



GERMANY AND ISRAEL. 50 YEARS OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

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President of the Bundestag
and Ambassador
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Michael Borchard



KAS
INTERNATIONAL REPORTS
4 | 15



Konrad
Adenauer
Stiftung



EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

“Anyone who doesn’t believe in miracles is not a realist.” Not only is this one of the most beautiful and apt quotes of David Ben-Gurion, founding father of Israel and friend of Konrad Adenauer; this statement also lends itself very well to describing the relationship between Germany and Israel over the last 50 years. While one ought to be careful using the term miracle in a historical context, it is the case that 50 years on from the agreement sealing the establishment of diplomatic relations between Germany and Israel, relations between the two countries are in a state that seems almost a miracle. The fact that the quality of this relationship is by no means a matter of course is brought home once again when one contemplates the other major and difficult anniversary of the year 2015: On 27 January, 70 years ago was the day when the Auschwitz concentration camp was liberated.

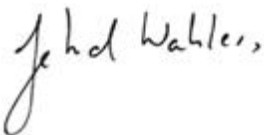
Thanks in part to solid “realpolitik”, what started out as tentative political “probing” between Germany and the young State of Israel after the unimaginable atrocities of the systematic murder of the Jews in Europe has developed into a stable foundation. Contacts at governmental level are excellent, reliable and imbued with deep trust, without existing differences of opinion – particularly relating to the Middle East conflict – being brushed under the carpet. There are few other countries with which Germany has as intensive relations at all political levels as with Israel.

It was only at the beginning of this year that the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung demonstrated on the basis of a survey that the high respect in which Germany is held as a partner in Israel is not restricted to cooperation at governmental level, and that this affinity has come to be shared by large swathes of the Israeli population. When one extends the term ambassador beyond the sphere of diplomatic personnel, this positive development can also be attributed to the good work of many tens of thousands of “ambassadors”, engaged in a variety of enterprises from volunteer organisations to innumerable scientific collaborations to town twinning, who have helped to shape this favourable image of

Germany in Israel. After decades of intensive work in Israel, the political foundations may also consider themselves among these “ambassadors”.

That said, the Foundation’s studies also show that there is no guarantee that this favourable view of the Germans among Israelis will persist in the long term. Particularly among the younger generation, scepticism with respect to “Europe’s central power” (Hans-Peter Schwarz) is demonstrably on the rise once again. The main reasons for this are not only an increasing threat perception among many people in Israel and news about attacks on Jewish institutions in Europe. The anti-Semitic demonstrations in Germany and elsewhere in Europe in 2014 have also added to it significantly. The risk of alienation between the two societies cannot be dismissed out of hand and, considering the special relationship between the two countries, it is crucial to avert it. The situation makes it all the more important to create opportunities for Israelis and Germans to meet and discover joint interests, in line with the beautiful phrase by Martin Buber: “All real living is meeting.” All the more important to awake curiosity about and empathy with what is taking place away from the overpowering backdrop of the conflict. And all the more important to make efforts not only to deepen the close collaboration further, but to develop new areas of bilateral cooperation as well. This is and remains the goal, sphere of activity and guideline of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung which meanwhile is looking back on an impressive 33-year presence in Israel.

This issue of the *KAS International Reports*, which is dedicated to the anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, brings together close partners and supporters of the Foundation and highlights perspectives and potential courses of action for securing the “miracle” alluded to by David Ben-Gurion for the future. The Foundation will continue to do everything in its power to work towards this goal.



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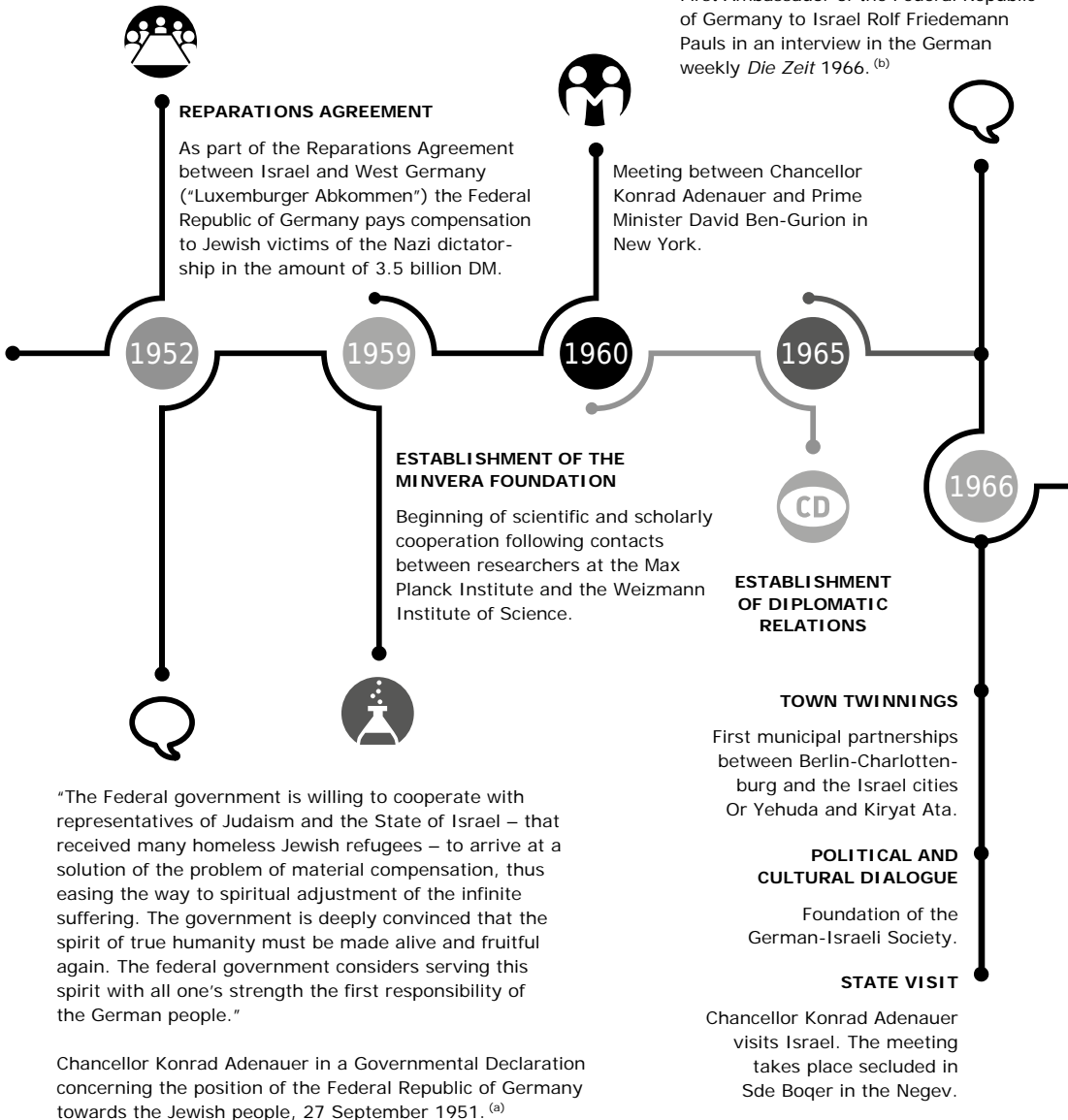
Michael Borchard

GERMAN-ISRAELI RELATIONS

1. CHRONOLOGY OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC EVENTS ⁽¹⁾

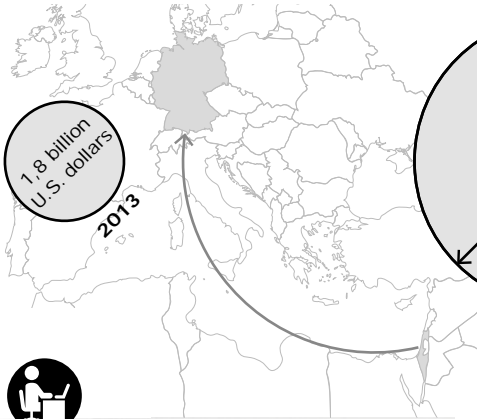
"A normalization of relations between Germans and Jews cannot be 'made'. It has to grow. This is an arduous process that will take several generations."

First Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Israel Rolf Friedemann Pauls in an interview in the German weekly *Die Zeit* 1966. ^(b)

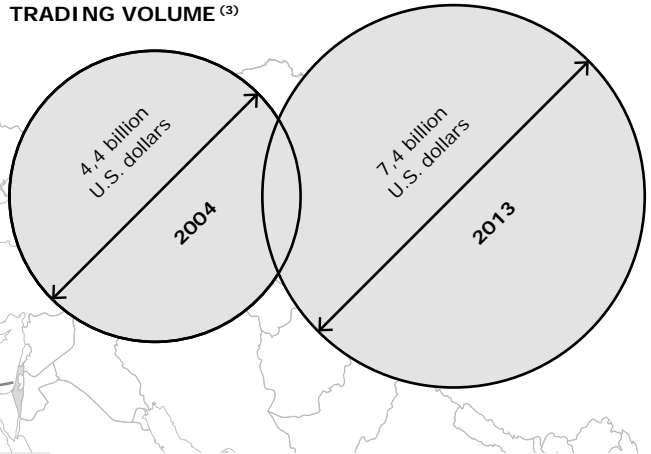


2. ECONOMIC DATA

ISRAEL'S EXPORTS TO GERMANY ⁽²⁾



GERMAN-ISRAELI TRADING VOLUME ⁽³⁾



VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Cooperation in the field of vocational training.

STATE VISIT

Foreign Minister Abba Eban visits the Federal Republic of Germany as the first member of the Israeli government.

YOUTH EXCHANGE

Formalisation of the German-Israeli youth exchange.

1969

1970

1972

1975

1979

TERROR ATTACK IN MUNICH

Palestinian terrorists take eleven members of the Israeli Olympia team hostage. The attempt by German security forces to free them fails. No hostage survives.



GERMAN CULTURE AND LANGUAGE

Opening of the Goethe-Institut in Tel Aviv. In 1988, a further institute was opened in Jerusalem.

Mutual cultural heritage:
Bauhaus architecture in Tel Aviv.

