



JDC International Centre for  
Community Development



American Jewish Joint  
Distribution Committee

# Fourth Survey of European Jewish Community Leaders and Professionals, 2018

November 2018



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Community Development

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## Foreword

The *Fourth Survey of European Jewish Community Leaders and Professionals* – conducted every three years by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee's (JDC) European research division, the International Centre for Community Development (ICCD) – offers professionals, lay leaders, academics and practitioners the chance to explore how Europe's top Jewish community leaders relate to emerging and existing trends in their communities and countries. Among these are antisemitism, security, economics, intermarriage, and a rating of their priorities and strategic directions accordingly.

The 2018 survey takes place in the context of deep uncertainty in Europe. From the survey one may see a growing concern of leaders who are increasingly sensitive to issues that relate to antisemitism, resilience, and security. At the same time, one can also see a commitment to investments in the future of these communities and a determination to remain in Europe rather than emigrate.

That said, tragic events often change not just communities but how they envision and plan ahead. Indeed, since January 2015, new indicators, measures, and in certain places even new narratives, have emerged which are shaping the texture of European Jewish communities.

Indeed, for the first time in ten years, there is a growing concern by leaders toward Jewish poverty. While this is not the main priority, this concern grew from 10 percent in 2008 to 26 percent in 2018. This may be attributed to the weakening of public pension systems and the need for planning new communal welfare systems and infrastructure in light of the foreseen end of the Claims Conference funds.

Additionally, this survey was conducted at a time when Europe was facing the greatest humanitarian crisis in years: the continuing flow of refugees and migrants. This challenges Jewish communities to balance their Jewish commitment to "love the stranger" while ensuring that their institutions remain safe and secure.

This survey also explores aspects of leadership within Jewish communities, notably trends in burgeoning grassroots organizations, a social entrepreneurship sector, flourishing projects run by and for young adults, and the emergence of informal Jewish life beyond the establishment, which shape the dynamics of different stakeholders.

Among its many uses, this new survey is most relevant in three ways:

1. As a tool to disseminate knowledge about European Jewish leadership, and to understand their priorities, their concerns, and the opportunities that might arise from these.
2. As an invitation for European Jewish leaders to consider how their thinking is reflected in the policies, programmes, and strategies in their own communities.
3. For social researchers, it is a unique opportunity to look back at the past three surveys and compare how the perceptions of European leaders and key influential players have evolved in view of the major changes in Europe.

Lastly, we would like to thank the respondents for their time and wisdom. As a research project, this survey can only achieve real representation and validity by reaching a relevant critical mass.

This was made possible through the generous involvement of almost 900 leaders who agreed to thoughtfully share their diverse opinions and views. We are extremely pleased to present this fourth JDC-ICCD Survey of European Jewish Community Leaders and Professionals.

We are confident that it will serve as a rich tool for readers to gain clarity on European Jewish communities, and guide us forward in strengthening Jewish life in Europe at a time when its very future, and the gains we have made in Jewish life, are more critical to strengthen than ever before.

We sincerely hope you find it informative.

JDC Europe team

## Executive Summary

Despite real concern as regards rising antisemitism, Europe's Jewish community leaders show relative optimism regarding the future of Europe and its Jewish communities. This is according to the *Fourth Survey of European Jewish Community Leaders and Professionals*, conducted between April and May 2018 by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee's International Centre for Community Development (JDC-ICCD). The survey also shows that the prospect of leaving Europe is not on the agenda of most of the respondents with 76% reporting that over the past 5 years they have not considered emigrating while most respondents expect only limited emigration of Jews from their countries.

The *European Jewish Community Leaders Survey* is conducted every three or four years using the same format in order to identify trends and their evolution. Thus, the findings of the 2018 edition have been assessed and observed, taking into account the previous surveys conducted in 2008, 2011, and 2015. The latest survey was conducted online in 10 languages and administered to 893 respondents in 29 countries.

This survey asked Jewish community leaders and professionals a range of questions, seeking their views on the major challenges and issues concerning European Jewish communities in 2018, and their expectations on how their community's situation will evolve over the next 5 to 10 years.

## Antisemitism

Since the 2015 edition of the survey, antisemitism is viewed as being on the rise and as a major threat by Europe's Jewish leaders. The current survey has confirmed this trend. When asked if they expected changes over the course of the next five to ten years regarding antisemitism, respondents tended to be pessimistic, with 66% expecting antisemitic prejudice to *increase significantly or somewhat* (as opposed to 67% in 2015).

Western European respondents were more likely to consider antisemitism as a threat than were Eastern Europeans, and to report deterioration in the situation from earlier surveys.

**Table 1. "Over the course of the next 5 to 10 years, do you expect problems with antisemitism will..." Comparison 2018, 2015, 2011 and 2008.**

	2018	2015	2011	2008
Increase significantly	21%	23%	10%	16%
Increase somewhat	45%	44%	39%	38%
Remain constant	25%	27%	35%	34%
Decrease somewhat	3%	2%	8%	6%
Decrease significantly	1%	1%	4%	1%
Don't know	4%	3%	4%	4%

## Safety and Security

Respondents were asked how safe they felt to live and practise as Jews in their countries. Most European Jewish leaders felt secure, with 20% reporting that they felt *very safe*, and 63% reporting that they felt *rather safe*. Only 13% felt *rather unsafe*, and a mere 4% *not safe at all*.

This relative feeling of safety might be linked to the fact that 73% of respondents consider that their national governments' respond adequately to the security needs of the Jewish communities.

Most striking is the emergence of sharp regional differences. Whereas 96% of those living in the East felt safe in their city only 76% of those living in the West shared that feeling. On the other hand, almost one in four in the West (24%) felt unsafe in their city in contrast to only 4% of those in the East. This regional variation is noteworthy and has historical significance for Jews in Europe. It is a reversal of the situation whereby over the past two centuries the “West” was regarded as more welcoming and safer for Jews than the “East.”

However, when seen from a broader perspective, it is clear that since 2008 the feeling of safety has eroded significantly among Jewish leaders and professionals. In 2008 36% felt very safe living as a Jew in their cities, while only 20% felt that way in the current study. Likewise, *rather unsafe* rose from 6% to 13%.

**Table 2. “To what extent do you feel that today it is safe to live and practice as a Jew in the city where you reside?” Comparison 2018, 2015, 2011 and 2008.**

	2018	2015	2011	2008
Very safe	20%	22%	22%	36%
Rather safe	63%	63%	62%	56%
Rather unsafe	13%	9%	9%	6%
Not safe at all	4%	5%	3%	1%

## Threats to the Future of Jewish Life

Nevertheless, concerns regarding security and antisemitism must be read in a wider context, because when leaders were invited to identify the main threats to the future of Jewish life, none of the top four issues cited were related to security or antisemitism.

Alternatively, there were a number of internal community problems mentioned such as; *the alienation of Jews from Jewish community life* (66%); *demographic decline* (65%); and *the lack of engagement by members in community affairs or activities* (62%). *The lack of renewal of Jewish organizations* is now considered a more serious threat (60% in 2018 as opposed to 55% in 2015) and *ignorance about Judaism* (56% in 2018 compared with 48% in 2015) is deemed to be an equal threat to *antisemitism*.

Mixed marriage continued its downward trend, confirming that it is no longer regarded as the most serious threat to communities (in 2008 it was ranked as the major threat by 64% of respondents, whereas in 2011 it garnered that ranking from 54% of respondents, 44% in 2015, and 40% in 2018, falling to the eleventh position).

The item that shows the largest uptick (16%) in terms of threat to the future of Jewish life is *antisemitism*, which now scores 56% on the serious threat index, compared to 40% in 2015 and only 23% in 2008! The trend was for more people across all socio-demographic groups to assess it as an increased threat.

*Poverty in the communities*, though not considered to be a major threat, also increased in perceived significance by 16% over the past 10 years.



**Figure 1. “Which of the following are the most serious threats to the future of Jewish life in your country?” 2018.**

	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
Alienation of Jews from the Jewish community life				66%	
Demographic decline				65%	
Lack of engagement by members in community				62%	
Weakness of Jewish organizations / Lack of renewal				60%	
Ignorance/declining knowledge about Judaism				56%	
Antisemitism				56%	
Lack of effective leadership				51%	
Lack of economic sustainability to provide key community services				47%	
Internal Jewish conflicts				44%	
Terrorism and violence against Jews				40%	
Increasing rate of intermarriage				40%	
Lack of religious pluralism within the Jewish community				39%	
Lack of effective assistance from abroad				36%	
Lack of religious life/observance				29%	
Poverty in your community				26%	

## Jewish Status Issues

Issues concerning Jewish status, non-Orthodox conversions, and community membership are of importance in all communities. The overall tendency is to be inclusive and accommodating rather than exclusive and rigid. 80% agreed that *including intermarried families in Jewish community life is a critical factor for the survival of our community*, and 86% believed that *the community should put in place suitable spaces or programmes in order to better integrate intermarried families*.

