



GOVERNING BOARD
WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS
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REGIONAL REPORTS

European Jewish Congress

EUROPEAN JEWISH CONGRESS TWO YEAR REPORT 2005 - 2007

Working Meetings with EU Presidency

The EJC meets regularly with the 6 month rotating presidency of the European Union to bring the current concerns of European Jewry to the agenda-setting level of the EU. Over the past two years EJC delegations – composed of Jewish community leaders and members of the EJC executive – have met with: UK Prime Minister Tony Blair; Finnish Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen; Austrian President Heinz Fischer and Prime Minister Dr. Wolfgang Schüssel; and German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

During these meetings, the EJC discussed and urged action on:

- Ensuring that the Middle East Quartet position on withholding aid to the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority is upheld by the European Union until all conditions are met
- Urging more direct action against the Iranian regime
- Pushing for Europe-wide harmonization of hate crime (finally adopted in April 2007)
- Urging for the normalization of relations between Arab states and Israel

High-Level Meetings with National Governments and EU Officials

EJC President Pierre Besnainou, Secretary-General Serge Cwajgenbaum and EJC delegations have had numerous working meetings with both national heads of state and government throughout Europe, and with the leaders of all the European Union institutions. Among the many meetings held, were those with: Spanish Prime Minister Jose Luis Zapatero; Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan; Czech President Vaclav Klaus; President of Poland Lech Kaczynski; Greek Prime Minister Kostas Karamanlis and President Károlos Papoúlias; and King Abdullah II of Jordan, as well as several meetings with Israeli Prime Ministers Ariel Sharon and Ehud Olmert.

Working meetings were also held with numerous EU officials, including: President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso; Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union, Javier Solana; EU Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood, Policy Benita Ferrero-Waldner; two Presidents of the European Parliament and a wide range of party leaders and Members of the European Parliament.

European Parliament Dinners

The EJC organizes annual dinner meetings at the European Parliament building in Strasbourg, bringing together high-level Israeli personalities with European lawmakers. In 2005, 130 members of the European Parliament attended with guests of honor Israeli Vice Prime Minister Shimon Peres and EU Commissioner for External Relations Benita Ferrero-Waldner. Israeli Interior Minister Ronnie Bar-On attended the 2006 dinner.

Monitoring of Anti-Semitism

In November 2006, the EJC published an important report on anti-Semitic rhetoric and acts in Europe during the Hezbollah-Israel war – this report was compiled with the assistance of all EJC

affiliated Jewish communities. This report was widely covered in the international press, with coverage devoted specifically to the study in the the Financial Times, Rzeczpospolita, the Jerusalem Post, Haaretz, Le Figaro, La Croix and the International Herald Tribune. The EJC has also followed and acted on various anti-Semitic publications and incidents throughout Europe.

Inter-Religious Dialogue

EJC organized the 3rd European Conference Between Jews in Catholics in December 2005, at the Paris City Hall, bring over 700 participants together with Catholic and Jewish dignitaries to pay tribute to the late Pope John-Paul II and to celebrate of the 40th anniversary of the ‘Nostra Aetate’ declaration.

EJC CAMPAIGNS 2005 - 2007

EJC Israel Solidarity Campaign, July-August 2006

Beginning in early July 2006, the EJC carried out a co-ordinated campaign, with its affiliated communities, to demonstrate a united front of support to the Israeli people during wartime. Leaders from 24 Jewish communities from across Europe took part in the EJC ‘Solidarity Mission’ to Israel, with visits to the affected Northern areas, and meetings with the full Israeli leadership.

Jewish communities throughout Europe also launched campaigns, in co-ordination with the EJC and the WJC, to show support for Israelis in European cities, including Amsterdam, Rome, Paris, Kiev and London.

European Jewish Communities Mobilize Against Iran, October 2005

In a joint action organized by the EJC, synchronized protests took place in European capitals during the week of October 31st, demonstrating against the Iranian President’s statement that Israel "should be wiped off the map."

Campaign to Declare Iranian President Persona Non Grata in EU

After months of lobbying the European Parliament, the EJC prepared and submitted a draft ‘open letter,’ prepared in co-operation with the head of the Europe-Israel EP Delegation, calling for the Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to be made ‘persona non grata’ in Europe. Over 100 Members of the European Parliament signed this document.

EJC Involvement in EU Enlargement Process

Since February 2006, the EJC has committed itself to acting as an intermediary in the European Union enlargement process, working equally with Jewish communities and national governments in candidate countries. In 2006, the EJC held meetings with heads of state and governments in two states that were soon to be admitted into the EU – Bulgaria and Romania – and met with the government of Croatia, a possible future candidate.

HOLOCAUST MEMORY

World Holocaust Forum, ‘Let My People Live’, Kiev 27 September 2006

At a ceremony in Kiev led by Ukraine's president Viktor Yushchenko and attended by delegations from 41 countries, including Israel's president Moshe Katsav, tribute was paid to the victims of the 1941 Babi Yar massacre by Nazi occupiers, in a historical commemoration that was the largest of its kind to have taken place in the former Soviet Union. The event was the second 'Let My People Live' forum organized by Chairman of the EJC Board of Governors, Moshe Kantor.

Report prepared by Serge Cwajgenbaum, EJC Secretary General
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