



## WORKSHEET: ARGENTINE

You are the representatives of Argentina at the Evian Conference. Prepare and deliver a speech with the help of the following information. Consider which of the following points can be made public in the speech, and which should better be kept hidden.



Argentina on the globe

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Flag of Argentina

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### Background information

- Argentina's population in 1938: about 13.5 million people, including approx. 270.000 Jews.
- In the early 1930s, Argentina suffered from high unemployment and severe economic crisis. However, by 1938 the economic situation in Argentina improves significantly, and it largely overcomes the crisis.



- During its history, Argentine had been a county of immigration. However, in 1932 Argentine started to close its gates to immigration, and introduced new restrictive immigration regulations. The new regulations allow entry mostly to immigrants who are agriculturalists (and can be sent to agricultural settlements), or immediate relatives of Argentinian citizens (most Jewish refugees are neither agriculturalists nor did they have such relatives).
- Following the Spanish Civil war in 1936, the Argentinian government was concerned that Communist supporters would like to immigrate to Argentine. Many still see Jews as connected to communism.
- At the time in which the Evian conference takes place, even more restrictive immigration regulations are being prepared. These regulations allow entry, after meticulous examination, only to immigrants who prove they can socially and economically assimilate well in Argentine (rather than refugees who flee for their lives).
- The restrictive immigration policy has been influenced by Argentinian nationalists, and by a large part of the Argentinian Catholic Church, which is socially and politically influential in Argentine. They view Jewish citizens and immigrants as a “foreign element” in the Argentinian society, which they see as Latin and Catholic in its cultural, religious and social life.
- At the same time, there is some criticism of the restrictive immigration policy by Argentinian Liberal politicians and journalists, who call to help the refugees.
- Argentine is very concerned that Western powers (such as the United Kingdom and the United States) would pressure it to accept Jewish refugees, who they do not want.

### Major points by the Argentinian delegation at the Evian Conference

- Argentina has already received the greatest number of Jewish immigrants, second only to the **United States** (if we take into account the size of the population, Argentine accepted even greater proportion of Jewish refugees than the U.S.). Argentine feels that it has fulfilled its duty.
- *“Argentine is above all an agricultural country. Immigrants must therefore be directed towards agricultural work and certain specialized forms of employment.”*
- *“The number of immigrants who intend to enter occupations that are already fully supplied with labor must not be allowed to exceed what is reasonable. Otherwise... opportunities for the employment of our won people would be reduced [and also] to the very immigrants whom we have already received.”*



- *“The immigration authorities will provide information as to the number of immigrants of each occupation it may be possible for us to assimilate at any time.”*
- *“We will not attempt to influence over the decision taken by other countries in regard to the way in which they incorporate immigrants. On the other hand, we shall always take our own decisions in such matters in light of our own circumstances and possibilities.”*
- *“One of our distinguishing characteristics is the absence of prejudices of every kind. We are hospitable by nature... We are fully determined to cooperate within the limits of what is possible.”*

## Sources

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