



Pressemitteilung

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Joint Statement of the 7th German-Israeli Inter-Governmental Consultations

Marking the Tenth Anniversary of Consultations –
From an enriching present to an innovative future

The Governments of the Federal Republic of Germany and the State of Israel held their seventh Inter-Governmental Consultations in Jerusalem today. This meeting marks a decade of Inter-Governmental Consultations, since the first meeting took place in March 2008.

Chancellor Dr. Angela Merkel of the Federal Republic of Germany and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of the State of Israel, along with their respective members of cabinet, noted with satisfaction and appreciation the development of a strong and vibrant partnership during the last decade.

The frequency of the meetings, the bilateral discussions as well as the agreements and understandings reached by the Governments attest to the exceptionally intense cooperation between Germany and Israel in the fields of scientific research and innovation, economy and trade, culture, environment, youth exchange and expanding people to people exchanges as well as diplomacy, strategic and regional cooperation, politico-military and defense, intelligence, counter-terrorism and cyber.

This year, the two Governments devoted special attention to the field of innovation in the face of future challenges and encourage all relevant sectors in both societies to deepen the collaboration in research and development, science and technology and in the start-up ecosystem for the benefit of both countries and beyond.

After a decade of Inter-Governmental Consultations both sides expressed their resolve to further intensify the unique relations between Israel and Germany, which are based, among other things, on their common history and shared values and to follow the path from an enriching present to an innovative future. They reiterated their shared goal of preserving and consolidating these strong foundations and jointly decided to start a process to discuss and decide on strategic areas for future cooperation during the next decade and to present the results at the eighth Inter-Governmental Consultations in Berlin.



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The Prime Minister confirmed that Germany is, and will remain, one of Israel's closest and most important allies. The Chancellor stressed the German Government's commitment to, and special historical responsibility for, Israel's security as a Jewish and democratic state and reiterated that Israel's right to exist must never be compromised. This historical responsibility is part of Germany's *raison d'être* (*Staatsraison*). Germany rejects all attempts to boycott the State of Israel.

The Chancellor and the Prime Minister concurred that preserving the memory of the Shoah for future generations continues to be a central pillar of the relationship between the two countries and peoples. Therefore they concurred that continuous efforts will be undertaken in order to meet the challenges of both generational and demographic changes in both societies to preserve this memory.

In that context, the significant expansion of youth exchanges between Germany and Israel continues to be crucial to ensure that the young and future generations in both countries sustain this evolving spirit of friendship between the two peoples. Both sides welcomed the ongoing talks to broaden the bilateral youth exchange with the aim of establishing a German-Israeli Youth Office.

The Chancellor and the Prime Minister reiterated their strong commitment to fighting against all forms of anti-Semitism and racism. Both sides emphasized that the shared values of democracy, protection of minorities and human rights, liberty and rule of law are an essential foundation of the partnership and friendship between the two countries that needs to be protected.

In that context, the Chancellor and the Prime Minister welcomed that the first bilateral Consultations on Combatting anti-Semitism took place during the Inter-Governmental Consultations and underlined the importance of adopting the IHRA Working Definition of Anti-Semitism by governments as a vital and important tool for properly identifying and combating anti-Semitism and developing appropriate means of response.

Both sides expressed their resolve to work towards Israel's peaceful coexistence with all its neighbors. The sides reiterated that all outstanding issues between the Israeli and Palestinian sides should be resolved in the context of meaningful and direct negotiations.

The Chancellor and the Prime Minister emphasized their joint determination and resolve to continue strengthening the unique



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partnership between both countries, and expressed their deep appreciation for the commitment of the many people in both countries to deepen the bonds between the two countries and their societies.

Both sides approved to convene the next round of Consultations in Germany in 2019.

The following Government members took part in the consultations:

On the German side: Federal Chancellor Dr Angela Merkel; Vice-Chancellor and Federal Minister of Finance, Olaf Scholz; Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs, Heiko Maas; Federal Minister of the Interior, Building and Community, Horst Seehofer; Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Energy, Peter Altmaier; Federal Minister of Justice and Consumer Protection, Dr. Katarina Barley; Federal Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Hubertus Heil; Federal Minister of Food and Agriculture, Julia Klöckner; Federal Minister of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, Dr. Franziska Giffey; Federal Minister of Transport and Digital Infrastructure, Andreas Scheuer; Federal Ministry of Education and Research, Parliamentary State Secretary, Thomas Rachel; Federal Minister of Economic Cooperation and Development, Dr. Gerd Müller;; Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media, Monika Grütters; Federal Ministry of Defense, Parliamentary State Secretary, Dr Peter Tauber; Federal Ministry for the Environment, Parliamentary State Secretary, Rita Schwarzelühr-Sutter;

