



# Pressemitteilung

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## **German-Israeli Intergovernmental Consultations: Innovation – Education – Sustainability**

### **Joint Statement of the Government of the Federal Republic of Ger- many and the Government of the State of Israel**

(Berlin, 6 December 2012)

On 6 December 2012, the Governments of the Federal Republic of Germany and the State of Israel held the fourth round of intergovernmental consultations in Berlin.

Chancellor Angela Merkel of the Federal Republic of Germany and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of the State of Israel chaired the consultations and noted with satisfaction the progress made since the last consultations held in Jerusalem on 31 January 2011.

The sides discussed a broad range of topics of mutual interest and areas of cooperation with a particular focus on innovation, education and sustainability. They reiterated their joint objective to further solidify the unique relationship and close ties between Germany and Israel through cooperation and political measures which look towards the future while recognizing Germany's awareness of its historic responsibility towards Israel.

They reconfirmed their pledge to never forget the horrors of the past and to preserve the memory of the Shoah for future generations as present and meaningful through education, and their strong commitment to human rights and to the fight against all forms of anti-Semitism and racism. In this context, they also strongly reaffirmed that any challenge to the right of the State of Israel to exist as a nation, any calls for the destruction of the State of Israel and any denial of the Shoah are totally unacceptable.

Both sides underlined the importance of the Luxemburg agreement agreed upon by David Ben Gurion and Konrad Adenauer sixty years ago, which laid the groundwork for diplomatic relations between Germany and Israel. They emphasized the solid basis of shared values of democracy, freedom and the rule of law which underpin the strong friendship and partnership between Germany and Israel.

The two Governments wish to thank the many people who work continually to promote the ties between the two countries.

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**The following Government members took part in the consultations:**

On the German side: Federal Chancellor, Dr. Angela Merkel, Federal Minister of Economics and Technology and Deputy Federal Chancellor, Philipp Rösler, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs, Guido Westerwelle, Federal Minister of Finance, Wolfgang Schäuble, Federal Minister of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection, Ms. Ilse Aigner, Federal Minister of Defence, Thomas de Maizière, Federal Minister of Transport, Building and Urban Development, Peter Ramsauer, Federal Minister of Education and Research, Prof. Annette Schavan, Federal Minister of Economic Cooperation and Development, Mr. Dirk Niebel, and Minister of State in the Federal Chancellery and Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media, Mr. Bernd Neumann.

On the Israeli side: Prime Minister, Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu, Minister of Defense and Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Ehud Barak, Minister of Finance, Dr. Yuval Steinitz, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Ms. Orit Noked, Minister of Science and Technology Prof. Daniel Hershkowitz, Deputy Foreign Minister Mr. Danny Ayalon and Cabinet Secretary Mr. Zvi Hauser.

The Government consultations focused on the following topics:

**1. Marking the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and Germany in the year 2015**

Both Governments have decided to mark the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between the countries during the course of 2015. They concurred that the jubilee year, 2015, is an excellent opportunity to celebrate what has been achieved and to look ahead and develop new ideas and initiatives for shaping the future of their countries. Both Governments declared their commitment to hold events, ceremonies and activities in both countries. To that effect, they stated their intention to designate national points of contact in the respective Foreign Ministries that will exchange information and explore joint projects. Both sides underlined their commitment to allocate budgetary funds for activities in the jubilee year. Given the importance of civil society contacts and activities in shaping German-Israeli relations, they emphasized the merits of civil society participation in the 2015 activities and declared their intention to explore ways to actively encourage civil society contributions as well as cultural activities.



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## 2. Innovation

- a) Industrial research and development and start-up sectors:  
Both Governments reaffirmed their long-standing, successful cooperation in scientific research and emphasized their willingness to strengthen this cooperation. They jointly decided to strengthen their cooperation in the areas of industrial research and development.  
They also discussed ways to intensify cooperation between research institutions and start-up sectors in both countries, and to enhance the focus of existing programs on German-Israeli projects.
- b) Research cooperation:  
The Federal Minister of Education and Research and the Minister of Science and Technology signed a Joint Declaration of Intent on research cooperation in the area of battery research and electrochemistry.
- c) Innovation days and cooperation in information technologies:  
The Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology and the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor decided to organize an "innovation day" under the auspices of the German Center for Innovation and Small- and Medium-Sized Business. Both ministers also agreed to organize a German-Israeli Innovation Day as part of the 2015 celebrations. They also stated their intention to strengthen cooperation in the areas of information and communication technologies.

