Reflecting on a year of unprecedented growth.
The European Jewish Community Centre hosts events and provides multi-lingual services and resources to officials and civil servants of the European Institutions.

Our programs are designed to strengthen Jewish identity and understanding of Jewish culture to the wider community.

In 2007, the centre experienced unprecedented growth, as the pages before you will testify.

Our successes of the previous year inspire us to accelerate our activities for the upcoming year. Indeed, we look forward to expanding our programs in 2008.
Contents

Ongoing educational programs 5
 Europeans Hebrew Youth 6
 Jewish Learning Classes 8

Events 9
 Educational Programs 10
 Cultural Programs 13
 Jewish Life 14
 Social Events 19
 External: Events at the EU Institutions 21

Resources 25
Ongoing Educational Programs
A bimonthly junior program brought Judaism to life for children ages 4-12. The program combined interactive play, crafts, songs, discussion groups, and Hebrew language to provide children with a complete Jewish experience. Indeed, participants were encouraged to use their linguistic, logical, kinesthetic, spatial, music, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences, as appropriate, to reflect on the Jewish concepts conveyed.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

**JANUARY 14TH**  Children reviewed the holiday of Chanukah through their Experience Books, and discussed the upcoming holiday of Tu Bishvat. Children also studied the Kosher Kitchen and discussed some mitzvoth that may be done with food. Additionally, they examined the concept of reciting a blessing before food, and the practical details associated with this tradition. Children were also familiarised with the Shma Yisrael prayer.

**JANUARY 28TH**  Children reviewed the holiday of Tu Bishvat through their Experience Books, focusing on the analogy of a person and a tree. Moreover, children were taught of the relevance of the Jewish New Year for trees in Israel, as the time when trees are planted across the country. Practically speaking, European Hebrew Youth sent money to Israel to plant a tree in its name.

**FEBRUARY 11TH**  Children studied the mezuzah, examining its physical makeup and conceptual significance. Students were taught how to recite the Shema prayer in sign language.
FEBRUARY 25TH  Guided by their Experience Books, children reviewed the story of Purim. The highlight of the program was when children packed Purim packages to distribute to the elderly on the holiday itself.

MARCH 18TH  Children studied the story of Pesach; the highlight of the program was when children made their own matzot, keeping to the traditional time limit of 18 minutes!

MARCH 25TH  Children had the opportunity to create their very own seder books to use on the holiday itself.

APRIL 15TH  Children studied the land of Israel, examining its physical makeup and conceptual significance. The highlight of the program was when children built the Western Wall, wrote prayers and placed them in the Wall.

MAY 6TH  Children studied the festival of Lag Baomer, examining its historical and contemporary significance. Children reenacted the story, enjoyed a delicious barbeque and competitive sports races.

JUNE 3RD  Children reviewed their holiday experience books. They also enjoyed playing a game of charades with their parents to review all the songs taught throughout the year.

JUNE 10TH  An end of year performance wrapped up a year full of activity. Children and parents enjoyed a barbeque to celebrate the occasion.
JEWISH LEARNING CLASSES

Jewish Learning Classes were held periodically throughout the year. They feature a warm atmosphere, sensitive to the diverse needs of participants. The classes encourage full participation, questions and input.

HIGHLIGHTS

PARSHA CLASSES  Personalised sessions were held to discuss the depth and wisdom of the Torah. Parsha Classes were held in 2007.

TALMUD CLASSES  Classes were held to introduce the breadth of Jewish thinking as represented in the age-old text. 20 Talmud Classes were held in 2007.

LUNCH & LEARN  Lunch and Learn sessions provided opportunities for EU Institution workers to take a break from their stress and delve into the beauty of Jewish thought. 12 Lunch and Learn sessions were held in 2007.

EULPAN  Community classes for beginner, intermediate and advanced Hebrew speakers were held three times a week to study and explore the Hebrew language. Three sessions of 10 lessons each were held in 2007.
Events
EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Educational Programs were held throughout 2007. Led by renowned European and international speakers, Educational Programs encouraged discussion and debate on contemporary issues and managed to increase knowledge of Jewish history, tradition and culture amongst participants.