On the Israeli side: Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu; Minister of Finance, Moshe Kahlon; Minister of Public Security, Gilad Erdan; Minister of Construction and Housing, Yoav Gallant; Minister of Interior, Aryeh Deri; Minister of Energy and Water, Yuval Steinitz; Minister of Economy, Eli Cohen; Minister of Justice, Ayelet Shaked; Minister for Social Equality, Gila Gamliel; Minister of Labor and Social Affairs, Haim Katz; Minister of Education, Naftali Bennett; Minister of Transportation, Yisrael Katz; Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tzipi Hotovely; Deputy Minister of Health, Yakov Litzman; Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection, Yaron Mazuz; Director General of the Ministry of Science and Technology, Peretz Vazan; Director General of the Ministry of Culture and Sport, Yossi Sharabi; Director Policy & Political Military Bureau, Ministry of Defense, Zohar Palti;

The Inter-Governmental Consultations focused on the following topics:



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1. Foreign Affairs, Defense and Homeland Security

Both Governments decided to further strengthen the cooperation in the political and political-security fields including the enhancement of ongoing and frequent consultations at all levels with respect to strategic, regional and defense issues and bilateral and trilateral cooperation. Both sides underlined the importance of a regular exchange about vital multilateral developments, also with a view to Germany taking into account Israel's positions and interests during the period of its membership in the UN Security Council in 2019/20. Germany will act as a friend of Israel in its capacity as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council and be supportive of Israel's legitimate interests. Germany will continue to make every effort to prevent the practice of unfair treatment of Israel.

Both Ministries of Foreign Affairs intend to increase possibilities for regular exchange and training programs especially for junior diplomats.

Both Governments affirmed their readiness to strengthen their cooperation in regional and international organizations, including the UN and its agencies and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

The Governments worked together to implement the Germany-Israel Africa Initiative, and in that framework, cooperated in the field of development in six African countries. The Chancellor and Prime Minister expressed their satisfaction with the results and achievements of these joint projects. Both sides stressed the close ties between Mashav and BMZ. At the annual development dialogue on 17 September 2018 it was agreed to consider positively the extension of the Initiative. The details of which will be defined in further deliberations in the course of 2019. Both sides stressed the importance of engaging the private sector in the development cooperation and of new and innovative technologies for joint projects.

Both Ministries of Defense strive to maintain and continuously deepen the close and trustful security policy and defense ties that exist between the two countries. The relationship is mutually beneficial, based on solid partnership and a shared understanding of common challenges. In the face of shared threats and concerns, the defense establishments will continue and expand the dialogue and multifaceted cooperation to promote security in a way that will serve the mutual long-term interests of Israel and Germany. The two sides



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seek, inter alia, to intensify and deepen the bilateral cooperation in the field of cyber defense.

The two leaders reiterated their commitment towards the enhancement of EU-Israel relations in areas of mutual interest, including cooperation on economic, political, strategic, regional, innovation and people-to-people issues, including in the framework of partnership priorities and in accordance with the reviewed European Neighborhood Policy.

The Governments will continue to collaborate closely in the field of homeland security, emergency preparedness and disaster management. They work towards an enhanced cooperation in preventing and combatting extremism and radicalization, serious crime, terrorism and state-driven terrorism, espionage (including cyber-espionage) and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction by further strengthening the bilateral cooperation of the law enforcement and intelligence agencies in the strategic, operative, technological and forensic field, aiming at an even more effective fight against crime, terrorism and state-driven threats.

2. Economics, Trade and Energy

The Governments worked to encourage economic cooperation, collaboration in research and innovation as well as mutual investments of the private sector, including activity of German companies in the fields of infrastructure, transportation and energy. The Governments initiated “Innovation Days” in which entrepreneurs and the broader public were presented with innovations and opportunities for investment in both countries.

The Governments will seek to establish a financial dialogue mechanism between the Federal Ministry of Finance of Germany and the Ministry of Finance of Israel in the areas of their responsibility, aiming to further promote and strengthen cooperation.

The Governments took note of the positive trade figures for the year 2017. Total bilateral trade volume of goods and business services was USD 7.83 billion, a 14% increase from the previous year.

The growth trend in business services was particularly encouraging in 2017, yet both sides believe that much remains to be done in order to fully realize the potential of the bilateral exchange in this area, as well as in trade in goods.



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Both Governments are ready to invest resources in new initiatives whose objectives will be to expose the business communities to each other and to present potential opportunities to the other market.

Regarding the current trade balance between the two countries, both sides will dedicate resources to create additional business platforms by organizing bilateral business events.

In light of the highly advanced nature of their economic interactions, the two Governments will put in place bilateral working agendas focused on the following technological and business areas: Cleantech (water and energy); Digital health; Mobility and automotive tech; Industry 4.0.