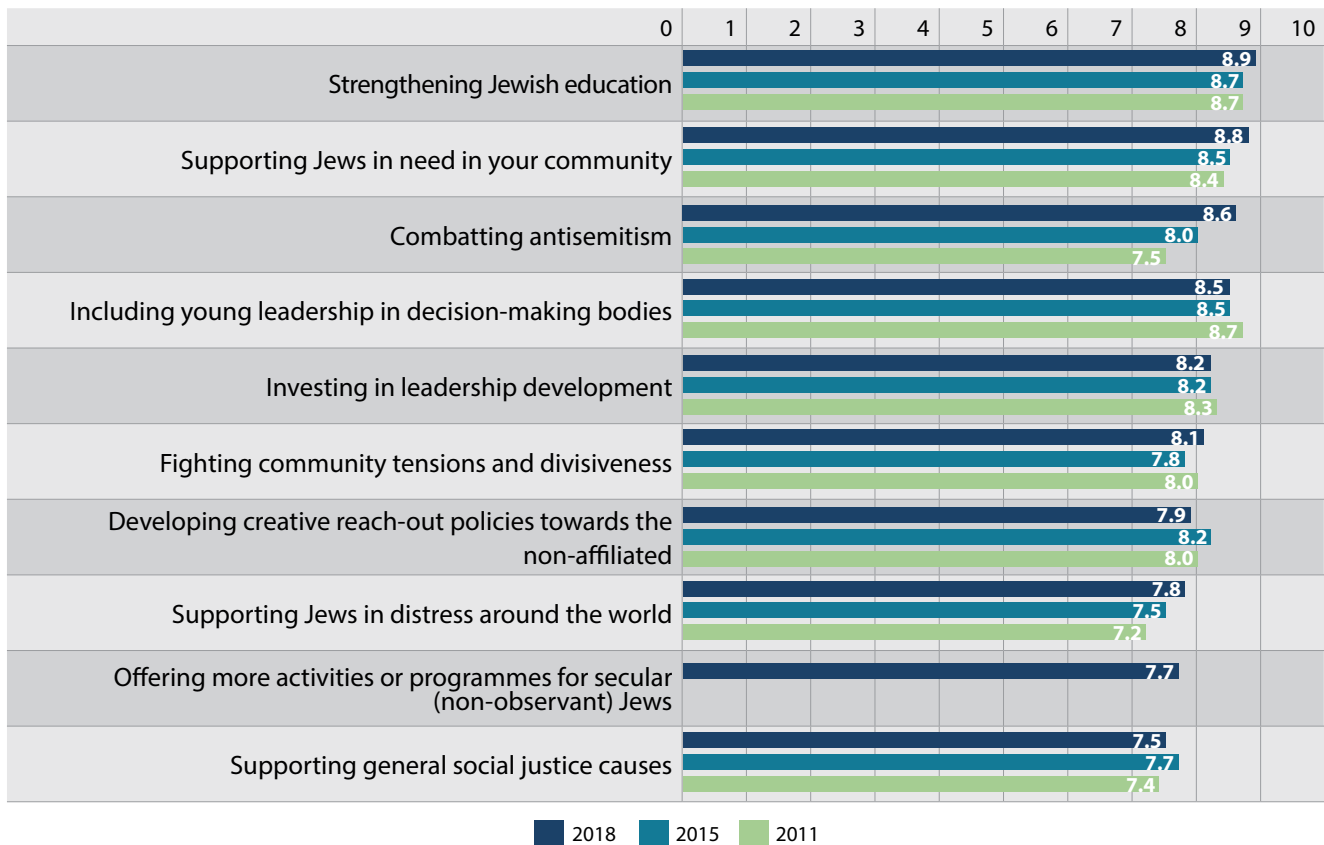
Opinions on these matters were mostly divided among the religious denominational lines, and in some cases were seen as sources of community tensions, as reported by respondents. The younger and older generations tended to be slightly more liberal on these issues than the middle-aged.

Most respondents were pessimistic on this issue, with 37% expecting this to become more problematic in the future or even *pose a danger to the continuity of the existing Jewish community* (15%).

## Future Priorities for Jewish Communities

When asked about the communal causes that need to be prioritized within the next 5 to 10 years, Jewish community leaders focused on issues within their sphere of influence. Their highest priorities, in order of importance, were; *strengthening Jewish education*; *supporting Jews in need in your community*; and *combatting antisemitism*. For the first time since the start of the survey in 2008, *combatting antisemitism* ranked among the top three communal priorities. Other significant changes in the ranking of items were the relative increases in *fighting community tensions and divisiveness* and *supporting Jews in distress around the world*.

Figure 2. Top Ten Community Priorities: Comparison of 2018, 2015, and 2011 rankings.



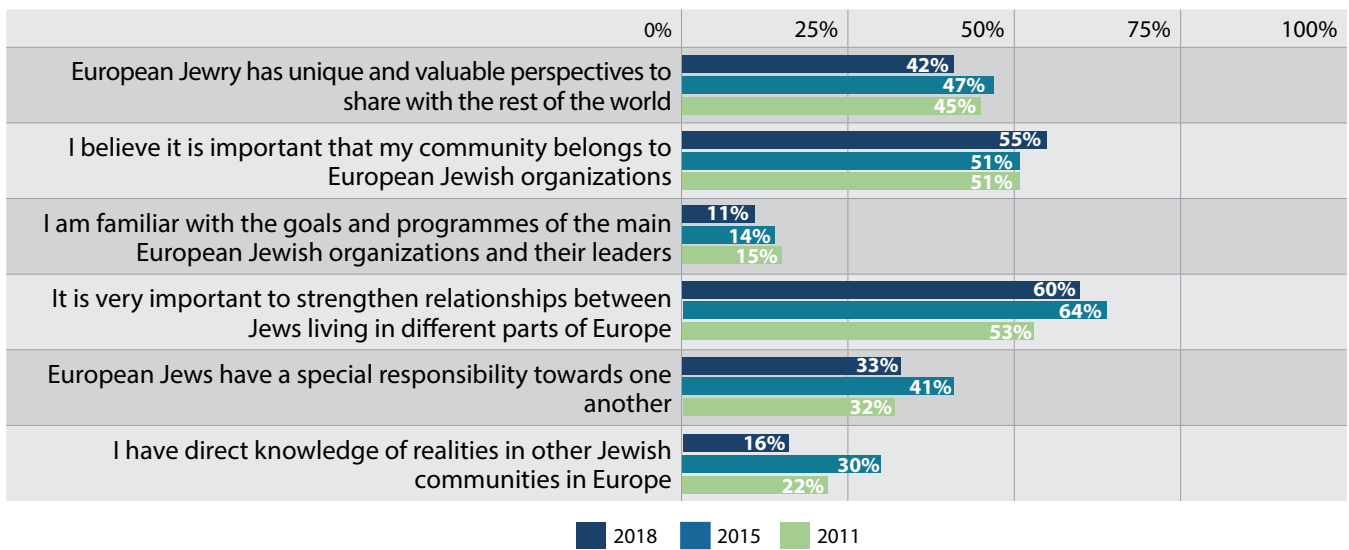
## Europe

Both as a Jewish and a general political project, Europe is popular among respondents. There is a desire to strengthen relationships among Jewish communities and to be affiliated with European Jewish organizations, particularly in Eastern Europe. However, it is also accepted that there is minimal integration, and leaders admit that they have little direct knowledge of other Jewish communities in Europe.

Are Jewish leaders optimistic about the future? 44% of the leaders agreed with the statement *'The future of European Jewry is vibrant and positive'*, and 46% affirmed that *'I am optimistic about the future of Europe.'* Given Europe's current social and political uncertainties, these percentages attest to a relative feeling of confidence, though not an excessive one. Yet, when compared to other Europeans, Jewish leaders are more pessimistic. According to the most recent Euro barometer survey, 56% of Europeans showed optimism in the EU<sup>1</sup>. Thus there is a 10% gap in *optimism* between Europeans and European Jewish leaders.

<sup>1</sup> "A European Spring? Latest Standard Eurobarometer shows Optimism is on the Rise," European Commission, August 2017. [[https://ec.europa.eu/malta/news/european-spring-latest-standard-eurobarometer-shows-optimism-rise\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/malta/news/european-spring-latest-standard-eurobarometer-shows-optimism-rise_en)]

**Figure 3. Statements about European Jewish communities. Strong agreement only. 2018, 2015, and 2011.**



## Israel

The relationship with the State and the people of Israel is regarded with great importance to European Jewish communities, but there is wide recognition that this relationship has become more problematic and contentious in recent years, as events in the Middle East have reverberated throughout Europe. It was perhaps in recognition of this fact that the greatest consensus (85% agreement) was found among Jewish leaders who agreed that *Jewish communities should provide opportunities for members to share different opinions and points of view on Israel and its policies*. There was an equally strong consensus (85%) who stated that *events in Israel sometimes lead to an increase of antisemitism in my country*.

Yet recently, support for Israel seems to have gained strength among Jewish leaders in Europe. 68% agreed with *I support Israel fully, regardless of how its government behaves* (as opposed to 55% in 2015, 56% in 2011, and 61% in 2008). Likewise, *I am sometimes ashamed of the actions of the Israeli government* was agreed to by only 42% of respondents, compared to 51% in 2015.

Hostility towards Israel in the general society is perceived to be fiercer in Western Europe; 88% of leaders from Western Europe considered that *the media in my country regularly portrays Israel in a bad light*, as opposed to only 36% from Eastern Europe. This might be a contributing factor to the higher antisemitism in the West.

Likewise, Western Europeans reported community divisiveness towards Israel was much more of a problem than for Eastern leaders, with 11% stating that there was a great degree of divisiveness over Israel in western communities compared to only 1% in the East. Conversely 47% of Eastern Europeans reported no divisiveness at all compared to only 17% from Western Europe.

## Changes Since 2008

The four surveys provide a useful timescale to measure if any changes have occurred. However, the most significant feature shown by this data is that there are consistent patterns over time across most issues under investigation, and this regularity validates the reliability of the earlier survey results. This is a remarkable feature, bearing in mind that

the sample sizes of the surveys have varied over time, as have the proportion and number of respondents from the different countries. This suggests that a stable European Jewish community consensus has emerged on many issues and opinions.

Confirming 2015 data, the 2018 results show that most communities' financial position has largely returned to that of 2008, after reporting strain in 2011. Respondents in Eastern Europe were more likely to respond that their financial situation was healthy or stable than those in Western Europe.

In regard to security, there has been a decrease in the number of people who feel "very safe" in their city, and more people across all socio-demographic groups assessed antisemitism as a very serious threat. Overall, respondents continue to feel concerned about the prospect of antisemitism increasing (66% in 2018, 67% in 2015 as opposed to 54% in 2008).

Overall, in terms of current challenges, there has been an increase in concern about demographic decline (65% in 2018 as opposed to 41% in 2008), and *alienation from the community* now feels like more of a threat (66% in 2018 as opposed to 50% in 2008). On the other hand, the increasing rate of mixed marriages is no longer regarded as the most serious threat to communities (40% in 2018 as opposed to 64% in 2008). *Poverty in communities*, though not considered to be a major threat, increased in perceived significance by 16% over the past ten years.

## About the Respondents

For the purposes of gathering the sample of respondents for this survey, we considered that the following roles fulfilled the criteria for being "leaders" and "community professionals:" presidents and chairmen/women of nationwide "umbrella organizations" or Federations; presidents and executive directors of private Jewish foundations, charities, and other privately funded initiatives; presidents and main representatives of Jewish communities that are organized at a city level; executive directors and programme coordinators, as well as current and former board members of Jewish organizations; directors and executive directors of Jewish agencies or departments dealing with Jewish social welfare; directors and programme coordinators of Jewish educational bodies and departments at Jewish Federations or communities; principals of main Jewish schools; prominent Jewish informal educators, including rabbis; directors and programme coordinators of youth departments at Jewish Federations or communities; directors and executive directors of Jewish Community Centres (JCCs); programme-responsible staff at non-institutionalized Jewish initiatives; prominent young activists; influential Jewish media entrepreneurs; and significant donors to the communities.

Drawn from a wide variety of European socio-demographic backgrounds, Jewish leaders and opinion formers cannot be easily stereotyped. Two-thirds were male and one-third female. The sample was skewed to the older generation, with 65% over 55 years of age, and only 13% under the age of 40. In terms of denominational affiliation, 33% identified with an Orthodox group, while the age of 26% identified as "Traditional" and 41% as non-religious "Cultural" Jews. In terms of their personal outlook, 55% regarded themselves as "religious" and 45% as "secular." This diversity probably accounts for their emphasis on community pluralism and inclusion. The statistical analysis underscores the predictive unreliability of characteristics such as region, gender, age, denomination, and education among the leaders of European Jewish communities with regard to most opinions on community priorities and organization. Synagogue denomination is a predictive factor only with regard to intermarriage and Jewish status issues and, to some extent, attitudes toward Israel. Role in the community is predictive of communal service priorities. One common factor is that the respondents are highly educated, with 89% holding university degrees.