HIGHLIGHTS

ANIMAL WELFARE CONFERENCE In honour of Tu Bishvat, the EJCC held an open discussion titled “alternative perspectives on animal welfare” on January 25th. Speakers included Mr. Neil Parish, President of the Parliament Intergroup on the Welfare and Conservation of Animals and Rabbi Fison, Chief Rabbi of Metz and Mozelle who also works as a veterinarian. Both speakers expressed their viewpoint regarding animal welfare, debating the issues of slaughter and fur use. The speakers engaged in a question and answer session with the animated audience. A light buffet was served. 21 people attended.
VIDEOCONFERENCE WITH RABBI ADIN STEINSALTZ  On February 6th, 37 people attended the videoconference in which Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz addressed Jewish communities from Brussels, Copenhagen, Manchester and Warsaw on the topic of Jewish survival.

VIDEOCONFERENCE WITH MR. BENYAMIN NETANYAHU  On March 29th, Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu spoke on securing Israel’s future, and answered questions from videoconference participants in Brussels, Berlin, Helsinki, Copenhagen and Vienna. The videoconference was moderated by Dr. Emanuele Ottolenghi, the executive director of the Transatlantic Institute. MEP Van Buitenem attended the event.

HOLOCAUST TESTIMONIAL  On April 16th, Mr. Benjamin Silberberg delivered a one-hour testimony of his experiences in the Holocaust. 16 people attended this Yom Hashoa commemoration, all of whom were truly moved by the speech.

YOM HASHOA VIDEOCONFERENCE WITH RABBI ISRAEL MEIR LAU  On April 17th, 26 people attended the videoconference with Rabbi Israel Meir Lau. The former Chief Rabbi of Israel gave his perspective as a survivor.

“*I’m a big fan of Rabbi Steinsaltz, I appreciated very much that you arranged this videoconference. I think that it was well-arranged and was surprised that so many people turned up in Brussels despite the bad weather. It was fascinating to listen to the rabbi and his message was clear and relevant for all of us.*”

-Moses, European Commission

“I was very moved by Rabbi Lau’s lecture. What a strong and determined man. Thank you so much for your work.”

-Mikael, European Commission
CONFERENCE WITH MRS. FREDERIQUE RIES On October 2nd, 65 people attended a conference led by Mrs. Frederique Ries MEP. Mrs. Ries spoke about her last journey to Israel and her work as a European Friend of Israel at the European Parliament. Mrs. Nehama Tawil also addressed the crowd, pointing out the significance of the lulav. The Mayor of Eterbeek made a special appearance at this event. A buffet and cooking show by a Thai chef also entertained the audience.
Jewish cultural events were held throughout 2007. These events officered a taste of Jewish culture to participants, who came from a wide spectrum of backgrounds. Whether it was an exploration of Jewish family life, a depiction of beauty according to the ancient texts or a visit to the Jewish museum, EJCC cultural events brought Judaism to life, making it a meaningful experience.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

**CINEMA NIGHT** On January 18th, 16 people attended the screening of “Welcome to the Waks Family”, a documentary sponsored by the Australian government and broadcasted by more than 10 TV channels in Europe. It tells the story of the challenges and celebrations of a Jewish Australian family with 17 children from the same two parents.

**JEWSH MUSEUM VISIT** A visit to the Jewish museum on March 14th proved to be a moving educational experience, exposing much of Belgian Jewish culture and history. The tour was guided by Avi Tawil together with the Museum’s guide. 27 people attended.

**DR. EMANUELE OTTOLENGHI, DIRECTOR OF THE TRANSATLANTIC INSTITUTE IN BRUSSELS, AT THE EJL** On October 24th, Dr. Ottolenghi presented his new book “Autodafe: Europe, the Jews and Anti-Semitism” at the European Jewish Library to an audience of 28 people. An exquisite Italian style buffet was available to the audience prior to the lecture and question-answer session.
JEWISH LIFE Jewish life celebrations were held throughout 2007. These events were memorable occasions, incorporating fine food, innovative programs and, most importantly, a comfortable atmosphere that managed to bring people of widely varying nationalities, ages, religious affiliations, cultural backgrounds and interests together.

