New President's Message

It is with great pride that I have taken over the position of President of B’nai B’rith Europe from Graham Weinberg who will continue to serve B’nai B’rith Europe as our Mentor and has been proclaimed Honorary Life President in recognition of his achievements.

The Executive Committee will concentrate on supporting our lodges to bring the B’nai B’rith Europe work and projects close to you and is seeking your active input and cooperation. We will make a major effort to rejuvenate our membership. This is a matter of the highest priority to all of us where we can not afford to lose any more time.

To achieve this aim we want to widen our activities and increase our membership, by the means of our educational MAKOR project and, of course, through our very successful Young Jewish Adult Forum that attracts young Jewish Adults throughout Europe.

This year, the YJAF will be held in Berlin from November 11th to November 14th. We invite you all not only to advertise for the Forum but to also invite and support young people in the age group from 25 to 40 to attend the Forum. The full programme will be sent to you shortly so please be sure to read it and make it known to the sisters and brothers of your lodge! If you have any questions you can always address our Director Aline Brandon in our Brussels office who will be happy to forward them to the Chair of the Youth Commission, John Reeves or to Simone Hofmann.

To rejuvenate our lodges it is up to the Presidents and their boards to take matters into their hands and to invest into the next generation. This will require for you to organise activities that are of interest for young adults such as film evenings, Kabbalat Schabbatot and to invite lecturers. It will require to work closely together with the Jewish students organisations and to appoint 1 or 2 young people in your lodge to chair your own Youth Commissions. It will of course be necessary to introduce the ideas of B’nai B’rith to these young adults since the aim of this investment is to eventually get them to join the lodges.

B’nai B’rith Europe will also continue to strengthen our Jewish Heritage Day and on other cultural programmes. The Israel Commission will work out some interesting and important projects together with the BB World Center in Jerusalem and will be in touch with you on matters where we will ask for your help and support.

B’nai B’rith Europe will actively continue its efforts in the framework of our Foreign Affairs Network F.A.N.

All of us are very much concerned with the rising anti-Semitism and the very aggressive tones against Israel.

This is something which we have to encounter and where we need to get our forces together. The new EC will be concentrating to introduce a structure where we can all participate in efficient political work to tackle these problems.

Part of this work will be done professionally by Nuno Wahnon who is in charge of lobbying at the EU institutions as a result of our joint political work with B’nai B’rith International. We are pulling our best and most experienced people together in order to present a practical and feasible political project to you. This will of course require the help and the expertise of our friends and colleagues from the US. Many of you know our Executive Vice President of B’nai B’rith International from Washington, Dan Mariaschin, who has achieved such brilliant political work at the highest levels for so many years.

I want to take this opportunity to congratulate our incoming B’nai B’rith International President Allan Jacobs on his election and wish him success in the important duties that are lying ahead of him.

B’nai B’rith Europe will continue to do its successful and important humanitarian work in the Ukraine and in the other countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

But most importantly, we will be relying on you, the Lodge Presidents, your boards, and all of your sisters and brothers throughout Europe to keep your lodges alive and running. It is you and your work that make the difference. This is why I invite all of you to participate in our common goals and aims in order to keep our beloved order of B’nai B’rith alive.

On behalf of the Executive Committee, I extend my warmest congratulations to the President of the Renaissance Lodge in Prague, Tomas Kraus and to all his members on the occasion of their 20th anniversary that took place on May 23rd. May they continue their good work for many more years to come.

The members of the Executive Committee and I will be visiting as many lodges as possible in the future, and will be looking forward to a close cooperation with all of you.

Best fraternal regards,

Ralph HOFMANN

President B’nai B’rith Europe