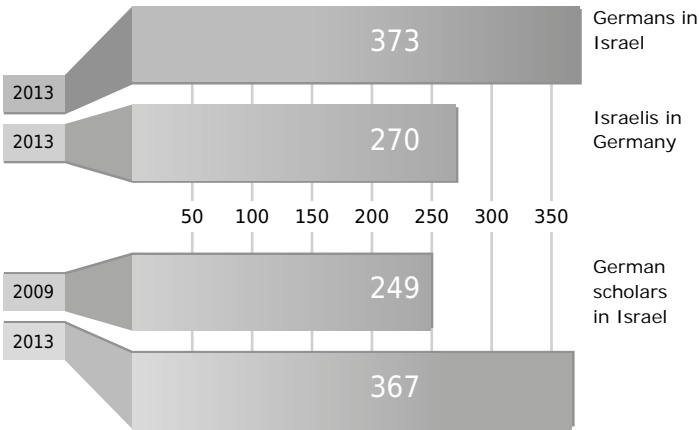
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- (b) Cited in: Jörg Andrees Ellen, "Kein Stander am Dienstwagen", *Die Zeit*, 7 Jan 1966, <http://zeit.de/1966/02/kein-stander-am-dienstwagen> (accessed 10 Apr 2015). Translated by the editors.
- (c) Cited in: "Rede von Bundeskanzlerin Dr. Angela Merkel vor der Knesset am 18. März 2008 in Jerusalem", Bulletin 26-1, Press and Information Office of the Federal Government, 18 Mar 2015, <http://bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Bulletin/2008/03/26-1-bk-knesset.html> (accessed 10 Apr 2015). Translated by the editors.
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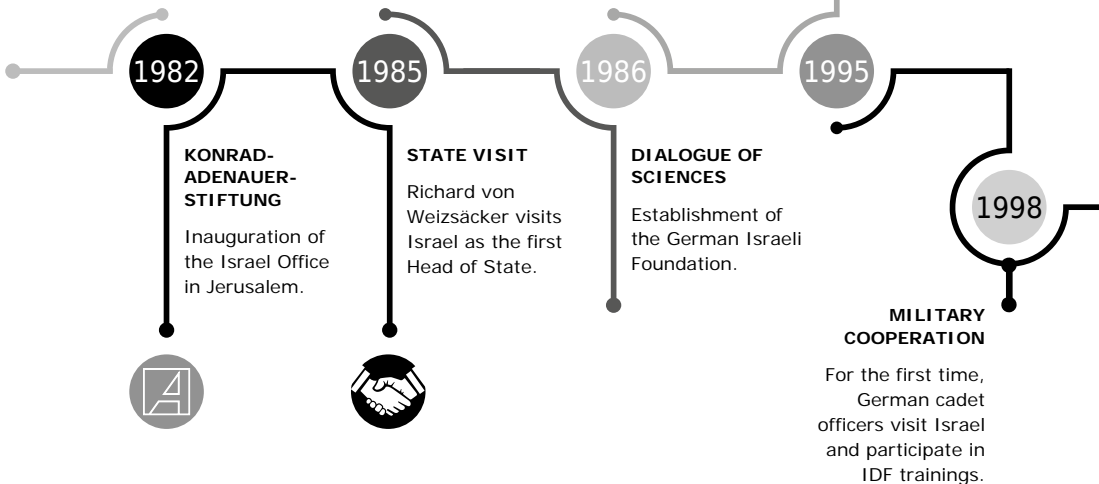
GERMAN-ISRAELI RELATIONS

3. EDUCATION COOPERATION

STUDENTS, GRADUATES, SCIENTISTS AND UNIVERSITY LECTURERS IN DAAD PROGRAMS ⁽²⁾

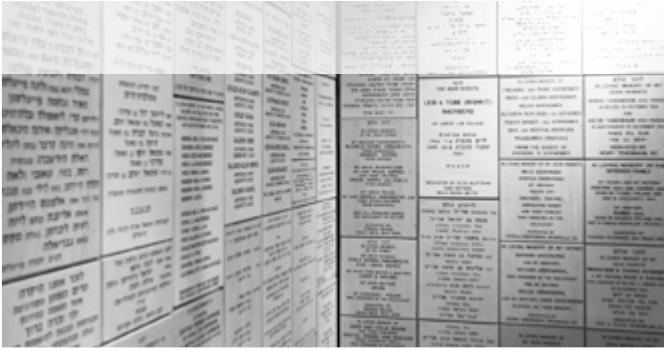


SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS ⁽⁴⁾



SOURCES DATA

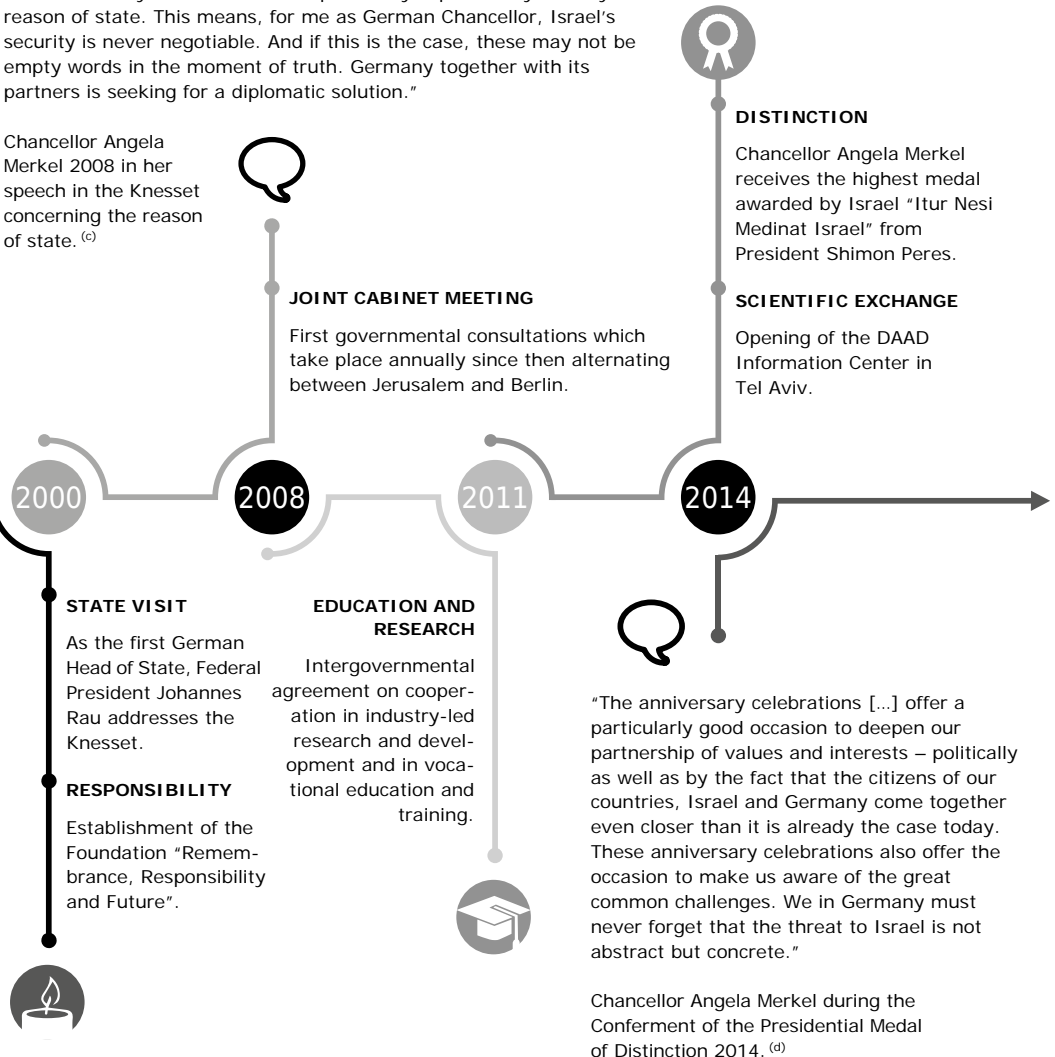
- (1) Own compilation according to the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, the Federal Foreign Office, the Embassy of the State of Israel Berlin and the German Israeli Society.
- (2) Own compilation according to the Embassy of the State of Israel Berlin and the Federal Foreign Office.
- (3) Own compilation according to the Federal Statistical Office, Wiesbaden, in: Außenwirtschaftsportal Bayern, "Export nach und Import aus Israel im Vergleich nach Jahren", <http://auwi-bayern.de/Asien/Israel/Export-Import-Statistik-Israel.jsp> (accessed 10 Apr 2015).
- (4) Own compilation according to the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), "Länderinformationen. Israel. Stipendienprogramme", <http://daad.de/laenderinformationen/israel/de> (accessed 10 Apr 2015).



Place of remembrance: Since its inauguration in 1957, the Holocaust memorial Yad Vashem is frequently visited by official guests from Germany.

“Each Federal Government and each Federal Chancellor before me was committed to Germany’s particular historical responsibility for Israel’s security. This historical responsibility is part of my country’s reason of state. This means, for me as German Chancellor, Israel’s security is never negotiable. And if this is the case, these may not be empty words in the moment of truth. Germany together with its partners is seeking for a diplomatic solution.”

Chancellor Angela Merkel 2008 in her speech in the Knesset concerning the reason of state. (c)



LIKE A MIRACLE OF HISTORY

Norbert Lammert



Prof. Dr. Norbert Lammert is President of the German Bundestag.

"But we remember the past not in order to brood upon it, but in order that it shall never recur." When Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion uttered this memorable sentence in March 1960 at a press conference after his historic meeting with German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer in the New York Waldorf Astoria hotel, Germany and Israel had not yet established diplomatic relations. During the years following the unconditional capitulation of the National Socialist regime, which had killed millions of European Jews, Jews in Israel and elsewhere could not conceive of the possibility of trust ever being established between Germans and Israelis. And without the leadership demonstrated by Adenauer and Ben-Gurion, a rapprochement, which would subsequently facilitate increasingly close cooperation and ultimately friendship between our countries, would not have been possible at this early stage. By sheer good fortune in two aspects, these two great old men were the first heads of government immediately after the two countries had been founded – Israel in 1948 on the ashes of the Holocaust and the Federal Republic in 1949 on the ruins of the Nazi regime – and found the insight and determination to aim for a genuine fresh start.

It took several years from the conclusion of the reparations agreement signed in 1952 in Luxembourg City Hall, which was important for the process of rapprochement between Germans and Jews, until the two states established diplomatic relations. When the Federal Republic and Israel conducted an official exchange of ambassadors 50 years ago on 12 May 1965, this was anything but a foregone conclusion; it still seems almost like a miracle of history today. It had only been 20 years since the demise of the National Socialist terror regime, which had put the annihilation of Jewish life in Germany and Europe on the political agenda – a chapter of our history that will forever remain a determining element of our relationship with Israel.

Photo: © Achim Melde, German Bundestag.



In 2005, the Holocaust Memorial was inaugurated in Berlin. The debates in the Bundestag which had preceded its construction are characteristic of a dynamic engagement with the nation's past. | Source: Toby Keller, flickr ©①③③.

However, German-Israeli relations must and should not be limited exclusively to our traumatic past. There are a number of good reasons why we should turn our thoughts to the present and the future. Since diplomatic relations were established 50 years ago, close and intensive cooperation has developed between the two countries. There is a lively, mutually enriching cultural exchange, intensive, constantly expanding trade relations as well as numerous cooperation projects between universities and research institutions. At a communal level, over one hundred town twinnings have been established so far. Since 2008, the German and Israeli cabinets have conducted annual governmental consultations, which are giving further important impulses to the bilateral relations between our countries. It is still obvious, however, that the German-Israeli relationship is not "normal", and nor should it be. Germany has a special historical responsibility for Israel's existence and security, underscored emphatically by Chancellor Angela Merkel in her eminent and much-quoted speech at the Israeli Knesset in March 2008. It remains both our duty and our

responsibility to energetically confront those who question Israel's right to exist and to ensure that the citizens of the State of Israel have the same right as those in the neighbouring countries to live within internationally recognised borders – free from fear, terror and violence.