JEWISH HOLIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

TU BISHVAT DINNER On February 2nd, 47 people attended the Tu Bishvat Shabbat Dinner led by the children of the European Hebrew Youth program under the auspices of their teacher and program director, Mrs. Sarah Rosenblum. The children sang Shalom Aleichem together with Chazan Reichmann, and then recited the Kiddush, explained the washing and the blessing over the two challot. The 3-course meal included the seven species of Israel, each one explained by Michael Rosenblum, the evening MC. The evening concluded with the presentation of a birthday cake to community member Eva Schalin.

PURIM EVENING CELEBRATION 84 people attended the March 3rd Saturday night party, enjoying a buffet, megillah reading accompanied by a slideshow and a hat decoration workshop with Nourit Vondame. Live music by Mr. Bornstein and distribution of mishloach manot added to the festivities. Children enjoyed hearing about the mitzvot of Purim and creating their own sand art.

PURIM BREAKFAST 31 people attended the megillah reading and buffet breakfast on Sunday morning, March 4th.
**FIRST SEDER**  The first seder, held on April 2nd, was attended by 53 people. It featured hagada readings and traditional songs, as well as a 3-course catered meal.

**SECOND SEDER**  The second seder, held on April 3rd, was attended by 21 people. It featured hagada readings and traditional songs, as well as a 3-course catered meal.

**SHAVUOT PARTY**  82 adults and children attended the outdoor Shavuot party on May 23rd which featured a reading of the Ten Commandments by Leon Gordon and Galila Hollander, a fresh dairy lunch and a goodbye party for the Seldowitzs. Children enjoyed making cheese cake, a scavenger hunt and eating ice cream in the Shavuot tradition of eating dairy foods.

**ROSH HASHANAH COCKTAIL**  92 people, many of them new faces, attended the September 13th cocktail, held in the gardens of the newly built synagogue. The shofar was sounded, and guests enjoyed the scrumptious buffet lunch.

"Thank you so much for a wonderful Seder night. It was extremely spiritual and beautifully prepared."
- Ruth, European Commission

"I just want to thank you... for a wonderful Seder night. It really was a lovely and welcoming atmosphere and the food was great too (very yummy). Thank you for looking after us so well on our table."
- Jacqueline, European Commission

"I just want to put on record that we had the best time ever on Seder night. We had such fun. Adam was great and I am still laughing at Stephen’s performance for the last part of Chad Gadya."
- Pam, European Commission
EUROSH HASHANAH DINNER 73 people attended the EuroRoshHashanah dinner on September 13th. A candle lighting ceremony followed by dinner was held in the ten after synagogue services. Rabbi Levi Garelik and Journalist Pascal Vrebos helped create an intellectually stimulating and socially warm environment. Food: A traditional three courses meal was served.

YOM KIPPUR 183 people attended the final Neila service on September 22nd, and many individuals participated in prayer services throughout the day and the previous night. Following the Neila service, participants enjoyed a “break the fast cocktail” in the tent, during which time many people broke out in deeply emotional song and dance.

EUROSUKKOT DINNER 52 people attended the EuroSukkot dinner on September 26th following service at the Ohel Eliezer Synagogue. The dinner was held in the Sukkah elaborated decorated Ofra Godlewics and Nourit Van Dam. Mr. Gerard Grosjean, Administration Director at the European Council addressed the crowd with current affairs of import.

SIMCHAT TORAH 83 people attended the three-day simchat torah celebration, which featured overflowing buffet tables, and sincere joy, expressed in traditional melodies and dances.

"Thank you for a lovely evening and for having us as guests. The setting, the preparation, the speeches, the food, everything was gorgeous."
-Katharina
CHANUKAH FAMILY PARTY  103 people attended this special event on December 8th, which featured an ice skating rink, built in the EUJB gardens especially for the occasion. At the party, Michoel Rosenblum coordinated A Chanukah Pictionary game for parents. Additionally, children enjoyed an indoor activity arranged by the teachers of the European Jewish School. Specialty foods included the traditional doughnuts and latkes.
JEWSH LIFE CYCLE HIGHLIGHTS

**MEIR TAWIL’S UPSHERIN**  A ceremony was held in the synagogue on June 3rd in which Rabbi Uzan spoke about the biblical significance of cutting the hair of a 3-year-old. A powerpoint presentation further provided an educational experience on this Jewish lifecycle event which often goes unnoticed. Children enjoyed playing on an inflated castle in the garden as parents partook in a scrumptious buffet breakfast.

