

LORD JAKOBOVITS PRIZE



Conference of
European Rabbis

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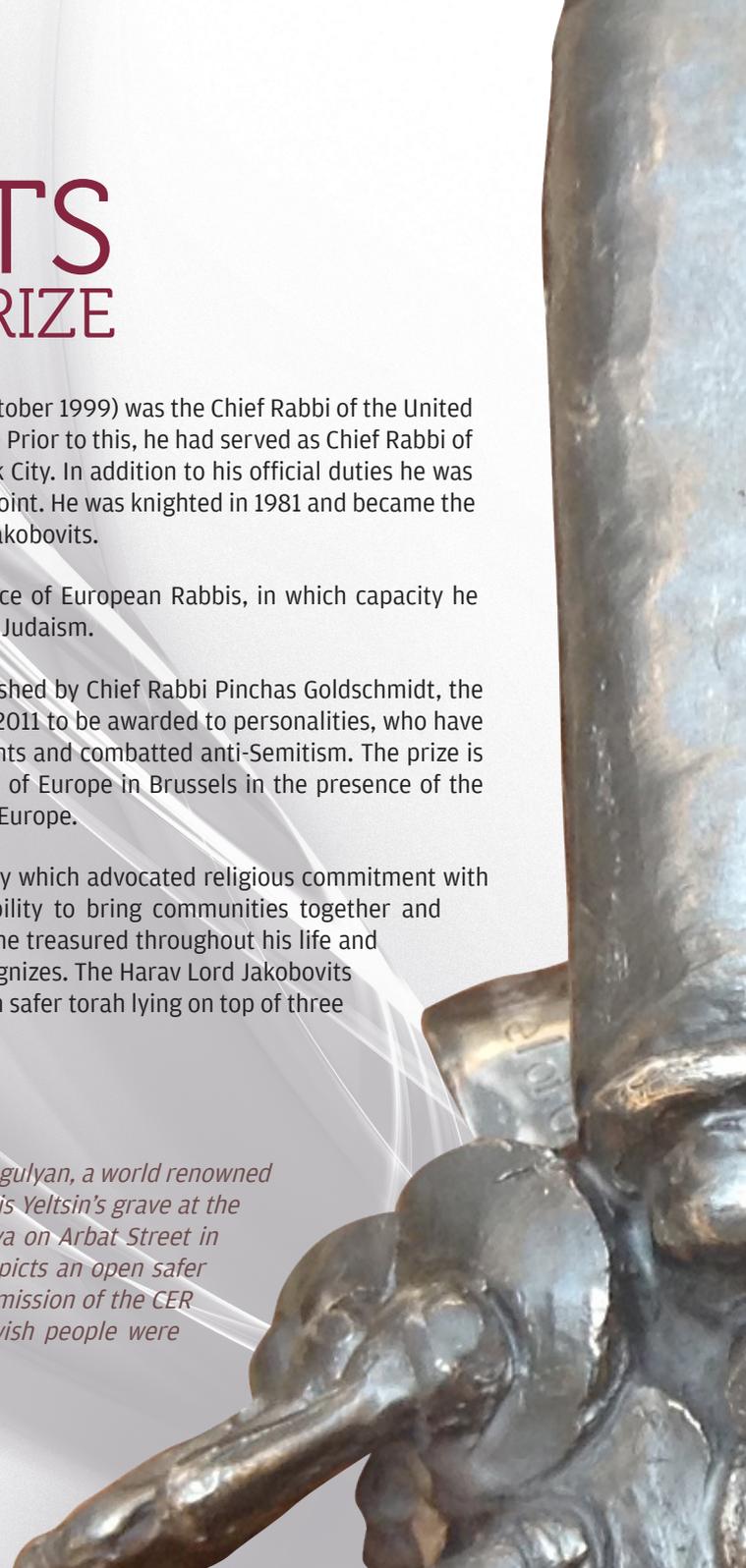
Immanuel Jakobovits, Baron Jakobovits (8 February 1921 - 31 October 1999) was the Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth from 1967 to 1991. Prior to this, he had served as Chief Rabbi of Ireland and as rabbi of the Fifth Avenue Synagogue in New York City. In addition to his official duties he was regarded as an authority in medical ethics from a Jewish standpoint. He was knighted in 1981 and became the first Chief Rabbi to enter the House of Lords in 1988 as Baron Jakobovits.

Chief Rabbi Jakobovits was also the president of the Conference of European Rabbis, in which capacity he worked on standardising and regulating religious conversion to Judaism.

The Harav Lord Jakobovits Prize of European Jewry was established by Chief Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt, the President of the Conference of European Rabbis Foundation in 2011 to be awarded to personalities, who have shown support to European Jewry, defended their religious rights and combatted anti-Semitism. The prize is usually awarded in a festive ceremony in the Great Synagogue of Europe in Brussels in the presence of the leadership of the European Union and the Jewish leadership of Europe.

