**Brussels call for lower kosher tax**

Asher Gold

**PROPOSALS to reduce the tax that is levied on meat products received a favourable response this week at a high level rabbinical conference on kosher issues in Brussels. Delegates at the three day meeting of the Rabbinical Council of Europe (RCE) were in broad agreement that the tax which supports the rabbinate, melovos and other communal facilities should be reduced to facilitate increased consumption of kosher food. They also urged greater cooperation between the different kosher organisations, such as using the same ablation, for example.

Over one hundred rabbis and representatives of the world’s most prominent kosher authorities heard that while the supermarket Tesco sells a whole chicken for £2, its kosher counterpart of similar weight costs five to six times more. This situation, delegated were told, obtains throughout Europe, although the continent may be divided into two categories: those countries where it is not possible to obtain any kosher meat whatsoever and those where the price of kosher meat is prohibitively high.

“The current price of kosher food in Europe deters tens of thousands of Jews from buying kosher food,” said Rabbi Aryeh Goldberg, deputy director of the RCE. “Their failure to eat kosher erodes their Jewish identity and encourages their assimilation into non-Jewish society.”

A special panel consisting of representatives of the Manchester Beis Din, the Federation of Synagogues in London and others, examined the causes for inflated prices. It was agreed that there are factors that affect the prices of kosher food in Europe that do not apply in other countries. For example, in many European communities there is a special tax imposed on the purchase of meat to help support the community’s educational institutions. The panel decided they would lobby to cut these taxes.

The rabbis explained that high kosher food prices often put them at a disadvantage when they attempt to present Torah Judaism in a positive light. Many members of Orthodox communities in Europe are not Torah-observant in their personal lives. When a rabbi attempts to persuade an individual to begin purchasing the kosher meat made available by his kosher organisation, he is often met with the question, “Why should I pay five times as much for meat which is the same as in a supermarket?”

Another kosher issue raised was the problem of parasite infestation in fish. There was a fiery debate between Rabbi S.Z. Revach, head of the Institute for the Mitzvos Pertaining to Erets Yisroel, and Rabbi Dov Landau of Bayit Chug Chassidim Sofer. Both rabbis were visiting from Israel. Over the past several years Rabbi Revach has waged a campaign to make the public aware of the existence of these parasites and of the need to examine every fish before consuming it. Rabbi Landau, on the other hand, argued firmly that according to the Shulchan Aruch it is permissible to eat these particular parasites and there is no need for such a campaign.

One of the guests at the conference, Rabbi Chaim Lursky, represented the Chief Rabbinate of Israel. He is responsible for the approval of products imported from Europe. Rabbi David Werner, rabbi of Chadera and chairman of the Conference of Shechita Organizations in Israel, was the guest of honour.

**Interfaith charity warning**

Gila Fisch

**JERUSALEM**

Rav Tuvia Weiss and Rav Yosef Shalom Eliahu have renewed their ban on mosdos receiving funding from the Christian-backed IFCJ (International Fellowship of Christians and Jews). A previous ban on the organisation headed by Lev Leviev and the Reichmann family has been renewed by Rav Elyashiv on the grounds of the former Soviet Union’s (FSU) rejection of the charity over the last two weeks, the IFCJ has reportedly added, “We regret to say that we have learned that several institutions, organisations and charity groups have made mistakes of this nature but taking money from this fund remains an ‘unclean act’.” Rav Shmuel Arush and Rav Nissim Karelitz have likewise joined the list of prominent Rabbonim who have forbidden this funding.

Stung by the public criticism, Mr Elistein reacted by threatening to list all Charedi organisations who accept his huge funds. According to the Jerusalem Post, he will “in the interests of transparency” also include soup kitchens in Bnei Brak, social outreach in the Gush and homeless children in Odessa – all run by strictly Charedi personalities and organisations. However, another group promised to proudly list all those who have selflessly refused IFCJ’s funding in the past.

**Save on international calls**

*Please do NOT press ‘Call button again!’

**From your mobile Simply dial**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>Promotional Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>1p/ min</td>
<td>020 8497 4404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1p/ min</td>
<td>020 8497 4404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. Europe</td>
<td>1p/ min</td>
<td>020 8497 4404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>2p/ min</td>
<td>020 8497 4404</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Call credit.** To make international calls, enter your full International destination number and *.

**Clear lines**

**Same rates 24/7**

**No additional bill**

**No hidden charges**

**A selection of flowers are available at Kosher Kingdom**

**Think flowers**

**Think twiggs**

**Exciting vibrant flowers and arrangements**

**Seeing is believing**

**New Opening Times**

Thurs: 11am-9pm
Fri: 9am-1pm

**Call at other times to make an appointment**

**t: 0973 961 835 / 0208 301 0406**

**A. Europe from - 2p**

**W. Europe from - 1p**

**USA - 1p/min**

**Israel - 1p/min**

**SUKKAROOF FROM BSD**

**POST SUKKOS PROMOTION**

**10% OFF***

**orders all placed now!**

**SUKKAROOF@BSDLTD.CO.UK**

**M Y FORDSHAM**

**SUKKAROOF@BSDLTD.CO.UK**

**0191 421 0081 / 07973 783 045 / F: 0191 477 6000**

**Clear lines**

**Same rates 24/7**

**No additional bill**

**No hidden charges**

**Save on international calls**

**Please do NOT press ‘Call button again!’**

**From your mobile Simply dial**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>Promotional Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>1p/ min</td>
<td>020 8497 4404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1p/ min</td>
<td>020 8497 4404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. Europe</td>
<td>1p/ min</td>
<td>020 8497 4404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>2p/ min</td>
<td>020 8497 4404</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Call credit.** To make international calls, enter your full International destination number and #.

**Clear lines**

**Same rates 24/7**

**No additional bill**

**No hidden charges**