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# Knowledge and Attitudes of European Kosher Consumers as Revealed through Focus Groups



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**Abstract** There is a very small, yet important minority within the community of European Union kosher consumers. There is a great deal of research regarding objective aspects of the kosher religious as well as civil laws and their implementation, but comparatively little research about the subjective attitudes, opinions, and concerns of those who actually purchase and consume kosher food. Such information can be important for a variety of interested parties including suppliers, distributors, regulatory agencies, legislators, and certifying agencies as well as religious authorities. We collected relevant data by organizing hour-long Focus Groups (FG) in five European cities and a suburb of Tel Aviv. The FG addressed consumer attitudes related to shopping practices, commitment, trust, and certification as well as their knowledge and opinions regarding nonhuman animal welfare as it relates to shechita (kosher slaughter) and knowledge of the issue of stunning animals at the time of killing. One of the significant findings was a high level of secularization among Jews that translates to a low level of commitment to eating kosher. But this was accompanied by assertions that eating kosher was an important religious obligation and complaints of low availability and high cost. There was a strong feeling, even among those less committed to eating kosher, that shechita was the preferred method of slaughtering an animal (more animal friendly) and a strong suspicion of anti-Semitism as a motivation for any attempt to impose a stunning obligation.