AALST CARNIVAL RETURN UNESCO RECOGNITION, EU JEWISH CHIEF SAYS “THEY JUMPED BEFORE THEY WERE PUSHED”

Monday 2 December, 2019

(Brussels 1 December) The head of Brussels-based European Jewish Association, responded this evening to the news that the Mayor of Aalst has “returned” UNESCO recognition for the city’s carnival as “a classic case of jumping before they were pushed”.

The carnival has been in the spotlight because of grotesque anti-Semitic floats at the last carnival. The European Jewish Association has been calling for the UNESCO recognition to be withdrawn. A decision to withdraw recognition was widely expected to be confirmed in Bogota, Colombia on December 12th.

Rabbi Margolin said in a statement this evening,

“Despite the widespread criticism, despite the clear grotesque anti-Semitic imagery, despite the opportunity to at least acknowledge the wrong and hurt caused, the Mayor of Aalst has consistently remained defiant and mocking. It is sad that when given the opportunity to put things right and return the carnival to universal values of decency, they instead prefer to put themselves outside of the pale. So be it.

“The anti-Jewish theme was already in evidence ahead of this year’s carnival. More anti-semitic images were prepared that mocked UNESCO and featured grotesque images of religious Jews.

“It is now clear that Aalst are undeserving of any status or recognition afforded by UNESCO. It was also clear that the UNESCO committee was more than likely to recommend the withdrawal of recognition.

“What we are witnessing tonight is a face-saving exercise, a classic example of someone jumping before they were pushed.” Ends

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