## I. Community Priorities, Tensions and Threats

One of the primary goals of the *Survey of European Jewish Community Leaders and Professionals* was to identify the major priorities and challenges facing European Jewish communities today, together with the perceptions these leaders and professionals held about the most serious issues and threats regarding the future of Jewish life in their respective countries.

### Future Priorities

Respondents were asked to prioritize community causes for the next 5 to 10 years in a list of 16 items (Figure 4) using a scale from 1-10 where 1 is not a priority and 10 is a pressing priority. The results all focused on issues that were within the competence of the leadership to control or affect. The five highest priorities in 2018 (scoring 8 or more) were; *strengthening Jewish education* (8.9); *supporting Jews in need in your community* (8.8); *combatting antisemitism* (8.6); *including young leadership in decision-making bodies* (8.5); *investing in leadership development* (8.2); *fighting communal tensions and divisiveness* (8.1). The lowest priorities on the scale were recorded for *functioning as a pressure group in national politics* (5.6), *developing an effective policy on intermarriage* (6.2) and *strengthening Jewish religious life* (6.6).

It is interesting to note that the overall rank order of the priorities has hardly changed since 2011. The only significant change in the items was the increase in the rating for combatting antisemitism (from 7.5 to 8.6) which shifted from the 6th to the 3rd highest priority. This reflects the growing concern particularly in Western Europe which will be evidenced further in this report.

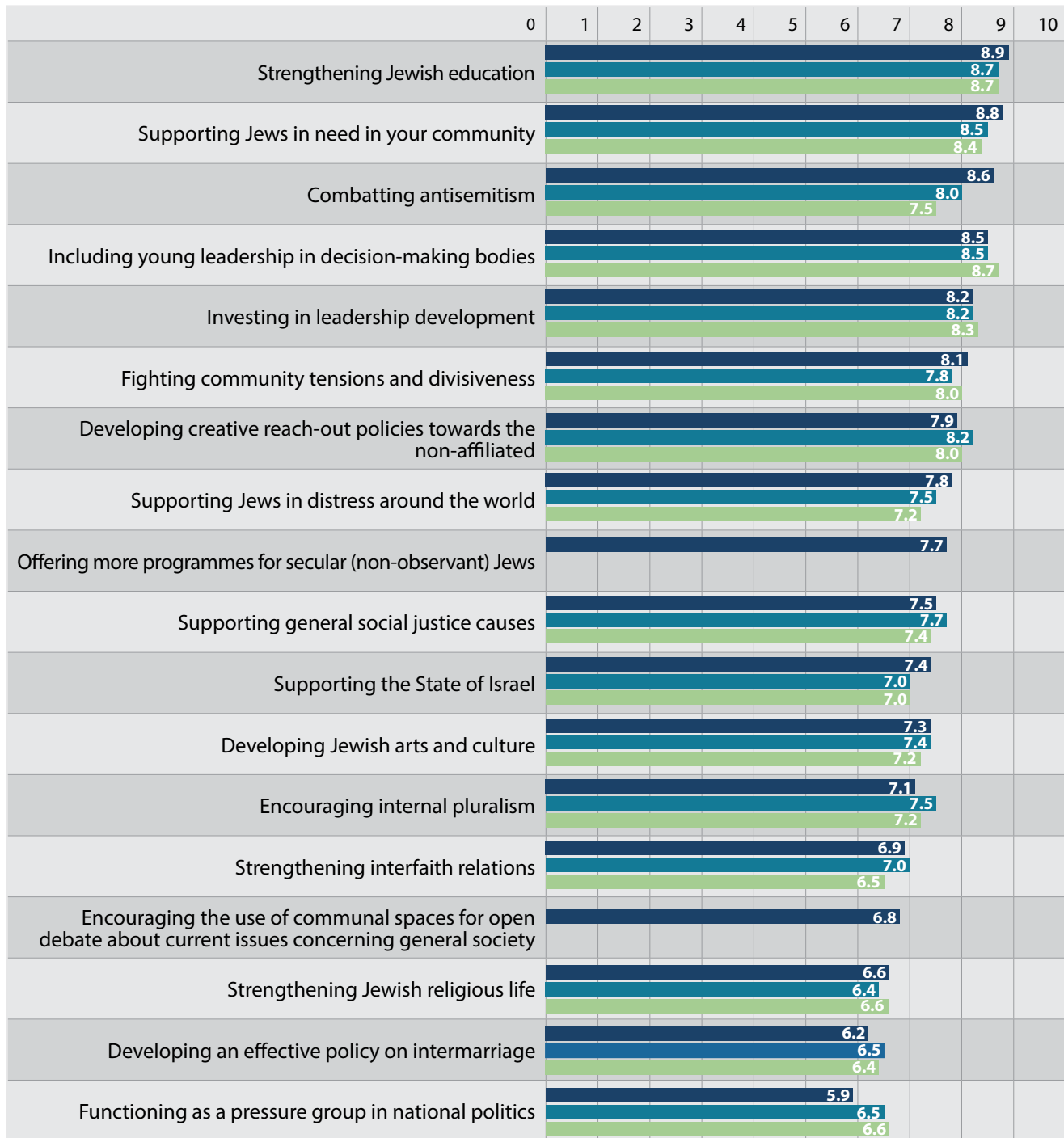
*The fight against antisemitism is the MAIN priority of every Jew, but also of everyone, as is the fight against racism and xenophobia.*

*Former Lay Leader, Belgium,  
85 years old.*

In terms of future community priorities, there were some measurable differences in the rank order of the priorities between the three age groups. The younger generation gave less emphasis on *combatting antisemitism* (47% v 72%), *supporting the state of Israel* (22% v 47%) and *supporting Jews in distress around the world* (32% v 48%). Conversely, the young favoured *supporting Jews in need in your community* more than the older generation (44% v 34%), and not surprisingly *including young leadership in decision-making bodies* (68% v 56%). There was a clear age sequence with the middle-aged group located in the centre on most issues.

Major differences between the rating of priorities by men and women respondents only emerged over *encouraging internal pluralism*, which 43% of women gave a top score of 9/10 as opposed to 28% of men. There was also a gap in the priority of *including young leadership* with 58% of women giving it a top score but only 44% of men. Women also favoured developing Jewish arts and culture more than men (38% v 27%).

Figure 4. "Please indicate the extent to which you think it should be prioritized in the next 5-10 years." Responses on a scale of 1-10 for 2018, 2015 and 2011.



■ 2018 ■ 2015 ■ 2011

Regional differences emerged on *supporting Jews in need* which was significantly more of a priority to East European communities (74% v 60%) as was *supporting general social justice causes* (52% v 31%), and *fighting communal tensions and divisiveness* (63% v 46%). Major denominational differences in prioritizing items between the denominations emerged where one might expect them to. On most items, the gap was between

Orthodox and Cultural Jews with the Traditional taking the middle ground. Orthodox Jews gave more priority to *strengthening Jewish religious life* (35% v 18%). They were less

*In unified communities, it is especially important to promote internal pluralism and bring the different Jewish ways of life closer together. This applies to different religious denominations, but also to origin (Ashkenazi/Sephardic, etc.)*  
Lay Leader, Switzerland,  
64 years old.

likely, however, to *supporting general social justice causes* (27% v 46%) or *developing Jewish arts and culture* (23% v 43%). Cultural Jews prioritized more *combatting antisemitism* (70% v 57%) and *encouraging the use of communal spaces for open debate about current issues concerning the general society* (38% v 15%). Perhaps more importantly, there were very few priorities on which the lay leadership and the community

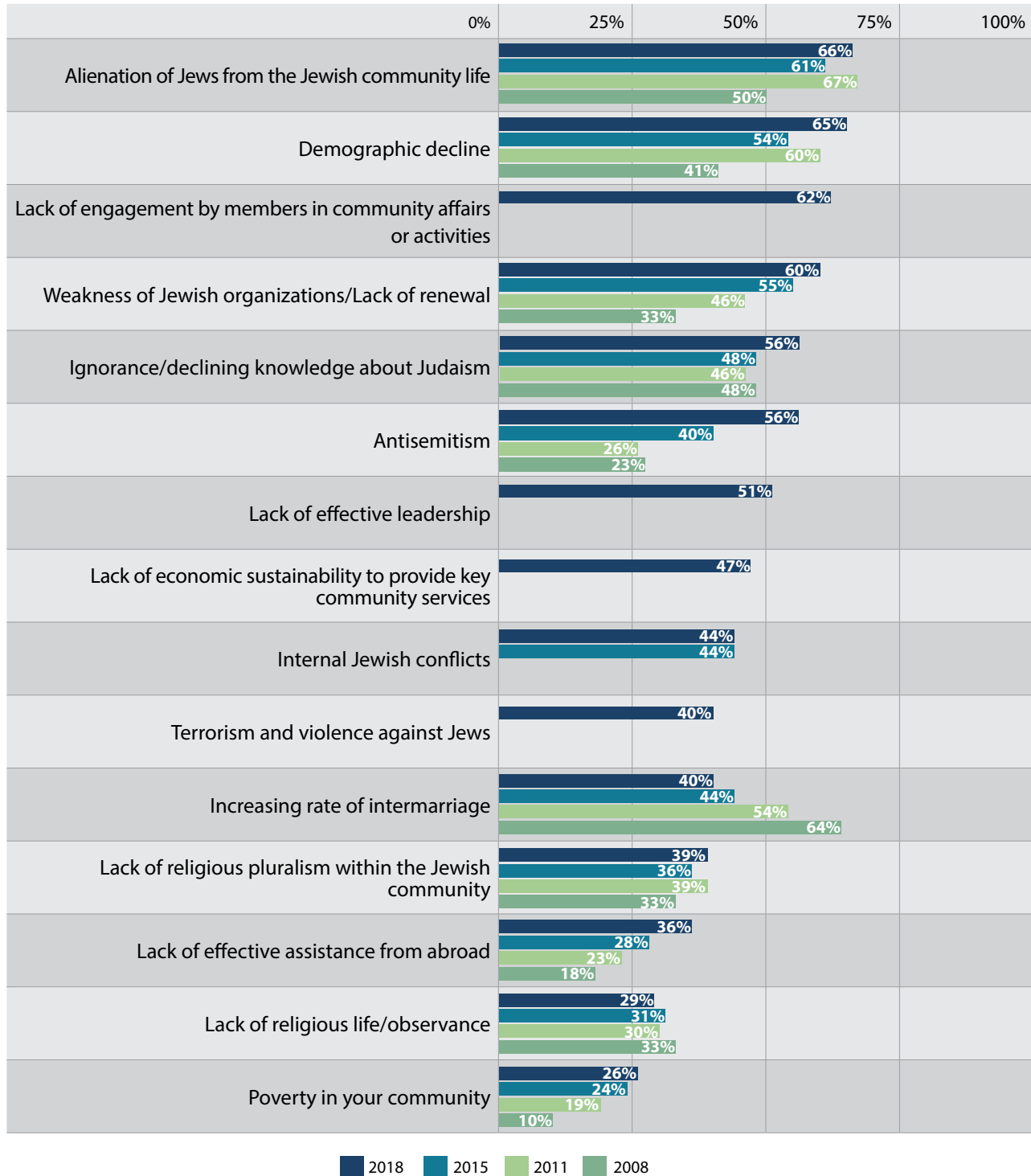
professionals disagreed. The only significant gap was that the lay leaders placed more emphasis on *combatting antisemitism* (67% v 50%).

