



Condemnations Pour in After Orban-Farage Brussels Conference Shut Down by Police

Description

UK : Police descended upon a Brussels conference venue on Tuesday morning on the orders of local mayor Emir Kir to prevent a political conference from taking place.

Delegates and speakers who had not yet made it into the building were blocked from entering as well as catering supplies for the day.

The conference is slated to feature a range of political speakers including Brexit leader Nigel Farage, the Prime Minister of Hungary Viktor Orban, former UK Home Secretary Suella Braverman, and other conservative thinkers and legislators.

Belgian Prime Minister delivered a withering rebuke to the Brussels mayors who worked to prevent the National Conservatism Conference from taking place, calling their acts “unacceptable”.

PM Alexander De Croo said while the regions enjoyed autonomy, nevertheless, freedom of speech is guaranteed in the national constitution and could not be overruled.

“Banning political meetings is unconstitutional. Full stop”, he said. De Croo’s support of freedom of speech for national conservatives with whom he — as a liberal — probably has comparatively little in common politically came amid a similar expression of concern from Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni who said the news of police officers being sent to shut down a conference being attended by the Hungarian Prime Minister and a group of European elected politicians left her feeling “disbelief and dismay”.

“Police physically prevented guests and speakers from entering the conference”, she said and thanked PM De Croo for “his timely and clear stance against the hateful oppression of freedom of expression taking place in Brussels. To all the victims of this unjustifiable abuse, particularly the ECR Members present goes my total solidarity.”

While Britain’s Prime Minister has not spoken directly on events — perhaps because political opponent

Nigel Farage and former colleague turned-critic Suella Braverman were prominent speakers at the National Conservative Conference — an unnamed spokesman expressed his disquiet.

The Number 10 spokesman said, per the Evening Standard: “Clearly, these reports are extremely disturbing. The Prime Minister is a strong supporter and advocator for free speech and he believes that should be fundamental to any democracy.

“Speaking more broadly to the principle of such events, he is very clear that cancelling events or preventing attendance and no-platforming speakers is damaging to free speech and to democracy as a result. He is very clear that free debate and the exchange of views is vital, even where you disagree.”

But Downing Street stopped short of saying the British government was going to raise the matter with Belgium as a diplomatic incident.

John O’Brien, spokesman for conference co-convenor the Mathias Corvinus Collegium (MCC) Brussels told Breitbart News that the tactics at hand would be familiar to conservatives in the United States, where flimsy pretexts of ‘public safety’ have been used to shut down campus debates for years.

He congratulated the venue owner who, despite not holding any political views in common with the conference, is a strong advocate of freedom of speech for all and resisted pressure to cancel the booking, and noted the attempt to shut down the event had backfired for the mayors.

He said: “...we actually have had a wonderful day, a wonderful day of discussing conservative ideas... anyone with a bit of sense would see the hypocrisy. They go on about rule of law all the time in relation to Hungary.

What about rule of law in Brussels? They use it against political meetings in Brussels, I don’t think you’d experience the same thing in Hungary even if you hold political views that the party in power there might disagree with.”

O’Brien remarked that far from shutting down discussion, the censorious mayors had inadvertently left mainstream journalists who had been expecting to cover the event shocked that such a naked act of censorship could pass in the heart of the European Union.

He continued: “There has been a media spotlight, some of the journalists here today might not share the views of the speakers [but they are amazed at what has happened]... I think a lot of people might not have cared, but are seeing that something Orwellian — and I don’t like to throw that word around easily — even the most unsympathetic journalists to the conservative cause have seen a major overstep by the left and by anti-democratic forces.

“I think that has shocked the sensibilities of those that otherwise would have dismissed the idea of ‘cancel culture’ or ‘woke’.”

The MCC spokesman said he was optimistic that despite the attempts to shut it down the conference would continue on Wednesday, and that guests such as Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán would

be able to speak. The matter was going to court, he said, but the organisers were confident about the outcome.

Several speakers who had been due to sit on panels or deliver keynotes were physically barred from entering the conference venue in Brussels on Tuesday, including former French Presidential candidate Eric Zemmour and Member of the European Parliament Patricia Chagnon.

Zemmour accused Brussels municipal mayor Emir Kir of being “close to the Turkish Islamists” and using the police as “a private militia” to shut down discussion. “The fight for freedom of expression is more important than ever,” he reflected.

BY OLIVER JJ LANE

Category

1. Crime-Justice-Terrorism-Corruption
2. Main
3. Media-Soc. media-Internet
4. Politics-Geopolitics-Gov.-Events

Date Created

04/17/2024