

# Ending Hate: EJA speak out in Sofia at major conference

*The Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Bulgaria together with the European Jewish Association are holding an International Conference on STOP HATE SPEECH*

JERUSALEM, December 5, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Bulgaria together with the [European Jewish Association](#) are holding an International Conference on STOP HATE SPEECH, which started today (5th December) and concludes on the 6th December in Sofia, Bulgaria.

The Conference, a first in Bulgaria, is being attended by Prosecutors General and Ministers from across the European Union and Europe as a whole, senior clerics of various religions, representatives of state institutions, non-governmental organizations, academic society, human rights defenders and civil activists.

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*Rabbi Menachem Margolin*



International Conference on STOP HATE SPEECH, which started today (5th December) and concludes on the 6th December in Sofia, Bulgaria.

The main goal of the conference is to create a platform for the exchange of experience and good practices, which will help to effectively counter xenophobic, anti-Semitic and discriminatory acts, as well as hate crimes.

The international conference was opened by the Prosecutor General of the Republic of Bulgaria Ivan Geshev, Vice President of the Republic of Bulgaria Iliana Yotova, the Interim Minister of Justice Krum Zarkov, Rabbi Menachem Margolin, Chairman of the European Jewish Association and representatives of the executive and

judicial authorities.

In his speech to Conference, Rabbi Margolin said:

""Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, you understand what is at stake here. Hate speech is not just about Jews. People who hate don't only hate Jews. They are unhappy in themselves and seeks to blame others for their situation.

"It is easy to be manipulated to hate Jews but if it not the Jews it will be the Muslims, the blacks, the police, the rich people and anyone else who are different than them.

"We should always remember that the train tracks that lead to the Gas Chambers - there are the final stop for the hate. The way to counter ignorance and hate speech is to live completely differently than the way those who spread hate do. We should be an example. We must welcome diversity with open arms. It is our responsibility to use all means to ensure that hatred of the self can never ever be expressed against another human being."

Video messages to the participants were relayed to the conference by Manfred Weber - Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, Ilhan Kyuchuk, MEP from the "Renew Europe" Group in the EP and co-chairman of the European Liberals, Adrian Vázquez Lazara - Chair of the Legal Affairs Committee in the EP.

At the invitation of the Prosecutor General Ivan Geshev, the Prosecutor General of Romania Gabriela Scutea, the Prosecutor General of Lithuania Nida Grunskiene, the Prosecutor General of



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Slovenia Drago Šketa, the Chief Prosecutor of the State of North Rhine Westphalia - Germany Markus Hartmann, the Deputy Republic Public Prosecutor of Serbia Tamara Mirovic, the Deputy Prosecutor General of Albania Thoma Jano, the Head of Odesa Regional Prosecutor's Office - Ukraine Sergiy Kostenko, chief prosecutors from the Republic of Slovak, the Czech Republic, Latvia and Estonia, experts from Eurojust and the Council of Europe, the leadership of the Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Bulgaria, are all taking part in the International Conference.

The international conference STOP HATE SPEECH uniquely gathers in one place clerics from four religions. Guests at the event are Bishop Polycarp, Vicar of His Holiness the Bulgarian Patriarch and Metropolitan Neophyte of Sofia, Alexander Moshev- representative of the Apostolic Nuncio in Bulgaria, Grand Mufti Mustafa Hadji. The Chief rabbi of the Netherlands, Binyomin Jacobs also attended.

A speaker planned for the 6th is the photojournalist Marissa Roth, Pulitzer Prize-winner for coverage of the 1992 Los Angeles riots sparked by police brutality against a black biker.

Keren Knoll, grand-daughter of Mireille Knoll, an 85-year-old Jew who survived the Holocaust in World War II and was murdered in her Paris home in 2018 because of her ethnicity, gave an impassioned speech in which she urged all present to do more.

Within the framework of the two-day conference, a discussion will be held on Tuesday on the protection of human rights and respect for ethnicity and gender. Speakers on the topic will be representatives of the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, the Bilitis Foundation, activists for the rights of the LGBT community, the Center for Inter-Ethnic Dialogue and tolerance "Amalipe" and others.

Representatives from academia are taking part in a number of separate discussions within the conference programme. Prof. Dr. Vili Lilkov presented a historical overview of the rescue of Bulgarian Jews during the Second World War, and Assoc. Prof. Simeon Groisman outlined research on the topic: "The religious - source and object of hatred in the age of "Online Crowds".

Among the participants of the International Conference are Assoc. Prof. Iva Pushkarova, Assoc. Prof. Romyana Hristidi, Milena Kotseva, Director of the Directorate "Procedural Representation before the ECHR" in the Ministry of Justice, and Yulia Dandolova, executive director of the organization of Jews in Bulgaria "Shalom".

The program of the event is divided into three thematic panels:

"Countering Crimes Against Religions" with moderator Alexander Benjamin from the European Jewish Association; "Protecting the citizens'- rule of law – way to guarantee the fundamental human rights" with moderator Vladimir Nikolov - Chairman of the Association of Prosecutors in

Bulgaria; "Crimes with a discriminatory motive - the needs of measures guaranteeing the rights of minority groups" with moderator Liliya Dragoeva, BILITIS FOUNDATION.

Nearly 70 media representatives are accredited for the event.

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European Jewish Association

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