### Threats to the Future of Jewish Life

The respondents were asked to rate 15 items on communal threats and tensions that they viewed as serious threats to the future of Jewish life in their country, both internal and external to the community, on a 5-point scale where 1 meant “not a threat at all” to 5 “a very serious threat.” Figure 5 shows the most alarming issue that was rated a very serious threat by a majority of respondents in 2018 (a score of 4 or 5) *alienation of Jews from Jewish community life* (66%). This replicated the findings in both 2011 and 2015. *Demographic decline* (65%) rose to position number 2 in the serious threat index. The other high scores are also related to internal community organizational items. These were introduced for the 2018 survey; *lack of engagement by members in community affairs or activities* (62%) and *lack of renewal in Jewish organizations* (60%). *Ignorance about Judaism and Jewish observance* (56%) is also regarded as a threat for Jewish communal continuity. *Antisemitism* which had been a relatively minor threat in 2008 (23%) rose to 7th position (56%) in 2018.

Though the overall assessment of the rank order of threats is stable, there have been some changes in the assessments of threats to the future of Jewish life. There is now more concern about *demographic decline* (5% more since 2011) but there is a definite less of a concern regarding the *increasing rate of mixed marriages* (down 14%). The item that shows the largest uptick (33%) in terms of threat is *antisemitism* which now scores 56% on the serious threat index compared with 23% in 2008. The trend was for more people across all socio-demographic groups to assess it as an increased threat. There has been an increase in feeling that *lack of effective assistance from Jewish organizations abroad* is a threat to the future of communities (36% in 2018; 28% in 2015; 23% in 2011; 18% in 2008).

Figure 5. "Which of the following are the most serious threats to the future of Jewish life in your country?"\* 2018 v 2015 v 2011 v 2008.



\*Only percentage of responses ranging from 4-5



*Our community is aging and is in a continuous numerical decline. The main effort must be made to maintain community life (including the functionality of community institutions) at a level that allows numerical growth of members at any time.*  
Lay Leader, Romania, 80 years old.

Concerning their evaluation of most of the items deemed to be a threat, there was a consensus across sub-groups. In regards to regional differences, those living in Western Europe were more likely to perceive threats than those in the East (score of 4/5). The widest gaps were on *antisemitism* (63% v 38%) and *terrorism and violence against Jews* (47% v 22%). Western Europeans were also more concerned about *increasing rate of mixed marriages*, *lack of economic sustainability* and *lack of engagement* (12-13% gaps).

Lay leaders and professionals exhibited a consensus on the nature and level of threats. Their only divide was on the threat of intermarriage, where leaders saw this as more of a threat than professionals (44% v 27%). Whereas women and men held similar opinions about threats younger respondents generally tended to see fewer serious threats than the old, particularly in regard to *demographic decline* (50% v 70%), *mixed marriages* (28% v 42%) as well as *antisemitism* (43% v 61%) and *terrorism* (28% v 46%).

Religious denominational differences were more marked when contemplating the future. Orthodox Jews differ from other respondents since they consider that *increasing rates of mixed marriages* are serious (Orthodox 56%; Traditionalists 31%; Cultural 32%). Predictably, the *lack of religious life* was regarded as a serious threat by both the Orthodox and Traditionalists (43% and 38%), more than the Cultural segment (18%) but lack of *religious pluralism* was more of a concern for the Traditionalists and Cultural Jews (54% and 52%) than the Orthodox (23%).

*As part of an Orthodox community I think we should discourage intermarriage. Nevertheless as people have chosen for mixed marriage we should encourage them to join the community (but after proper conversion)*  
Lay Leader, Netherlands,  
53 years old.

It is important to recall that 90% of the Orthodox respondents reside in Western Europe. However, there is some evidence here and later in this report that the Orthodox opinion has become less fearful about the issue of intermarriage. Orthodox Jews remain the group with the highest number of respondents saying that mixed marriages are a *very serious threat*, but the percentage fell from 61% in 2008 to 44% in 2011, 31% in 2015 and 30% in 2018.

## II. Internal Community Issues

### Denominational Tensions

Internal community issues tend to focus around religious or ideological differences. In order to assess the context of these issues, we must bear in mind the overall pattern of loyalties found among the respondents. The respondents were roughly equally distributed: One-third with Orthodox affiliation, one-third affiliated with Traditionalist synagogue groupings and one-third religiously unaffiliated. The population was also approximately equally divided between those who reported a religious outlook and those who expressed a secular outlook.

When asked: *To what extent do you feel that there are tensions between different streams within your community today?*, most respondents reported that there were a number of problems but the overall assessment of tensions reported in Table 3 suggests a decline since 2011. However, some caution is required here since the national and regional balance has shifted since 2011 and a larger percentage of respondents provided an answer in 2018 compared with 2015 (96% v 83%).

**Table 3. “To what extent do you feel there are tensions between different denominational streams within your community today?” 2018 v 2015 v 2011 Comparison.**

	2018	2015	2011
No tension/minor tensions	41%	30%	23%
Tensions are real but manageable	37%	40%	47%
There are very serious tensions	18%	13%	22%
Don't know/no answer	4%	17%	9%

No age, gender or, somewhat surprisingly, denominational differences emerged with regard to denominational tensions. Attitudes do, however, differ among Western Europeans, with female community professionals being slightly more concerned by this issue.

*There are different positions within the communities, with respect to the relationship with national politics; Israel; the rabbis; religious pluralism; and the role of Jewish bodies. At times, groups with different opinions enter in conflict and this can generate significant tensions. The use of social networks tends to worsen such tensions. Lay Leader, Italy, 55 years old.*

### Status Issues & Inter-marriage

Respondents were asked to answer a battery of five questions and statements on these issues. In effect they were asked: “Who is a Jew?” What should communal policy on intermarriage be? What should communal policy on Non-Orthodox conversions be? What are the prospects for status issues? What should community policy on the education of children of intermarriage be? The answers reported below are of course the aggregate for the combined European communities and for no community in particular. Nevertheless, they provide an interesting overview of the current sentiment on these contentious questions as well as how the trend in opinion on some issues has evolved since 2008 (See Figure 6).

### Community Membership

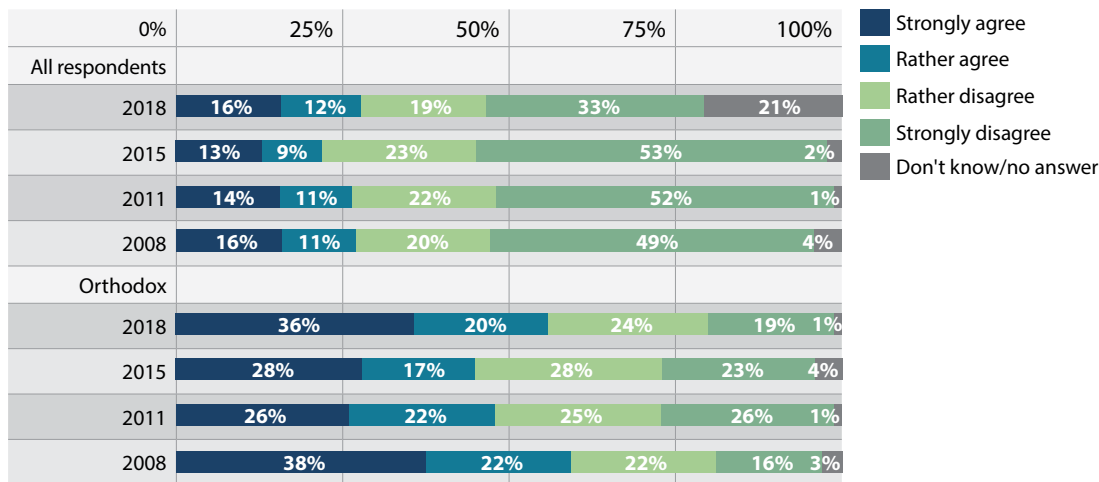
The five statements proposed for agreement or disagreement as to whom should be considered a Jew varied from a normative Halakhic (Jewish Law) definition to a sociological or self-certification approach. The scores for 2018 showed only very small changes on a few percentage points from earlier surveys usually in a more inclusive liberal direction. Given the contentious nature of the membership issue the *strongly agree* or *strongly disagree* response categories for 2018 are reported.

The greatest consensus was for a policy of accepting *everyone who has undergone conversion under the supervision of a rabbi from any denomination* received strong agreement at 50% and strong disagreement at 9%. *Anyone with a Jewish father should be allowed to be a member of the community* gained strong agreement at 47% and strong disagreement at 14%. A policy of accepting *everyone with at least one Jewish grandparent* had strong agreement at

29% and strong disagreement at 24%. The Halakhic approach: *Only those born to a Jewish mother or who have undergone an Orthodox conversion* gained strong agreement from 20% but strong disagreement from 41%. The largest opposition was a policy of acceptance for everyone who considers him/herself to be Jewish achieved strong agreement among 11% of respondents but strong disagreement among 40% of respondents.

In order to find majority opinion, the *rather agree* responses need to be factored into the results. When these are added, the most popular criteria for community membership are after *having undergone conversion under the supervision of a rabbi from any denomination* (81%), *having a Jewish father* (73%), and *one grandparent* (57%).

**Figure 6. "Only those born to a Jewish mother or who have undergone an Orthodox conversion should be allowed to become a member of the community." Comparison of 2018, 2015, 2011 and 2008 responses.**



Among all respondents, attitudes on community membership hardly changed between 2008 and 2015 (Figure 6). The 2018 results are more difficult to interpret due to an increase in the number of "don't knows." If these are eliminated from the totals then there is a slight decrease in the liberal approach (63%) compared with earlier surveys when respondents in general tended to disagree slightly more (69-74%) with the statement: *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*. Perhaps more importantly, the trend of a decrease in agreement with the strict Halakhic position among the Orthodox group revealed in 2011 and in 2015 was reversed in 2018. Orthodox responses of *strongly* and *rather disagree* were 60% in 2008 and 56% in 2018. Again it is worthwhile repeating the caveat that the national balance and number of respondents changed between the various surveys.

