



B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation Commission condemns decision by The European Parliament not to establish a taskforce on anti-Semitism and calls on the Australian government to intervene

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Melbourne, Australia...The B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation Commission has strongly criticised the decision by The European Parliament not to form a specialised intergroup taskforce to tackle the escalating problem of anti-Semitism in Europe.

Dr Dvir Abramovich, Chairman of the B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation Commission issued the following statement:

“I am very disappointed by this decision. The European Parliament had a timely opportunity to show that it is serious about fighting the growing problem of anti-Semitism but shamefully failed to do so. This irresponsible and politicised decision sends all the wrong messages. At a time when the European Jewish community is being subjected to unacceptable levels of intimidation and violence, and is feeling unsafe, this inexcusable veto demonstrates that European lawmakers are not willing to take the necessary and bold action to counter the dangerous resurgence of anti-Semitism. After the very public statements and pledges by European politicians to take all needed measures to tackle this menace, this is a failure of leadership at the highest level which must be condemned.

Anti-Semitism is a disease that threatens the very fabric and values of European society and must be given top priority, in particular because of the continent's past history. One of the lessons of the Holocaust is that unchecked racism and bigotry spread and endanger everyone, not just Jews.

It is telling that just last week, Danny Cohen, the director of television at the BBC said that he has “never felt so uncomfortable being a Jew in the UK” as he has over the last year, and that the rising levels of Jewish hostility have caused him to reveal that “Having lived all my life in the UK, I've never felt as I do now about anti-Semitism in Europe.” This comes on top of 12 months of unprecedented and frightening attacks on Jewish people and institutions, including chants of “Jews to the gas chambers”, the firebombing of synagogues, and horrifying assaults and murders.

We call on the Australian government, through its EU Ambassador Dr. Mark Higgie, to urge the European Parliament to reconsider its decision and to form this anti-Semitism task force without delay.”