The Governments consider a permanent Energy Dialogue to address common interests in advancing technologies and methods to provide reliable, sustainable and affordable energy, with the goal of contributing to an improvement in and an expansion of renewable energies and the use of energy efficiency technologies.

Israel and Germany underline the importance of advancing cyber capabilities in critical infrastructures in the energy sector. The Governments are committed to identify possible new areas for cooperation and stressed the need to continue exchanging knowledge and experiences in this field.

The Governments will consider holding a dedicated "innovation summit" in Germany during the second half of 2019, to further facilitate cooperation schemes and specific business and investment opportunities in the areas mentioned above.

The Governments collaborated in the field of land, air and marine transportation and without prejudice to EU competence worked to create bilateral and international frameworks in these fields to strengthen the economic ties between the two countries.

3. Environment and Sustainability

The Governments recognized the need for urgent action to handle the global threat of climate change. The governments ratified the Paris Agreement under the UNFCCC, which sets a goal of limiting global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius. The Governments have committed to playing their part to realize the Paris Agreement goals, including undertaking domestic



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measures to implement their nationally determined contributions and to operationalize the Paris rulebook while strengthening their cooperation in the field of technological developments. The Governments are making efforts to become low carbon economies by the second half of this century including efforts to transform their energy sectors by 2050.

The Governments reiterated the importance of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that combines the three aspects of sustainable development – environmental, economic and social; accelerates the global move towards sustainable economies and societies; advances the sustainable management of natural resources; and is a milestone in ensuring the world can provide a sustainable future for all. The Governments are committed to working cooperatively towards an ambitious, comprehensive and timely implementation of the Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals. The Governments also emphasized their willingness to work jointly towards improving resource efficiency and promoting environmental innovation.

The Governments cooperated closely in two environmental Twinning projects, which they view as very successful from both sides. Further EU-funded projects would be welcome to continue joint work on the environment and to strengthen the exchange of experts.

The Governments collaborated in the field of electric mobility as a central component of future transportation systems. Moreover, it was decided to cooperate in the field of autonomous driving.

The Governments cooperated and exchanged knowledge in the field of agricultural research, rural tourism and veterinary medicine.



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4. Interaction between Societies

The Governments worked to strengthen the ties between the younger generation in both countries and increase mutual acquaintance and understanding. As such, young Germans participate in volunteer services in Israel and the German young leadership visits Israel as an additional means for strengthening ties between the younger generations in both countries and increasing mutual understanding. The program for issuing working holiday visas provides another framework for young people to become better acquainted and deepen their mutual understanding.

The Governments worked to establish exchanges of young student interns, to have a variety of professional and cultural meetings and to encourage joint research activity. The Governments cooperate within the framework of the “German-Israeli Program on Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training (VET)” and support the exchange of apprentices and experts through various activities. This common dialogue in the field of VET is a longstanding and fruitful exchange process which the governments intend to continue and intensify. In 2019, the Governments plan to celebrate the 50th jubilee of this program with jointly coordinated and highly visible events in Germany and Israel.

The Governments exchanged knowledge in the field of labor regulation and active labor market policy, specifically with regard to preparations needed for a changing labor market, integration of disadvantaged groups in the labor market and occupational safety and health.

The Governments cooperated and exchanged knowledge in the field of improving and reducing regulatory burden stemming from regulation as a component in advancing the society and the economy.

The Governments cooperated in the field of youth exchanges as an important and effective component for mutual acquaintance and decided to pursue the goal of establishing a German-Israeli Youth Office.

The Governments cooperated and exchanged knowledge in the field of professional-technological training.

The Governments intend to continue strengthening cooperation in the social field.



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The Governments expressed their intent to cooperate and exchange knowledge and experiences in the fields of public housing and new building technologies.

The Governments further strengthened and deepened the firm bilateral cooperation in the legal field.

In light of the shared principles of democracy and the rule of law, the governments exchanged knowledge and shared views on legal matters, including personal data protection; online hate speech and incitement to violence; and combating human trafficking.

In the spirit of the Joint Declaration concerning Cooperation in the Legal Field, signed in 2015 (under the Cooperation Agreement signed in 1989), mutual exchange visits of legal professionals, enhancing knowledge, exchanging information and facilitating cooperation in various legal matters continue to take place. As further testament to the sound professional relations between the Governments, the Attorney General of Israel is due to conduct an official visit to Germany shortly.

The Governments intend to continue strengthening and further developing existing cooperation in the legal field.

5. Science and Innovation

The Governments collaborated in the international arena with the aim of safeguarding the open internet while maintaining the right to privacy and prevent the use of the internet for criminal and terrorist purposes, including incitement.

The Governments related their respective strategies and initiatives aimed at ensuring healthy lifestyles and combatting nutrition-related diseases, particularly among children, through various policy measures such as nutritional education, offering healthy meals in schools and pre-schools, public guidelines, research activities and labelling options. They decided to explore options for future bilateral research projects in the areas of food safety, food processing technology and plant cultivation.