## Communal Policy on Intermarriage and the Intermarried

Eight approaches to this issue were offered for agreement or disagreement. There was a consensus that communities needed a policy with 71% of respondents opposed the proposition that their *community remain neutral*, i.e. *there should be no communal policy on intermarriage*. Respondents appeared to differentiate between a civil notion of community membership and religious rituals such as weddings and conversion. So 71% agreed and only 29% disagreed with the statement that *intermarried couples should be allowed to become members of your community*. The tendency to favour inclusion was confirmed when 90% disagreed with the statement *I strongly*

*By not allowing children of intermarriages to find a place, spaces of reflection or commitment, they are doomed to move away from the organized Jewish community, which further isolates the members of the organized Jewish community and promotes a monolithic block. Community Professional, France, 25 years old.*

support to bar intermarried couples from community membership. Consequently 86% agreed their community should put in place suitable spaces or programmes in order to better integrate intermarried families. This is probably because 80% agreed with the statement *including intermarried families in Jewish community life is critical for the survival of our community*. The most widely held opinion, agreed by 91%, was that *“all children of intermarried couples, whether from a Jewish mother or father, should be accepted into Jewish schools.”* This result is surprising given the results below and the sizeable Orthodox segment supporting the Halakha.

*In post-communist countries, especially smaller communities, intermarriage rates are very high. I think that encouraging families to rediscover Judaism and reconnect to their Jewish heritage is a good and important step in revitalizing Jewish life.*  
Lay Leader, Slovakia, 39 years old.

There was division regarding marriages *per se*, with majority of 53% disagreed with the statement *intermarried couples should be allowed to have a Jewish wedding ceremony in your community* while 47% supported the idea. There was a similar split on the proposition that *non-Jewish spouses should be actively encouraged to convert to Judaism* with 47% supporting the idea but 53% opposed.

## Non-Orthodox Conversions

Respondents were offered five policy approaches to communal policy on non-Orthodox conversions. The proposition to *only accept Orthodox conversions* gained the support of 31% of respondents but a majority 69% disagreed (40% strongly). In regard to the idea to *tolerate non-Orthodox conversions but always encourage potential converts to pursue an Orthodox conversion and live an Orthodox Jewish lifestyle* 58% opposed this and 42% agreed. Given that 33% of respondents were Orthodox the pattern of answers to the two statements was probably predictable. However, the non-Orthodox opinion was more likely to take the *strongly disagree* option than the Orthodox to the *strongly agree* position.

The inclusionary option to *actively encourage non-Orthodox conversions and accept those converts as full and equal members of the community* received agreement from 58% but was opposed by 42%. A strictly exclusivist policy received little support with the vast majority of respondents disagreeing with the statement: *Actively discourage non-Orthodox conversions and bar those converts from membership in the community* (84% strong/rather disagree).

*The structure of our community is Orthodox. The synagogue and community are not separated. However, the culture around the community needs to be inclusive, with restrictions of the Halakha. I strongly believe that it is possible to have an Orthodox community with a good inclusive culture.*  
Lay Leader, Denmark, 32 years old.

Interestingly, despite the changes in the profiles of respondents for options also provided by the 2015 and 2011 surveys, scores were almost exactly the same. This suggests that opinions are quite set on this issue. Given the strong feelings in their communities on this divisive question it is no surprise that a majority of 62% agreed with the statement to *remain neutral i.e. the community should have no policy on non-Orthodox conversions*.

## Future Expectations on Jewish Status Issues

Respondents were asked whether they thought Jewish status issues in their communities would become more or less problematic over the next 5 to 10 years. Most were pessimistic with 37%

expecting them to become more problematic and 15% believing “they will pose a danger to the continuity of the existing Jewish community.” Though pessimism has declined since 2011, when it stood at 56%, there was little optimism where only 9% thought these issues would become *less problematic* (9% in 2015 and 10% in 2011). The remaining one-third or so of respondents to the surveys expected little change from the present.

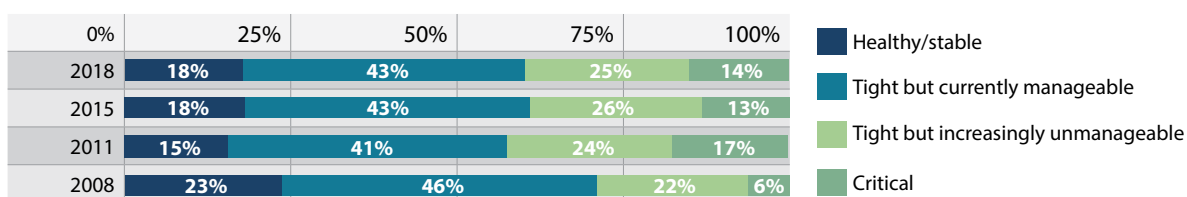
What is worthwhile noting is that there were no statistically significant differences in the assessments of the problem of Jewish status in terms of professional or lay roles in the community, according to generation or denomination. However, there was a regional difference which suggested the problem was greater in Western European communities since 58% of Western Europeans favoured the two pessimistic options as opposed to only 44% of Eastern Europeans.

*Being Jewish cannot be limited to having been born to a Jewish mother: while this is, according to Jewish law, a correct criterion, it should be open to re-interpretation.*  
Lay Leader, Italy, 65 years old

### III. Financial Situation and Funding

The overall assessment of the current financial position of the communities varied considerably but the general pattern has changed very little since 2011 (Figure 7). Though there has been a slight improvement since 2011 the situation has not returned to that prior to the economic recession of 2008-10. Most respondents in 2018, as in 2015, saw their community's funding situation as *tight but currently manageable* (43%) and some reported it as *tight but increasingly unmanageable* (25%). Whereas 18% viewed their financial situation as *healthy*, 14% reported it as *critical*. Respondents from Eastern Europe were more likely to respond that their financial situation as healthy or stable than those in Western Europe.

**Figure 7. “How would you characterize your community's overall financial situation at present?” Comparison of 2018, 2015, 2011 and 2008 responses.**



In regards to expectations for the next 5 to 10 years, the tendency was pessimistic: 49% expected the general financial situation of the community to *deteriorate somewhat or significantly* and only 18% expected it to *improve somewhat or significantly*. Interestingly, there were regional differences on expectations with 56% of those in the West adopting pessimistic expectations compared to only 37% from the East. There was also a slight tendency for lay leaders (53%) to be more pessimistic about finances than the professionals (46%) or others (42%) in the community.

### IV. Safety, Security and Emigration

The early 21st century has been marked by a series of terrorist attacks on Jewish communities in Western Europe such as a Jewish school in Toulouse, France in 2012, the

Jewish Museum in Brussels in 2014, a kosher supermarket in Paris and a synagogue in Copenhagen, Denmark in 2015. Respondents were asked *to what extent do you feel that it is safe to live and practise as a Jew in your community today?* There was surprisingly little change in the overall assessment of the safety situation since 2011 and most European Jewish leaders felt secure in 2018 with 20% reporting they felt *very safe* and 63% reporting they felt *rather safe*. Only 13% felt *rather unsafe* and a mere 4% *not safe at all*. Presumably the majority's confidence in their safety reflects their assurance in the additional security measures put in place by the national authorities (see below).

## Personal Safety

However, these surveys reveal growing unease regarding safety, and since 2008 there has been a 13% decrease in people who feel *very safe* in their city, although the response for *rather safe* has remained constant. The concern is widespread as there were no statistically significant differences between or within the socio-demographic groups (age, gender), denomination or office in the community with regard to responses to the question. The fact that "visible" Jews in public such as the Orthodox did not feel more vulnerable is worth noting.

Most striking is the emergence of sharp regional differences. Whereas 96% of those in the East felt *safe* in their city only 76% of those in the West did. On the other hand almost one in four from Western Europe (24%) felt *unsafe* in their city in contrast to only 4% of those in the East. This regional variation, which is evident elsewhere in the current survey is noteworthy and has historical significance for Jews in Europe. It is a reversal of the situation whereby over the past two centuries the "West" was regarded as more welcoming and safer for Jews than the "East."

## Future Expectations of Antisemitism

When asked if they expected changes over the course of the next 5-10 years in the frequency or occurrence of problems stemming from antisemitism, the tendency was to be pessimistic with 22% expecting the prejudice to *increase significantly* and 47% expecting it to *increase somewhat*. Those expecting antisemitism to *remain constant* amounted to 26%. Only a tiny minority of 4% expect it to *decrease somewhat/significantly*. These results are almost exactly the same as in 2015. Again opinion was unanimous across socio-demographic groups. However, a significant regional difference emerged on expectations of increasing antisemitism with those in Western Europe considerably more pessimistic (75%) than those in the East (56%).

## Government Response

Respondents were asked: *Do you think the government of your country responds adequately to the security needs of Jewish communities?* Three out of four respondents thought their government did respond to security needs; *yes, definitely* 29%; *yes, probably* 45%. Only 7% responded *no, definitely not* and 19% *no, probably not*. While yet again no subgroup variations emerged, interestingly neither did a regional one on this question.

## European Union Initiatives

Respondents were asked: *Are you aware of any specific measures taken by the European Union in order to prevent or combat antisemitism?* Only a minority of 42% answered "Yes" while 57% answered "No." Community professionals were no more aware than lay leaders. The younger respondents were more informed (52% voting "Yes"). Awareness was low regarding EU initiatives when it came to the specifics: *Legislation* (19%); *coordinator on combatting Antisemitism* (19%) and *combatting hate speech* (17%).

## Emergency Preparations

Respondents were asked to report *to what degree is your community prepared to deal with an emergency situation?* The response varied considerably. 35% considered they were prepared to a *very large/large degree*, 39% to a *moderate degree*, 18% to a *small degree* while 8% considered their community was *not prepared at all*. Leaders and professionals followed similar response patterns but the younger respondents were slightly less sure about community preparedness.

## Emigration

There were two types of questions about emigration. One was personal and specific, and the other was in regard to the general Jewish population of the respondent's country. The personal question was *In the past five years, have you considered emigrating from your country because you don't feel safe living there as a Jew?*<sup>2</sup> The vast majority, 76% had not considered emigrating. Only 3% had made *active preparations* and 19% had *considered emigrating but has not yet done this*. Interestingly, the young were more likely to reject emigration (81%) than the old (74%). On this issue, the middle-aged were slightly more likely than the other two age groups to consider emigration (25%).

