

What is B'nai B'rith Europe?

Written by B'nai B'rith Europe

B'nai B'rith Europe is part of the worldwide Jewish organisation, B'nai B'rith International. It was established in New York in 1843 and has been represented in Europe for over 130 years.

In 1999, District 19 Continental Europe merged with District 15 United Kingdom to become B'nai B'rith Europe. Its first President was Seymour Saideman, followed by David Lévy-Bentolila, Reinold Simon and Graham Weinberg.

Structure of B'nai B'rith Europe

Offices of B'nai B'rith Europe are located in Brussels.

The current President of B'nai B'rith Europe is Erika Van Gelder, assisted by an Executive Committee representing B'nai B'rith all over Europe.

There are a number of Commissions dealing with specific projects.

At a triennial Convention, representatives of B'nai B'rith lodges from all over Europe deliberate many subjects concerning the activities of the organisation and elect new officers and a new Executive Committee.

Presence of B'nai B'rith Europe

There are over 5,500 Members in more than 110 associations or Lodges in 25 European countries.

Thus, B'nai B'rith Europe has a presence all over Europe and in many important cities.

Aims of B'nai B'rith Europe

Motto of B'nai B'rith is "Benevolence, Brotherly & Sisterly Love and Harmony".

B'nai B'rith Europe aims at the following goals:

- To fight racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism
- To support the State of Israel
- To help the needy
- To promote Jewish identity
- To strengthen the knowledge about Jewish presence through Culture and Heritage
- To encourage and train young Jewish adults for leadership in the Jewish Communities

Activities of B'nai B'rith Europe

B'nai B'rith has the status of a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) and is represented at:

- The European Union
- The Council of Europe

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- The UN-institutions
- UNESCO

In order to realise the aims of B'nai B'rith at these institutions contacts at the highest level with political leaders, representatives of other NGOs, opinion leaders and diplomatic representatives are daily routine activities.

Recent achievements of B'nai B'rith Europe

Amongst other daily activities, B'nai B'rith Europe has, in its short history, realised a number of important accomplishments:

- A notable travelling exhibition was organised on Jewish Resistance during World War II, thus honouring those heroes, Jews and non-Jews, who fought to save so many lives during the Nazi regime throughout Europe. The exhibition was inaugurated in Brussels on 20th November 2001 where it was displayed for three months before opening in Vienna and Berlin in 2002.
- The organisation of an international Symposium in Brussels: "Europe Facing Terrorism" in October 2004.
 - The creation of B'nai B'rith Europe Foreign Affairs network (FAN).
 - The European Day of Jewish Culture: B'nai B'rith was instrumental in planning, initiating, and developing this historic event throughout Europe which has collectively been celebrating the rich European Jewish cultural heritage. Since 2004 the European Route of Jewish Heritage is supported by the European Institute of Cultural Routes and the Council of Europe. On 5th December 2005 during an official ceremony in Strasbourg it has received the diploma "Major Cultural Route of the Council of Europe".
 - B'nai B'rith Book Fair: For many years, B'nai B'rith Europe has held an International Book Fair in Paris with books written by Jewish writers, in the presence of the authors and followed by round table debates on subjects such as, in 2008, "Do Jews and Black People remain natural allies?". Major personalities from the Jewish and non-Jewish media and the political world participate in these debates.
 - The Makor Project also known as "Bridges of Tolerance", a B'nai B'rith Europe initiative for a multi-national Jewish cultural project in Central & Eastern Europe. We aim to create an educational, cultural platform through which we would present the Jewish contribution to the various aspects of cultural life of each participating country. See Romanian award here: <https://www.bnaibrithurope.org/bbeurope/en/news/mazal-tov/592-congratulations-to-erika-van-gelder-president-of-bnai-brith-europe>
- The first B'nai B'rith Europe Young Jewish Adult Forum was held in 2007 in Frankfurt. Since then, other successful editions were organised in 2008 in Rome, in 2009 in Brussels and in 2010 in Zurich. The 2011 edition will take place in Berlin.

Publication of brochures:

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- "The Palestinian children at the school of hate"
- "The Palestinian authority: Where does the money go?"