

The European Jewish Leaders & Opinion Formers Survey

American Jewish
Joint Distribution
Committee



JDC International
Centre for
Community
Development

Executive Summary

GALLUP®

The *European Jewish Leaders and Opinion Formers Survey* was sponsored by the American Joint Distribution Committee's International Centre for Community Development (JDC-ICCD) and conducted by Gallup between September and November 2008.

The online survey asked Jewish leaders and opinion formers for their views on the major challenges and issues concerning European Jewish communities in 2008 and their expectations for how the situation would evolve over the next five to 10 years. All key topics are covered in this report:

- Current challenges facing Jewish communities in Europe
- Population movement and change
- Security and antisemitism
- Status issues, intermarriage and non-Orthodox conversions
- Denominational tensions
- Financial situation of Jewish communities and funding
- European Jewish communities and Israel
- European Jewry
- Decision-making and control
- Vision and change
- Jewish communities' lay and professional leadership
- Community causes
- Major priorities for European Jewish communities

More than half of European Jewish leaders and opinion formers who were invited to participate – 54% (251) – completed the online survey. Over two-thirds (70%) of them were men. A quarter of respondents were younger than 40, 35% were aged between 40 and 55 and a similar proportion (35%) were older than 55. Most respondents were highly-educated (74% had at least a master's degree and only 3% lacked a university degree).

Almost three out of 10 participants identified with Orthodoxy (5% Orthodox and 22% Modern Orthodox). Slightly more than one in 10 identified themselves with the Reform, Liberal or Progressive movements and approximately one-sixth with the Masorti/Conservative movement. As well as members of the official Masorti/Conservative movement, the latter group included those identifying themselves with traditional beliefs and practice. Finally, almost four out of 10 participants described themselves as "just Jewish" (23%) or secular (15%).

Denominational affiliation:		
Orthodox	5%	(13)
Modern Orthodox	22%	(55)
Masorti/Conservative	18%	(44)
Reform/Liberal/Progressive	12%	(29)
Just Jewish	23%	(57)
Secular	15%	(38)
Other	4%	(9)
Don't know/Refused/No answer	2%	(5)

Figures have been rounded to one decimal place, and may not sum to 100.

Forty percent of European Jewish leaders and opinion formers participating in this survey described themselves as community professionals or "professional leaders", working either full-time (31%) or part-time (8%) in the community. A slightly higher number of participants (45%) were elected or appointed lay leaders in the Jewish community in their country. A smaller group of participants (14%) answered that they did not have a formal position in the community – these respondents were mostly journalists, scientists, academics and lawyers, hereafter referred to as "opinion formers".

Two-thirds of European Jewish leaders and opinion formers participating in the survey were living in "western Europe" (incl. Turkey). The countries with the highest numbers of participants were: France (33), the UK (25) and Germany (23). Respondents

from eastern Europe tended to be younger than those interviewed in western Europe (38% were younger than 40 compared to just 19% in western Europe). Jewish leaders and opinion formers in eastern Europe were also more likely to describe themselves as secular or “just Jewish” (63% vs. 26% in western Europe).

Current challenges facing Jewish communities in Europe

[Our community should be] more open and welcoming to potential newcomers, especially when the majority of Jews are not affiliated but nevertheless interested. It is ok that some members are ultra-orthodox, but this shouldn't become the norm.

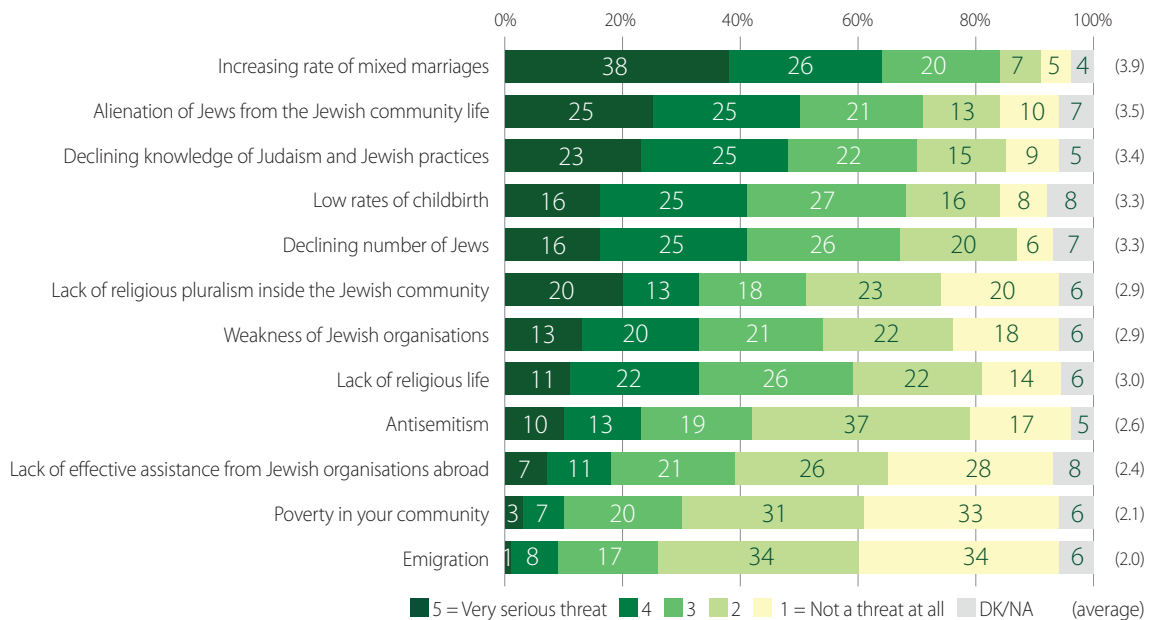
Henny van het Hoofd
 Director of Education
 Nederlands-Israëlitisch Kerkgenootschap (NIK)

One of the goals of the *European Jewish Leaders and Opinion Formers Survey* was to identify major priorities and challenges facing European Jewish communities, including leaders' and opinion formers' perceptions about the most serious threats to the future of Jewish life in their respective countries.

The following chart shows that an increasing rate of mixed marriages was perceived as the most serious threat to Jewish life: 38% of the respondents felt that this was a very serious threat. Mixed marriages were seen as the most serious threat to Jewish life across all age groups – both in western and eastern Europe.

European Jewish leaders and opinion formers were also concerned about the alienation of Jews from Jewish community life: a quarter said this was a very serious threat. A similar proportion of participants (23%) thought that a related issue, declining knowledge of Judaism and Jewish practices in their community, was a very serious threat. Concerns about demographic decline of the Jewish population in the respondents' countries were next in line.

Q7. Which of the following are the most serious threats to the future of Jewish life in your country?



The younger European Jewish leaders and opinion formers were the most pessimistic in their evaluation of the challenges facing European Jewish communities. For example, slightly more than a fifth (22%) of the youngest respondents (aged below 40) and 23% of the 40-55 year-olds thought that the lack of religious pluralism inside the Jewish community was a very serious threat to the future of Jewish life in their country, compared to only 14% of over 55 year-olds. One-sixth of the over 55 year-olds reasoned that declining knowledge of Judaism and Jewish practices was a very serious threat to Jewish life, compared to almost 30% of younger respondents.