The 22% who responded that they were preparing or considering emigrating were then asked: *To which country?* Two-thirds (67%) chose Israel, 15% another country in Europe and 15% North America. There was considerable age variation in the choice of destination. Israel was favoured by 78% of the older generation while only 24% of the younger respondents who preferred elsewhere in Europe (36%) or North America (36%). This suggests Israel was seen more as a retirement choice. The *Aliyah* orientation of older leaders is probably also buttressed by their higher degree of Zionism (see below) and their greater concern about antisemitism (see above). Orthodox Jews (77%) were more likely to consider Israel than Cultural Jews (53%) and were more motivated to *search for a richer Jewish life*. There was some regional disparity too. Israel was the choice of 72% of those living in the West and only 29% of those in the East, but we must bear in mind that respondents in the East also tended to be younger and less likely to be Orthodox.

The question *"do you expect an increase of Jewish emigration from your country?"* divided the sample with 48% responding *"No"*, 43% *"Yes, limited"* and 9% *"Yes, significant."* Those who replied *"Yes"* were then asked what they thought *were the main reasons for Jews to emigrate?* No one paramount reason emerged but *due to antisemitism* led with 22%. The other options were the *search for richer Jewish life* (17%), *the search for better professional opportunities* (17%) and *financial reasons* (16%). While the young and middle-aged spread their motivation for emigration equally across the reasons, antisemitism was by far the prime reason among older potential emigrants.

The respondents' assessment of the preferred destination of local Jews in general differed from their own pattern of choices. While 22% failed to offer an opinion, 33% thought it would be Israel, 25% North America, 17% elsewhere in Europe, and 3% other countries. The lower expectations concerning *Aliyah* in their community compared with themselves suggest that the leaders do not believe that the average Jew is as Zionist as they are. Respondents in the East were more likely to believe emigrants from their communities favour Europe and North America while those in Western Europe believed Israel was the most popular potential destination. Lay leaders and professionals again provided similar patterns of answers.

<sup>2</sup> This question was deliberately taken from the Second FRA survey on discrimination and hate crime against Jews in order to have a comparative perspective.

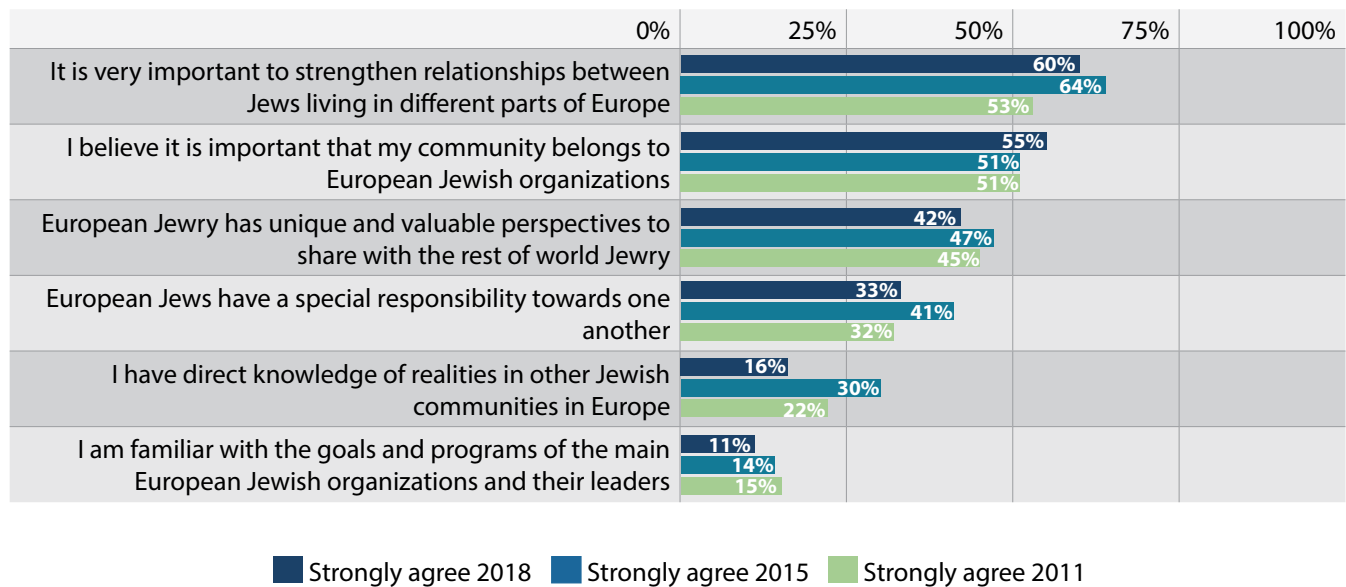
## V. Europe

The respondents were offered seven statements concerning attitudes towards Europe and Jewish communities within Europe. The rank order of *strong agreement* with the statements was very similar for all the surveys as shown in Figure 8.

However, both as a Jewish and a general political project, Europe is very popular. All the statements received majority support with a tendency to concentrate their answers in the *rather agree* option. Consequently, in order to obtain a more differentiated analysis the *strongly agree* response category should be our focus.

In 2018 the statement gaining a majority and increasing level of *strongly agree* responses was related to Jewish unity: *It is very important to strengthen relationships between Jews living in different parts of Europe* (60%). This was followed by *I believe it is important that my community belong to European Jewish organizations* (55%). Those living in the East were in stronger agreement than those in the West, which correlates with the pattern of the overall survey response rate by region to this survey which was higher in the East.

**Figure 8. Comparison of 2018, 2015 and 2011 responses on statements about European Jewry expressed in strongly agree (%).**



Jewish solidarity and European Jewish identity were also strongly supported: European Jewry has unique and valuable perspectives to share with the rest of World Jewry (42% strongly agree). There has been a decrease since 2015 in the sentiment that European Jews have a special responsibility towards one another (33% strongly agree).

Most participants admitted that their familiarity with or direct knowledge of Jewish communities in other countries and organizations was weak and this has decreased slightly since 2011: *I have direct knowledge of realities in other Jewish communities in Europe* (16% v 22% strongly agree). In addition few believed they were very familiar with the goals and programmes of the main European Jewish organizations and their leaders (11% strongly agree). Regarding this issue, if we add in the *rather agree* responses, lay leaders reported that they were more familiar than professionals (54% v 37%).



## Optimism about the Future

Two questions were posed in order to assess the degrees of optimism about the future of European Jewry and of the European project itself. These were; *I am optimistic about the future of Europe*; and *the future of European Jewry is vibrant and positive*. Concerning the future of the European project, European Jews seemed almost equally divided between optimists (*strongly/rather agree* 49%) and pessimists (*strongly/rather disagree* 51%). There was more optimism in the East (61%) than the West (44%). The young (60%) were more *optimistic* than the middle-aged (43%) and older age cohort (47%).

Likewise, the statement *the future of European Jewry is vibrant and positive* obtained a *strongly/rather agree* of 49%. Again, there was more optimism in the East (58%) than in the West (45%). The younger cohorts (65%) were more *optimistic* than the middle-aged (51%) and the older age cohorts (43%).

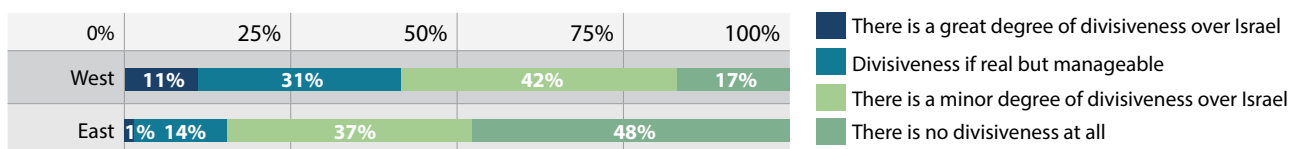
Given Europe's current social and political uncertainties, these percentages attest to a relative feeling of confidence, though not an excessive one. Yet, when compared to other Europeans, Jewish leaders are more pessimistic. According to the most recent Eurobarometer survey, 56% of Europeans showed optimism in the EU<sup>3</sup>. Hence there is a 10% gap *in optimism* between Europeans and European Jewish leaders.

## VI. Israel

The relationship with the State and people of Israel is of great importance to European Jewish communities. However, this relationship has become more problematic and contentious in recent years, as events in the Middle East have reverberated through Europe. The policies of the Israeli government on Jewish religious issues as well as peace and security issues have been controversial. Some have claimed Israel is polarizing Jewish communities as well as creating some of the antisemitism which, as noted, is having an increasingly harmful effect on communities.

In order to gauge the situation respondents were asked: *To what extent do you feel there is divisiveness over Israel within your community today?* Overall only 7% reported a *great degree of divisiveness* while 26% reported there is *no divisiveness at all*. The only significant differences according to subgroups were regional. Similar to 2015, Western Europeans reported community divisiveness (Figure 9) was much more of a problem than for Eastern Leaders, with 11% stating that there was a *great degree of divisiveness over Israel* in Western communities compared to only 1% in the East. Conversely 47% of those in Eastern Europe reported no divisiveness at all compared to only 17% of those in the West.

**Figure 9. "To what extent do you feel there is divisiveness over Israel within your community today?" West v East 2018.**



<sup>3</sup> "A European Spring? Latest Standard Eurobarometer shows Optimism is on the Rise," European Commission, August 2017. [[https://ec.europa.eu/malta/news/european-spring-latest-standard-eurobarometer-shows-optimism-rise\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/malta/news/european-spring-latest-standard-eurobarometer-shows-optimism-rise_en)]



Though issues involving Israel are regarded as contentious, there was a strong consensus over the need to provide space for open political debate about Israel within the communities. This is an issue where the communities themselves have jurisdiction. The survey replicated the 2011 and 2015 findings which found overwhelming agreement (49% *strongly* and 35% *rather agree*) that *Jewish communities should provide opportunities for members to share different opinions and points of view on Israel and its policies*. There was also a strong consensus of 83% that *events in Israel sometimes lead to an increase of antisemitism in my country* (43% *strong* and 40% *rather agree*). This observation may well be linked with the 73% agreement with the statement: *The media in my country regularly portrays Israel in a bad light*. Though here again there was regional divide with 88% of those in the West viewing the media as hostile but only 36% of those in the East. The four surveys allow for the monitoring trends in European Jewish on five attitudes towards Israel as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4. "To what extent do you personally agree or disagree with the following statements about Israel?" Comparison of 2018, 2015, 2011 and 2008 responses.**

	Strongly Agree	Rather Agree	Rather disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/no answer
<b>All Jews have a responsibility to support Israel</b>					
2018	42%	41%	11%	4%	2%
2015	51%	31%	11%	4%	3%
2011	41%	38%	13%	5%	3%
2008	51%	31%	11%	4%	3%
<b>Someone can just as easily be a good Jew in Europe as they can in Israel</b>					
2018	44%	34%	16%	5%	2%
2015	49%	32%	12%	4%	3%
2011	46%	35%	12%	4%	3%
2008	51%	26%	14%	4%	5%
<b>Israel is critical in sustaining Jewish life in Europe</b>					
2018	49%	35%	13%	2%	2%
2015	41%	38%	16%	3%	2%
2011	40%	38%	16%	3%	2%
2008	37%	34%	21%	5%	4%
<b>I am (NOT) sometimes ashamed of the actions of the Israeli government</b>					
2018	25%	28%	25%	18%	4%
2015	16%	35%	26%	19%	2%
2011	16%	31%	29%	21%	3%
2008	12%	35%	26%	23%	5%
<b>I support Israel fully, regardless of how its government behaves</b>					
2018	36%	32%	19%	11%	2%
2015	28%	28%	26%	15%	3%
2011	20%	35%	25%	17%	3%
2008	30%	31%	19%	15%	6%

Table 4 shows that views regarding Israel are stable and there has been minimal change in the pattern of responses between the 2008 and 2018 surveys. A consistently strong held opinion is the 78% agreement in 2018 (44% *strongly agree*; 34% *rather agree*) that the proposition: *Someone can just as easily be a good Jew in Europe as they can in Israel*. Paradoxically there was also a strong and increased 84% agreement with the statement: *Israel is critical to sustaining Jewish life in Europe* (49% *strongly* and 35% *rather agree*).

