

Protecting Jews as a National Minority in European States

Summary of findings and recommendations¹

Overview of the Framework Convention

1. The Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities (FCPNM) protects National Minorities and the existing human rights of their members to preserve their distinct identity and culture, including traditions, languages, and practices.
2. The Convention sets out key areas where states must create laws to protect the rights of National Minorities as well as practical mechanisms for implementation.
3. The FCPNM does not define National Minority. It focuses on ethnic, religious and linguistic groups. States distinguish between “old” minorities and “new” minorities or immigrants by focusing on National Minorities’ longstanding ties with the country.
4. National Minorities have longstanding ties with a State, and have preserved their distinct identity while present there. Immigrants and new minorities voluntarily move to a State and only hold equality rights aimed at promoting their integration into society.²
5. States provide specific protections to National Minorities. These are in addition to anti-discrimination laws that protect all minorities. Protections for National Minorities are specifically aimed at preserving the group and its distinct identity, culture and features.

Jewish Inclusion as a Protected National Minority as it Currently Stands

7. Jews are included as National Minorities (i) explicitly in State legislation, (ii) under general laws protecting ethnic/racial, religious, or linguistic minorities, (iii) or not at all.
8. Our aim is for Jewish inclusion as a Protected National Minority across all European States. This should either be by explicitly including Jews on the list of National Minorities, where such a list exists, or by protecting Jews under all three categories – religious, linguistic, and ethnic/racial – under general laws on protecting minorities.

Recommendations

14. To prepare advocacy strategies for inclusion of Jews as having Protected National Minority status in all countries where they live and do not currently have this status.
15. To prepare an advocacy strategy for inclusion of Jews as an ethnic / racial group as well as religious and linguistic.

¹ This summary was prepared by Professor Dr Rosa Freedman for the European Jewish Association, March 2026. Any errors remain the fault of the author.

² Kymlicka, Multicultural Citizenship, A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995)

16. To set out key rights specific to Jews that are needed within each country to preserve their distinct culture and identity.

17. To set out key practical mechanisms specific to Jews that are needed within each country to preserve their distinct culture and identity