The role of a progressive community in today's Judaism is essential to cope with intermarriage and conversions in the best and most rational way.

Pierre-Antoine Ullmo
 Reform community of Barcelona (ATID)
 WUPJ Spain

The results by denominational affiliation showed that Orthodox and Modern Orthodox Jews were the most concerned about the increasing rate of mixed marriages – six in 10 felt that this was a “very serious threat”. It was those who identified themselves with the Reform, Liberal and Progressive movements who were the least likely to answer that this increasing rate was a threat to the future of Jewish life in their country.

Orthodox and Modern Orthodox Jewish respondents were, however, considerably less concerned about the lack of religious pluralism in the Jewish community: while only 9% of these respondents thought this was a very serious threat, approximately a quarter of the respondents with other affiliations thought this was the case.

Population movement and change

The conditions for Jewish life in European countries were considered to be favourable: 20% of European Jewish leaders and opinion formers who completed the survey selected the “very favourable” response and 57% the “rather favourable” response. Only one-sixth of participants thought that the conditions for Jewish life were not favourable.

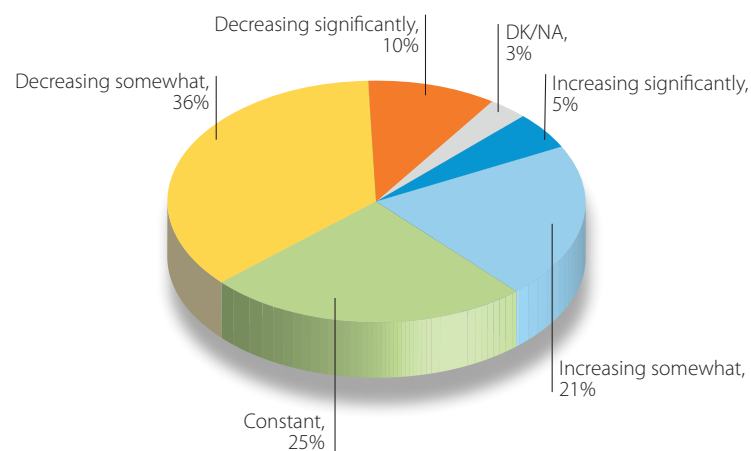
Despite this generally favourable opinion, almost half of the respondents answered that the Jewish population was decreasing in their countries: a tenth thought that there was a significant decrease and over a third (36%) felt the population was decreasing somewhat. A quarter of respondents reported that the Jewish population in their country was at a constant level and a similar proportion said the population was increasing.

The problem is the size of the membership. I don't see a solution due to assimilation and emigration. We will only be capable of keeping Jewish life in our community for another twenty years.

Dr. Pavol Sitar
 Jewish Community of Kosice, Slovakia

The Jewish population was particularly thought to be decreasing in the southern European and Nordic countries and the UK, in the opinion of the respondents in those countries. Respondents in Germany were the least likely to answer that their Jewish population was decreasing – 78% of German respondents reported a population increase.

Q1. The Jewish population in your country is:



Although not many respondents thought that migration was a serious threat to the future of Jewish life in their country (see chart p.4), respondents were more likely to expect an increase in Jewish emigration from their country as opposed to Jewish immigration – this was especially the case in western Europe.

Security and antisemitism

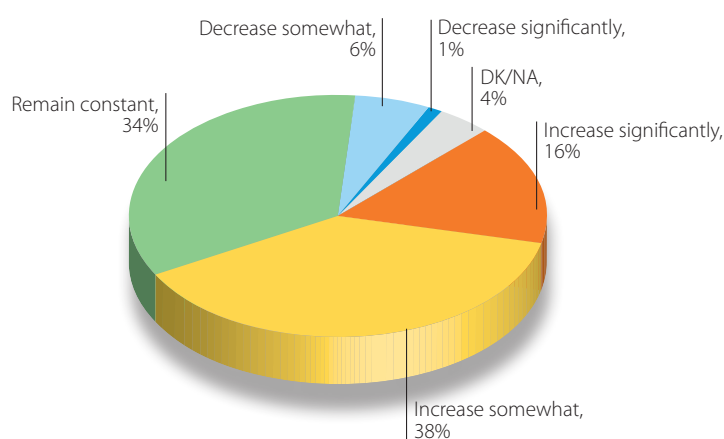
Almost all participants thought that it was safe to live and practise as a Jew in their community: 36% felt it was very safe and 56% selected the “rather safe” response. Only 7% thought it was rather unsafe or not safe at all to live and practise as a Jew in their community. Interestingly enough, while only one out of 20 respondents over 55 years-of-age thought it was unsafe in their country, this proportion was three times greater for those younger than 40 (15%). Respondents from eastern and western Europe did not differ much in terms of feeling unsafe.

The main issue today is the rise of antisemitism, not as a resurgence of pre-WWII right-wing antisemitism but rather as a by-product of mass immigration from deeply antisemitic and anti-Israeli third world countries and cultures (Arab countries, Black African Muslim countries, Turkey, the West Indies).

Michel Gurfinkiel

Respondents were split in their opinions as to whether antisemitism was a serious threat or not. They were also divided as to whether problems with antisemitism would increase or not over the course of the next five to 10 years: 54% expected these problems to become more serious and 41% felt there would be no change or a decrease in antisemitism.

Q39. Over the course of the next five to 10 years, do you expect problems with antisemitism will:



Masorti/Conservative Jews were the most likely to expect that problems with antisemitism would increase over the next five to 10 years (75% vs. 54% average); those describing themselves as “just Jewish” or secular most frequently selected the “remain constant” response (42% vs. 34% average) and Reform/Liberal/Progressive Jews were the most likely to expect that these problems would become less important (17% vs. 7% average).

Respondents from eastern Europe were less likely to think that problems with antisemitism would become more problematic in the coming five to 10 years (46% vs. 58% in western Europe). The difference between eastern and western Europe was especially noticeable among the youngest respondents: while half (52%) of those under 40 in eastern Europe thought that antisemitism would increase in their country, this proportion increased to almost three-quarters (73%) for those in western Europe.

If antisemitism and its threatening danger are prevailing, all other topics become much less important.

Ruvín Ferber
University of Latvia

Although respondents from France were among the most likely to describe antisemitism as a serious threat to the future of Jewish life in their country, they were less likely than respondents in Germany and the Mediterranean region to think that problems with antisemitism would increase over the next five to 10 years (42% in France vs. 74% in Germany).

As far as allies in the struggle against antisemitism are concerned, half of the respondents felt that they could always (or at least most of the time) count on their current national government for support. Jewish organisations abroad were also seen as being supportive with 43% of respondents holding this view.

Scepticism was much higher regarding the media and NGOs. The proportions of respondents who thought that local and international human rights organisations were never or only occasionally allies in the struggle against antisemitism (42% for local organisations and 45% for international ones) were almost twice as high as those who thought the opposite (slightly more than one-fifth of participants). Similarly, half of Jewish leaders and opinion formers thought that the mainstream media were never or only occasionally allies in the fight against antisemitism.