The overall tenor of opinion on political issues produced a sympathetic pro-Israel majority but levels of support and criticism varied considerably according to the context and wording offered. There was an 83% agreement with the statement, "all Jews have a responsibility to support Israel." There continues to be some division over the statement,



"I support Israel fully, regardless of how its government behaves" (strongly agree 37%; rather agree 32%; rather disagree 19%; strongly disagree 11%). The widest division of opinion related to the provocative statement, "I am sometimes ashamed of the actions of the Israeli government." In the interests of consistency this statement has been reversed in Table 4 in which 53% of respondents disagreed with the statement (25% strongly disagree). On the other hand, 43% took a critical stance and agreed (18% strongly agree). Yet even on this issue there is great stability in the balance of opinion over the period 2008-18.

In regards to the relationship between respondent background characteristics, and their opinion on matters concerning Israel, statistical analysis showed that the age factor is important, with the younger generation being slightly less enthusiastic supporters of Israel than the older generation. The same is true for professionals when compared with the lay leaders. Gender largely fails to predict differences in reactions towards the battery of statements regarding Israel. The exception was that women agree more than men that they are *sometimes ashamed of the actions of the Israeli government* (54% v 36%).

Attitudes towards support for Israel by denomination showed a strong positive consensus on the need to support the Jewish state. There is a slight tendency for the Orthodox to be firmer in their support and less critical. Orthodox Jews were more likely to offer unconditional support for Israel *regardless of how its government behaves* (82%) compared with the Traditional (75%) or Cultural Jews (62%). Orthodox Jews (29%) were also less likely to be ashamed than the Cultural (41%) and much less than the Traditional where a majority of 59% was sometimes ashamed of Israel's actions. Cultural Jews seem more polarized than the other two groups in terms of having more members who have strong agreement and disagreement about being ashamed of Israel. Again the largest and most significant difference on an item was regional with Western Europeans tending to be more certain than Easterners that they *could be as good a Jew in Europe as they can in Israel* (85% v 59%).

On specific issues relating to the surrounding local environment regarding Israel, there has been increasing divergence between the regions over time even though the direction of trends is similar. One of the reasons why those in the West are more likely to be *ashamed of the actions of the Israeli government* may probably be related to the different factors concerning the local impact of the media and events in Israel. In contrast, the amount of hostility in the media and Israel-caused antisemitism are rated lower by those in the East. The statement *the media in my country regularly portrays Israel in a bad light* obtained a much higher score in the West than in the East (88% v 36%) and the gap was particularly wide related to the highest rating (strongly agree) for the statement *events in Israel sometimes lead to an increase in antisemitism in my country* (53% West v 18% East).

## VII. Community Development: Decision-Making, Leadership and Change

### Decision-Making Processes & Future Planning

The variety of community sizes and situations the respondents were reporting on makes any overall assessment of community organization largely impressionistic and difficult to interpret. Nevertheless a macro-view is indicative and useful because it can reveal insights and trends across Europe. One major concern revealed both by opinions on community priorities and on threats was the need to work harder on recruitment and outreach in order to maximize the involvement of the Jewish public.

There is recognition that greater openness and transparency could help increase community participation. Respondents were first asked on a scale of 1-10 *how participative is the decision making of your institution?* High participation scores of 9/10 were provided by 23% of respondents and two-thirds (68%) gave a positive assessment (6-10) for their organization. In regards to the occurrence of regular assemblies and plenaries, 84% reported that it took place. The level of member participation varied: 37% were attended by over 60%, 21% by around half while 24% reported less than 20% attendance.

In regards to their organization developing *any type of strategic planning for future years* 47% answered "Yes" and 19% "No". Strategic planning appeared to be a fashionable activity as one-third of the respondents (34%) claimed "*we are working on this right now.*"

A somewhat similar pattern emerged regarding any type of leadership succession planning for future years. A majority reported their organization was working on it with 29% answering "Yes" and 31% reporting "we are working on this right now." However, that suggests that 41% of European Jewish organizations have no leadership succession plan. Continuity requires involving the younger generation. In the battery of questions on programmes for young adults (age 18-40), respondents were asked if their community had leadership programmes for this demographic group and 37% replied positively. In regards to the degree of importance given to *young Jewish adults' engagement in the community planning and policies*, 20% of respondents rated it as of *high importance* (10) and the overall score for all communities was a respectable 6.7.

### Quality of Professional & Lay Leadership in European Jewish Communities

Respondents were asked to *assess the overall quality* of their community's lay leadership and their professionals on a scale of 1-5 from *very weak* to *very strong*. This exercise was basically a self-assessment since the assessors were the lay and professional leadership of their communities themselves. However, it must be borne in mind that the sample is skewed since more lay leaders than professionals responded. Six items were asked about both leaders and professionals and these are shown in Table 5.

**Table 5. Assessment of Quality of Lay Leadership and Community Professionals on Common Items. Percentage, very strong.**

	Lay Leaders	Professionals
Have an understanding of community needs	24%	24%
Are knowledgeable about Judaic issues	26%	16%
Have management skills for non-profit organizations	15%	14%
Have financial skills	19%	11%
Have political skills	15%	7%
Have a clear picture of what the Jewish community should look in the future	12%	10%

The scores for the strongest attribute *understanding community needs* were exactly the same. They were also similar on *management skills for non-profits*, and the weakest regarding having *a clear picture of the community's future*. The respondents saw the professionals as weaker than the lay leadership in the areas of *Judaic issues*, *financial skills* and *political skills*.

*I believe installing term limitations to community leadership roles and positions would be a good start to having a more vibrant community leadership. Older volunteers may assume more advisory or consulting roles, guiding younger Jews in leadership roles.*  
Lay Leader, Turkey, 57 years old.

The battery of items exclusive to lay leadership also included *collaborative skills* (19% very strong); *a compelling Jewish vision of how the world should look* (18%); *can be seen as a model for community members* (17%); *have knowledge about non-profits* (15%).

The assessment item only for professionals was if they *could have professional success in the non-Jewish world*. Here they were rated *very strong* by 17% of respondents.

This links to another question which asked: *When compared to other professionals undertaking similar responsibilities in the general society (non-Jewish) are professionals in your community properly paid?* Perhaps not surprisingly, 18% of respondents stated they did not know or had no opinion. Among those holding an opinion, there was a split with 53% replying "Yes" and 47% "No."

Age, gender, denomination and region were unimportant in these assessment scores but further analysis that deals with the responses of lay leaders and professionals separately shows that each subgroup tended to score the skills in their own group higher by around 10 percentage points than on most items. This was also the case in 2015. Not surprisingly, this discrepancy is most evident on the assessment of the professionals' *success in wider world* and the professional pay question. In terms of percentages, scores of 4-5, 65% of professionals but only 43% of leaders believe professionals could be

*We need to provide more training and opportunities for collaboration between lay leaders, especially the volunteers from different countries in order to share ideas and cross-fertilize. Provide women with empowerment training to allow them to take the place they deserve in leadership positions in the community.*  
Lay Leader, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 52 years old.

successful outside the Jewish community. Logically it is no surprise that 58% of lay leaders claim that professionals are properly paid but only 42% of the professionals themselves. This assessment suggests remuneration could be a factor underlying issues regarding tensions and quality of personnel in some communities.

## Community Initiatives

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with six statements about initiatives in their communities as shown in Table 6.

**Table 6. Agreement (strongly /rather agree) with Community Initiatives Items.**

Most of the new initiatives created in your community are initiated as part of already existing Jewish organizations	79%
I find it positive that Jewish life flourishes outside the more established Jewish institutions	76%
Most of the new initiatives created in your community are initiated by grassroots organizations and/or Jewish entrepreneurs	37%
Most of the new initiatives created in your community are initiated by private foundations and agencies from abroad	22%
Most of the new initiatives created in your community are initiated outside existing Jewish organizations	21%
New initiatives outside the more established institutions undermine the Jewish community	19%

There appeared to be a reasonable consensus on these issues. The respondents appeared to welcome new ideas and did not seem to be too defensive or exclusionary. Yet it appears that most new initiatives in European communities arise from existing organizations. However the younger generation agreed more strongly than older cohorts concerning flourishing outside existing organizations (young 89%; middle-aged 81%; older 71%). One change since 2015 is the disappearance of regional differences, particularly on the item relating to interventions from foundations and agencies from abroad.

## Young Adults

A battery of questions was focused on *touch points for young adult engagement* (aged 18-40) in the communities. Respondents were asked to note all that applied in their community. Table 7 provides results for the total sample and for the young adult subgroup of respondents (N= 114). Obviously since it affected them, the young adults knew more about this subject and provided more accurate and detailed information. Nevertheless, the rank order of the items is not too dissimilar. The total sample which is heavily skewed to older leaders seemed to regard synagogues as more important while the young people themselves saw leadership programmes and international gathering as more important "touch points."

**Table 7. “What are the “touch points” for young adult engagement in your community?” (Percentage mentioned).**

	All Respondents	Young Adults
Leadership programmes	37%	72%
International events and gatherings	37%	66%
Local programmes in synagogues	37%	48%
Jewish Students' Union	36%	50%
Volunteer programmes in Israel	28%	40%
Jewish professional networks	21%	39%
Volunteer programmes for social justice causes	19%	32%
Moishe House	12%	32%

*Even young Jews who used to be very active in the community at the age of 18, have no place there anymore after this age. The community offers them programmes, but this means they cannot actively shape community life. Young leaders who are involved in decision-making processes can speak for their own generation and ensure that their voices are heard and they become part of the community and have a home in the community. If the voices of young Jews are not represented by their peers, they will no longer have any relationship with the community in the future.*  
Community Activist, Germany, 23 years old.

