**Welcome address from Serge Dahan 14.05.2018 Warsaw**

As B’nai B’rith Europe President, it is an honour to welcome at this European meeting, the Executive Committee members and the Presidents of B’nai B’rith, Chief Rabbi Schudrich, Members of the European Parliament and members of the European Commission.

Let me start by thanking the Polin Lodge, and especially President Sergiusz Kowalski, Vice-President Franck Telling Saphar for the organisation of this event.

I also want to warmly thank Chairman of the POLIN Museum and member of the Polin Lodge Marian Tulski, and Director of the POLIN Museum Dariusz Stola, for welcoming this meeting between B’nai B’rith and the Jewish community of Poland.

This place, a memory of a thousand year old presence of Jews in Poland, tells us a complex coexistence.

The Jewish community of Poland was the largest in Europe back in 1939. It was almost entirely wiped out by the Nazis. Then, the ones who survived the Shoah were battered by the years of communism.

The POLIN Museum, which was funded by a public-private partnership in Poland, includes the Jewish history in the national Polish history.

This initiative helps up to raise awareness among the Polish 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 for others and living together.

Thus, picking the POLIN Museum for this gathering was a symbolic choice to talk about our duty of remembrance and our fight against antisemitism.

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.

I am also grateful for the presence of Piotr Cywinski, Director of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum, and to express the gratitude and solidarity of B’nai B’rith regardinghis mission of preservation and his duty of remembrance.

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 ; and I wish European countries 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”.