Finally, three out of 10 Jewish leaders and opinion formers who completed the survey felt that Muslim religious leaders never supported them in the fight against antisemitism but four out of 10 thought this happened occasionally.

Status issues, intermarriage and non-Orthodox conversions

Less than three out of 10 Jewish leaders and opinion formers agreed that only those who were born to a Jewish mother or who had undergone an Orthodox conversion should be allowed to become a member of the community. This is the strictest position concerning membership of the Jewish community and is held by the Chief Rabbinate across Europe. In contrast, half of the respondents disagreed strongly that these should be the criteria for membership.

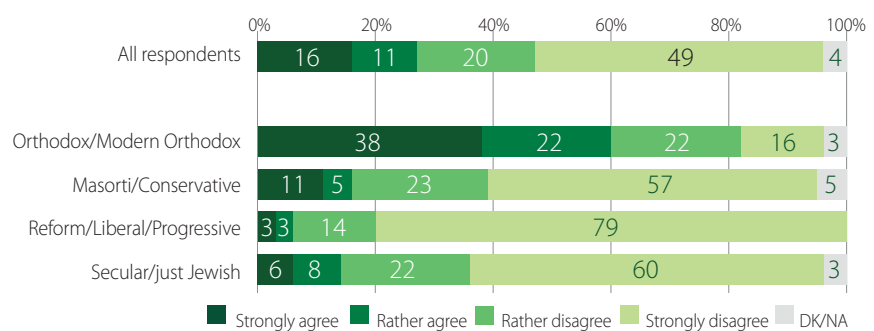
Certains milieux consistoriaux et orthodoxes sont de plus en plus fermés aux différentes sensibilités qui forment cette communauté, que ce soit dans le rejet des juifs qui ne sont pas nés d'une mère juive que dans celui des courants plus modernes ou ouverts. Notre communauté est occupée à se replier sur elle-même et je trouve cela dangereux.

Michèle Szwarcourt
Présidente
Centre Communautaire Laïc Juif de Belgique

Although respondents were also very unlikely to agree that everyone who considered him/herself to be Jewish should be allowed to become a member of the community (25% agreed), a large majority did agree that everyone (a) who had undergone conversion under supervision of a rabbi from any denomination or (b) with at least one Jewish parent should be allowed to become a member of the community (for each statement, 72% agreed).

One of the most striking results of the survey is that only 38% of those identifying with Orthodoxy agreed strongly that only those who were born to a Jewish mother or who had undergone an Orthodox conversion should be allowed to become a member of the community. A majority of respondents in all the other groups strongly disagreed with these strict rules to define who could be a member of the community.

Q17. "Only those who were born to a Jewish mother or who have undergone an Orthodox conversion should be allowed to become a member of the community"



When asked to choose an ultimate authority on issues relating to intermarriage and Jewish status, four out of 10 respondents felt that different organisations and synagogues should be free to make their own policies. Three out of 10 respondents thought that the decision on these issues should rest with the community's highest religious authority.

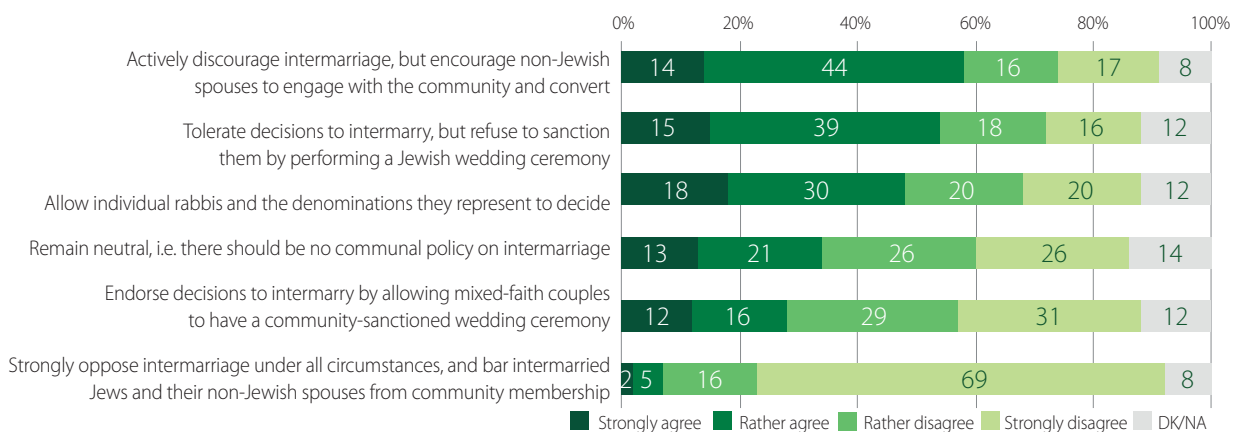
Although I believe that various groups, whether religious or cultural, and irrespective of denomination, should be free to determine their own rules regarding status, there are lines which, when crossed, mean we move from speaking of Jewish life to speaking of remembrance of Jewish life.

Josh Spinner
The Ronald S. Lauder Foundation

Intermarriage however is seen by the majority as an issue where the community needs a common understanding. Only one-third of Jewish leaders and opinion formers completing this survey felt that there was no need for a communal policy on intermarriage. While 85% of respondents answered that it was not a good idea to strongly oppose intermarriage under all circumstances and bar intermarried Jews and their non-Jewish spouses from community membership, only 28% agreed that decisions to intermarry should be endorsed by allowing mixed-faith couples to have a community-sanctioned wedding ceremony.

A majority of respondents agreed that a communal policy should actively discourage intermarriage, but encourage non-Jewish spouses to engage with the community and convert (58% agreed) or, alternatively, tolerate decisions to intermarry, but refuse to sanction them by allowing a Jewish wedding ceremony (54%). Almost half of respondents agreed that individual rabbis and the denominations they represent should be allowed to decide.

Q19. Communal policy on intermarriage should be to:



Furthermore, all Reform, Liberal and Progressive Jews disagreed that a communal policy on intermarriage should consist of strongly opposing intermarriage under all circumstances (97%). Orthodox and Modern Orthodox Jews were the most likely to agree with this approach to intermarriage; however, even among this group, three-quarters of the respondents shared Reform, Liberal and Progressive Jews' opinion that opposing intermarriage under all circumstances was not a good idea. There was agreement amongst Orthodox, Modern Orthodox and Masorti/Conservative Jews to actively discourage intermarriage, but encourage non-Jewish spouses to engage with the community and convert (71% and 75%, respectively, agreed).

As with the results for a communal policy on intermarriage, the majority thought that there should be a policy on non-Orthodox conversions. Among all denominational streams – except for Orthodox and Modern Orthodox Jews – at least eight out of 10 participants disagreed that a communal policy should mean that non-Orthodox conversions were to be actively discouraged and that those converts were to be barred from membership of the community.