## 3. Education

- a) Youth Exchanges:  
Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to work together in the fields of education and youth exchanges. They stated their intention to establish a working-holiday program that will complement the existing and thriving youth exchange programs between the two countries and facilitate programs for young professionals. Both sides are looking forward to making progress on various outstanding consular issues, including Israeli visa for German volunteers.
- b) Vocational Education and training:  
Both sides emphasized the importance of consolidating the exchange of apprentices which began in 2011. The Federal Ministry of Education and Research and the Israeli Ministry of Indus-



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try, Trade and Labor will co-organize a German-Israeli conference on vocational education and training that will take place in Germany in 2013.

c) German-Israeli Schoolbook Commission:

The Governments took note of the results of the First Conference of the German-Israeli Schoolbook Commission that took place in the Federal Foreign Office from 3 to 5 December of this year, and believe that this initiative will make an important contribution to promoting dialogue and understanding between the two countries through education.

#### **4. Sustainability**

a) Renewable energies:

The Governments decided to reinforce cooperation in the area of renewable energies both in terms of industrial and trade cooperation and with regard to developing education modules on solar energy and energy efficiency.

b) Agriculture:

The Governments decided to intensify cooperation in the agricultural sector and will explore the possibility of further cooperation in this area. The sides decided to cooperate and jointly promote innovations in agriculture closely related to the phenomena of worldwide climate change. Both sides will cooperate in related joint projects to be implemented in different countries. The Ministers signed an Agreement on Scientific-Technical Cooperation in the Area of Research in Agriculture and Nutrition. In addition, the Governments reaffirmed their interest in future joint twinning projects and decided on the first twinning project on rural development and agrotourism as a trilateral project between Italy, Germany and Israel. The possibility of working together in agricultural projects in Africa is also being considered.

c) Rail transport:

The Governments have decided to strengthen cooperation in the area of rail transport. The German Government will encourage German consulting firms and infrastructure companies to take part in transportation projects in Israel, such as the Eilat railroad project and the planned light rail in Tel Aviv.

d) Electric Mobility and Innovations for Sustainable Transportation:



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The Governments recognize that sustainable transportation, including electric mobility, will contribute to economic growth, lower dependency on oil and environmental and climate protection. For the further deployment of electric mobility in their countries, both sides have introduced relevant policies. The Governments exchange information on these policies. Moreover, the Governments have agreed to promote the dialogue between experts, and to engage in relevant activities for motivating additional potential partnerships.

e) Development cooperation:

The Governments of Germany and Israel are strongly committed to the global agenda for sustainable development, poverty eradication and the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.

The two Governments welcome the recent signature of the trilateral Memorandum of Understanding between the Republic of Kenya, the Federal Republic of Germany and the State of Israel, regarding the tripartite implementation of joint program focusing on Enhancing Sustainable Ways of Protecting Lake Victoria Environment by (1) the promotion of tilapia fish farming as a business and (2) a contribution to the improvement of wastewater management. Both sides recognize and appreciate the partnership in the implementation of the development program in Ghana.

Furthermore, Germany and Israel have decided to increase their engagement and coordination by establishing a development dialogue through BMZ and MASHAV, to begin in January 2013 and by pursuing a new project with Romania in Moldova focusing on food safety.

## 5. Other issues

a) National Security and National Emergencies:

The Governments decided to strengthen and expand cooperation in the area of homeland security, especially combating violent extremism and terrorism. Issues pertaining to national security will be added to those for which cooperation already exists in the framework of a Joint Declaration of Intent on Cooperation on Combating Crime and Terrorism.

The national authorities also cooperate and exchange good practice in the field of counter-terrorism technology especially on countering CBRN-terrorism.



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The sides also decided that cooperation between the two countries in dealing with natural disasters and emergencies be extended. The Governments have decided to cooperate and mutually assist each other in emergencies resulting from natural disasters (fires, earthquakes, floods, etc.).

b) Cyber Defense:

The Governments recognized that the evolution of cyberspace provides both opportunities and challenges. This also has repercussions on national and public security. Therefore, the Governments intend to enhance existing collaboration and promote new partnerships in essential domains such as national policy, academic research and raising awareness.

c) Avoidance of Double Taxation:

The Governments decided to strengthen their economic ties, making it easier for citizens of one country to engage in economic activity in the other country. They expressed their intent to sign an Agreement for the Avoidance of Double Taxation so that taxpayers, citizens, entrepreneurs and companies of one country, who are active in the other country, will not be taxed twice for the same income.

d) Preserving and refurbishing the "White City" Tel Aviv

The Governments recognize that the "White City" in Tel Aviv is the world's largest collection of Bauhaus architecture, built by exiled Jewish German architects, and plays an important role in joint German-Israeli history. The Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development and the City of Tel Aviv Municipal Authority will cooperate on the study, documentation and preservation of Bauhaus buildings in Tel Aviv.

## 6. Conclusion

The Governments reiterated the great importance they attribute to the relationship between the two Governments and have decided to convene the next consultations in Jerusalem during 2013.