We must not condone people being harassed, threatened or attacked in Germany today because they speak up for Israel or reveal their Jewish identity.

Of course, one should also be permitted to raise the question of Israel's responsibility for the current conditions in the Palestinian territories in this context. Voicing criticism is legitimate, sometimes even essential, also and particularly among friends. But we must not condone people being harassed, threatened or attacked in Germany today because they speak up for Israel or reveal their Jewish identity. We are thankful that it has been possible for Jewish life to flourish once again in Germany after the traumatic experiences of the National Socialist dictatorship and the Holocaust. This is to us, the second German democracy, not only one of the best compliments but also a moving expression of trust. The fact that we still have to protect Jewish institutions in Germany against attacks and that anti-Semitism can still be encountered in our country is shameful. We are aware that anti-Semitism is not a problem that is restricted to Germany. But we also know that nowhere else in the world has it resulted in such devastating consequences like here. Therefore, the German state, the authorities and the citizens have a particular responsibility to deny anti-Semitism social acceptance.

In this regard, the German parliament plays a central role. Besides numerous intensive debates in the Bundestag, as in 1999 over erecting the Holocaust Memorial, which was opened to the public exactly ten years ago, an annual event has been held in the plenary since 1996 on the Day of Remembrance for the Victims of National Socialism. The fact that Shimon Peres was the third Israeli President to speak at the Bundestag on this occasion in 2010 is yet another indication of our special relationship with Israel. It is a relationship to which all Presidents of the Bundestag have attached and continue to attach particular importance, each in his or her own way. In addition, thanks to the committed work of the German-Israeli Parliamentary Group, established as far back as 1971 to foster friendly relations with Israel, close and trusting relations exist between the Israeli Knesset and the German Bundestag today. These manifest in measures such as

regular exchange visits, participation in the International Parliamentary Scholarship program (IPS) and in the regular exchange of personnel.



Shimon Peres spoke in 2010 as the third Israeli President in the Bundestag – a sign of the special relationship the Federal Republic shares with the State of Israel. | Source: Amos Ben Gershom GPO, Israelisches Außenministerium, flickr ©🇮🇱🇩🇪

The Bundestag will mark this year's special anniversary by placing the relationship with Israel center stage and organising a number of activities and events. There are plans for the presidia of the two parliaments to meet in Israel and Germany. During the course of the year, we will also exhibit works of art by young Israeli artists, which the Advisory Committee for Art of the Bundestag purchased for its art collection on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. There are further plans to exhibit part of a collection of manuscripts of Albert Einstein focusing on his political activities, which has been assembled by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. A further exhibition designed by the German-Israeli Association will reflect the historical development of the unique relationship between Germany and Israel.

The fact that 70 years on from the liberation of the concentration and extermination camp of Auschwitz and the end of World War II – a war that was probably the greatest catastrophe of human

history, certainly of German history – we can look back on many years of enduring friendship with Israel as a godsend. At the same time, this friendship, which we shall strive to strengthen and develop in our role as a reliable, yet not uncritical partner, will remain an ongoing task, which we are very proud of pursuing particularly during this very special year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Norbert Lammert', written in a cursive style.

Prof. Dr. Norbert Lammert
President of the German Bundestag



BOTSCHAFT DES STAATES ISRAEL

GREETING FROM AMBASSADOR

HE Yakov Hadas-Handelsman

In 2015, the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the State of Israel and the Federal Republic of Germany is the focus of numerous events and publications in both countries; and this edition of the *KAS International Reports* is no exception.

It does not go without saying that today Israeli-German relations can be described as multi-faceted, trusting and dynamic. It has been a nearly unbelievable development from the darkest hour in history to where we are today. Some may even call it a miracle. The relations between our two countries are unique because of the Shoah. This uniqueness must be preserved because it is – due to different reasons – important today and in the future for both peoples and both nations.

After the Shoah, it was only Germany's willingness to deal with and take responsibility for its guilt that provided an opportunity for rapprochement. But as Jews/Israelis, it was initially very difficult for us. Without losing sight of the perpetrators' guilt and the pain and suffering of the victims, David Ben-Gurion and Konrad Adenauer decided to officially begin a direct dialogue. Despite harsh criticism in Israel, the first Prime Minister of the State of Israel extended his hand to the first Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany. These two courageous statesmen are still the epitome of responsibility and farsightedness. Politicians like Konrad Adenauer have contributed to Israel's renewed sense of



HE Yakov Hadas-Handelsman has been the Ambassador of the State of Israel to the Federal Republic of Germany since March 2012.

trust in Germany. But it was also the personal contacts between committed citizens on both sides, among them athletes as well as scientists and artists, who paved the way for the long process of rapprochement at a civil society level before the establishment of diplomatic relations.



Remembrance as a responsibility: The Speaker of the Knesset, Reuven Rivlin, and the President of the German Bundestag, Dr. Norbert Lammert, at the Memorial in Berlin Grunewald in 2012. From this location, the Nazis deported 50,000 of Berlin's Jews to the concentration and extermination camps. | Source: © Sebastian Kahnert, picture alliance / dpa.

Today, the unique relationship between Israel and Germany constitutes one of the pillars of foreign policy for both nations. In March 2008 Chancellor Angela Merkel addressed the Knesset about "Germany's particular historical responsibility for the security of Israel" and that this historical responsibility forms part of Germany's reason of state. Today's lively exchanges and collaborations stretch far beyond the political sphere to countless other areas, such as business, trade, culture, education, sports, science and research, town twinning and youth exchanges. Many personal friendships have developed between Israelis and Germans over the years. In order to ensure that this continues, we need to encourage interaction between Germans and Israelis from all walks of life.

In 2015, we are looking back on our successes while developing prospects for the future. We stress our commonalities and the fact that Germany and Israel share the same interests and values: democracy, freedom, tolerance, peace and progress. However, we should also acknowledge our differences since Israel has to defend these values under entirely different circumstances than those in Germany.

There will be no shortage of challenges to come, and of course some of these will also affect the relations between our two countries. We would be wise to face these challenges together. Beyond that, we should hold an open and creative dialogue in order to define new goals and build connections for the benefit of both parties. I am often asked why I believe circumstances are so favourable for match-ups between Germany and Israel. With a wink, my response is that Germans seem to have difficulty thinking *outside* the box, while we Israelis find it hard to think *inside* the box. I am convinced that Israeli creativity – and at times creative chaos – goes perfectly with German competence, punctuality and discipline. We complement each other – resulting in a win-win situation.

The processes of building the future involve many partners and supporters on both sides, including the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung. Whether we are creating bilateral encounters, explaining the background and complexities of issues, launching new initiatives and partnerships or revealing the “other” face of Israel that is less often shown in the media – every action we take to strengthen and expand our relations is a good investment in the future of both our countries. In this respect, we need to pay particular attention to the younger generation. Before long, it will be today’s youth who are defining and creating our bilateral relations. I believe this is why we need to ensure that as many young Germans and Israelis as possible have the opportunity to develop their own and authentic impression of their partners’ countries and daily lives.

Every action we take to strengthen and expand our relations is a good investment in the future of both our countries. In this respect, we need to pay particular attention to the younger generation.

Today, Israelis and Germans are working together on the same level in every area of political and social life – not just in the service of their own interests, but for the benefit of third parties. An example of the progress in Israeli-German relations is our commitment to development cooperation in Africa, a topic which is covered in detail elsewhere in this publication. We are combining

our expertise and efforts in Africa and working on trilateral projects with African partners. I believe these joint projects enrich our relations. Together, we can get things moving in Africa and – in line with the Jewish obligation of “Tikkun Olam” – help to make the world a better place. 70 years ago, no-one would ever have believed that we could come this far.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Yakov Hadas-Handelsman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Yakov Hadas-Handelsman
Ambassador of the State of Israel
to the Federal Republic of Germany

STRIVING FOR SECURITY IN AN INSECURE WORLD

Amichai Magen

Not long ago, the sensible Berliner travelling to work on the U-Bahn line U1 could reasonably assume she was generally immune from the kind of security threats faced regularly by her friend living in Jerusalem. German civilians had not been killed by terrorists on home soil since 1996, when the now extinct Red Army Faction felled its last murderous blow. Palestinian nationalists, who attacked twice in Munich in the early 1970's, last struck in Germany in 1982. Even al-Qaeda's infamous Hamburg cell had the Pentagon in its sights, not the Hardthöhe.

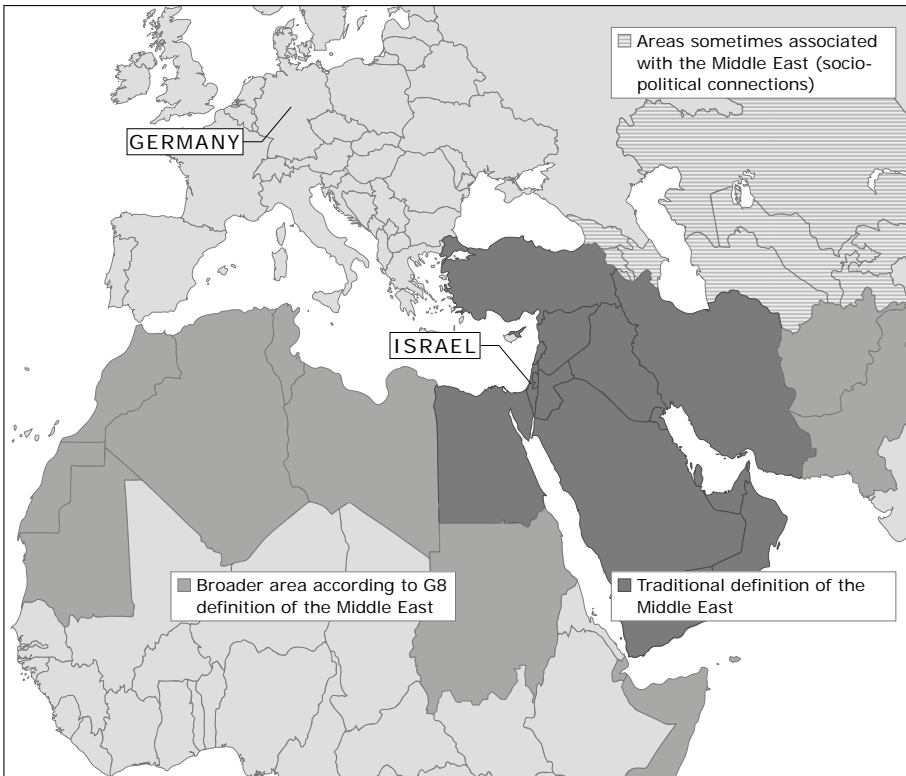
By the beginning of 2015, the security ecosystem affecting Israelis and Germans (indeed Europeans more broadly) had converged dramatically and negatively. Early harbingers of trouble appeared already in 2006 when two German youths, Youssef Mohamad El-Hajdib and Jihad Hamad, came within a hair's breadth of killing hundreds of passengers on two regional trains near Hamm and Koblenz, as well as with the discovery of the Sauerland-Gruppe car-bomb plot in September 2007.