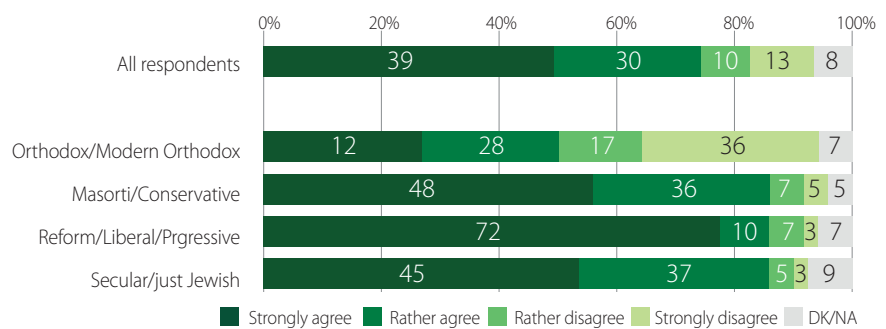
Die Frage, wer Jude ist wird letztendlich über die Zukunft des europäischen Judentums entscheiden. Dabei ist es wichtig, einen gangbaren Weg zu finden, damit sich alle Juden in einer Gemeinde zu Hause fühlen, ohne das Judentum zu verwässern.

Marcel Yair Ebel
Gemeinderabbiner
Israelitische Kultusgemeinde Zürich

Among Orthodox and Modern Orthodox Jews, however, 28% agreed that barring non-Orthodox converts from membership of the community was a good approach for a communal policy.

More than eight out of 10 respondents who identified themselves as Masorti/Conservative Jews, Reform, Liberal and Progressive Jews, and those describing themselves as secular or “just Jewish” agreed that non-Orthodox conversions should be accepted and that converts who defined themselves as living a committed Jewish life should be recognised.

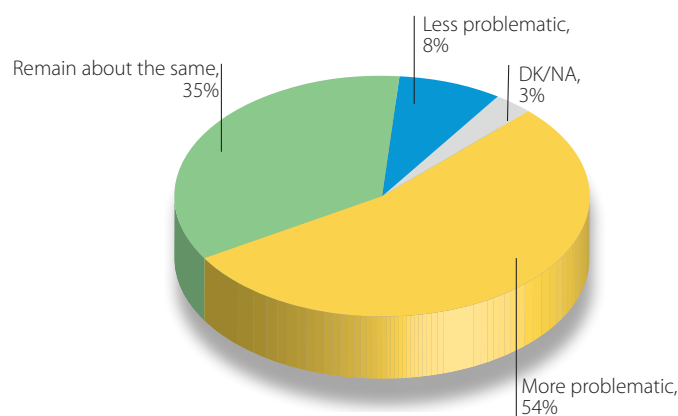
Q20. “Accept non-Orthodox conversions and recognise those converts who define themselves as living a committed Jewish life”:



Opinions were divided as to whether issues concerning Jewish status in their community would become more problematic or not over the course of the next five to 10 years: 54% expected these issues to become more problematic and 43% felt that everything would remain the same or that these issues would become less problematic (35% and 8%, respectively).

Men, younger respondents, Orthodox, Modern Orthodox and Masorti/Conservative Jews, opinion formers and respondents in western Europe were more likely to answer that they expected issues concerning Jewish status in their community to become more problematic.

Q21. Over the course of the next five to 10 years, do you expect issues concerning Jewish status in your community to become:



Denominational tensions

Over 90% of European Jewish leaders and opinion formers reported tensions between different denominational streams in their community and fewer than one in five described these tensions as minor. Half of the respondents described denominational tensions in their community as real but manageable and a quarter said the tensions were very serious between different denominational streams.

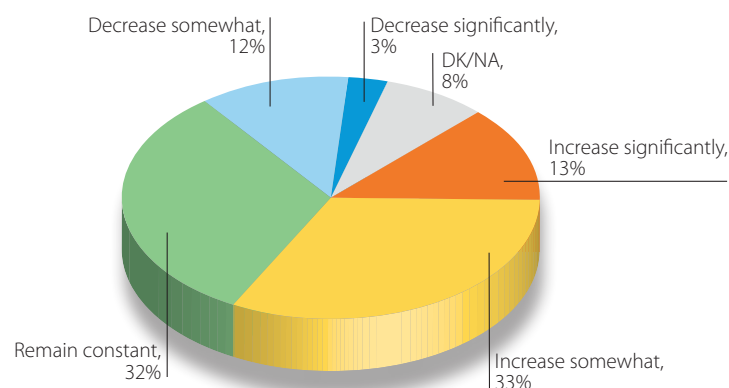
There has to be an end to denominational tensions. The most dividing factor is denomination. Chabad is a BIG PROBLEM in Europe today.

Lena Posner-Korosi
President
Stockholm Jewish Community

The relative majority of respondents who identified themselves with the Reform, Liberal and Progressive movements felt that there were very serious tensions between different denominational streams within their community (45% vs. 24% average). The respondents in the other groups were more likely to describe the tensions as “real, but manageable”. Orthodox and Modern Orthodox Jews – together with non-affiliated respondents (i.e. those describing themselves as secular or “just Jewish”) – were the least likely to answer that there were very serious tensions (17% and 21%, respectively).

Participants were again split in their opinions as to whether the tensions between different denominational streams within their community would increase or not in the coming five to 10 years: slightly less than half of the respondents expected these tensions to increase (13% “significantly” and 33% “somewhat”), while the other half felt that nothing would change (32%) or that the tensions would decrease (3% “significantly” and 12% “somewhat”).

Q36. Over the course of the next five to 10 years, do you expect that tensions between different denominational streams within your community will:



While Orthodox and Modern Orthodox Jews were the least likely to report very serious tensions within their community at present, they were the most likely to expect denominational tensions to increase over the next five to 10 years (54%). Almost none of the respondents in this group expected such tensions to decrease (4%).

Although older respondents in western and eastern Europe did not differ much in their opinions about the extent of denominational tensions in their community, their expectations for the future evolution of such tensions did differ. The over 40 year-olds in western Europe were more prone to expect that tensions would intensify over the next five to 10 years (61% of the 40-55 year-olds and 44% of the over 55s) and less frequently answered that the tensions would decrease (14% for both groups).

Among younger respondents (aged below 40), approximately half thought that denominational tensions in their community would intensify over the next five to 10 years (47% in western Europe and 55% in eastern Europe) – less than one-tenth of the youngest respondents expected that tensions would decrease (7% and 3%, respectively).

Official representation of the community and various denominations' share in organisational governance were considered to be more important as sources of denominational tensions in respondents' communities than access to communal and governments funds. For example, almost half of the respondents identified official representation of the community as a source of great tension between denominational streams (scores 4 or 5) compared to only 28% who identified access to government funds in that way.

Denominational tensions relate to essential questions regarding «who is a Jew,» how to treat intermarried couples, how to view female religious leaders (rabbis, cantors). But deal with them we must, if (say, as in Germany) we want to maintain the «Einheitsgemeinde» - the united umbrella under which we all sit.

