have already started to rise."

Shechitah bans have a long and ugly history, with some European communities having had to deal with *shechitah* prohibitions for over a century. The bans are usually presented in the guise of animal rights, but in reality they're a cover for anti-Semitism. Switzerland banned *shechitah* in 1894 after a nationwide referendum, claiming that it was cruel to animals. But most understood it to be an attempt at discouraging Jews, who were escaping Russian



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pogroms, from immigrating to the country. In the 1920s and '30s, coinciding with the rise of Nazism and anti-Semitism, several other nations also prohibited *shechitah*, again cloaked in the language of animal cruelty, of course. In recent years, countries such as Britain and France have rejected animal rights activists' attempts to ban ritual slaughter. Most believe that these attempts were at least partially motivated by anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.

The case reached the Supreme Court of Belgium, which deferred it to the European Court of Justice. The ECJ decides cases via its panel of 15 judges by a simple majority. An advocate general (AG) presents the case to the court, and judges ask questions of each side.

The CCJOB, an umbrella group of Jewish organizations in Belgium, argues in its lawsuit that the law runs afoul of the European Convention on Human Rights, which guarantees the right to practice religious beliefs without government interference. Rabbi Menachem Margolin, chairman of the European Jewish Association, told *Ami* that the judges' questions could shed light on which side they're sympathizing with.

<https://www.amimagazine.org/2020/07/15/shechitah-goes-to-court/>





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Stand for Christians

EUROPEAN COMMISSION WILL “RENEW ITS EFFORTS” FOR PROMOTING RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

MEUWISSEN SÉBASTIEN - 2020. 07. 15.



"We decided to renew the special function of the envoy for the Promotion of religious and transnational perspectives in the European Union," informed European Commissioner Margaritis Schinas. Schinas added that the appointment of the new envoy shows that the Commission authorities are determined to "ensure that the rights of all religions and beliefs are respected around the world."





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Stand for Christians

The function of Special Envoy for the Promotion of Religious Freedom and beliefs outside the European Union used to be performed by the Slovakian Jan Figel. His mandate was extended several times, but it expired at the start of the new European Commission at the end of 2019 and was not extended.

Commissioner for International Partnership, Jutta Urpilainen, was to decide on this matter but failed to do so.

Criticism came from the Chairman of the European Community Episcopate Commission Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich, President of the European Rabbis Conference, Chief Rabbi of Moscow Pinchas Goldschmidt, Center for Documentation of Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians in Europe, Christian human rights organisation ADF, MEPs from Austria and Germany, as well as 135 members of the German Bundestag.

On the 9th of July, under a cross-party initiative, the interested stakeholders decided to continue the work of the special envoy's office.

<https://en.s4c.news/2020/07/15/european-commission-will-renew-its-efforts-for-promoting-religious-freedom/>