Sadly, both the sources and severity of the threat have grown ominously since the turn of the decade and are unlikely to diminish any time soon. In the coming years, possibly decades, making sure that the sensible Berliner travelling to work on the U-Bahn line U1 remains safe will necessitate a concerted effort to understand the ideology and modus operandi of jihadist terrorism, to contain and ultimately reduce the capacity and motivation of terrorists to attack, and to strengthen German societal resilience. Indeed, the counter-terrorism posture required to protect the Berliner and Jerusalemite, while not identical, will depend on the intelligent and determined application of common guiding principles and so will greatly benefit from intimate German-Israeli dialogue, cooperation, and learning.



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Fig. 1
The Greater Middle East



Source: Illustration © racken.

THE NEW SECURITY ECOSYSTEM

In approaching the new security ecosystem it is important to distinguish between three ideological movements animating contemporary jihadist activity – Salafist, Shi’a, and Muslim Brotherhood led – as well as between three concentric circles of jihadist threats: local, European, and (broadly) Middle Eastern. Each ideological stream and concentric circle impacts both German and Israeli security, albeit to different degrees at this time.

The first ideological movement is Salafist jihadism which can be understood as a modern revolutionary political ideology mandating the use of violence to promote a very narrow, fundamentalist vision of Sunni Islamic identity. Salafist jihadism – to which al-Qaeda, its affiliates in the Arabian Peninsula and North Africa, Jabhat al-Nusra, Ansar Bait al-Maqdis, and Daesh (the self-styled

“Islamic State”) all subscribe – is a compound ideology: it mixes a highly puritanical reading of Sunni Islam – one that strives to emulate the “pious ancestors” (*Salaf*) by rejecting apostate (*Kufr*) regimes and seeking to establish a Sharia-based Caliphate – with a virulent interpretation of the concept of jihad – one that downplays the non-violent, spiritual reading of the notion in favor of a proclaimed duty of every Muslim to fight for the realisation of the Caliphate.



A threat to liberal society: The modern society with its core values of freedom and the rule of law suffers particularly under the attacks of Salafist jihadism. | Source: Thomas, Valley Forge National Park, flickr ©©©.

This violent utopianism inspires Salafist jihadism’s vision of conflict, society, and politics. To their mind, the *Ummah* (or “community of believers”) is in a state of total war with the West, “the Jews”, and other non-believers, including apostate Arab regimes and Shi’a Muslims. This war not only justifies acts of extreme violence against those who have conspired to “suppress the true faith” – beheadings, crucifixions, mass executions and rape – but involves the rejection of all forms of man-made law, democracy, and the Westphalian international system. Indeed, Salafist jihadism is contesting the essential values and institutions of modern liberal societies in a manner not experienced by the West since the defeat of Nazism.

Salafist jihadism represents the most serious and immediate terrorist threat to Germany (and Europe more broadly), and is fast rising in the hierarchy of threats to Israel. With the disintegration

of Iraq, Libya, Syria, Yemen and large parts of the Sahel region (Mali, Niger, northern Nigeria, Chad, and Sudan) the geographical epicenter of global jihad has quite literally shifted away from Afghanistan-Pakistan towards the Levant and North Africa. The most active sources of Salafist jihadism are now on Israel's borders and at Europe's gates. Moreover, Europe is increasingly in the cross-hairs of Salafist jihadist organisations. In late January 2015, for example, a spokesman for al-Qaeda in Yemen – the group claiming to be behind the *Charlie Hebdo* terror attack in Paris – stated that with the “weakening” of the U.S. in recent years, France has surpassed America to become the “main enemy of Islam”.¹



Targeting public infrastructure: Unlike the people in Jerusalem or Tel Aviv (the photo above shows a terrorist attack from 21 November 2012), Berliners have not yet encountered terror attacks on public transport. Plans of this kind can be prevented if bilateral intelligence work is intensified. | Sources: © Gideo Markowicz, picture alliance / epa (t.); © racken (d.).

1 | Cf. “Al-Qaeda in Yemen says France top enemy”, *AFP*, 30 Jan 2015, http://news.yahoo.com/qaeda-yemen-chief-says-france-top-enemy-163015975.html?soc_src=copy (accessed 4 Mar 2015).

According to a study published in January 2015 by the counter-terrorism coordinator of the state Ministry of Interior in Bremen, Daniel Heinke, and journalist Jan Raudszus, the estimated 600 German Muslims and converts who have traveled to fight in Syria and Iraq since 2011 are “almost exclusively followers of the Salafist brand of Islam”². German fighters in Syria and Iraq have reportedly formed their own brigade within the Islamic State – what Israel and Arab states refer to by the Arabic acronym, Daesh, in order to avoid legitimizing the organization by refusing to call it a “state” of any kind – and Daesh propaganda outlets have repeatedly published German language leaflets and videos.



Europe is increasingly in the cross hairs of jihadist organisations. France in particular has become a new target of Islamist violence. After the *Charlie Hebdo* attack on 7 January 2015 Parisians made a case for the values of their republic. | Source: Laurent Tine, flickr ©①⑤⑥.

The seriousness of the Salafist jihadi threat to Germany is compounded by the movement’s presence in each of the three concentric circles – the local, European, and Middle Eastern – and by the interconnectedness between the three. Austria, Belgium France and the Netherlands have all supplied higher per capita numbers of foreign fighters to Syria and Iraq, but the estimated 600 German fighters are, jointly with the United Kingdom, the highest

2 | Daniel H. Heinke/Jan Raudszus, “German Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq”, *CTC Sentinel*, vol. 8, no. 1, Jan 2015, p. 20, <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/v2/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Sentinel-January-2015-vol-8-issue-1-22.pdf> (accessed 4 Mar 2015).

absolute number in Europe.³ Of these, nearly two-thirds were born and raised in Germany. Around 180 German foreign fighters are known to have already returned to Germany, approximately half of them remain active in extremist circles.⁴ This is an extraordinarily high rate, suggesting existing German methods to contain and de-radicalise returnees are inadequate.

As the campaign of the international coalition against Daesh puts growing pressure on the organisation in Syria and Iraq, the number of German returnees is likely to grow, raising the probability of both “Lone Wolf” attacks – typically involving stabbings, shootings, car-rampage attacks, or Boston-Marathon style bombings – as well as more organised strikes by sleeper-cells.



Export of terror: The assassins of the attack on the Boston Marathon in April 2013 were of Chechen origin. The crisis regions on Europe’s edges provide fertile ground for terrorism. | Source: Vjeran Pavić, flickr ©@@.

The local, German Salafist scene is also connected to a broader European one. The Millatu Ibrahim group, banned in Germany in 2012, for example, is known to have not only recruited German jihadists but also served to connect them to extremist networks in Austria, Belgium, and France. Similarly, the 16 January 2015

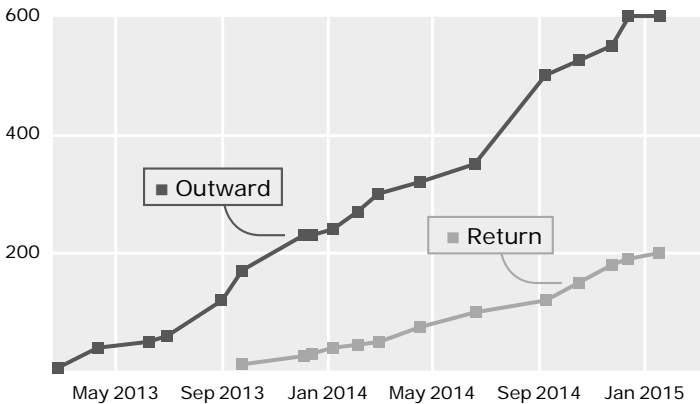
3 | For current figures of European foreign fighters see: Peter Neumann, “Foreign fighter total in Syria/Iraq now exceeds 20,000; surpasses Afghan conflict in the 1980s”, *ICSR Insight*, 26 Jan 2015, <http://icsr.info/2015/01/foreign-fighter-total-syriairaq-now-exceeds-20000-surpasses-afghanistan-conflict-1980s> (accessed 4 Mar 2015).

4 | Cf. Heinke/Raudszus, n. 2.

Berlin police raid on eleven addresses and arrest of two men suspected of recruiting fighters, arms and finance for Daesh, came a day after the thwarting of a terrorist plot in Belgium and appears to have been part of a wider effort to disrupt a European network of Salafi extremists.

Fig. 2

Combatants traveled from Germany to Syria and Iraq and repatriates



Source: Own illustration with data (estimates) of the German authorities for the protection of the constitution from Christian Elmer/Bertolt Hunger/Maximilian Schäfer, "Wie die deutschen Islamisten vernetzt sind", *Spiegel Online*, 21 Jan 2015, <http://spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/a-996534.html> (accessed 16 Mar 2015).

Israel too is experiencing a foreign-fighters problem, although a remarkably smaller one than Germany's. Some 40 Israeli Arab citizens have traveled to Syria to fight or have attempted to do so.⁵ The social-media outlets of Salafist jihadi groups invest a considerable amount of their energy inciting Israeli Arabs and Palestinians to carry out acts of "spontaneous jihad" against soft (civilian) targets in Israel and Jewish communities in Europe, but so far with mercifully little success. In the medium to long-run, the highest threat to Israel emanating from Salafist jihadism comes from the Islamist group which constitutes al-Qaeda's "official franchise" in Syria, Jabhat al-Nusra and, to a lesser extent, the Sinai-based Ansar Bait al-Maqdis. Daesh and its gruesome activities further east continue to dominate western media attention, yet in north-western Syria, in Lebanon and on the immediate

5 | A further 80 fighters are estimated to have traveled to Syria from areas controlled by the Palestinian Authority (PA).

border with Israel in the northern Golan, it is Jabhat al-Nusra that has become the main Sunni jihadi force on the ground.

Table 1

Foreign fighters from Western Europe in total in Syria and Iraq in the second half of 2014

Country	Estimate	Ratio per 1 million inhabitants
Austria	100-150	17
Belgium	440	40
Denmark	100-150	27
Finland	50-70	13
France	1,200	18
Germany	500-600	7.5
Ireland	30	7
Italy	80	1.5
Netherlands	200-250	14.5
Norway	60	12
Spain	50-100	2
Sweden	150-180	19
Switzerland	40	5
United Kingdom	500-600	9.5

Note: The estimated worldwide total is 20,730. | Source: Peter Neumann, "Foreign fighter total in Syria/Iraq now exceeds 20,000; surpasses Afghan conflict in the 1980s", *ICSR Insight*, 26 Jan 2015, <http://icsr.info/2015/01/foreign-fighter-total-syriairaq-now-exceeds-20000-surpasses-afghanistan-conflict-1980s> (accessed 18 Mar 2015).