Toby Axelrod
Journalist

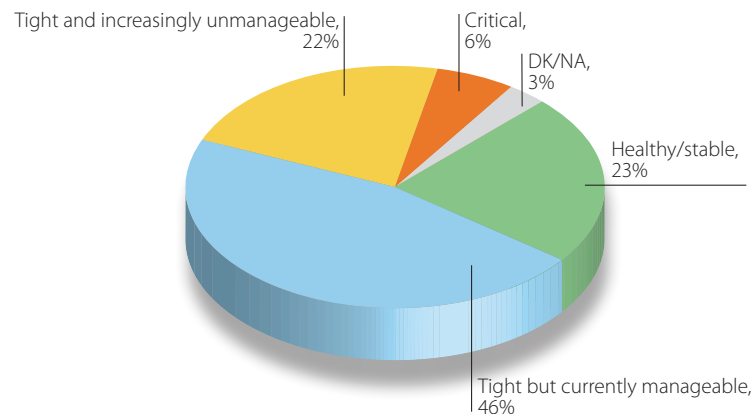
The issue of Jewish status and intermarriage was also seen as a cause of tensions between denominational streams in respondents' communities: 37% of the respondents felt that the issue was a source of great tension (scores 4 or 5) and only one-sixth thought that only minor, or no, tensions had arisen over the issue of Jewish status and intermarriage.

More than half of Reform, Liberal and Progressive Jews and of those identifying themselves as Masorti/Conservative Jews thought that the issue of Jewish status and intermarriage was an important source of tensions (scores 4 or 5) between denominational streams in their community compared to only 37% of Orthodox and Modern Orthodox Jews.

Financial situation of Jewish communities and funding

A quarter of European Jewish leaders and opinion formers participating in this survey characterised their community's current financial situation as stable and healthy. The largest number of respondents (46%), however, felt that their community's financial situation was tight but currently manageable, and 22% said the situation was tight and increasingly unmanageable. A minority (6%) described their community's financial situation as critical. (6%) described their community's financial situation as critical.

Q28. How would you characterise your community's overall financial situation at present?



Older respondents more frequently described their community's financial situation as tight but currently manageable (50% of the over 55s vs. 39% of those under 40), while younger respondents more often felt that things were tight and, in addition, increasingly unmanageable (30% of those younger than 30 and 25% of the 30-39 year-olds vs. 19% of the over 55s).

Similarly, Jewish leaders and opinion formers in western Europe more often described their community's financial situation as tight and increasingly unmanageable (26% vs. 14% in eastern Europe), while respondents from eastern European countries were slightly more likely to answer that the situation was difficult but nevertheless manageable (48% vs. 45% in western Europe).

Funding the needs of the Jewish community in Turkey will become more difficult. Priority should be to ensure future funding needs by instigating change to increase ownership of, and participation in, the community.

Metin Bonfil

A quarter of the respondents who said that their community's financial situation was tight and increasingly unmanageable also reported that access to government funds had been a source of great tension in their community compared to just one in seven (14%) of the participants who felt that their community's current financial situation was stable and healthy.

Three out of 10 respondents expected that their community's financial situation would improve (4% "significantly" and 26% "somewhat") over the next five to 10 years. However, an equally large number of respondents thought that things would get worse: a quarter of them expected that their community's financial situation would deteriorate somewhat and one in 12 thought there would be a significant deterioration. Finally, three out of 10 participants expected that things would remain the same.

While 35% of the over 55s thought that their community's financial situation would improve, only three out of 10 of the youngest respondents (younger than 40) shared this opinion. Leaders and opinion formers in eastern Europe were more than twice as likely as respondents in western Europe to expect that there would be a financial improvement for their community in the coming five to 10 years (51% vs. 21%).

European Jewish communities and Israel

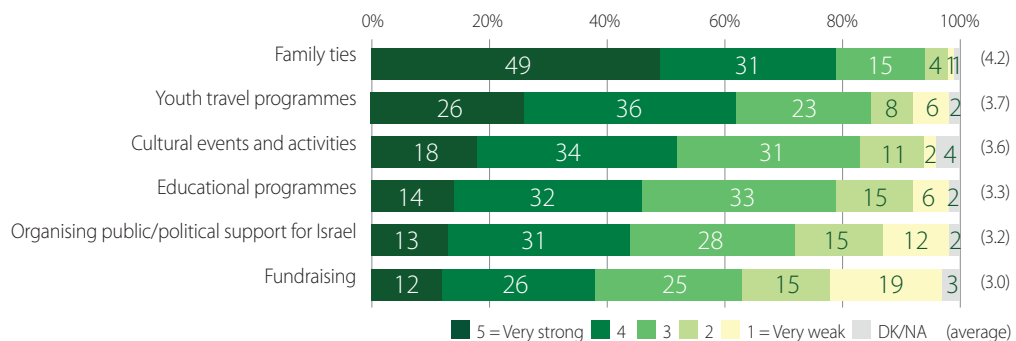
The relationship with Israel was perceived as the strongest in terms of "family ties" – half of the respondents (49%) selected the "very strong" response – and the weakest in terms of the organisation of public or political support for Israel and fundraising (27% and 34%, respectively, selected scores of 1 or 2 – where 1 meant "very weak").

Israel is what is keeping world Jewry alive, proud and safe.

Jean Cohen
Journalist

When asked to assess their community's relationship with Israel in terms of youth travel programmes, cultural events and activities and educational programmes, approximately half of the respondents selected scores of 4 or 5 – where 5 meant "very strong" (62%, 52% and 46%, respectively).

Q42. Please assess the current strength of the relationship between your community and Israel, in terms of:



Younger respondents described the relationship between their community and Israel as weaker than the older respondents did – the greatest difference was found in the strength of the relationship in terms of "family ties". Similarly, the relationship between western European communities and Israel appeared to be stronger than that of the eastern European communities: the greatest difference was found in the strength of the relationship in fundraising (average score of 1.8 in eastern Europe vs. 3.5 for western Europe).

[We need to] end our morally intolerable silence in the face of Israel's shameful path, it compromises our position in our societies.

Antony Lerman
Executive Director
Institute for Jewish Policy Research

When asked about future expectations, slightly more than four out of 10 respondents answered that they had positive expectations for the relationship between their community and Israel: one in 10 expected a significant strengthening of the relationship and a third expected the relationship to strengthen somewhat over the next five to 10 years. Only one-tenth of the respondents thought the relations with Israel would deteriorate and 43% expected that nothing would change.

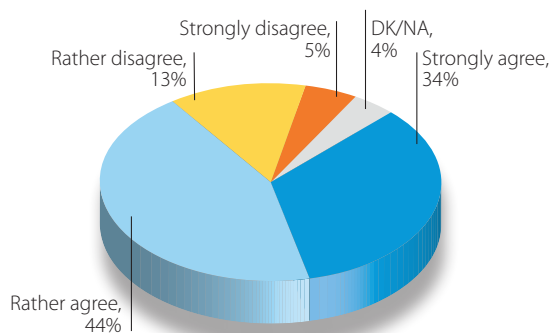
Although respondents in eastern Europe were less likely than those in western Europe to see the relationship between their community and Israel as strong, they were almost twice as likely to expect that this relationship would strengthen over the next five to 10 years. Respondents in the Mediterranean countries, however, differed from those in other western European countries – 61% expected that the relationship with Israel would strengthen over the next five to 10 years.

