Italy and several others Western countries to desert Durban Conference

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In line with other Western countries, Italy will not participate to the next World Conference Against Racism, also known as Durban Conference, which will take place in New York in September.

In recent months, controversy has arisen over the fact that the new UNESCO Intergovernmental Conference would risk turning into an anti-Semitic and anti-Israeli meeting, as experienced in previous episodes starting from 2001 in Durban, South Africa, when Israel was described as a “racist and apartheid state”.

Other than Italy, countries such as the US, Canada, Australia, the UK, France, Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Hungary, Czech Republic and, obviously, Israel already opted for the boycott: these are all countries that had already deserted the 2011 edition, in New York, and many of those who had not gone to the conference in Geneva in 2009.

In 2001, the Conference transformed into an accusation against Israel, reinforced by the distribution, among other things, of anti Semitic materials such as the Protocols of the Elders of Zion. Years later, in 2009, former Iranian President Mahmud Ahmadinejad, the only leader to get on stage, starred in an anti-Israeli show. 23 EU leaders left the room, but France did not so, despite being represented only at ambassador level, in order to “make another voice heard, that of tolerance and responsibility”.

In 2011, Italy confirmed the boycott of the celebrations of the tenth anniversary, motivated by the words of former Minister of Foreign Affairs Franco Frattini, according to whom “the minimum conditions to participate were not met”. Paris as well pulled out in that occasion: a position confirmed by President Emmanuel Macron, whom in mid-August reiterated the absence of France from the Conference: “We will continue to fight all forms of racism and
we will ensure that the Durban Conference is held in accordance with the founding principles of the United Nations”, specified the Elysée Palace in a mid-August note. (@giorgiodelgallo)