Lord Jakobovits dedicated his life to the pursuit of a philosophy which advocated religious commitment with unyielding love and consideration for his fellow man. The ability to bring communities together and recognize the value of faith in a modernizing world is one that he treasured throughout his life and it is that character trait, above all others, which this award recognizes. The Harav Lord Jakobovits Prize was designed by Georgy V. Frangulyan and depicts an open safer torah lying on top of three closed sifrei torah.

The Harav Lord Jakobovits Prize was designed by Georgy V. Frangulyan, a world renowned artist whose most notable works include the monument on Boris Yeltsin's grave at the Novodevichy cemetery in Moscow, the monument to Okudshava on Arbat Street in Moscow and the statue of Empress Elizabeth in Baltiysk. It depicts an open safer torah lying on top of three closed sifrei torah, symbolising the mission of the CER to recreate a presence of Judaism after one-third of the Jewish people were wiped out in the Holocaust.





2012



Former Polish European Parliament President Prof. Jerzy Buzek was awarded the first "Lord Jakobovits Prize of European Jewry" by the Conference of European Rabbis (CER), during a ceremony held at Brussels's great synagogue.



JERZY BUZEK

honored by the Conference of European Rabbis, Brussels 2012

Former Polish European Parliament President **Prof. Jerzy Buzek** was awarded the first “Lord Jakobovits Prize of European Jewry” by the Conference of European Rabbis (CER), during a ceremony held at Brussels’s great synagogue.

“He has been a friend of Jewish communities for years, as a Polish Prime Minister and European Parliament’s president he has been constantly building bridges of understanding, decisively fought against anti-Semitism and acted for commemorating victims of Shoah” – said Chief Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt, the President of the CER, justifying the award for **Jerzy Buzek**.

At the Great Synagogue of Europe in Brussels, European Jews gathered for a prize award and remembrance of Toulouse victims on March 27, 2012.

The ceremony at the Brussels synagogue, which was consecrated by European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso as The Great Synagogue of Europe in 2008, included a special prayer for the victims of the Toulouse shootings. During the ceremony, children from local Jewish schools read out a psalm in memory of the Toulouse victims. To emphasise the message of education for tolerance and mutual respect, classes from the European School in Brussels also were present.

CER President Chief Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt said, “This public affirmation of our continued commitment to the values of tolerance and democracy which form the basis of the European Union needs to be reasserted particularly at this time when we are mourning the passing of our children as the result of a hate crime on the European continent,” Goldschmidt added. “Coming just one week before Pesach, the ultimate Jewish festival of liberation and freedom, when we transfer the message to our children of the continued victory of the forces of light over those of darkness, it is particularly poignant that we gather here to reassert our commitment to those values.”

The Conference of European Rabbis (CER) awarded the first “Prix du Judaism European – Prix Lord Jakobovits” to the former prime minister of Poland and former president of the European Parliament, **Prof. Jerzy Buzek** MEP, for his efforts in support of Polish and European Jewry. The award ceremony was addressed by the president of the European Parliament, **Martin Schulz** MEP.

A number of European and Belgian political leaders, diplomats, as well as chief rabbis and other representatives of European Jewish communities were present, including the chief rabbi of Toulouse, Avraham Weill.

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2013



German Chancellor Angela Merkel was honoured by the Conference of European Rabbis (CER) for her support to the German Jewish community and her denunciation of anti-Semitism throughout Europe.



ANGELA MERKEL

Lord Jakobovits Prize to German Chancellor, Brussels 2013

German **Chancellor Angela Merkel** was honoured Wednesday by the Conference of European Rabbis (CER) for her support to the German Jewish community and her denunciation of anti-Semitism throughout Europe

At a ceremony in Brussels following an EU summit, Merkel was awarded the Lord Jakobovits Prize for European Jewry at the Great Synagogue of Europe.

“**Chancellor Merkel** is a worthy recipient in recognition of her continuing efforts of inter-communal harmony across Europe, her friendship towards the Jewish community and outstanding contributions to the promotion of tolerance and understanding,” the CER’s president, Chief Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt, said in a statement.

Merkel referred in her acceptance speech to the murder of six million Jews instigated by Germany, calling the Holocaust a “break with civilization.” She stressed the right to religious freedom, referring to anti-Semitic comments that had arisen during a fierce recent debate in Germany over the Jewish and Muslim practices of circumcision.

“The fight against anti-Semitism is a paramount duty of a free democratic state,” Merkel said, adding that it was important to invest in education to keep the memory of the Holocaust alive.

The chancellor also spoke about Germany’s friendship with Israel, and said a two-state solution remains an attainable goal in the Middle East, despite all setbacks.

