BBE/FAN condemns proposal by Italian trade union for boycott of Jewish and Israeli shops

Chairman of F.A.N. Yves Kamami: “FLAICA Uniti - CUB’s idea is highly similar to the Nazis’ call not to buy ‘Jewish’.”

Brussels, Belgium – January 12, 2009 – B'nai B'rith Europe condemns the proposal by Giancarlo Desiderati, the leader of the Italian trade union FLAICA Uniti - CUB, to ‘identify and boycott’ Jewish-owned shops in the Italian capital. This call clearly represents a multiple transgression of the red lines of the Working Definition of Antisemitism that is used by both the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) of the EU, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the OSCE and by the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE on Combating Antisemitism. It mentions not only “holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel”, but also “applying double standards by requiring of it a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation” as “examples of the ways in which anti-Semitism manifests itself”.

Moreover, “FLAICA Uniti - CUB’s idea is highly similar to the Nazis’ call not to buy ‘Jewish’”, as Yves Kamami, the Chairman of F.A.N., notes. “Desiderati’s subsequent condemnation of ‘all forms of anti-Semitism by Right or Left’ appears to be nothing but a meaningless lip service in the face of his earlier statement. This is also confirmed by the fact that he has since compared the situation of the Palestinians today to that of the Jews in the Holocaust, whereby an analogy between Israel and Nazi Germany is implied.” Precisely these comparisons are mentioned as another example of antisemitism by the Working Definition, as BBE has pointed out previously in a condemnation of similar remarks made by Cardinal Renato Martino.

B’nai B’rith Europe holds that while the statements by the leader of FLAICA Uniti - CUB are malicious and unfounded, they also do nothing to help the people in Gaza.

Far from resembling a truly progressive viewpoint, the trade union’s position ignores the true causes for the suffering of the Palestinians, who have been subjected to the rule of an anti-Semitic movement that also suppresses and murders women, homosexuals, religious minorities, oppositionists, and trade unionists.

Represented in 58 countries, B’NAI B’RITH is the world’s largest Jewish Human Rights, Community action and Humanitarian organisation. B’NAI BRITH EUROPE is represented in 28 countries throughout Europe. With its office based in Brussels B’NAI B’RITH is represented at the European

Parliament, the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, the United Nations in Geneva and UNESCO in Paris.

The main goals of B’NAI B’RITH are the defence of Human Rights and the fight against antisemitism, racism and xenophobia, the defence of the State of Israel, humanitarian relief for the needy in Eastern Europe and in Israel and action to develop Jewish identity, Jewish culture and Jewish heritage.

Contact

Phone : +32-2-6469298

Email : direction@bnaibritheurope.org