**SHABBAT DINNER**  A “thank you” Shabbat dinner to close the year 2006-2007 was held on June 15th. 41 people attended this evening which featured songs, short speeches and a wonderfully warm atmosphere. A beautifully impressive table was set by Magali Tal. The theme colour was red, the colour of love.

**MENAHEM MENDEL TAWIL’S BRIT MILA**  123 friends and members of the community attended the Brit Mila of Avi and Nehama Tawil’s newborn son on January 21st. Nehama’s father, Rabbi Uzan from Paris, delivered a speech on the importance and the meaning of the Brit Mila prior to the ceremony.

**PAMELA AND STEPHEN KAY’S ANNIVERSARY KIDDUSH**  Stephen and Pam Kay dedicated Kiddush on Saturday morning, May 25th, in honour of their wedding anniversary.

**TONJA AND RIVKA HOUWELING BIRTHDAY KIDDUSH**  Tonja Houweling and Stephane Dana dedicated a Kiddush in honor of Tonja’s birthday on December 22nd. This event also celebrated their daughter Rivka’s birthday.

**RAPHAEL BLUMENTHAL’S THIRD BIRTHDAY KIDDUSH**  Alexia and Ben Blumenthal dedicated a Kiddush in honour of their son Raphael’s third birthday on June 16th.

“I should thank you for your compassion, care, understanding, patience and kindness. I have a lot to learn and you have a lot to share; Your generosity continues to touch me. It was so nice to have seen you on Shabbat.”

-Bethany

“Thanks a lot for the nice dinner and greetings Magali for the beautiful decoration you did! It was really nice.”

-Eva, European Commission
**SOCIAL EVENTS**

EJCC social events held in 2007 brought Jewish people together in a relaxed setting. Note that these events were vital in that they conveyed lessons of continuity, messages of hope, and glittered the year with excitement and positivity.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

**SPA EVENING FOR WOMEN** 16 women enjoyed a relaxing evening at Aqua Heaven Spa on February 12th.

**YOUNG PROFESSIONALS DINNER** Over 50 people attended the March 19th dinner which featured a three course dairy meal prepared by Bilboquet’s chefs and speaker Bruce Backman, a Fox News Research Analyst who shared his experiences as a young professional living in New York. Note that the restaurant’s kitchen was especially koshered for the occasion since there are not so many kosher restaurants in town. Souvenir bags, containing an EJCC calendar and Shabbat candles, were distributed to all participants. This event marked the launch of the EJCC Young Professionals Division.
CHALLAH BAKING 16 women joined the Bake & Chat evening at the home of Mrs. Fallik on September 6th. Women baked challah for Shabbat, honey cake for Rosh Hashanah and shared recipes.

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS GREEK EVENING 47 young professionals attended this event on October 18th, which incorporated a Greek theme. Indeed, Greek music and Greek food at a Greek restaurant created a unique atmosphere, in which many new faces felt comfortable. The MC and key speaker was Dr. Adam Shocket, who shared his experiences of practising medicine as a religious Jew. Participants received EJCC calendars and kosher chocolates as souvenirs.
EVENTS AT THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS

In servicing officials and civil servants of the European Institutions in 2007, the EJCC coordinated several events such that they were held at venues within the European Institution buildings. This enabled the organization to establish a strong presence at the Institutions, facilitating a unique Jewish knowledge transfer.

HIGHLIGHTS

JERUSALEM DAY CELEBRATION AT THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

This May 14th event was arranged by the EJCC together with MEP Hannu Takula and the Israeli Ministry for Jerusalem Affairs. In light of Jerusalem’s political tension, the event presented a purely cultural perspective of the much disputed city. While European and US ambassadors were forbidden from attending the Israeli Jerusalem Day Celebration, most member state as well as US ambassadors to the EU attended our celebration. Over 250 people attended the event which featured a wide range of cultural booths including an art exhibition and wine tasting. Mr. Alberto Hasson, Chief of Unit at The DG External Relations at the European Commission introduced Mr. Zvi Tal, Deputy Chief of the Israeli Mission to the EU who welcomed the newly assigned Ambassador of Israel to the EU, HE Mr Ran Curiel. The Vice President of the EU Parliament, Marek Siwiec delivered a speech. This event received much media coverage.
EUROPEAN PREMIER OF “I HAVE NEVER FORGOTTEN YOU”, LIFE AND LEGACY OF SIMON WIESENTHAL AT EU HEADQUARTERS