Chief Rabbi Goldschmidt praised Merkel for her “principled leadership” and her stance during the debate on circumcision. He said it had not been an easy decision to award the prize to a German chancellor, but said it was the “right decision.”

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2015



European rabbis honour French Prime Minister Manuel Valls for combating anti-Semitism



MANUEL VALLS

Prime Minister of France get the Lord Jakobovits prize, May 2015 Paris

French Prime **Minister Manuel Valls** was honoured by a gathering of European rabbis for his “exemplary determination in the fight against anti-Semitism,” less than a month after he announced the beginning of a massive national effort to combat his country’s rising levels of anti-Jewish incidents.

Following a meeting of the CER standing committee, a private ceremony was attended by CER President Chief Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt, the Standing Committee and Members of the Board of Patrons. The presentation itself was made by Chairman of the Board of Patron Mr Boris Mintz together with Vice Chair Mrs. Joelle Aflalo.

During the ceremony, Chief Rabbi Goldschmidt said: “We made the decision to award Prime Minister Valls the Lord Jakobovits prize after the decisive action Prime Minister Valls took to protect the people the Jews of France from the mobs who were about to make a pogrom against our people and our synagogues.”

“There are some voices asking if there is a future for the Jewish people in Europe? I say the answer this question can only be answered by European governments themselves. And if that answer is to be a positive answer then they must follow the example of Prime Minister Valls.”

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2016



King Felipe VI recognized for his steadfast support for the Jewish community in Spain

KING OF SPAIN

awarded Lord Jakobovits Prize, 2016



King Felipe VI recognized for his steadfast support for the Jewish community in Spain.

His Majesty King Felipe VI of Spain received the Lord Jakobovits Prize of European Jewry from Conference of European Rabbis President, Chief Rabbi Goldschmidt at the El Pardo Palace in Madrid. During the ceremony, Chief Rabbi Goldschmidt called for religious leaders to take responsibility for their communities amid growing extremism in Europe.

The king received the award in tribute to his steadfast support of the Jewish community in Spain and in honour of his welcome and endorsement of the unique legislation to allow those Jews who can prove their Spanish heritage to return to Spain. The unprecedented move was the climax of years of dialogue between the palace and the Jewish community. In particular the CER recognised the “immense contribution that the king has made in his willingness to embrace the many religious faiths present throughout the continent.”

His Majesty King Felipe VI said, “Europe needs the invaluable contribution of its Jewish communities, because we need to be honest and respectful to both our common Judeo-Christian values and origins, and also with the more broader or universal sense of true human values we are trying to extend and defend worldwide amidst all the horrors and hatred that still persist in so many places on Earth.”

During his address Chief Rabbi Goldschmidt said, “As religious leaders, we must take every opportunity to stress how it is our responsibility to combat extremism in any form. We set the tone for our communities and we can help leaders around the world to combat this evil.

“However, in an era where anti-Semitism is on the rise throughout Europe, Spain has taken extraordinary measures to make its Jews feel welcome. Not only did the minister of justice acknowledge the expulsion of what he has called an ‘historic mistake,’ he ensured that action was taken to rectify it.”

Isaac Quereb, president of the Federation of Jewish Communities of Spain said, “It is honour and privilege, and a wise decision as well, that the Conference of European Rabbis has awarded this prize to His Majesty the King, and it is our pleasure to welcome the Conference of European Rabbis to Spain. Our community is blessed to have the warmest of relationships with King Felipe VI and this award is a credit for his involvement with the Spanish Jews and the Sephardim around the world. From the Federation of Jewish Communities of Spain we are truly convinced that His Majesty may be a key figure to lead a time of dialogue and cooperation between Jews, Israel and the Arab World”

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2018



King Felipe VI recognized for his steadfast support for the Jewish community in Spain

ANTONIO TAJANI & FRANS TIMMERMANS



Lord Jakobovits Prize of European Jewry awarded to EP President and EC Vice-President

First VP of the European Commission, Frans Timmermans, stands by continents community while being awarded the Lord Jakobovits Prize for European Jewry.

A European leader has told the continent's Jewish community "I will always be there for you" as he was awarded the Lord Jakobovits Prize for European Jewry.

Speaking at the Great Synagogue in Brussels, First Vice-President of the European Commission Frans Timmermans said: "I will always be there for you, I will always defend your rights and I will always stand by you."

Together with Antonio Tajani, President of the European Parliament, Timmermans was honoured with one of European Jewry's highest accolades, named after former Chief Rabbi Lord Immanuel Jakobovits.

Chief Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt, President of the Conference of European Rabbis, presented the award to Timmermans, while Rabbi Albert Guigui, Chief Rabbi of Brussels, presented a second award to Tajani. In an emotional address, delivered without notes, Timmermans said: "The souls of so many cities were torn out during the Shoah but the attitude of the Jewish community is the ultimate triumph over Hitler and his henchman. This is our common quest. This is the Europe we want to be a part of."

