

Mr. Antonio TAJANI
President of the European Parliament
Rue Wiertz 60, 1047 Brussels
Belgium

Brussels, 14 February 2018

Dear President Tajani,

We, the undersigned Jewish umbrella organisations and leaders of the Belgian and Portuguese Jewish Communities, as well as leading organisations representing European-Israel relations and interests want to express our deep concerns and opposition regarding the invitation of Mr. Omar Barghouti, founder of the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions movement (BDS) to a conference “The Israeli Settlements in Palestine and the European Union” taking place on 28 February inside the European Parliament, organised by Ms Ana Gomes, Member of the European Parliament (S&D – Portugal).

The BDS founding appeal of 09.07.2005 as well as its founder Mr. Barghouti call for a total economic, cultural and academic boycott as well as for divestment and sanctions against the State of Israel. Accordingly, the campaign addresses not only the disputed territories, but opposes the very existence of the State of Israel as a Jewish state in its entirety and in any kind of borders.

Furthermore, BDS activists consistently engage in practices, which are considered antisemitic according to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism¹, which are:

- Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavour.
- Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.
- Making mendacious, dehumanising, demonising, or stereotypical allegations about Jews

¹https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/sites/default/files/press_release_document_antisemitism.pdf

Mr. Barghouti himself has stated in public that *“most definitely we oppose a Jewish state in any part of Palestine. No Palestinian (...) will ever accept a Jewish state in Palestine.”*² He argues that the *“decolonisation of Palestine”* can only be achieved through a *“one-state solution”*³ and rejects any bi-nationalism since it would be based on *“two problematic assumptions (...) that Jews are a nation, and that such a nation has a right to exist as such in Palestine”*⁴.

Mr. Barghouti has also made repeated comparisons between the state of Israel and the Nazi Regime calling Gaza a *“concentration camp”*⁵ and speaking of *“Israel’s final solution”* against the Palestinian People.⁶

The objectives of the BDS movement and the repeated antisemitic statements of Mr. Barghouti himself directly harm Europe’s Jewish communities, and are not compatible with European values. They also directly oppose and undermine the dialogue-based and constructive peace process between Israel and the Palestinians that the EU supports as an honest broker.

Most importantly, by offering Mr. Barghouti a platform within the European Parliament, the house directly undermines its own policy stance on antisemitism.

Less than a year ago, on 1 June 2017, the European Parliament adopted with a large majority, a resolution on combatting antisemitism which calls on EU-Member States, and all European Union institutions and agencies to adopt and apply the above mentioned IHRA working definition of antisemitism. Ms. Federica Mogherini has repeatedly confirmed that *“the EU rejects the BDS campaign’s attempts to isolate Israel and is opposed to any boycott of Israel.”* She reportedly stated that she would take action on the issue and emphasised that she and the entire EU oppose calls to boycott Israel.

In many EU member states, political groups and municipalities have already officially decided to reject any support of the BDS movement due to its antisemitic character.

We, the undersigned, with deep respect for the EU’s values, freedom of speech as well as the right to different opinions, oppose the inflammatory antisemitic hate speech of

² [22] (Added by the translator: Full quote: “Definitely, most definitely we oppose a Jewish state in any part of Palestine. No Palestinian, rational Palestinian, not a sellout Palestinian, will ever accept a Jewish state in Palestine.”) (<https://vimeo.com/75201955>), last accessed on 25.09.2017

³ <https://electronicintifada.net/content/relative-humanity-fundamental-obstacle-one-state-solution-historic-palestine-22/4940> last accessed on 12.02.2018

⁴ <https://electronicintifada.net/content/relative-humanity-fundamental-obstacle-one-state-solution-historic-palestine-22/4940> last accessed on 12.02.2018

⁵ The original headline reads: “An open letter from Gaza to Thomas Quasthoff: Do not Forget the Gaza Concentration Camp and ‘Tell It Like It Is!’” (<http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=1439>, last accessed on 12.02.2018)

⁶ The original headline reads: “Ethnic Cleansing: Israel’s Final Solution to the Palestinian ‘Demographic Threat’” (<https://electronicintifada.net/content/relative-humanity-fundamental-obstacle-one-state-solution-historic-palestine-22/4940> last accessed on 12.02.2018)


Mr. Omar Barghouti, the BDS movement, as well as the public platform and added legitimacy that an event inside the European Parliament hosted by an official member provides.

We urge you as President of this house to make sure that, in line with the commitment of the European Parliament to combat antisemitism, any kind of attempt to engage in antisemitic hate speech inside your Parliament will be prohibited and prosecuted.

Mr. President, we look forward to your prompt action and response.

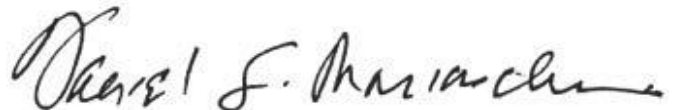
Sincerely,

Raya Kalenova



Executive Vice-President
European Jewish Congress

Dan Mariaschin



CEO & Executive Vice President
B'nai B'rith International

Larry Hochberg



Founder & Chairman
ELNET

Daniel Schwammenthal



Director
AJC Transatlantic Institute

Yohan Benizri



President
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Gabriel Steinhardt



President
Jewish Community of Lisbon

Alina Bricman



President
European Union of Jewish Students