



AMERICAN SEPHARDI FEDERATION / SEPHARDIC HOUSE
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PRESS RELEASE

Spanish Ombudsman Enrique Mugica Herzog Coming to New York to Keynote International Symposium

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NEW YORK, NY (December 3, 2009) - His Excellency Enrique Múgica Herzog, the Ombudsman of Spain, will be featured at an international Symposium on the '**Jews of Spain: Past and Present**' which will take place **December 5-7, 2009** at the *Center for Jewish History* (15 West 16th Street) in New York City.

This program is being organized by the **American Sephardi Federation/Sephardic House** (ASF/SH) with the generous support of *The Edmond J. Safra Philanthropic Foundation*; the invaluable assistance of the *Consulate General of Spain in New York*; along with the participation of *Casa Sefarad-Israel* in Madrid; the *Red de Juderías de España* in Girona; the *Instituto Cervantes*, New York; and *The Catalan Center* at NYU. Other sponsors include *Banco Santander*, *Iberia Airlines* and *Telefonica*.

Numerous Spanish officials will be coming to New York to join eminent scholars from the United States, Canada and Israel in addressing both the triumphs and travails of the Sephardic Jewish legacy in Spain.

In addition to H.E. Enrique Múgica Herzog, other featured participants from Spain include Jacobo Israel Garzón, President of the *Federation of the Jewish Communities of Spain*; Diego de Ojeda, Director General of *Casa Sefarad-Israel*; Assumpció Hosta Rebes, Secretary General of the *Red de Juderías de España*; and Deputy Mayors of the Spanish cities of Girona, Ribadavia and Segovia.

"The American Sephardi Federation is extremely pleased to present this program, as it is of great historic interest and goes to the very core of our mission," said Florence Amzallag Tatistcheff, ASF Board Member and Chair of the Program Committee. *"This Symposium will increase knowledge of the Sephardic Jewish experience which emanated from Spain and its impact on Jewish thinking up to today."*

The Saturday night opening will feature a Gala Concert and Dessert Reception with Spain's Paco Díez, who brings his voice, guitar, percussion, and scholarship of the folk traditions from the varied regions of Spain.

The Symposium program will initially address the contributions of Jews to Spain through scholarship (Jewish thought, mysticism, Maimonides, etc.) Culture (e.g. artists, poets, etc) then

focus on the darker medieval period (the Inquisition, the 1492 Expulsion, etc.) finally addressing 'Spain and its Jews Today.'

While this project will no doubt be of interest to Sephardim, the ASF/SH is committed to promoting this program to a wider Jewish and non-Jewish audience in order to enrich the public knowledge about the Sephardic Jewish experience.

The Symposium is part of a year-long initiative that ASF has organized throughout 2009-2010, on ***'The Jews of Spain: Past and Present.'*** Other programs include an exhibition entitled ***'Jerusalem and the Jews of Spain: Longing and Reality'*** which is free and open to the public through May 2010; the February 4-11, 2010 ***NY Sephardic Jewish Film Festival***, which will feature selected films on Spain; and a series of lectures on a variety of topics including "Maimonides, Spinoza and Us"; "Daughters of Sara, Mothers of Israel"; and "The Jewish Presence in Contemporary Catalan Literature."

Full details on all programs are available on the ASF/SH website:

www.AmericanSephardiFederation.org