

# Canopy of Prayer

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Author

**Tomas Sandell**  
European Coalition for Israel



## Dear Prayer Partners in Europe

**Let's face it!** – don't many of us have anti-Semitic, anti-Jewish reservations in us? Europe, especially Germany, is full of them. Two Bible passages helped me to get on the track of this: **(1) John 19:19:** "Jesus the Nazarene, the King of the Jews" was written above the crucified. Jesus, my Saviour, my Beloved, my... is the King of the Jews. Something inside me bristled. Jesus does not belong to "us", but to "them"? It became clear to me: we only have Jesus as the "King of the Jews" or not at all. We either love him as the King of the Jews or we don't love him at all. **(2) Ruth 1:16:** The young Gentile woman, Ruth of Moab, sums up all her faith in the God of Israel to her Jewish mother-in-law in these words: "Your people are my people and your God is my God." Imagine a Jew you have met and say these words of Ruth to him, observing your heart. For these words are the most radical response to anti-Semitism. The same God – that is what unites Jews and Christians!

Ortwin Schweitzer

## Antisemitism in Europe

**Israel is more popular in Europe but a deadly pandemic can strike anytime.**

A recent survey by the data company You Gov reveals that European attitudes towards Israel have become more positive in recent months. Of those polled in Germany, France and the UK, around 35 percent say that they have a positive attitude towards Israel, which is up several percentage points (in France 12 percent!) from the last polling period.

The polling period coincides with the Corona pandemic and the Abraham accords as well as a period of relative calm in the Middle East. Given Israel's successful vaccination campaign and unprecedented number of peace treaties with former enemies during last year, the positive attitudes should not come as a surprise. Furthermore, the general acceptance of the IHRA definition of "antisemitism", which includes disproportionate criticism of Israel, for example by calling into question the legality of the Jewish state, as a new form of antisemitism has seen many of Israel's critics on the retreat. Still, it would be too early to draw any major conclusions from the survey.

Yes, many nations admire Israel's effectiveness in dealing with the Corona pandemic but at the same time the conspiracy theories which accuse the Jews of being responsible for the pandemic are spreading far and wide. In a recent European report program by ECI, the head of the Jewish community in Finland explains how it has become more difficult to defend religious freedom to

national authorities. Whereas Jewish kosher slaughter and circumcision of male babies were widely accepted in the time of his parents today they are viewed with suspicion and by some even considered incompatible with European values, as they appear to violate animal rights and the rights of children.

For many years ECI ([www.ec4i.org](http://www.ec4i.org)) has warned not only of the rise of traditional antisemitism, in the form of right-wing extremism and Islamic Jew hatred, but also for what we have called "sophisticated antisemitism." This type of antisemitism is not expressed in the name of any

extreme or violent ideology but rather in the name of human rights. The late Lord Sacks has pointed out how Jews have always been condemned according to the leading ideology of the time, as Christ killers during the Middle Ages, for their race during the time of social-Darwinism, and today as violators of human rights, for allegedly oppressing the Palestinians or for violating the right of the child or of animals. The life of Jews in Europe can therefore come to an

abrupt end, not only by the rise of traditional antisemitism but also through democratic means by new legislation in the name of human rights which would make traditional Jewish life in Europe impossible.

It is not without reason that antisemitism has been described as "the world's oldest hatred." As Christians we are called not to give in to this deadly hatred but rather stand on the side of the Jewish people as Ruth did, remembering that your people are my people and your God is my God.



## EU Demographic changes

The European Parliament has been examining demographic trends in the EU including: depopulation of some regions, a

brain drain/gain (especially south-east to north west), the gap between urban and rural areas, an ageing population and population decline. The Covid pandemic is also likely to affect birth/death rates and migration flows. Let's not forget the effect of easily obtained contraception and abortion too.

## Additional Prayer points:-

1. President Biden said, "Diplomacy is back". Let us pray for a new, stable connection between the US and Europe on all levels. (Trade, NATO, China policy)
2. Let us continue to pray for the effective roll out of the vaccination programme and the effectiveness of the vaccines themselves to the new variants of the virus from countries like Brazil, South Africa and India.

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