

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Þingskjal: 183-114. mál Umsögn um breytingu á almennum hegningarlögum nr. 19/1940 (bann við umskurði drengja)

As I am sure you are aware, a Bill affecting circumcision in Iceland is getting its' first reading in the Icelandic Parliament. Progressive Party MP Silja Dögg Gunnarsdóttir is the driving force behind the legislation, a law that would criminalise the act of circumcision.

As you can imagine, despite the small size of the Jewish community in your country, the reaction to the Bill and repercussions stemming from it have been met with great concern by Jews across the continent.

The chairman of the European Jewish Association, Rabbi Menachem Margolin and myself met a week ago here in Brussels with her Excellency Ambassador Mrs Bergdís Ellertsdóttir and her Deputy Minister Mr Ragnar Kristjánsson.

We had a very common-sense and pragmatic discussion on this issue. It is clear from this meeting that this is a party-led initiative and not one that enjoys the initiative or direct support of the Icelandic Parliament as a whole. This on its own is a good start.

Our expressed concern to the Ambassador is the origin of such legislation, given that it only affects, at best 3 Icelandic children per year who would be circumcised for the purposes of the Jewish faith. Why is such a bill even required in the first place? It reeks of the type of populism that is all too sadly manifesting itself across the European Continent at the present time. Her Excellency assured us that our remarks would be reported directly back to the Government in Iceland, and we trust this was done.

The import of such legislation ever becoming law is that it sets precedence for other European nations, and normalises the branding of the entire Jewish population as "criminals" for performing this important, vital and precious rite of ours. It cannot be allowed to happen.

We will travel to Iceland where we are already in the process of making representations to the parliament via established channels and consultative protocols.

Yours Faithfully,

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