As far as the link between antisemitism and anti-Israeli feelings is concerned, three-quarters of participating Jewish leaders and opinion formers agreed that events in Israel sometimes led to an increase in antisemitism in their country. A large majority of respondents also thought that the media in their country regularly portrayed Israel in a bad light.

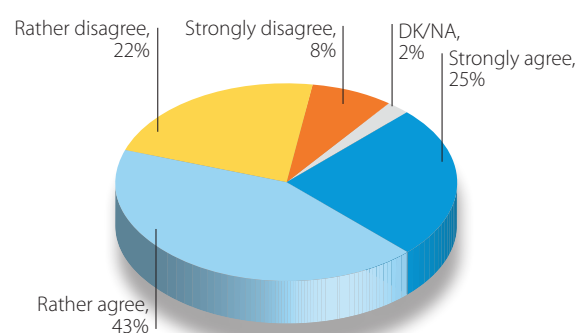
Jewish leaders and opinion formers in post-communist countries evaluated their media as more pro-Israel. Less than half (47%) of the respondents in eastern Europe agreed that the media in their country regularly portrayed Israel in a bad light, while more than three-quarters of the respondents in western Europe agreed with this proposition (e.g. 85% in France, 80% in the UK and 81% in the other northern European countries).

Q44. To what extent do you personally agree or disagree with the following statements about Israel?

Events in Israel sometimes lead to an increase of antisemitism in my country



The media in my country regularly portrays Israel in a bad light

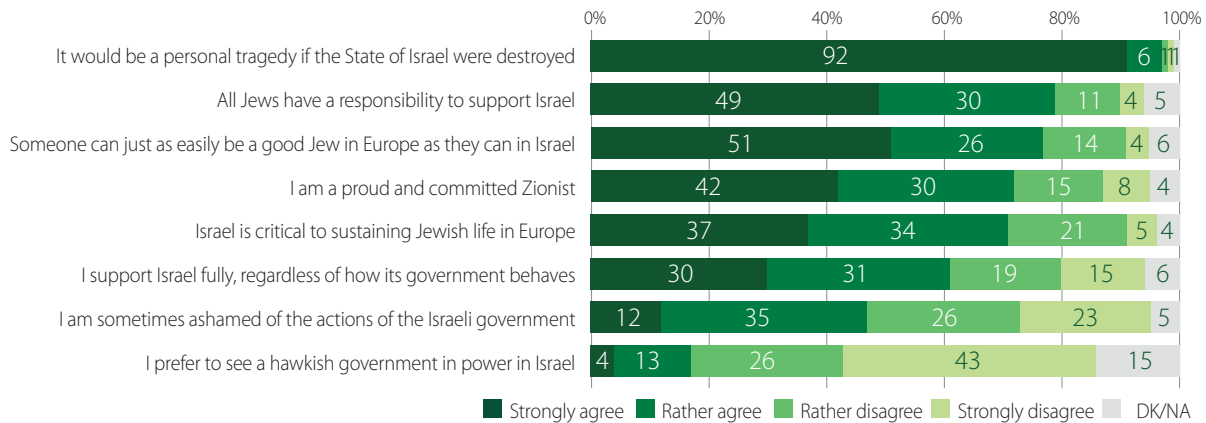


While virtually all Jewish leaders and opinion formers completing this survey agreed that “it would be a personal tragedy if the State of Israel were destroyed”, only one-sixth agreed that “they would prefer to see a hawkish government in power in Israel”. Respondents were evenly divided on whether they were “sometimes ashamed of the actions of the Israeli government”. There was, however, overwhelming agreement on the question that “someone can just as easily be a good Jew in Europe, as they can in Israel”.

We can live out of Israel, but we can't live without Israel.

Aleksandar Sasha Necak
Federation of Jewish communities in Serbia

Q44. To what extent do you personally agree or disagree with the following statements about Israel?



European Jewry

L'évolution de la communauté juive de France devrait aller vers le renforcement de sa responsabilité et de ses moyens d'action à l'égard des juifs d'Europe en partenariat avec la communauté de Grande-Bretagne, pour un soutien permanent à Israël et en dialogue d'égal à égal avec les juifs d'Amérique du Nord.

Jo Toledano
 Directeur général
 Alliance israélite universelle

Most Jewish leaders and opinion formers who completed the survey had strong views on the specificity of the European Jewish community: nine out of 10 agreed that it was very important to strengthen relationships between Jews living in different parts of Europe and eight out of 10 agreed that European Jewry had a unique and valuable perspective to share with world Jewry.

Nevertheless, some doubts were raised about the meaning of the term "European Jewry". Respondents were split in their opinions as to whether Europeans had as much in common with non-European Jews as they did with one another: half of the participants agreed compared to a third who disagreed and over one-tenth who were undecided. Similarly, half of the respondents

agreed that the term "European Jewry" was meaningful only insofar as it described Jews from a particular geographical region, compared to 39% who disagreed with this statement, implying a more substantive definition.

Two-thirds of Jewish leaders and opinion formers felt that their community was very much a part of European Jewry, but three out of 10 doubted whether this was true. Regarding the future, half of the participants agreed that the future of European Jewry was vibrant and positive while four out of 10 respondents disagreed with this proposition.

Decision-making and control

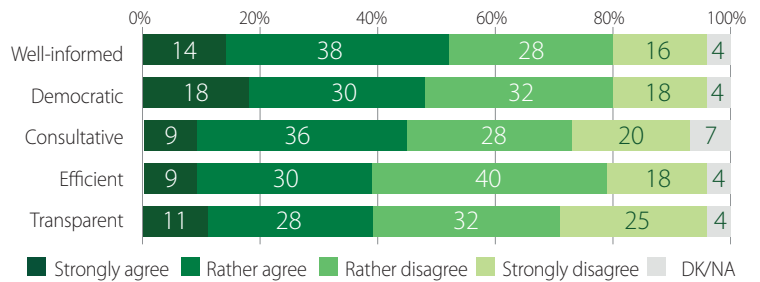
Participants were deeply divided in their perception of decision-making and control in the community. Between 39% and 45% of participating Jewish leaders and opinion formers agreed that decision-making processes in their community were consultative, efficient and transparent. However, between 48% and 58% of the respondents shared the opposite view.

The method of decision-making in the community is a very important question. For me, the democratic and pluralistic principles are most important.

Shmuul (Simas) Levin
 Director
 Social centre (Khesed), Lithuania

Furthermore, the proportions of respondents who strongly disagreed that decision-making processes in their community were consultative, efficient or transparent were twice as large as the proportions of respondents who strongly agreed: 20% vs. 9% for consultative processes, 18% vs. 9% for efficiency and 25% vs. 11% for transparency.

Q9. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the decision-making processes in your community are:



Men, younger respondents, those identifying themselves with the Masorti/Conservative movement, or with the Reform, Liberal or Progressive movements, opinion formers and respondents in western European countries were less likely than their counterparts to agree that the decision-making processes in their community were well-informed, democratic, consultative, efficient and transparent.