Based on the common understanding that the reduction of food losses was a global concern, the Governments presented the steps they took to curb food losses and food waste on national level, exchanging the lessons learned with a view to making national policies more effective.



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They took note of the bilateral intergovernmental agreement on agricultural research concluded in 2012 and pledged to explore joint follow-up research projects under this agreement, putting particular emphasis on the links between digitization and agriculture.

The Governments intensified and deepened cooperation in the field of science and innovation on the bilateral level, as well as through the European Union's framework program Horizon 2020, and through Eureka. The success of the joint programs in the past decade has led to continued cooperation in the fields of nanotechnology, water technology, civil security and IT security with the aim to foster technology transfer and stimulate the interaction of science and industry. The Governments have strengthened the long-standing cooperation in science, technology and innovation, which stands for thousands of encounters between researchers of both countries and for the excellence of cooperation at the highest level. The main research fields for the joint programs have been in the areas of cancer research, water technology, precision medicine, marine sciences and battery and electrochemistry research. The two Governments share the view that bilateral initiatives in science and technology should be expanded to research activities in the field of Artificial Intelligence and Quantum Technology.

In addition to the ministerial programs the Governments continue to support the German-Israeli Foundation for Scientific Research and Development – GIF, as one of the most important pillars in the bilateral funding landscape.

The two Governments emphasize the importance of promoting young scientists of both countries to encourage cooperation, exchange and mutual understanding. Therefore, special measures for young researchers will receive increased support, such as joint schools in cancer research and battery research, special awards and short term research grants for young scientists and the GIF young scientists' program.

The Governments intend to continue strengthening existing cooperation in the fields of science and innovation on a bilateral and European level, especially in view of the new EU Research Programmes.

The Governments of Israel and Germany reaffirm the importance they attach to issues of digitization and will jointly explore mechanisms to harness its economic and social potential.



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As processes of digital transformation and technology disruption deeply reshape the economic landscape, the sides highlighted the potential they identify in bringing their respective tech ecosystems closer together.

To that end, the sides will support the creation and operation of acceleration programs, aiming at facilitating market access for entrepreneurs, investors and corporations.

The Governments cooperated and exchanged knowledge in the fields of health and medicine, coping with the challenges of public health systems in the areas of, long-term care, prevention of infections in hospitals, digital health and others.

The two Governments will set up a joint working group that will discuss joint activities, in order to encourage cooperation between the Governments and businesses in the field of digital health.

6. Culture and Education

The Governments worked to strengthen cultural and educational activities in order to deepen understanding and cooperation between the two societies. As such, German language studies are a permanent subject in Israeli high schools. The Governments expressed their support for the work of Germany's central agency for schools abroad, the Goethe Institute and other 12 organizations to advance the German language and cultural cooperation in Israel. The Governments encouraged the translation of books from German into Hebrew and from Hebrew into German and will continue the translation prize award for German and Hebrew literature. They will encourage cooperation in the field of research of literary heritage, dance, music and cinema, including exchanges of experts and knowledge.

Both Governments welcome the progress made concerning cooperation in provenance research on Nazi-looted Art and Nazi-looted Judaica and emphasize the importance of a continued close cooperation in the field of provenance research. The Governments shall continue to hold consultations and coordination in order to promote the issue of Restitution of Nazi-looted Art and Nazi-looted Judaica.

Both governments welcome the cooperation of the Art and Exhibition Hall of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Israel-Museum and their efforts to show the exhibition 'Gurlitt: Status Report - An Art Dealer in Nazi Germany' in Israel in 2019. Upon the timely request



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submitted by the Israel Museum for legally binding immunity from Seizure under Art. 3 Immunity from Seizure law of 2007, the Israeli Minister for Social equality would support such a request for a warrant of Immunity by the Israeli Minister of Justice. The grant of immunity is therefore subject to warrant for immunity from seizure issued by the Israeli Minister of Justice in accordance with the respected law. Both parties emphasize the importance of loans of art works from the Gurlitt collection to the Israel-Museum as far as their legally binding immunity from seizure may be granted.

The Governments cooperated in the field of sports, which plays a central role in the ties between Germany and Israel. The highlight of this cooperation was the European Maccabi Games held in Berlin.

The Governments cooperated in safeguarding the legacy of the Bauhaus culture in the White City in Tel Aviv-Jaffa. As part of this, exhibitions and lectures were held.

The Governments supported the activity of foundations whose goal is to strengthen the ties between the two peoples in the fields of culture, research, youth and more. In this framework, one can mention the Minerva Foundation, the Martin Buber Society of Fellows in the Humanities and Social Sciences and the Foundation “German-Israeli Future Forum”.

The Governments intend to continue to strengthen the existing cooperation in the field of culture.