This event, held on November 11th at the Berlaymont Building, European Union Headquarters, was arranged in collaboration with the Simon Wiesenthal Centre, The Austrian and German ambassadors to the EU, as well as the Israel mission to the EU, the United States mission to the EU, member of the Commission Cabinet, and Jewish organization leaders. Prince Alexander of Belgium and Princes Lea of Belgium were also present. EJCC Director Avi Tawil, delivered a speech regarding the importance of keeping alive the memory of the Shoah. The audience had the opportunity to learn a bit more about the EJCC through a video produced by the centre.

After Dr. Samuel, Director of External Relations at SWC Europe spoke about the resurgence of anti-Semitism in Europe. Rabbi May, Director of the SWC, presented a movie about the Tolerance Museum in Jerusalem. The movie “I have never forgotten you” was then viewed. 75 people attended this event.

“I would like to thank you for having made the effort to bring the Simon Wiesenthal film to Brussels and for inviting us to the screening. The film was very strong and we were deeply moved by the story of this remarkable man. I attended a workshop with Simon Wiesenthal in Vienna in 1989 and was very impressed by his strong character and dedication.”

- Mikael

“Merci pour cette extraordinaire soirée. Tout était parfait ; l’accueil, les discours, le film bien sûr et le délicieux buffet. Les Princes étaient ravis et émus. Quant à moi, j’ai pleuré, je l’avoue. La mémoire est un fondement de l’avenir.”

- Véronique

“Bravo for last evening.”

- Rose
EUROCHANUKAH AT THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

This event, held on December 5th, celebrated Chanukah in the form of an exhibition of antique menorahs and paintings of the French artist, Judith Benguigui. The evening was attended by the Israeli Ambassador to Belgium, Tamar Samash, the Moroc- can Ambassador to the EU, Mr. Alem, Head of Mr. Barosso’s Cabinet, David Hammerstein MEP and the Vice President of the European Commission, Mr. Franco Frattini. Mr. Frattini spoke of his personal fight against any form of anti-Semitism and discrimination, symbolically lighting the menorah which represents the triumph of good over evil. 131 people attended this event.

“Just a short note to tell you how much I enjoyed the EJCC Chanukah reception. Nice people, warm speeches and moving music + excellent doughnuts.”

-Mikael

“I wanted to say "Mazel Tov" on a beautiful evening! You organized things well and everyone seemed to enjoy it greatly. It was a joy to be a hostess and to meet such a wide array of people. Most interesting and inspiring. I would be delighted to do this role again at the next event.”

-Bethany

“Thank you for organizing the Chanukah celebration yesterday! It was highly appreciated. “

-Mose

“Thank you all for organising the lovely Chanukah celebrations yesterday. It was really special to celebrate this occasion with you. I’m really glad there was such a large turn-out too. Thank you also for the lovely gift and not forgetting the sufganiot, which were yummy.”

-Jacqueline

“It was an excellent event. “

-Guy

“Hag Sameach and thank you for last night. Kol Hakavod and thank you for binging light to the nations in the Berlaymnot.”

Jonathan, European Commission
Resources
The EJCC helped make Jewish life more meaningful this past year by distributing a wide range of resources.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

**ROSH HASHANAH PACKAGES** Distributed 60 gifts in honour of the Jewish New Year.

**MISHLOACH MANOT** Distributed 110 traditional Purim packages.

**CD** Distributed 100 copies of the new EJCC movie.

**CALENDAR** Distributed a total of 1,000 Jewish calendars.

**CHANUKIOT** Distributed 120 Chanukah guides and candles at the Chanukah celebration.

**SHABBAT CANDLES** Distributed 100 Shabbat candle kids at the Young Professionals events.
The European Jewish Community Centre is proud to have successfully completed its goals for 2007.

Indeed, we arranged over 34 events including an event at the European Parliament and two events at the European Commission. In addition, the EJCC coordinated six weekly programs a bimonthly program.

1,952 people participated in our events this past year, including Commissioners, MEPs & Ambassadors to the European Union.

We look forward to expanding our work in 2008 and anticipate your continued partnership for a better Jewish tomorrow.