Between two-thirds and three-quarters of the respondents thought that decision-making processes would become more well-informed (76%), efficient (70%), transparent (67%), democratic (67%) or consultative (66%) over the next five to 10 years. However, only

I would like to see my community become a self-sustained, transparent, democratic one that has a significant role in strengthening the civil life in Bulgaria. This community will be led by strong visionaries and committed professionals.

Alexander Oscar
President
Organization of the Jews in Sofia

a sixth or less of the respondents thought that the change in decision-making in any of these directions would be really significant.

Finally, respondents in eastern Europe were more optimistic than those in western Europe about communal decision-making at present and in the future; they more frequently agreed that decision-making would become more well-informed (84% vs. 72%), efficient (82% vs. 63%), consultative (82% vs. 57%), transparent (80% vs. 61%) and democratic (79% vs. 60%).

Vision and change

Of the various identified components of Jewish life, the current levels of Judaic knowledge and of Jewish religious practice and observance were rated as critically low.

When asked to assess how they would ideally like to see these aspects of Jewish life in the future, more than two-thirds of the respondents selected scores of 4 or 5. The only exception was for the ideal level of Jewish religious practice and observance (score of 5 – 14%; 4 – 28%; 3 – 39%). In other words, respondents saw room for improvement in all aspects of Jewish life in their community, but only a minority of them felt that this was very important in the field of religious practice.

Respondents older than 55 gave the highest ratings to the ideal level of Judaic knowledge (scores 4 or 5 – 72%) and the level of attachment to Jews around the world (70%). Although the younger participants (under 40) had a similar vision for the future in terms of these components of Jewish life (73% and 75%, respectively), they had even higher expectations for the ideal level of creativity and entrepreneurship (scores of 4 or 5 – 81%).

There is an absolute need to invest in Jewish education. Study, and specifically traditional study, must be a key commitment for the future.

Shmuel Riccardo Di Segni
Chief Rabbi
Jewish community of Rome

The community's lay leadership was considered to be one of the most likely drivers of change by approximately half of the respondents. A third selected professional leaders and just over a third mentioned individuals creating non-institutional programmes or initiatives as drivers of change in their community. Twenty-eight percent of the participants selected young people as one of the most likely drivers of change and 24% thought that change would come from rabbis.

Younger respondents were as likely to select professional leaders and lay leaders as the drivers of change in their community (41% vs. 39%), while the older respondents placed more trust in the communal *lay* leadership (30% of the over 55s mentioned professional leadership vs. 52% who selected lay leadership).

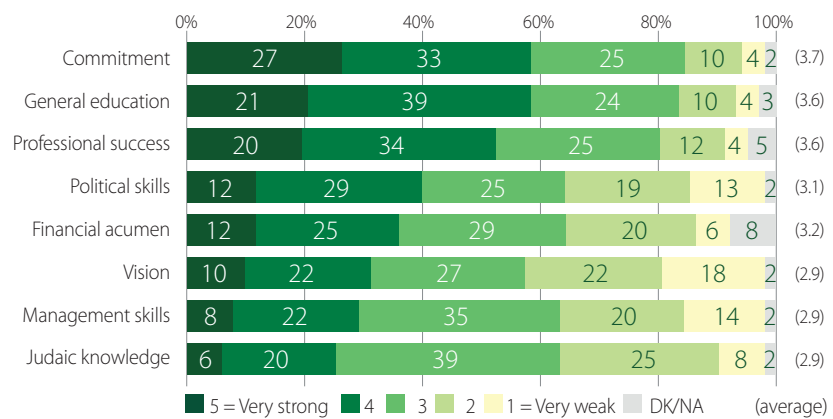
In addition, younger respondents were more prone to select young people as the drivers of change (39% of those younger than 30 and 36% of the 30-39 year-olds vs. 23% of the 40-55 year-olds), while older participants were more likely to expect change to come from rabbis (30% of the 40-55 year-olds vs. 17% of those younger than 40).

Lay and professional leadership in European Jewish communities

When asked to rate the overall quality of their community’s lay leadership, respondents gave the highest ratings in terms of commitment, general education and professional success – more than half of them gave their community’s lay leadership a “strong” (4 or 5) score in these domains.

Survey participants were the least positive about the vision, Judaic knowledge and management skills of their community’s lay leaders – at least a third of the respondents gave a “weak” (1 or 2) score in these domains.

Q11. Please assess the overall quality of your community’s lay leadership by evaluating the following characteristics:



Quels que soient les thèmes à défendre et le travail à faire, il est important d'assurer le renouveau du leadership communautaire, qu'il soit bénévole ou rémunéré. Ce sont ces personnes qui pourront porter les projets de demain, et il est important de faire émerger des vocations au sein de la Communauté.

Ruth Ouazana
Limoud France

Respondents tended to rate the overall quality of their community’s professional leadership slightly lower than their lay leadership: e.g. 54% rated their lay leaders’ professional success as strong or very strong, compared to 41% for professional leaders.

As with their assessments of lay leadership, respondents also identified commitment, general education and professional success as the highest-ranking areas for professional leadership – more than four out of 10 of them gave their community’s lay leadership a “strong” (4 or 5) score in these domains.

Younger respondents (younger than 40) and those respondents not having a formal position in the community tended to be most critical and gave the lowest ratings to the overall quality of their community’s leadership (lay and professional).

Four out of 10 participants expected that the overall quality of communal *lay* leadership would improve over the next five to 10 years. A slightly lower proportion – 36% – thought that there would be no change in the overall quality and 12% expected lower quality over the next five to 10 years. One-tenth of respondents did not answer this question. Similarly, 46% of participants expected

that the overall quality of communal *professional* leadership would improve, a third expected that the level of quality would be constant, 10% expected a decline in quality and 10% did not answer.

Respondents in eastern Europe were more likely to expect that the overall quality of communal *lay* leadership would improve (52% vs. 35% in western Europe) or that the overall quality of communal *professional* leadership would improve (58% vs. 40%).

On ne peut plus se satisfaire d'initiatives individuelles où le président fait tout. Il faut une vision des besoins généraux de la communauté avec une structure de dirigeants bénévoles et de véritables professionnels.

Simon Cohn

CBG-Radio Judaïca - Habonim Dror, Belgium

Community causes

Strengthening Jewish education was selected by three-quarters of the respondents as one of the top communal priorities at the time of the survey. Furthermore, more than half of the respondents selected supporting Jews in need in their community, supporting the State of Israel and combating antisemitism.

Respondents were also asked to score each of the above-mentioned causes in terms of its priority level over the next five to 10 years. Strengthening Jewish education and supporting Jews in need in the community remained the top priorities, followed by investing in leadership development and fighting community tensions and divisiveness. The latter causes were seen as communal priorities for the future rather than today.

Although an increasing rate of mixed marriages was perceived as the most serious threat to Jewish life, developing an effective policy on intermarriage was selected by only slightly more than one in 10 respondents as a top communal priority. This cause was also ranked lowest in terms of being a future communal priority.

Q26. Which five of the following causes would you say are the top communal priorities today?

Q27. For each cause, please indicate the extent to which you think it should be prioritised over the next 5 to 10 years.

