



Resolution 2309 (2019)¹

The preservation of the Jewish cultural heritage

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Jewish cultural heritage reflects the historical plurality of communities that have lived together for thousands of years and which, in spite of persecution, have benefitted from significant cross-cultural exchanges and mutual enrichment. The Parliamentary Assembly emphasises that Jewish cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, forms an integral part of the shared cultural heritage in Europe and therefore requires a common responsibility to preserve it.

2. In this context, the Assembly recalls its [Resolution 885 \(1987\)](#) on the Jewish contribution to European culture, [Recommendation 1291 \(1996\)](#) on Yiddish culture, [Resolution 1883 \(2012\)](#) on Jewish cemeteries, and [Resolution 1981 \(2014\)](#) on Europe's endangered heritage.

3. Today, less than one quarter of historical synagogue buildings in Europe still function as synagogues. Without a community of users, the majority are neglected and are therefore especially vulnerable. By ensuring the survival of such sites, collective memory would also be preserved and the sites could continue to serve as "living heritage", capable of engaging and educating people, especially the young, about their history and culture, strengthening their identity and sense of belonging.

4. Accordingly, the Assembly recommends that the member States of the Council of Europe:

4.1. concerning strategy and policy design:

4.1.1. sign and ratify the Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (CETS No. 199, Faro Convention) and the European Landscape Convention (ETS No. 176) if they have not yet done so, and include Jewish cultural heritage equitably in national strategies which take into account cultural heritage, in accordance with the principles laid down in these conventions;

4.1.2. recognise the special vulnerability of Jewish heritage as "orphaned" heritage, without a community of users, and take this into account when shaping heritage policies and programmes;

4.1.3. include Jewish heritage as a distinct category in national surveys on the state of heritage, develop action plans to ensure that Jewish heritage receives an appropriate level of protection, conservation and maintenance, and directly allocate resources to those heritage sites most at risk;

4.1.4. value the potential of Jewish cultural heritage sites for fostering intercultural dialogue as a means of promoting inclusiveness and social cohesion, and combating ignorance and prejudice; and undertake an assessment of the degree to which Jewish history and the interaction of Jewish culture with other cultures are understood within society, in order to establish a complete Jewish historical record and so that Jewish history can be included in school and university curricula and recognised within the world of museums;

4.1.5. recognise, interpret and communicate Jewish traditions, customs, religious practices, language, food, music, arts and crafts as a rich intangible cultural heritage;

1. *Assembly debate* on 4 October 2019 (35th Sitting) (see [Doc. 14960](#), report of the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media, rapporteur: Mr Raphaël Comte). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 4 October 2019 (35th Sitting).

See also [Recommendation 2165 \(2019\)](#).



4.2. concerning implementation at local level:

4.2.1. raise awareness of the pressing need to preserve Jewish heritage, also as an asset of local sustainable development, and foster local “ownership” and engagement by encouraging partnerships with various stakeholders, including local authorities, civil society groups and interested Jewish community and heritage organisations;

4.2.2. develop mechanisms that can facilitate discussion, exchanges and the sharing of knowledge, skills, experiences and best practice, involving volunteers and professionals working in the field of Jewish heritage preservation, with a view to advancing the sense of a shared ethos and the standardisation of practices;

4.2.3. where required, develop policies to address legal ownership questions in relation to Jewish communal buildings to help solve disputes and to avoid that such questions adversely affect preservation work;

4.2.4. in the event of development schemes that may endanger Jewish sites, ensure that preservation measures are considered in consultation with heritage agencies and Jewish heritage bodies such as the Foundation for Jewish Heritage;

4.2.5. in addition to established conservation practices and methodologies to be applied to Jewish heritage sites, provide training to ensure that the specific value of Jewish heritage sites can be recognised, appropriately assessed and correctly managed;

4.3. concerning educational value:

4.3.1. address the challenges surrounding the context of Jewish heritage and the impact of the Holocaust, in an honest and forthright way, through education, as a means for achieving a form of societal healing while promoting well-being and reconciliation;

4.3.2. develop educational programmes, especially for young people, to enable them to better understand and appreciate the Jewish experience and the historical diversity of the peoples of Europe and to promote both respect for others and for democratic citizenship;

4.4. concerning co-operation at European level:

4.4.1. foster the inclusion of Jewish heritage sites in the Jewish cultural route, which is part of the Council of Europe Cultural Routes Programme, with a view to co-operating and taking part in historical research and education, youth exchanges, and the promotion of contemporary cultural and artistic expression, as well as interacting with other cultural routes promoting the sense of shared history and heritage;

4.4.2. promote and support co-operation and partnerships across Europe, seeking to disseminate best practice in the domain of protection and preservation of Jewish heritage.

5. The Assembly invites the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe to take account of the present resolution and promote co-operation between local and regional authorities in this respect.

6. The Assembly invites the European Union to co-operate with the Council of Europe with a view to supporting the implementation of the Faro Convention, to develop guidance and financial incentives for the protection and preservation of Jewish heritage sites and to consider the setting up of a mechanism for monitoring the state of Jewish heritage preservation and the introduction of an award for outstanding volunteer work on the preservation of the Jewish heritage.