

# European Jews often fear showing identity: poll

JTA

**KIEV** — A quarter of respondents in a survey of Jews from nine European countries said they avoid visiting places and wearing symbols that identify them as Jews for fear of anti-Semitism.

Fear of wearing a kippah and other identifiably Jewish items was especially strong in Sweden, where 49 per cent of 800 respondents said they refrained from such actions, according to the year-long survey conducted among more than 5,100 Jews by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights.

In France, 40 per cent of approximately 1,200 Jews said they avoided wearing such items in public, followed by Belgium with

36 per cent, according to preliminary results from the survey obtained by JTA.

In total, 22 per cent of respondents said they avoided “Jewish events or sites” because of safety concerns.

“The results show that a majority of European Jews are experiencing a rise in anti-Semitism,” Gert Weisskirchen, a former representative of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe for fighting anti-Semitism, said Oct. 15 at a conference in Kiev.

The survey, which began on Sept. 3, 2012 closed last month. Along with Sweden, France and Belgium, the survey was conducted online in Britain, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Hungary, Romania and Latvia. The full report is due to be pub-

lished next month in Vilnius.

In Hungary, 91 per cent of more than 500 respondents said anti-Semitism has increased in the past five years. The figure was 80 per cent or higher in France, Belgium and Sweden. In Germany, Italy and Britain, some 60 per cent of respondents identified a growth in anti-Semitism, compared to 39 per cent in Latvia.

Figures for people who said they had experienced an anti-Semitic incident in the 12 previous months were 30 per cent for Hungary, 21 per cent for France and 16 per cent in Germany.

Twenty-seven per cent of respondents said the perpetrators were Muslims, while 22 per cent blamed people with “left-wing views” and 19 per cent said the people responsible had “right-wing views.”

More than 75 per cent of respondents said they don’t report anti-Semitic harassment to police and 64 per cent said they don’t report physical assaults, with 67 per cent saying that reporting incidents was either “not worth the effort” or otherwise ineffectual.

“Individual states need to address anti-Semitism not for the sake of the current generation, but to prevent the worsening of the situation for the following one,” said Oleksandr Feldman, the Ukrainian Jewish parliament member who organized the two-day conference, titled “From the Beilis Trial to Berlin and Beyond” on the 100th anniversary of the anti-Semitic blood libel trial against Menachem Mendel Beilis, who was acquitted of killing a Christian child to use his blood for rituals.



**HIKERS HELP:** Some 50 Canadians and more than 30 Israeli victims of terror gathered in Jerusalem recently for the sixth annual OneFamily Cross Israel Hike, a challenging five-day trek to raise money and awareness for Israeli victims of terror. OneFamily ([www.onefamilytogether.org](http://www.onefamilytogether.org)) is Israel’s only national organization solely dedicated to the rehabilitation of victims of terror attacks and their families. It established the hike as a way for Canadians to show solidarity with terror victims. “For its symbolism alone, hiking is a perfect way to show our solidarity. When we hike, we move toward our goal one step at a time. By supporting victims of terror, we help them heal one step at a time, one family at a time,” said Pam Albert, director of OneFamily Canada and a six-time event participant.

## Jews and Muslims slam anti-ritual slaughter ads

JTA

**ANTWERP, Belgium** — A Belgian radio ad that’s accused of drawing on Holocaust themes to promote a ban on ritual slaughter has drawn sharp criticism from Jewish and Muslim representatives.

The ad, which the Antwerp-based animal welfare group Gaia produced for airing on national radio and sent Oct. 14 via email to 200 politicians, delivers a mock testimony told from the perspective of a lamb waiting for the slaughter.

“We were asleep when they came for us,” the voice-over for the lamb says. “I couldn’t understand a word of their foreign language. They hurled us in the truck and took us to a building with blood on the floor. I know what will happen to me but I can only wait.”

An announcer then says: “Without stunning, animals are very aware of what goes on in the slaughterhouse. Politicians, change the law and forbid ritual slaughter.”

Jewish and Muslim religious laws require animals to be conscious at the time

of their slaughter – a practice that some animal rights activists deem cruel.

In a strongly worded condemnation of the ad, Nicolas Zomersztajn of Brussels’ Jewish Secular Community Center told the Belgian news agency *Belga* that the ad was “a new example of the trivialization of the crime of genocide by Gaia activists.”

The Executive Committee of Belgian Muslims said the campaign “bordered on racism.”

A Gaia spokesperson denied the ad contained references to the Holocaust.

“This is an attempt to describe what animals experience now without any religious or historic connotations,” the spokesperson told JTA last week. Asked about the “foreign language” element, she replied: “Yes, animals don’t understand people.”

In 2005, the PETA animal rights group apologized to the Jewish community for its “Holocaust on Your Plate” campaign, two years after the Anti-Defamation League termed it “a project for trivializing the murder of six million Jews.”



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