While al-Nusra is guided by an uncompromising jihadi ideology, its leader Abu Mohammed Al Jolani has so far demonstrated impressive tactical legerdemain; focusing on winning hearts and minds among Sunni Arabs in Syria and Lebanon, rather than terrorising them into submission, and preserving his gains by avoiding targeting westerners or provoking Israel. Still, as Jonathan Spyer observes, Jabhat al-Nusra appears determined to emerge as a kind of Sunni mirror-image of the Shi'a Hezbollah – establishing

an al-Qaeda shadow-state in Syria and Lebanon with which to attack Israel and the West.⁶

The second and third main ideological streams driving contemporary global jihadist activity are Iranian-led Shi'a militancy and the more radical, activist branches of the Muslim Brotherhood, especially the Palestinian Hamas. Iran, which until the 1979 Islamic Revolution was a close ally of Israel and the West more broadly is, since the early 1980s, fighting an escalating proxy-war against the Jewish State and is now, for all intents and purposes, sitting on Israel's northern borders. Successive Iranian religious and political leaders – including Iran's supposedly “moderate” current president, Hassan Rouhani – have repeatedly called for Israel's annihilation. Iranian official statements regularly practice Holocaust denial, virulent anti-Semitism, and incitement to genocide against Israel.⁷



Patrolling the Golan: In Israel's hierarchy of threats, Salafi jihadism moved up rapidly. Particularly the situation in war struck Syria is of concern, which is monitored from the Golan by Israeli border patrols. | Source: Matan Portnoy, Israel Defense Forces, flickr ©①📷.

Ideologically, Iran's Shi'a proxy in Lebanon, Hezbollah, is cut from the same cloth as its masters in Tehran. In its 1985 manifesto, Hezbollah defines itself in Islamist, messianic terms, as “the sons of the Ummah, the party of God (Hizb Allah) the vanguard of which was made victorious by God in Iran” and states that it is part and

6 | Jonathan Spyer, “Jabhat al-Nusra: The Sunni Hezbollah?”, Global Research in International Affairs Center (GLORIA), 7 Nov 2014.

7 | Cf. Joshua Teitelbaum/Michael Segall, “The Iranian Leadership's Continuing Intent to Destroy Israel: 2009-2012”, <http://jcpa.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/IransIntent2012b.pdf> (accessed 20 Feb 2015).

parcel of a global jihad inspired and led by Iran.⁸ Regarding Israel, the manifesto explicitly states that holy war is the “cure to the ills and oppression inflicted on Lebanon and the region by Israel” and proclaims that: “our struggle will end only when this entity [Israel] is obliterated. We recognise no treaty with it, no cease fire, and no peace agreements, whether separate or consolidated.”⁹

Iran has been the primary beneficiary of the Syrian civil war, as well as the disintegration of Iraq and Yemen. The hegemon-by-proxy in Lebanon for decades, Iran is now methodically enlarging and deepening its influence across the region by simultaneously agitating Shi’a-Sunni conflict, portraying itself as protector and benefactor of the Shi’a populations in Bahrain, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen, and ruthlessly exploiting power vacuums wherever it finds them. By February 2015, for example, the Iran-backed Houthis rebel group completed a takeover of the Yemen capital, establishing a de facto Iranian protectorate in a key geopolitical spot in the Arabian Peninsula.



The Israel-Lebanese border: Rocket attacks by Hezbollah from Lebanon or Syria threaten Israel’s security. Renewed military conflicts cannot be ruled out and would extend over a wider front than in 2006. | Source: Ashley Hoff, flickr ©©©©.

8 | The text of the 1985 manifesto (or “open letter”) is published by the Council on Foreign Relations, <http://www.cfr.org/terrorist-organizations-and-networks/open-letter-hizballah-program/p30967> (accessed 20 Feb 2015).

9 | Ibid.

In the face of the Assad regime's total dependence on Iran and Hezbollah, Iranian Revolutionary Guards and Hezbollah forces are now actively pursuing the establishment of missile bases within Syrian territory with which to strike Israel, while minimising the risk of an all-out Israeli retaliation against Hezbollah in Lebanon. When Israel and Hezbollah next go to war – and it is a question of when rather than if – the battlefield will likely extend to Lebanon, the Golan, and Syria, and will almost certainly involve Iranian soldiers as well as Hezbollah militiamen.

Trained, supplied and financed by Iran, Hezbollah today poses the most serious and immediate danger to Israeli national security, but is also a rising threat to Europe. Hezbollah is now the world's largest, wealthiest, most militarily capable terrorist organisation, with operations spanning Europe, Africa, the Americas and parts of Asia. Hezbollah has also become an archetype and model for other jihadist groups, Shi'a and Sunni alike, ready to share its tactical knowledge with groups like Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) in Gaza.

Currently bogged down in fighting for Assad's survival in Syria and hesitant to open a full second-front against Israel, Hezbollah has, in the last three years, opted to strike at Israeli and Jewish targets in India, Georgia,

An Iranian/Hezbollah attack on a Jewish or Israeli target in London, Paris or Berlin would come as no surprise to most security analysts observing Iran and Hezbollah.

Cyprus, and Bulgaria – where in July 2012 a Hezbollah bomber killed five Israeli tourists and wounded 32 in the seaside resort of Burgas. As tensions between the West and Iran rise around the 24 March 2015 deadline for the conclusion of nuclear talks, and as Israel seeks to prevent Hezbollah attacks on its northern border or the transfer of sophisticated weaponry to the hands of the Shi'a militia, the risk of Hezbollah strikes on European soil grows. Indeed, an Iranian/Hezbollah attack on a Jewish or Israeli target in London, Paris or Berlin – one mirroring perhaps the 1994 bombing of a Jewish Community Center in Buenos Aires – would come as no surprise to most security analysts observing Iran and Hezbollah.

The logic whereby thwarting terrorist activity in the Middle East may increase the risk of its eruption in Europe also extends to Muslim Brotherhood-led organisations, especially Hamas, Jamaat-e-Islami, the latter having a strong presence especially in the UK. The Muslim Brotherhood has been entrenched in Germany for

many decades.¹⁰ Like Hezbollah, the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas – which has fought three rounds of major hostilities with Israel in the past five years from its stronghold in the Gaza Strip – depends on perpetuating violent struggle against Israel for its legitimacy and funding, yet is currently reluctant to provoke the Israeli Army into a further round of armed confrontation in the Middle East itself. Having emulated Hezbollah's military organisation, infrastructure build-up (notably the construction of underground bunkers and terror-tunnels), and combat doctrine, it is not inconceivable Hamas will seek to mimic Hezbollah and Salafists by striking soft targets on European soil, where it has an extensive fund-raising network, as well as a limited recruitment operation. The terror-traffic between Europe and the Middle East goes both ways in fact.¹¹



Hatred as a method: In Gaza, thousands of children are indoctrinated with anti-Western and anti-Semitic ideologies by Islamist groups such as Hamas or the Islamic Jihad. | Source: © Mohammed Saber, picture alliance/dpa.

In the longer term, Hamas' deeper danger lies in its continued control of Gaza and ambitions for taking over the West Bank and destabilising Jordan. As long as Gaza's 1.8 million civilians live

10 | Cf. Ian Johnson, *A Mosque in Munich. Nazis, the CIA, and the Rise of the Muslim Brotherhood in the West*, New York, 2010; Matthew Kaminski, "The German Connection: How the Muslim Brotherhood found a haven in Europe", *The Wall Street Journal*, 6 May 2010, <http://wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052748703961104575226372646226094> (accessed 4 Mar 2015).

11 | In April 2003, for instance, Hamas claimed responsibility for the recruitment and activation of two British Muslims who carried out a suicide-bombing attack on the *Mike's Place* bar in Tel Aviv, killing three civilians and wounding 50.

under Hamas' rule, Gaza's numerous children will continue to be systematically indoctrinated into a radical Islamist, anti-Western and anti-Semitic ideology – raising successive generations of jihadists and undermining any prospect of future Palestinian-Israeli co-existence. Although nominally in a unity government with Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah party, Hamas remains committed to expanding its rule beyond Gaza, to the West Bank, and eventually Israel. Hamas leader Mahmoud al-Zahar stated explicitly in October 2014 that: “[Some] have said Hamas wants to create an Islamic emirate in Gaza. We won't do that, but we will build an Islamic state in Palestine, the whole of Palestine establishing an Islamic state.”¹² During the June to July 2014 Israel-Hamas war, Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA) foiled an extensive Hamas plan to ferment a third Intifada against Israel and promote the overthrow of the PA in the West Bank, a repeat of Hamas' 2007 violent coup against Fatah in Gaza.



Missile attacks from Gaza remain a threat to Israel. In the summer of 2014, the situation escalated again. Although about half of the projectiles could be intercepted, there were many impacts as in this school in Rishon LeZion. | Source: Haim Zach, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, flickr ©©©.

For the foreseeable future, should Israel be forced to withdraw its security presence from the West Bank, Hamas is poised to challenge the rule of the weak and corrupt PA in Ramallah, spark an

12 | Steven Emerson, “Hamas Envisions West Bank Takeover, Destruction of Israel”, *The Algemeiner*, 6 Oct 2014, <http://algemeiner.com/2014/10/08/hamas-envisions-west-bank-takeover-destruction-of-israel> (accessed 20 Feb 2015).

intra-Palestinian civil war, boost the Islamist threat to the survival of the Jordanian monarchy, and turn the West Bank into a missile launching pad against Israel's largest and most densely populated civilian centers. Avoiding this nightmarish "Gaza II scenario" is at the heart of Israeli security concerns. It must also be the top priority of anyone concerned to preserve stability in Jordan and keep alive the prospect of Israeli-Palestinian peace. Indeed, a less than careful pursuit of a two-state solution risks producing a two-failed-states "solution" endangering the lives of Israelis, Jordanians, and Palestinians alike.



Hope for peace? The EU pleads for the two-state solution and seeks dialogue with both sides, here PA President Mahmoud Abbas with the foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini and President of the Commission Jean-Claude Juncker. | Source: Georges Boulougouris, European External Action Service, flickr @🇪🇺🇵🇸.

Striving for Security, Together

Against the background of this complex, rapidly evolving, and rather ominous security ecosystem, it is easy to feel overwhelmed or conclude that the search for a coherent counter-terrorism and counter-radicalisation strategy is a fool's errand. Succumbing to such a conclusion is highly dangerous and, thankfully, unnecessary. Terrorists only win when they manage to paralyze targeted societies into submission or get them to grossly overreact and

therefore stoke the fires of insurgency or civil war. Otherwise they always lose. The only question is at what cost?

