**Introduction of Serge Dahan, Bridges of Tolerance, Bucharest 16.05.2018**

Dear President Klaus Ioannis,

As B’nai B’rith Europe President, it is an honour to take part in the fifth edition of the “Bridges of Tolerance” project.

Let me start by thanking the Dr. Moses Rosen Lodge, and especially President Jose Iacobescu for the organisation of this event.

I also want to warmly thank Mr. Klaus Ioannis for his patronage and for honouring and welcoming us.

B'nai B'rith Europe initiated the "Bridges of Tolerance" project in 2013 in Bucharest with the Dr. Moses Rosen Lodge of Romania.

Since its first edition, this event has been playing an active role, by promoting the right to a life of dignity for all. Governments, Parliaments and civil servants are called to uphold the values encompassed in the Universal Charter of Human Rights, for all its citizens. This project is a wake-up call to the government, a citizens awareness program about cultural diversity, and an educational  platform  for educators and students on Holocaust Remembrance and the dangers of racist ideologies.

This year, the event focuses on "Contribution of national minorities from Romania to the diversity and vitality of European Culture”. It is about including the Jewish history within the national Romanian history, but also within the European history.

This initiative helps us to raise awareness among the Romanian people, and especially among the new generations, on the place of Jews in the history of the country. This awareness and the understanding of Judaism are essential for the respect of others and living together.

People often ask, “what is B’nai B’rith ?”. And the answer always lies in our history and in our combats.

B’nai B’rith has its own DNA, its own origins, history and ideal. It is an honour to live according our values and to remind in front of you this solemn commitment made by all B’nai B’rith Members :

“Love your neighbour as yourself ; be uncompromising on honour matters, exalt philanthropy and Human solidarity”.

B’nai B’rith was created in New York in 1843, and this year, celebrates its 175 years. It has been present in Europe for more than 130 years.

Since the beginning, B’nai B’rith was committed to promote the Human Rights and the fight against antisemitism.

Nowadays, as an Non-governmental organisation (NGO), B’nai B’rith is represented in the most official institutions, such as the European Union, the Council of Europe, the United Nations and the UNESCO.

We contribute to the political debate, especially regarding the rise of violence and aggressiveness towards the Jewish community. True to our commitment, B’nai B’rith has become a proactive force for bringing forward proposals to public actors and key figures such as elected representatives, educators and media.

I would like to dedicate this speech to the innocent victims, who have been sacrificed in the name of a fundamentalist ideology, to remind us that, together, we have to learn from the past.

More than 75 years ago, during the Wannsee conference, Nazi barbarism elaborated plans to wipe out Jews in Europe. At this moment, the Nazi madness unfolded against Jews. Six million human beings were assassinated in atrocious conditions.

These events seem far away but we are aware of our heavy responsibility in this sacred duty of remembrance and of education, to ensure new generations keep honouring this moral obligation.

This “duty of remembrance”, as told by Primo Lévi, can be defined as “the moral obligation to witness, individually or collectively, events of which the awareness and the education are considered necessary to learn from the past”.

Unfortunately, antisemitism, as well as hatred and stereotypes, are on the rise again.

Sweden, Germany, Belgium, France, … The whole Europe faces an new rise of antisemitism, which is a step backwards and leads us to horror.

Once again, Jews are killed, tortured, insulted, threatened or harassed in the streets, or even at their homes. This is a new judeophobia age.

This antisemitism, with its hatred and its stereotypes, is back. This antisemitism continues to use old themes, such as “Jews are rich”. This antisemitism is being reinvented with anti-zionism, which takes its roots from the islamisation of the Palestinian question. And of course, there is an antisemitic hatred of an extreme violence, which is freely expressed on social networks.

In front of these manifestations of hatred, there are women, men, families who are wondering about their future and the future of their children : What does the future hold for Jews in Europe ? What is the future for the democratic values and the respect of others that we defend and share ?

As you know, the European Parliament voted on the first of June 2017 a “resolution on combating antisemitism”, which calls on the Member States and the Union institutions and agencies to adopt necessary measures to fight hate speech and all the other forms of violence towards the European Jewish citizens.

The European Parliament invites the Member States to adopt and apply the working definition of antisemitism of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance.

I thank Romania for the adoption of this definition and I invite European countries to follow Romania footsteps and respond positively to the invitation of the European Parliament.

I would like to end my introduction speech with a message from Paul Eluard “We transform our hand by placing it in someone else’s hand” ; a message that I would like to complete with a lesson from Hillel “What is hateful to you, do not to others. Now go, and study”.