## VIII. Overview of the Findings

What stands out from this statistical analysis of the survey results is the level of consensus among the respondents on the present situation and challenges facing their communities as well as wide agreement on which issues are problematic or divisive. The quantitative findings reflect just how little opinions on community organization and priorities among the leaders of European Jewish communities vary on the basis of their personal background characteristics such as region, gender, age, and denomination. As a result, a surprisingly small number of questions revealed valid statistical divisions of opinion on the basis of the age or gender of the respondents. There appears to be a growing consensus on many issues as to both policy requirements, impact, and in the assessment of particular situations. For instance, overall there appears to be little evidence of generational splits on most communal issues and it is important to note that there are very few differences between the opinions and attitudes of men and women emerged.

Some subgroup differences may be observed on the basis of region, religious denomination and role in the community. Regional differences persist in both the spheres of community organization and internal community priorities, but they are narrowing with each survey in the series. Yet on matters of external relations such as safety, antisemitism and Israel, regional differences seem to be widening mainly due to an increasingly hostile



environment in Western Europe that most respondents expect to worsen in coming years. This will not lead to mass emigration but there is definitely a serious problem when one in five successful, well-educated Jewish leaders in Western Europe are considering emigrating, mostly because of growing antisemitism.

As might be expected, differences between the denominational groups were the most common, mostly in matters of religious practise and authority (*Halakha*), particularly regarding Jewish status and intermarriage and, to a lesser extent, matters pertaining to Israel. The general tendency leans towards a division of opinion within the European communities between those who are Orthodox in affiliation and the rest of the population.

In some policy areas, such as communal priorities, the significant differences between the professional leadership of the communities and lay leaders, which were evident in previous surveys seem to have diminished.

Regarding differences in the findings between the current 2018 and the 2015, 2011, and 2008 surveys, the most striking observation is the consistency of the data regarding the actual range of the scores, the overall pattern and the direction of trends. This situation is particularly striking given the differences between the participants in the four surveys in terms of numbers participating and their countries of residence. The stable patterns and clear trends in the results also suggest that the socio-demographic characteristics of the three samples, which are similar across the time series, override other factors and underpin the stability of the findings.

The consistency of the patterns and trends regarding the priorities and opinions of European Jewish leaders over the past ten years, which were revealed by the four surveys, also validate the quality of the research exercise and particularly the seriousness and care with which the respondents approached the survey. They also suggest that a clear European Jewish consensus is emerging in many areas of Jewish community life. This is a result of the continued convergence and integration of Western and Eastern European Jewish communities.

## IX. Profile of Respondents

**Table 8. Country of Residence in 2018, 2015, 2011, 2008.**

Country	Responded 2018	Percent	Responded 2015	Percent	Responded 2011	Responded 2008
France	134	15	34	11	48	33
UK	52	6	32	10	47	25
Germany	114	13	27	9	24	23
Austria	6		7		5	2
Belgium	30		9		14	17
Bosnia-Herzegovina	16		3		2	3
Bulgaria	21		17		4	6
Croatia	9		7		2	3
Czech Republic	34		9		12	10
Denmark	8		2		3	3
Estonia	7		2		4	5
Finland	5		3		1	2
Greece	24		7		6	3
Hungary	43		19		10	18
Italy	96		13		21	11
Latvia	12		5		7	7
Lithuania	6		3		9	8
Luxembourg	3		2		2	1
Netherlands	43		11		10	11
Norway	5		0		2	1
Poland	27					
Portugal	3		1		2	1
Romania	65		20		12	7
Serbia	19		2		4	3
Slovakia	21		9		8	4
Slovenia	0		1		1	1
Spain	40		19		12	7
Sweden	10		7		12	11
Switzerland	17		14		17	7
Turkey	23		7		18	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>893</b>	100	<b>314</b>	100	<b>329</b>	<b>250</b>

The overall profile of the respondents in terms of country of residence in all four surveys has varied considerably but has consistently skewed towards the smaller communities in Europe and those where JDC operates in Eastern Europe. Table 8 shows that the countries with the highest numbers of participants were: France (134), Germany (114), Italy (96), Romania (65), and U.K. (52). A feature of the 2018 profile is the fall in British participation and a large increase in the Italian survey. Hence, the proportion of respondents from the big three communities of France, United Kingdom and Germany, where the vast majority of European Jews live, is disproportionately low. They comprise only 34% of all respondents. This is due to both a lower response rate in the larger countries and the nature of the survey sample design which focused on a finite number of “leaders” in each country. Two-thirds (67%) of the European Jewish community leaders and professionals participating in the survey were living in Western Europe and 33% resided in the former Soviet bloc of Eastern Europe in 2018. This was up from 26% in 2011. The overall response rate was 68% of the 1,327 persons approached; the highest response rates to the survey—over 80%—tended to come from these smaller communities such as Bosnia, Greece and Latvia.

**Table 9. Distribution of Respondents by Synagogue Denomination 2018, 2015, 2011, 2008.**

Denomination	Responded 2018	Percentage	Percentage 2015	Percentage 2011	Percentage 2008
<b>Orthodox</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>27%</b>
Charedi	7	1%	0%	1%	n/a
Orthodox	70	11%	11%	9%	5%
Modern Orthodox	132	21%	20%	26%	22%
<b>Traditional</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>30%</b>
Conservative/Masorti	67	11%	17%	14%	18%
Reform/Liberal	83	13%	13%	14%	12%
Post/Multi-Denominational	10	2%	2%	1%	n/a
<b>Cultural</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>42%</b>
Secular	77	12%	11%	9%	15%
Just Jewish	154	24%	23%	21%	23%
Other	32	5%	3%	3%	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>632</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Survey respondents were free to choose the questions they answered and not everyone reported their synagogue and denominational affiliation (Table 9). In 2018, among the 632 individuals who did report, 33% identified themselves as belonging to some type of Orthodoxy, 26% identified themselves as belonging to another type of religious or traditional Judaism (Reform, Liberal, Masorti) and 41% identified themselves as cultural or nonreligious Jews (Secular and “Just Jewish”). Table 9 shows that the overall religious profile of the survey respondents has undergone little change over the four surveys conducted so far despite the variation in national profile and the size of the sample. However, the 2018 respondents appeared slightly less religious and more “centrist” when asked how they regarded themselves in terms of their own personal “outlook” rather than just their membership or “belonging.” This more psychological measure revealed the participants’ “outlook” as religious (16%); somewhat religious (39%); somewhat secular (21%), and secular (24%).

In terms of their current community involvement, 93% of 2018 respondents may be described as coming from “within” the organized Jewish community. This suggests the participants’ views and assessments are well informed by recent experience working in the various communities. The majority of participants (63%) were elected or appointed as lay leaders in the Jewish community of their country, while 26% described themselves as working as community professionals and 4% as religious leaders. The “opinion formers” who held no formal positions in the community made up 7% of the participants. They were mostly journalists, scientists, academics and lawyers. Overall respondents were a remarkably well-educated population with 89% holding a university degree. Furthermore, 65% of the sample held a post-graduate degree or professional qualification.

As in 2011 and 2015, the 2018 survey allows us to analyse the responses to questions with continuous ordinal categories (i.e. excluding statements and propositions) for subgroups within the sample. These subgroups are stratified on the basis of their background characteristics (when said characteristics were provided by the participant), such as gender (men v. women), age or generation (young, middle-aged and older persons), region (Eastern as opposed to Western Europe) and denomination (Orthodox, Traditional, Cultural). In addition, where relevant, analysis is provided by role in the community (lay leader, community professional, opinion former). This process makes it possible to probe the pattern of responses between these subgroups among the participants in terms of the answers provided and to test and report where there are valid and reliable differences in terms of statistical significance.<sup>4</sup>

## Denomination

In order to investigate differences among those respondents who identified themselves according to their religion or ideology, these were classified into 3 groups: Orthodox synagogue members (N=209), Traditional i.e. non-Orthodox synagogue members (N=160), and Cultural Jews, i.e. religiously unaffiliated (N=263).

## Gender

The differences between self-reporting male participants (N=416) and female participants (N=217) were probed to see if there were substantial differences of approach to community life and issues.

## Age

The participants who self-identified by age were categorized into 3 age groups: young—under 40 years of age (N=114), middle-aged—40-54 years of age (N=163), and older—over 55 years of age (N=455).

## Region

The participants were divided into an Eastern European group (N=294) and a Western European group (N=599). The Eastern region comprises former Soviet bloc countries (excluding East Germany but including former Yugoslavia).


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<sup>4</sup> All comparisons made in this report between subgroups of respondents or between the 2008, 2011, 2015 and 2018 findings are statistically valid. The mean averages of the responses to each question by each subgroup were measured using a T test of statistical significance. We report those at the  $p > .05$  level where the probability of error is lower than 5%.

Given the different histories of Western and Eastern Europe, regional differences persist and emerge in the profiles of the respondents from the two regions. There was no difference on gender with both regions having almost the same proportion of around one-third female respondents (33% in West; 30% in East). However, Eastern leaders are considerably younger with 28% under the age of 40 compared to only 16% in Western communities. Correspondingly, Western leaders are older with 56% over 55 years of age compared to only 47% among Eastern leaders. Religious Judaism is stronger in the West. In terms of religious denomination, Western leaders are more Orthodox (39% v 9%), slightly more likely to be Traditional Jews (27% v 23%) but much less likely to identify as Cultural Jews than those from the East (34% v 64%). The fact that Western respondents were older and more religiously-oriented than those living in the East must be factored into any conclusions where regional differences emerge in the analysis. Conversely, apparent denominational and age differences may be due to regional factors. However, given the small size of the sample these interactions are difficult to measure precisely.

### **Differences Between the 2008, 2011, 2015 and 2018 Survey Participants**

Any assessment of changes in the priorities and opinions of European leaders over the past ten years must bear in mind the differences between the characteristics of the participants in the four surveys. The main differences in 2018 compared to the earlier surveys were a larger sample and a larger percentage from smaller national Jewish communities particularly Italy and the Balkans. However, on most socio-demographic characteristics the samples were quite similar. For example, the proportion of women respondents was 32% in 2011, 33% in 2015 and 34% in 2018. The proportion of lay leader participants in 2018 was higher at 63% compared with 51% in 2015, 54% in 2011 was 54%, and 45% in 2008. Orthodox respondents ranged from 27-36% across the four surveys. The samples have become older with each succeeding survey with those over 55 years of age comprising 35% in 2008, 43% in 2011, 50% in 2015 and 65% in 2018.



The JDC-International Centre for Community Development (JDC-ICCD) is the independent European research and evaluation unit of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC). Founded in 2005, JDC-ICCD is devoted to providing an in-depth perspective on the phenomena of Jewish community, identity, and social welfare. Through applied research, JDC-ICCD analyses ongoing trends and changes in the Jewish world, while measuring and evaluating the impact of community initiatives in the field. The Centre generates meaningful and scientifically constructed data that can influence decision-making processes for Jewish communities and other stakeholders, including JDC, across Europe.

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