No functioning democratic state has ever been overrun by a terrorist organisation and that record will not change as long as Western societies pursue determined and sensible counter-terrorism and counter-radicalisation policies in a level-headed manner. There are no magic-bullet solutions to the scourge of terrorism, however. An effective strategy is necessarily multi-layered, grounded in sound values that protect the sanctity of human life, based on broad international cooperation, and temporally open-ended. All brands of Islamic radicalism – Salafist, Shi'a, and Muslim Brotherhood-led – think in terms of grand historical processes lasting decades or more.¹³ Containing, countering, and eventually defeating their malicious ideas require that Western democracies are normatively and institutionally prepared for a long struggle.

Ending Denial, Building Knowledge, Avoiding Overreaction

Overcoming denial, building responsible societal awareness, and pursuing evidence-based understanding of jihadi extremism in a rational and systematic way, is the most important – and perhaps most psychologically and culturally difficult – first step towards effective management of the present challenge. Whether it is because of misplaced “political correctness”, fear that it will be the messenger who is shot, or concern that acknowledging the existence of a problem will actually exacerbate it – many European leaders and publics still invest considerable time and energy in self-deception; ignoring the severity, even existence, of jihadist threats, or dismissing the topic as illegitimate “Islamophobia”.

Many European leaders and publics still invest considerable time in self-deception; ignoring the severity of jihadist threats.

As in other areas of human life, denying the existence of a real problem rarely leads to a happy ending. Denial perpetuates ignorance, and ignorance borne of denial tends to breed paralysis, suspicion, conspiracy theories, xenophobia, or just plain bad policy. Where denial and ignorance persist, the shock of a major terrorist attack, when it comes, almost inevitably propels public opinion and elected politicians toward knee-jerk reactions that are typically ill-informed and can be enormously costly (think

13 | See Martin Rudner, “Al-Qaeda’s Twenty-Year Strategic Plan: The current phase of global terror”, *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 36, No. 12, 2013, pp. 953-980.

invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, and the U.S. “Patriot Act”). Even without such an overt shock, lack of informed understanding of the sources and nature of the threat is pernicious. It undermines healthy prevention, harms efforts to build responsible social resilience to political violence, and plays into the hands of Islamist and far-right extremists alike.

To avoid the “denial-overreaction trap”, Germany, as state and society, must be free to conduct an open, honest, and clear-headed public discussion about the nature, causes, and dangers of Islamist extremism – Salafi, Shi’a, and Muslim Brotherhood-led. Then it can work diligently to ensure Germany, and Europe more broadly, possess the knowledge, institutions, technologies, and policies necessary to look these threats straight in the eye; to reliably assess their trends and relative danger over time; to decide on the level of risk it is prepared to tolerate in managing them; to debate the democratic, legal, and economic dilemmas involved in the fight against terrorism and radicalisation; and to maximise the national, European, and international resources available to tackle them. In each of these realms, Israel’s hard-gained experience – its failures as well as successes – is of profound value, as are those of other like-minded nations, such as Australia, Canada, France, India, and the United States.

Reducing Terrorist Motivation and Capacity

Acts of terrorism, as Boaz Ganor aptly observes, result from the convergence of two variables: motivation and operational capacity.¹⁴ Terrorist attacks can be limited or prevented entirely by reducing the perpetrators’ motivation to attack, lessening the organisation or individual attacker’s capabilities, or both. Reducing one of the variables to zero would essentially prevent terrorist attacks entirely, but in real terms the effectiveness of a counter-terrorism strategy ought to be measured in terms of its ability to dampen both motivation and capacity as far as possible.

In a globalised world – where travel, weapon smuggling and even bomb construction know-how are readily available – reducing terrorist capabilities is first and foremost about intelligence. Collecting, analyzing and operationalising information about terrorist

14 | Boaz Ganor, “Are counterterrorism frameworks based on suppression and military force effective in responding to terrorism?”, in: Richard Jackson/Samuel Justin Sinclair (eds.), *Contemporary Debates on Terrorism*, London et al., 2012, pp. 137-143.

organisations and terrorism-enabling activities – radicalisation, money laundering, procurement, training – ought to be a key focus of European-Israeli cooperation, not only at the level of clandestine security organisations (where it is already quite developed) but in other relevant fora where it is currently weaker: between banks, aviation authorities, and in open-source intelligence for example. Similarly, Israel's expertise operational defensive and offensive systems – particularly the detailed know-how of its specialised counter-terrorism, police, and border-control units – represents a treasure trove of hard-earned experience that ought to be closely studied to save European lives.



Hamas is eager to increase its influence in the West Bank. It could challenge the Ramallah-based PA, which is regarded as weak, and provoke a violent confrontation like in 2007 after the seizure of power in Gaza. | Source: tgraham, flickr ©115.

Reducing terrorist motivation involves both short-term deployment of carrot-and-stick incentives, as well as deeper, societal counter-radicalisation efforts. Although their values and conduct are abhorrent, terrorists are rarely psychopaths. Like the vast majority of human beings the vast majority of terrorists calculate their action based on the dual logics of consequentialism and appropriateness. Accordingly, the motivation of would-be perpetrators of politically motivated violence against civilians can be greatly reduced where excellent intelligence makes the likelihood of early detection by the authorities high, the chances of escaping the scene of an attack is low, legal sanctions against involvement

in terrorist activity (including incitement, recruitment, financing, procurement of weapons, training and fighting abroad) are tough and, at the same time, the benefits of lawful citizenship and integration into society are visible and attractive.

The best way to deal with a terrorist threat is to prevent its emergence or spread. Understanding processes of radicalisation and developing effective de-radicalisation policies ought therefore to be at the heart of European-Israeli dialogue about prevention of Islamist political violence. De-radicalisation involves the process of turning a radical group or individual away from use of violent methods to achieve political goals, the “peeling off” of existing members from a violent group, or the dissuasion of potential members from joining such a group in the first place.

Contrary to popular myths about spontaneous internet-based radicalisation, the process of radicalisation is almost always an intensely social one.

Studies of Islamic groups in Europe are somewhat encouraging in this area, finding that although young Muslim men in many European communities often harbor feelings of frustration and humiliation they have to be actively radicalised by others to cross the line into either “Lone Wolf” or organised terrorist activity.¹⁵ Contrary to popular myths about spontaneous internet-based radicalisation of lonely and unhinged individuals, the process of radicalisation is almost always an intensely social one. Peer-pressure, systematic indoctrination, separation from general society and repetitive training – which can more readily occur in prisons, secluded religious centers, remote training camps, or in fighting abroad – are typically preconditions for getting vulnerable would-be recruits to cross the line into terrorist activity.

These barriers provide state and civil society organisations with real opportunities for preventing and reversing radicalisation. As Omar Ashour’s extensive study of successful de-radicalisation programs demonstrates,¹⁶ combining determined state repression of Islamist radicalisation agents with the nurturing of alternative, moderate religious leadership, breaking up insular-group indoctrination, and utilising economic and social incentives to draw would-be recruits towards positive, non-violent activities, can substantially reduce terrorist motivation and help shrink the pool of potential recruits.

15 | See Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century*, Philadelphia, 2008.

16 | See Omar Ashour, *The Deradicalization of Jihadists: Transforming Armed Islamist Movements*, London et al., 2009.

Contain, Protect, and Counter

Deterring and de-radicalising existing and would-be terrorists, while a top priority and challenge for Western democracies, constitutes only a limited, shallow response to the immediate symptoms of the jihadist malaise. Tackling the root causes of radical Islam's assault on rational modernity, democracy, and the Wilsonian international order will require a far deeper strategic alignment in the West and, eventually, liberal transformations in Iran, Turkey, and the Arab world. We are today in the midst of a profound historic struggle not only between the free world and radical Islam, but within Islam itself – between those who wish to reconcile Islamic faith and civilisation with life-affirming values, and those who hijack Islam and torn Muslim countries (like Iraq, Libya, Syria and Yemen) to the cause of life-destroying barbarism. Ensuring that liberal progressivism triumphs over fundamentalist malevolence necessitates both the reinvigoration of the West (not least NATO) and the formation of new ties with those in the Muslim world – and they are many – who wish to be part of the liberal international order, not to replace it with a Caliphate.

In thinking about this grand struggle over the nature of political order in the 21st century, Europeans and Israelis can begin to stem the tide of extremism and enhance regional security and peace. First, we must remain united around,

and loyal to the central liberal truth about the foundations of true peace and security in the international system. To paraphrase the European Security Strategy, adopted by all

We must remain united around, and loyal to, the central liberal truth about the foundations of true peace and security in the international system.

members of the EU in December 2003: The quality of international society depends on the quality of states and governments that are its foundation. The best protection for our own security is a world of well-governed states that can provide for their own citizens and behave responsibly in the international system. This is as true for Lebanon and the Palestinians as it is for Bosnia-Herzegovina and Ukraine.

Second, Western democracies, and Germany among them, must resist the tendency to compartmentalise violent eruptions in the Middle East and elect to see them as self-contained. It is essential to connect the dots and address the animating agents of violence in the region. Most importantly, it is vital to understand Iran's methodical guiding hand across the region – from Lebanon, Iraq and Syria, to Yemen and Gaza – and to develop an integrated

regional strategy to counter Tehran's hegemonic ambitions. In particular, reaching a nuclear and sanctions-relief deal with Iran must also address its ongoing support for global terror, especially Hezbollah and PIJ.

Third, we must work together to contain and begin to roll back those areas of chaos in North Africa and the Middle East that have come under the lead of Salafi jihadism, Iranian-backed Shi'a militancy, and radical Muslim Brotherhood groups. If Islamist Non-State Armed Governors (INSAGs) such as Daesh and Jabhat al-Nusra in Iraq and Syria, the Houthis in Yemen, Hezbollah in Lebanon, Ansar Bait al-Maqdis in Sinai, Hamas and PIJ in Gaza, and Boko Haram in Nigeria are permitted to continue their territorial gains and entrenchment among the local populations, they will indoctrinate literally millions of children, gradually acquire state-like military and financial assets, and increasingly challenge the existing international order. A "contain and counter" strategy will necessarily involve kinetic action, but of equal importance in the long run will be civilian capacity building, economic development, and governance improvement. Here, Germany can learn from Israel's hard-power expertise while Israel learns from Germany's soft-power capabilities.

Finally, it is essential to safeguard those states in North Africa and the Middle East that are either fledgling democracies (Tunisia) or islands of relative stability interested in maintaining the state-based order and prepared to work with western partners to increase security, prosperity and peace. In particular, Israel and Europe should do more to nurture the development of an axis of stability to contain and counter armed groups and Iranian encroachment. Such an axis of stability should ideally also involve Jordan, Egypt, Morocco, and perhaps even Saudi Arabia and relatively moderate Gulf monarchies.

Israel itself is living proof that a human society can survive, indeed thrive, in the face of near constant security threats. In the years and possibly decades to come providing security to our respective populations will require that we communicate, cooperate, and learn from each other as never before.