	Top communal priorities today (% of respondents)	Average priority score for the future (max. score 10)
Strengthening Jewish education	73%	8.9
Supporting Jews in need in your community	63%	8.4
Supporting the State of Israel	54%	7.5
Combating antisemitism	52%	7.6
Strengthening Jewish religious life	48%	7.2
Investing in leadership development	40%	8.3
Fighting community tensions and divisiveness	30%	7.7
Developing Jewish arts and culture	30%	7.2
Strengthening interfaith relations	23%	6.5
Supporting Jews in distress around the world	16%	7.0
Supporting general social justice causes	16%	7.0
Functioning as a pressure group in national politics	14%	6.3
Developing an effective policy on intermarriage	12%	6.2

Strengthening Jewish education and supporting Jews in need in their community were selected as top communal priorities across all age groups – these communal causes were identified as priorities both today and over the next five to 10 years. Strengthening Jewish education was also the top communal priority at the time of the survey across all denominational streams. Finally, strengthening Jewish education was the top communal priority – both today and in the future – for respondents in both western and eastern Europe.

Consistent with the high priority given to strengthening Jewish education, Jewish leaders and opinion formers completing the survey

Much more effort should be aimed to Jewish youth and educational activities.

Zdenek Kalvach
Jewish Community of Prague

selected school children and university students – i.e. children aged 11 to 14 (51%), high school students (53%) and university students (49%) – as the current top priority population groups. Elderly people in declining health, however, were almost as frequently mentioned as a priority group (47%).

School children and university students were also named as top priority population groups for the future. The real gap however between present and future priority groups lay in the increased focus on young adults and young families with children. Elderly people in declining health, on the other hand, were less often mentioned as a priority population group for the next five to 10 years.

Jewish leaders and opinion formers identified Jewish youth clubs and movements and Jewish day schools as their communities' priority organisational frameworks at the time of the survey (selected by, respectively, 70% and 67%). A slim majority selected synagogues as one of the priority organisational frameworks.

In terms of priority levels over the next five to 10 years, Jewish youth clubs and Jewish day schools were still awarded high priority scores (8.4 and 8.0, respectively). Furthermore, although Jewish informal schooling – provided by, for example, Jewish educational organisations – appeared to be less important in terms of current communal priorities (Jewish educational organisations were selected by 43% of the respondents vs. 67% who selected Jewish day schools), Jewish educational organisations received a higher priority score in terms of communal organisational frameworks for the next five to 10 years (average priority score of 8.4).

My priority is that the new Jewish generation (third generation) which is now, on average, 20-55 years old has the possibility of a good professional and Jewish education and that the community is involved in this process and finds a way to assure them of a job so that they stay in the community and don't migrate.

Melita Švob
Association of Holocaust survivors, Croatia

Major priorities for European Jewish communities

At the end of the survey, respondents were asked to choose two topics that were of particular importance to them and to their community. Some topics were clearly of greater importance than others: a third of the respondents selected lay and professional leadership as an issue of particular significance. One-fifth selected funding and just less than that figure (18%) selected community causes and antisemitism/security.

Q45. This survey has looked at a wide range of topics. Which topics are of particular importance to you and your community? Select a first and second choice. (% of respondents)

Lay and professional leadership	34%
Funding	20%
Community causes	18%
Antisemitism/security	18%
Israel	16%
Decision-making and control	16%
Denominational tensions	15%
Organisational frameworks	13%
Vision and change	12%
Status issues	11%
Mobility and future prospects	11%
Influence in the wider society	7%
Population groups	6%

One of the major preconditions to ensure the community's future is to properly manage it.

Maros Borsky
Executive Director
Slovak Jewish Heritage Center

The pair “lay/professional leadership” and “funding” was the most common combination (selected by 21 respondents). This was expected, as these two priority issues were selected the most frequently. The pair “antisemitism/security” and “Israel” was selected by 14 respondents.

Older respondents were more likely to mention antisemitism or security (20% of those over 55 vs. 14% of those under 40) and denominational tensions (14% of the over 55s and 20% of the 40-55 year-olds vs. 10% of those under 40) as priority issues. Furthermore, while three out of 10 of the over 55 year-olds selected Israel as an issue of particular importance to themselves and their community, this proportion fell to one in 10 for those younger than 55.

Respondents below 55, on the other hand, were more prone to prioritise lay and professional leadership (38% of those under 40 vs. a quarter of the over 55s) and decision-making and control (21% vs. 9%, respectively).

While one in six of the respondents in eastern Europe selected status issues and a fifth mentioned decision-making and control as issues of high interest, only one in 10 (9%) and 14%, respectively, of the respondents in western Europe mentioned these topics. The latter were, nevertheless, more likely to mention denominational tensions (18% vs. 8%).

Thirty-eight percent of the respondents who identified themselves with the Reform, Liberal or Progressive movements selected denominational tensions as one of the two topics that were of particular importance to them and their community vs. 7% of those describing themselves as “just Jewish” or secular. The topic of “status issues” was selected by a fifth of Orthodox and Modern Orthodox Jews compared to only one in 12 of those who described themselves as “just Jewish” or secular and one in 10 of those who identified themselves as Masorti/Conservative Jews.

Funding is necessary to implement visions. It is important that funds are used in a way which is known and approved.

Eleonora Bergman
Jewish Historical Institute, Poland

The European Jewish Leaders and Opinion Formers Survey was sponsored by the American Joint Distribution Committee's International Centre for Community Development (JDC-ICCD) and conducted by Gallup between September and November 2008. In total, 465 European Jewish leaders and opinion formers were invited to participate in the survey. More than half of them – 54% (251) – completed the online survey. The full report can be requested from JDC – ICCD.

The American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC or “Joint”) has been working together with its partners in Europe since the organization's foundation in 1914. Non-partisan and non-political, JDC acts as the overseas arm of the American Jewish community, serving Jews in need and helping to reconstruct and renew Jewish communities. In 2005, JDC created the International Centre for Community Development (JDC- ICCD), a research centre and think tank designed to develop knowledge and policy addressing the changing needs of today's Jewish communities. JDC- ICCD's activities span professional development, applied research and knowledge generation.

Gallup has studied human nature and behavior for more than 70 years. Gallup's reputation for delivering relevant, timely, and visionary research on what people around the world think and feel is the cornerstone of the organization. Gallup employs many of the world's leading scientists in management, economics, psychology, and sociology, and our consultants assist leaders in identifying and monitoring behavioral economic indicators worldwide. Gallup consultants help organizations boost organic growth by increasing customer engagement and maximizing employee productivity through measurement tools, coursework, and strategic advisory services. Gallup's 2,000 professionals deliver services at client organizations, through the Web, at Gallup University's campuses, and in 40 offices around the world.

GALLUP

Avenue Michel-Ange 70, B-1000 Brussels
Tel: +32 2 734 54 18

contact@gallup-europe.be
www.gallup-europe.be | www.gallup.com

JDC- ICCD

Avenue Matignon 5, F-75008 Paris
Tel: +33 1 56 59 79 79

contact@jdc-iccd.org
www.jdc-iccd.org