Chief Rabbi Goldschmidt thanked Timmermans and Tajani for their support for religious freedom in Europe but warned against "the sinister undercurrent [of hate] in society that many of us hoped was consigned to the past".

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OUR PHILOSOPHY

The Conference of European Rabbis (CER) is the primary Orthodox rabbinical alliance in Europe. It unites more than 700 religious leaders of the mainstream synagogue communities in Europe. It was founded in 1956 on the initiative of British Chief Rabbi Sir Israel Brodie, in order to revive the vanquished Jewish communities on the European mainland. Chief Rabbi Brodie was supported by the chief rabbi of France, Jacob Kaplan, the chief rabbi of Amsterdam, Aharon Schuster and the British Sephardic spiritual leader, Hacham Gaon. The first conference took place in 1957 in Amsterdam. As a result of the CER union with the rabbinate of the stronger western European orthodox communities, the vast majority of mainstream communities throughout the continent retained Orthodox affiliation and rabbinical leadership (with the exception of Hungary and Sweden where non-Orthodox groups had a strong prior presence). Even as some major Western European communities were deliberating joining non-Orthodox movements in the post WWII period, the strong rabbinical alliance was successful in ensuring an Orthodox rabbinate and securing the continuity of the orthodox rite even where the larger part of the membership had unfortunately become secularized. The organization is run by a standing committee of 35 members which convenes twice a year for working meetings and policy assessments in one of the European capitals. These conventions are combined with a visit to the local Jewish community and institutions, and meetings with the government and other bodies for strengthening ties and cooperation on matters of local and pan-European Jewish significance. The Standing Committee members are in general, the chief rabbis of European countries and major cities and senior rabbinical judges. The entire CER membership assembles once every two years at a general convention to which all European chief rabbis and congregational rabbis are invited. The Conference of European Rabbis is mandated to defend the religious rights of Jews in Europe, and has become the voice of Judaism for the European continent. The CER has recently been involved with defending the rights of Jews to slaughter animals for consumption according to Jewish law and the right to circumcise their children. The CER also functions as a rabbinical authority, with expert committees to certify conversions and kashruth (kosher) operations and to pass rabbinical legal decisions affecting the broader Jewish community. The CER has always been the expert address for European Jewish communities and rabbis for support in the facilitation of their religious functions, recruitment of rabbis and educators and other issues. The CER has a special department for the planning, engineering and building of mikvehs (ritual baths) which has fulfilled over a dozen such projects all over Europe. The current president of the CER is the chief rabbi of Moscow, Pinchas Goldschmidt, who served as chairman of the Standing Committee for over ten years. The chairman of the Presidium is associate president Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis. Before Rabbi Sitruk, the organization was headed by Rabbi Lord Dr Immanuel Jacobovits, Chief Rabbi of Great Britain. The Executive Director of the CER since inception was Rabbi Maurice (Moshe) Rose, succeeded in the year 2001 by Rabbi Aba Dunner, who passed away in 2011.

WE BELIEVE

We believe in the eternal validity of the Divine Law as revealed in our sacred scriptures and as authentically interpreted in all ages by the Rabbis, acknowledging the authority of the Written and Oral Law of Judaism, and that Halacha forms the basis of Jewish life; That the restoration of the Jewish State in the Holy Land is a manifestation of Divine mercy towards the Jewish people and Israel's well-being is coupled with its moral and religious strength; That the religious attachment is the sole enduring link between the Jews of Israel and the Diaspora and that Israel is destined to become the source of religious inspiration to the Jewish people and the world at large; That all relations and dealings between nations must be governed by ethical and religious principles, without which human happiness cannot be secured; That advances in science and technology may become a menace to mankind unless they are used with due regard for ethical and religious principles, in the dissemination of which, the Jewish people as the bearer of the message of the Prophets, have a special role to play. As spiritual leaders of our people, we call on the lay leaders of the European Jewish communities and communal organizations, to work together with us to challenge the growing secularization of our communities and the growing threat of anti-Semitism in many European cities, and to strengthen the rabbis of our communities for them to be able to serve their communities with excellence. We also solemnly call on every Jew to strive to conduct his or her life as a living expression of the Divine Will, by studying the holy words of our Torah, and by observing its laws, which have since time eternal been the sole guarantee of Jewish continuity, notably the Sabbath and Festivals, religious education and upbringing of the young. As the custodians and teachers of Jewish Law in Europe we maintain that marriage, divorce and conversions will only be recognized and are only valid in Jewish Law when they have been carried out in conformity with Halacha. In order to prevent irreparable personal tragedies and to preserve the unity of the Jewish people, we earnestly appeal to the Jewish public not to be parties to marriages, divorces or conversions which would be contrary to Jewish Law



Conference of European Rabbis



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