UNEASY NEIGHBOURS

THE EU AND ISRAEL – A PARADOXICAL RELATIONSHIP

Michael Mertes

INTRODUCTION

Uneasy Neighbors is the title of a standard work on the special relationship between Israel and the European Union.¹ By this phrase, the authors Sharon Pardo (Ben-Gurion University of the Negev) and Joel Peters (Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University) succinctly describe the ambivalence of the Israeli-European relationship.² For decades, the two sides have been subjecting each other to alternating bouts of admiration and disappointment, attraction and repulsion. Although they are close to each other in geographic, economic and cultural terms, they also view each other with unease, increasingly even with incomprehension and antipathy. The paradoxical effect of this ambivalence is that relations between Israel and the EU are currently both intensive and tense to an unprecedented degree. In 2013, the Pew Research Institute found that only 41 per cent of Israelis have a positive image of the EU these days – compared to 56 per cent in



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- 1 | Sharon Pardo/Joel Peters: *Uneasy Neighbors. Israel and the European Union*, Lanham et al., 2010.
- 2 | The special relationships between Israel and individual EU Member States will not be addressed in this article. A historically rooted special relationship exists not only with Germany because of the Shoah, but also, for instance, with Poland (having the largest Jewish community in Europe before the Shoah numbering 3.3 million), with Spain and Portugal – countries where the Sephardic Jews originate, see “Portugal approves Sephardic Jew citizenship plan”, *The Times of Israel*, 29 Jan 2015, <http://timesofisrael.com/portugal-approves-sephardic-jew-citizenship-plan> (accessed 2 Mar 2015) – as well as with the UK (as the former mandate power in Palestine).

2009.³ Conversely, sympathy for Israel is clearly declining in the EU countries.⁴

Apart from the United States and Canada, there is no other country the EU is closer to than Israel. There, however, increasing numbers of people are contemplating a strategic reorientation of the country's economic and scientific cooperation. In their opinion, Europe belongs to the past, while the future lies with the Asian-Pacific region. Therefore, Israel should change from the strong EU focus of its trade relations (a third of all imports to Israel come from the EU, a quarter of Israeli exports go to the EU) and concentrate on other regions of the world. In East Asia, nobody is interested in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, so the critics say. The Chinese, for instance, "[...] want to talk about three things: Israeli technology, Israeli technology, Israeli technology"⁵. While such statements can be interpreted as expressions of defiance against the EU's commitment to a Palestinian state⁶, they are also influenced by the euro crisis, which has been ongoing since 2009, and the declining reputation of the European Union as an actor in global politics.

The special relationship between Israel and the European Union dates back to the second half of the 1950s. Israel was the third country after Greece and the USA to establish a diplomatic mission

- 3 | See Pew Research Center: *The New Sick Man of Europe: the European Union*, 13 May 2013, <http://pewglobal.org/files/2013/05/Pew-Research-Center-Global-Attitudes-Project-European-Union-Report-FINAL-FOR-PRINT-May-13-2013.pdf> (accessed 2 Mar 2015), p. 57.
- 4 | The country where Israel is viewed negatively by the largest proportion of the population is the UK with 72 per cent. (Spain: 70 per cent, Germany: 67 per cent, France: 63 per cent, Poland: 44 per cent.) Cf. the *BBC World Service*, "Views of China and India Slide While UK's Ratings Climb: Global Poll", 22 May 2013, http://globescan.com/images/images/pressreleases/bbc2013_country_ratings/2013_country_rating_poll_bbc_globescan.pdf (accessed 2 Mar 2015), p. 49.
- 5 | See John Reed, "Israel: Trading partners", *Financial Times*, 3 Jan 2014, <http://ft.com/cms/s/0/045dca8a-6725-11e3-a5f9-00144feabdc0.html#axzz3B2gxNE00> (accessed 2 Mar 2015).
- 6 | Naftali Bennett, Israeli Minister of Economy in Netanyahu's 3rd cabinet and chairman of the national-religious party Bayit Yehudi, gave an upbeat statement the following year, "saying the Chinese do not foist political visions on their business ties with Israel, a welcome change given recent moves in Europe and America, including threats of sanctions by the European Union". Cf. Elad Benari, "Bennett: The Chinese Don't Care About the 'Occupation'", *Arutz Sheva*, 12 Jul 2013, <http://israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/169817> (accessed 2 Mar 2015); and: Hezki Ezra/Ari Yashar, "Bennett in China to Help Build 'City of Water'", *Arutz Sheva*, 24 Nov 2014, <http://israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/187810> (accessed 2 Mar 2015).

to the European Communities. During a secret visit to Europe in 1957, Shimon Peres – then Director General at the Ministry of Defence – even had a meeting with Jean Monnet to discuss whether Israel’s accession to the EEC was conceivable.⁷ When Gideon Rafael was sent to Brussels as Israel’s first ambassador to the European Communities, David Ben-Gurion briefed him as follows: “Tell the Europeans that they have inherited their spiritual values from that little but enduring people which you are going to represent among them. We have not only horrible memories of the recent past in common, but also a bright future ahead of us.”⁸

Table 1

EU trade relations with Israel

Year	EU-Israel trade in goods		EU-Israel trade in services	
	EU imports in billion euros	EU exports in billion euros	EU imports in billion euros	EU exports in billion euros
2010	11.1	14.5	3.0	4.2
2011	12.8	16.9	3.3	4.7
2012	12.7	17.1	3.3	4.5
2013	12.5	17.0	—	—

Source: European Commission, “European Union, Trade in goods with Israel”, http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/september/tradoc_113402.pdf (accessed 30 Mar 2015).

In many respects, Ben-Gurion’s wish has become reality. Relations between Israel and the EU are extraordinarily close in almost all areas of bilateral cooperation – the economy, science, technology and culture. Moreover, the cooperation in the multilateral context of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EUROMED) forms another layer, which began with the Barcelona Process in 1995, was complemented by the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)⁹ in 2004 and continued as the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) in 2009.¹⁰

7 | According to a diary entry by David Ben-Gurion for 7 June 1957. See Sharon Pardo / Joel Peters, *Israel and the European Union. A Documentary History*, Lanham, 2010, p. 9; for other mentions see Pardo/Peters, n. 1, p. 2 f.

8 | Pardo/Peters, n. 1, p. 3 f.

9 | European Commission, “What is the European Neighbourhood Policy?”, http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/about-us/index_en.htm (accessed 2 Mar 2015).

10 | See European External Action Service, http://www.eeas.europa.eu/euromed/index_en.htm (accessed 2 Mar 2015).

The bilateral cooperation rests on solid legal footing: the Association Agreement of 1995, which entered into effect on 1 June 2000.

Since the first trade agreement between the European Economic Community and Israel concluded in 1964,¹¹ the bilateral cooperation has been upgraded to a partnership

between equals. It now rests on solid legal footing: the Association Agreement of 1995, which entered into effect on 1 June 2000, replacing the 1975 agreement on free trade and cooperation.¹² In June 2008, the EU-Israeli Association Council decided in favour of plans to upgrade the relations between the EU and Israel¹³; however, this was not pursued further because of the first Gaza war (Operation Cast Lead) in late 2008/early 2009. At that time, the EU gave a novel slant to its proposals by making the upgrading conditional on greater EU involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process – which had not been the case at the time of the Association Agreement.¹⁴

In November 2013, the two sides agreed that Israel – as the only non-European country – would take part in the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation Horizon 2020,¹⁵ which had been assigned a budget of close to 80 billion euros.¹⁶ It is the explicit aim of the EU to raise its special relationship with Israel to a level significantly above that of the current association. In December 2013, when the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations initiated by U.S. Foreign Secretary Kerry were still continuing, the EU Foreign Ministers stated their willingness to offer Israel a Special Privileged Partnership (SPP) in the event that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was resolved by a two-state solution.¹⁷

11 | Pardo/Peters, n. 1, p. 34 ff.

12 | For an overview of the legal basis of the relations between Israel and the EU see: Delegation of the European Union to Israel, “Agreements”, http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/israel/eu_israel/political_relations/agreements/index_en.htm (accessed 2 Mar 2015).

13 | Cf. EU-Israel Association Council, “Statement of the European Union”, http://europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/dv/association_counc/association_council.pdf (accessed 2 Mar 2015).

14 | Cf. Pardo/Peters, n. 1, p. 322 f.

15 | Cf. EU, “Joint Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton and Israeli Minister of Justice Tzipi Livni on Israel’s participation in the Horizon 2020 Programme”, Press Release, 26 Nov 2014, http://eeas.europa.eu/statements/docs/2013/131126_05_en.pdf (accessed 2 Mar 2015); further: European Commission, “EU, Israel sign Horizon 2020 association agreement”, Press Release, 8 June 2014, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-633_en.htm (accessed 2 Mar 2015).

16 | Cf. EU, “Breakdown of the Horizon 2020 Budget”, http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/pdf/press/horizon_2020_budget_constant_2011.pdf (accessed 2 Mar 2015).

17 | Cf. EU, “Council conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process”, 16 Dec 2013, http://consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/140097.pdf (accessed 2 Mar 2015).

There is no precedent that could serve as a model for an SPP. At an event held by the KAS Israel office in the spring of 2014, Ambassador Lars Faaborg-Andersen, the EU Representative to Israel, stated that this partnership could go as far as a *quasi*-membership status for Israel.¹⁸ The SPP offer is to include “increased access to the European markets, closer cultural and scientific links, facilitation of trade and investments as well as promotion of business to business relations. Enhanced political dialogue and security cooperation [...]”. From the Israeli perspective, the prospects of the European offer, however, appear less attractive because of two aspects. Firstly, the condition of an Israeli-Palestinian agreement, which ramps up the conditions laid down in the EU’s upgrade proposal of 2008. Secondly, the plans for a parallel offer to be extended to a future Palestinian state. EU representatives counter the second objection by stating that SPP agreements with a future Palestinian state would be quite different in nature from that with Israel just because they could not be based on anything like the same history.

The special partnership offer includes “increased access to the European markets, closer cultural and scientific links and an enhanced political security dialogue”.

The paradox of the relationship between Israel and the EU – increasing alienation despite increasing cooperation – cannot be attributed to a single cause. The factors, which will be examined in this article, include firstly the European and oriental roots of the Israeli-Jewish population, secondly the drifting apart of European and Israeli values, thirdly anti-Semitic tendencies in the EU, fourthly different threat perceptions on the two sides and fifthly the constant disagreements about a resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

ISRAEL – MERELY AN OUTPOST OF EUROPE?

Towards the end of the 19th century, 90 per cent of the global Jewish population lived in Europe. Today, it is only nine per cent.¹⁹ The centers of gravity for Jewish life have shifted to Israel and the United States. In 2014, the global Jewish population numbered

18 | Michael Mertes, “Welche Zukunft hat jüdisches Leben in Europa?“, 30 May 2014, <http://kas.de/israel/de/publications/37919> (accessed 2 Mar 2015).

