

# CEJI Calls on European Parliament to Condemn Racist and Antisemitic MEP



**CEJI – a Jewish Contribution to an Inclusive Europe asked the European Parliament to lift the parliamentary immunity of Maciej Giertych, MEP. CEJI did so in a letter sent today to Gert Pöttering, the President of the European Parliament.**

The European Parliament recently saw the launch of a publication entitled “Civilisations at war in Europe”, written by Maciej Giertych, a Polish independent MEP. In this document, Giertych lays out his view of the world. And his view is nothing less than scary: Giertych’s arguments throw us back to the long-discredited racial theories of the 19th and 20th centuries, and to the anti-Jewish religious hatred of the Middle Ages.

## **Reviving Ancient Anti-Jewish hatred**

Giertych’s work is full of spurious claims and simple lies. Claiming that Jews, “*By their own will, they prefer to live a separate life, in apartheid from the surrounding communities,*” he insists that, “*It was only Hitler’s Germany that created the concept of forced separation.*” Moreover, he suggests that Jews migrated from place to place in pursuit of money, reviving the stereotype of Jews as greedy. In doing so, Giertych wilfully ignores centuries of Jewish expulsions and forced ghettos, including the expulsions of Jews from his own hometown, Warsaw, in 1483, 1527, 1775 and 1790, and the Jewish quarter that was enforced in that city from around 1796-1862.

Presenting the Jews as “*a tragic community, a people that ... did not recognise Jesus Christ as the awaited Messiah*”, Giertych suggests that Jews brought persecution on themselves for refusing to convert to Christianity. He claims his ideas are rooted in Catholicism, a claim that ignores the work of the Vatican in recent decades to improve relations between the Church and the Jews.

The document is offensive not only to Jews, but in fact to anyone who is not a white Polish Catholic. In Giertych’s words: “*an effort must be made to make others accept [these] values. ... the idea of a nation was most strongly developed among the Polish people...*”.

## **Parliament’s Responsibility and Reponse**

Whether the publication was funded with subsidies from the European Parliament remains unclear, under the Parliament’s shambolic rules. Even if this decision by Giertych is protected by parliamentary immunity, it would undermine the credibility of the European Parliament as a force for a tolerant and inclusive Europe.

In the letter to President Pöttering, CEJI pointed to his inaugural speech on Tuesday, February 14th, in which Pöttering said that, “*Dialogue of Cultures can only succeed if it is based on truth and mutual tolerance.*” The document produced by Giertych stands in stark contrast to not only this speech, but also to the values espoused by the Parliament.

In light of this, CEJI – A Jewish Contribution to an Inclusive Europe, **calls on the European Parliament to:**

- Condemn in the strongest words possible the racist and antisemitic hatred espoused in Giertych's publication;
- Lift the parliamentary immunity of MEP Giertych, in cooperation with the Polish Parliament, the Sejm;
- Strengthen the commitment of the European Parliament to combat racism and intolerance in Europe, specifically through education;
- Clarify the rules on the use of public funds for personal publications, especially for independent MEPs.

*CEJI – a Jewish Contribution to an Inclusive Europe provides diversity education, facilitates intercultural dialogue and advocates for effective measures against discrimination on the European level.*

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