

## First International Workshop on the European Itinerary of Jewish Heritage

The 1st International Workshop on the European Itinerary of Jewish Heritage was held in Oviedo, Spain on 4th and 5th November, 2008. It was a great event organized by the European Association for the Preservation and Promotion of Jewish Culture and Heritage (AEPJ) with the support of Caminos de Sefarad & Red de Juderías de España and the wonderful hospitality of the City Hall of Oviedo and the Oviedo Auditorium where the workshop took place.

The opening session was open to the public with about 80 people in attendance, including a group of young students from a tourism school in Asturia. After the welcoming speeches by the mayor of Oviedo D. Cabino de Lorenzo Ferrera, and by the ECJC President Jonathan Joseph, Michel Thomas Penette, Director of the European Institute of Cultural Itineraries in Luxembourg, explained the new guidelines to be incorporated into the Cultural Routes in Europe.

Following that Max Polonoski, Director of the Musée des Plans-Reliefs in Paris gave an informative lecture with photos and examples on the meaning of art, culture and Judaism in the European Routes and explained the most important collections in the European Jewish Museum.

The workshop was then left to the participants to discuss their local experiences, both from European Day of Jewish Culture and of the Jewish Itineraries which covered Slovakia, the Czech Republic, England, France, Holland, Poland, Spain, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal, and Serbia. There was a wide array of experiences presented & very different from one country to the other & but very beneficial for future organization.

The following are some of the decisions that were taken during the meeting : AEPJ will continue with the following two projects:

- European Day of Jewish Culture and the Itineraries of Jewish Heritage.
- For the EDJC it was decided that the organizing committee will be enlarged with some additional members and the new group will decide the date, theme, logo, poster of the day, always with the support of AEPJ.
- AEPJ will concentrate on the new project of the Cultural Routes in Europe.

The leaders of the organizations (Annie Sacerdoti for ECJC, Claude Bloch for BBE and Assumcio Hosta for Red de Juderías) requested everyone present to send to the secretary all news relating to Jewish Itineraries in their countries (books, maps, bibliographies etc).

In conclusion, there was a frank and warm meeting among the Presidents of local Jewish Communities (sixty in total) in the La Casina synagogue in El Fontàn, a little building in the old center of Oviedo.

Message from Graham Weinberg, President of B'nai B'rith Europe to the AEJP Meeting in Oviedo:

I am sorry that I am unable to attend the First International Workshop on the European Itinerary of Jewish Heritage in Oviedo on 4th and 5th November, as I shall be returning from the B'nai B'rith Europe Young Adult Forum in Rome.

We, in B'nai B'rith Europe, consider culture and heritage an essential element in our programmes. It is fundamental that the Jewish people are aware of their culture & heritage since without this knowledge it is more difficult to know and appreciate who we are today and where we should be heading in the future. This is particularly so for the resurgent communities of Central & Eastern Europe where open observance of our faith was so difficult during the years of communist domination.

I would like to wish all the participants at this meeting a very successful and productive outcome.

Graham WEINBERG President B'nai B'rith Europe, October 2008