

Speech by Claudia de Santos, Deputy Mayor of Segovia, representing the Presidency of the AEPJ and the Network of Spanish Jewish Quarters

Dear Mr. President, members of the board, authorities, chairmen of the communities, rabbis and friends.

First of all I would like to thank the organisers of this conference for the invitation to participate in this event. It is a great honour for me to be here representing the Presidency of the AEPJ -the European Association for the Preservation and Promotion of Jewish Culture and Heritage-, as well as Network of Spanish Jewish Quarters – Routes of Sepharad, and to meet with the leaders and delegates of the Jewish communities of Europe. This is an excellent opportunity for us to share reflections, visions, experiences and projects.

“Enabling Jewish Life in Europe”, is doubtlessly not only the motto but also the main aim of this conference, and certainly a vital responsibility for all of us. “Building a common ground” expresses the need of strengthening our bonds in order to shape our common future. A future, where cultural, linguistic and religious differences are considered a valuable asset for all Europeans.

In representation of both the AEPJ and the Spanish Network, I am to convey to you a warm greeting from our chairman. We are sure that this meeting of leaders of community life and professionals from different fields will generate new projects and collaborations. In a similar way, the AEPJ has been developing, ever since 1999, such an important and multiple event as the European Day of Jewish Culture, in cooperation with governments and civil service; with Jewish and non-Jewish associations and foundations, as well as with Jewish communities of more than 20 European countries. This celebration of the EDJC throughout Europe boasts more than 800 different activities in hundreds of cities, and a participation of more than two hundred thousand visitors.

Such an achievement has not only gained us the acknowledgement of European public institutions, but also the certainty of contributing to the creation of a more plural and respectful Europe.

A step further on this way is our next big project: the development of the European Route of Jewish Heritage. Our aim is to create a network, similar to the one we have already established in Spain, where 21 different cities with Jewish heritage share experiences and projects of research, reconstruction and promotion. The virtues and benefits of such a project on European level are many-fold: On one side, it will highlight items and aspects of a culture which is truly European, since it has no national frontiers. Indeed the Jewish heritage route will cover several European countries, such as France, Italy, Slovakia, or Spain.

On the other side, the project will help to recover and reassess elements of Jewish heritage which may currently be in danger of destruction, disappearance and oblivion. On the whole we hope that the European Route of Jewish Heritage will bring together individual and collective efforts, from both public and private sectors throughout Europe. In fact, we have already received the acknowledgement by the Council of Europe, by being awarded the mention “Major Cultural Route of Europe”. However, as you all undoubtedly are aware of, these kinds of project require more than just official acknowledgement, and this is where our main efforts are now directed to.

Finally, and in order to conclude, let me thank you again for the invitation, and congratulate you on the magnificent organization of this event. Furthermore I wish you a fruitful work during these four days, and last but of course not least, on behalf of the

current chairman, the Mayor of Segovia, and all member cities of our Network, I would like to invite you most warmly to come to Spain to visit our Jewish quarters.

Thank you very much.

Claudia de Santos
Deputy Mayor of Segovia (Spain)
In representation of the AEPJ Presidency
and the chairmanship of the Network of Spanish Jewish Quarters

Speech by Graham Weinberg, President of B'nai B'rith Europe

Madam chairman, ladies and gentlemen,

I am delighted to bring greetings from the 27 countries across Europe in which B'nai B'rith has a presence.

As you may know, we in B'nai B'rith are active in three main fields of endeavour:

- 1) Promotion of Jewish Culture and heritage: This includes the development of educational and cultural programmes in central and Eastern Europe, where our resurgent communities are recovering from generations of communist suppression.

Our activities also include the organizing of Jewish Heritage Day events in over twenty countries. I am particularly happy to see with us Mme. Claude Bloch

- 2) We organize an annual Young Leadership Forum: This event is for those under the age of 35 years who are our potential future community leaders, not only within B'nai B'rith, but for all our organizations throughout Europe.
This year, the Forum is being held in Zurich, where we expect to close on 200 participants; if you know of anyone who may wish to participate, it is not too late to apply.

- 3) Humanitarian lobby for Israel and the Jewish People: In this regard, we have NGO status in Geneva and Strasbourg; we have observer status at the UN in New York; and we are represented at UNESCO in Paris.

In all our activities we welcome co-operation with other organisations with similar aims and objectives.

I hope we shall all be enriched and strengthened by our participation in this 4th Pan European Conference. United in purpose, we can grow in strength, influence and success....that must be our aim.

Graham Weinberg
President B'nai B'rith Europe
October 2010