19 | According to Dov Maimon from the Jewish People Policy Institute, Jerusalem in: Dov Maimon, “The Cultural Dimension of Jewish European Identity”, in: KAS Israel, “The Jewish Contribution to the European Integration Project”, 11 Dec 2013, pp. 26-33, here: p. 31, http://kas.de/wf/doc/kas_36349-1522-1-30.pdf (accessed 2 Mar 2015).

some 14 million; close to 43 per cent were living in Israel and just over 40 per cent in the U.S.²⁰ Europe, on the other hand, is merely “the largest Jewish cemetery in the world”, a phrase frequently used in Israel.²¹

Many Europeans regard Israel as an offshoot of Europe – some also as a relic from the colonial era.²² This perception is underpinned above all by the fact that Zionism has its political and ideological roots in Europe. Another aspect of equal significance is the fact that the generation of Israel’s founders were overwhelmingly Ashkenazi, in other words from Central and Eastern European origin. These pioneers had a European outlook (at least in their support for an enlightened secular version of the principle of the nation state) and formed the institutions of the young state based on European models.

Table 2

Jewish Population in the European Union

Year	Total population in millions	Jewish population in millions
1990	340.69	1.02
1995	372.74	1.02
2000	375.54	1.03
2005*	457.50	1.12
2013	500.00	1.11

* Number relates to EU-25. Source: *American Jewish Year Book*, Vol. 90-105, “World Jewish Population”, <http://www.ajcarchives.org/main.php?GroupingId=40> (accessed 4 Mar 2015).

Since 1948, however, the composition of the Jewish Israeli population (around three-quarters of the entire Israeli population) has undergone considerable change. The Ashkenazi-European proportion has decreased and the Mizrahi-oriental proportion

20 | See Jewish Virtual Library, “Jewish Population of the World”, <http://jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/Judaism/jewpop.html> (accessed 2 Mar 2015).

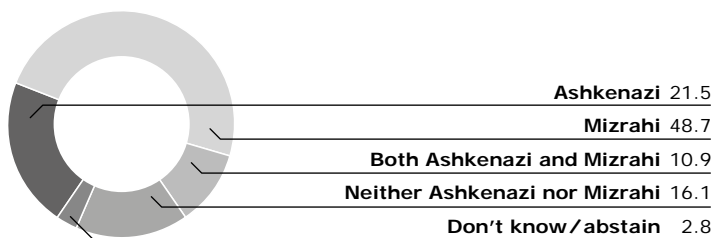
21 | See for example Centre for Israel & Jewish Affairs, “The Holocaust”, <http://cija.ca/resource/the-holocaust> (accessed 2 Mar 2015).

22 | Voicing a critical opinion on the subject: Dore Gold, “The Myth of Israel as a Colonialist Entity: An Instrument of Political Warfare to Delegitimize the Jewish State”, Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, 9 May 2012, <http://jcpa.org/article/the-myth-of-israel-as-a-colonialist-entity-by-dore-gold> (accessed 2 Mar 2015).

increased. (The term Mizrahi refers to Israeli Jews who originate from countries in the Middle East; in a wider sense, this term comprises Jews from North African and Caucasian origin.) Before the immigration of – very predominantly Ashkenazi – Jews from the former Soviet Union began in the 1990s, some 70 per cent of Israeli Jews were Mizrahi; currently, the proportion is around 50 per cent.²³

Fig. 1

Ethnic Self Identification of Jewish Israelis (in per cent)



Source: Israel Democracy Institute, n. 24.

The self-classification of Israeli Jews is, in fact, more telling for the Israeli-European relationship than these objective figures. The 2012 Israeli Democracy Index shows that some 49 per cent of Israeli Jews define themselves as Mizrahi and only 21.5 per cent as Ashkenazi. Around eleven per cent of respondents declared that they were both of Mizrahi and Ashkenazi origin. Some 16 per cent responded that they did not feel they belonged to either category; the Index publishers comment in this context that some of the respondents simply consider themselves Israeli and refuse to categorise themselves by their origin.²⁴

SHARED AND DIVERGENT VALUES

As a country with a democratic political system and a liberal economy, Israel forms part of the West. This association is manifested not least by the close alliance with the U.S. and the intensive partnership with the EU. At the same time, Israel's geographic location and the composition of its population place it firmly in the

23 | Cf. Jewish Virtual Library, "Jews of the Middle East", <http://jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/mejews.html> (accessed 2 Mar 2015).

24 | Cf. Israel Democracy Institute, *The Israeli Democracy Index 2012*, p. 181, <http://en.idi.org.il/media/1365574/Index2012%20-%20Eng.pdf> (accessed 2 Mar 2015).

Asian realm. Given these unique conditions, the country has the potential to act as a bridge between occident and orient.

There are several differences in their stances, some of which are significant and carry the seed of mutual alienation. The community of values between Israel and the EU is founded on the joint commitment to the principles of liberty, democracy and the rule of law. But there are several differences in their stances, some of which are significant and carry the seed of mutual alienation. These are (a) the influence of religious convictions in society and politics, (b) the significance of national sovereignty and the capacity for self-defence, and (c) the vision of one's own future.

Importance of Religion

Israel defines itself as a "Jewish and democratic state",²⁵ Whether the "Jewish" component is to be defined mainly as a secular term (meaning nationality) or a religious one remains a central object of discussions within the country. In any case, there is no country within the EU where a comparable question of identity exists.

European societies are generally moving towards a "post-religious" era. The Eurobarometer established in 2005 that only 52 per cent of Europeans believe in the existence of God; ranking at the top of the scale in terms of religiosity are the Mediterranean states of Malta (95 per cent), Cyprus (90 per cent) and Greece (81 per cent), while those at the lower end are Sweden (23 per cent), the Czech Republic (19 per cent) and Estonia (16 per cent).²⁶ A study published by the Israel Democracy Institute and AVI CHAI-Israel Foundation shows that 80 per cent of Israeli Jews believe in God; an equal number are convinced that a higher power rewards

25 | In terms of legislation, this self-image is enshrined in Article 1 of Basic Law "Human Dignity and Liberty" among others: "The purpose of this Basic Law is to protect human dignity and liberty, in order to establish in a Basic Law the values of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state." Knesset, "Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty", http://knesset.gov.il/laws/special/eng/basic3_eng.htm (accessed 2 Mar 2015).

26 | The values for the EU countries with the proportionately largest Jewish population are of particular interest: France 34 per cent, the UK 38 per cent, Germany 47 per cent. Cf. European Commission, "Special Eurobarometer: Social values, Science and Technology", 6/2005, p.9, http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_225_report_en.pdf (accessed 2 Mar 2015).

people for good deeds and punishes them for evil ones. Both figures rose during the period from 1991 and 2009.²⁷

Remarkably, Israel is closer to the U.S. than to the EU where fundamental religious convictions are concerned. According to a survey conducted in 2013 by Harris Interactive, 74 per cent of U.S. Americans believe in God. The number of people providing this response is, however, on the decline²⁸;

whether developments in Israel and the U.S. will diverge in this respect remains to be seen. One thing is clear: there is no problem leading an openly religious life as an obser-

There is no problem leading an openly religious life as an observant Jew in the U.S., while this is becoming increasingly difficult in many EU countries.

vant Jew in the U.S.,²⁹ while this is becoming increasingly difficult in many EU countries. In the past, threats to the Jewish way of life came predominantly from right-wing extremists and Islamists; there are daily reports in the Israeli media about verbal or physical attacks on Jews in Europe who don a kippa (skullcap).³⁰ A new type of problem has emerged recently, originating in militant secularism, which defines religious freedom purely in negative terms ("freedom from") and questions the right to exercise specific religious practices ("freedom to"). The most important indicators of this development are the debate over the admissibility of the circumcision of new-born boys³¹ and the ban on shechita (kosher slaughter).³²

27 | Cf. Israel Democracy Institute, "A Portrait of Israeli Jews: Beliefs, Observance, and Values of Israeli Jews, 2009", p. 50 f., http://en.idi.org.il/media/1351622/GuttmanAviChaiReport2012_EngFinal.pdf (accessed 2 Mar 2015).

28 | See Larry Shannon-Missal, "Americans' Belief in God, Miracles and Heaven Declines", Harris Interactive, 16 Dec 2013, <http://harrisinteractive.com/NewsRoom/HarrisPolls/tabid/447/ctl/ReadCustom%20Default/mid/1508/ArticleId/1353/Default.aspx> (accessed 2 Mar 2015).

29 | Cf. Hannes Stein, "Juden Europas, kommt nach Amerika!", *Die Welt*, 15 Jan 2015, <http://welt.de/debatte/kommentare/article136405010> (accessed 2 Mar 2015).

30 | One typical example of many: Ruchama Weiss/Levi Brackman, "Swedish reporter dons kippa and encounters anti-Semitic abuse", *Ynetnews*, 24 Jan 2015, <http://ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4618568,00.html> (accessed 2 Mar 2015).

31 | Once again, the EU differs significantly from the U.S.. While the rate of male circumcisions in the EU is below 20 per cent (figures for 2007, see: World Health Organization, "Male circumcision: global trends and determinants of prevalence, safety and acceptability", 2007, p. 9 ff., http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2007/9789241596169_eng.pdf?ua=1 (accessed 2 Mar 2015)), over 58 per cent of new-born boys are circumcised in the U.S., although numbers are declining (figures for 2010, see http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/04/07/circumcision-rate-drops_n_5107637.html).

32 | These and other indicators are listed by Dov Maimon, n. 19, p. 29.

Significance of National Sovereignty

While the majority of EU citizens identify more strongly with their own nation than with the EU,³³ the fact remains that an “ever closer Union of the peoples of Europe” is still a “post-national” project. It demands the transfer of parts of national sovereignty to supranational institutions; important legislative competences have accordingly been transferred from the EU Member States to “Brussels”.



In contrast to many European countries, a religiously observant Jewish life is easily possible in the U.S. Around 40 per cent of the Jewish population worldwide are currently living there. | Source: Alex Schwab, flickr ©©©.

The primary objective of Zionism is diametrically opposed to this. It defines the re-establishment of unrestricted “Jewish sovereignty” as its core mission. After almost two thousand years in exile, the Jewish people is to become master of its own fate once again³⁴ and should not depend on the unreliable goodwill of non-Jewish governments. Politicians speaking on the Israeli Holocaust remembrance day (*Yom ha-Shoah*) regularly emphasise

33 | According to the *Standard Eurobarometer*, eight per cent of respondent considered themselves “European and (nationality)” or “European only”. Cf. European Commission, “European Citizenship”, *Standard Barometer* 81, Spring 2014, p. 10 ff., http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb81/eb81_citizen_en.pdf (accessed 2 Mar 2015).

34 | Cf. the following passage from the Israeli Declaration of Independence of 14 May 1948: “This right [to establish their own state] is the natural right of the Jewish people to be masters of their own fate, like all other nations, in their own sovereign State.”

that the capability of the Jewish people to defend itself constitutes the core of Israel's national interest.³⁵ Deviating from this secular-Zionist majority position, a religious-Zionist minority contends that Jewish sovereignty is a decisive step on the road to salvation.³⁶

Although Israel should have no problem at all in overcoming the economic hurdles for EU membership (to name just one example, Israel was ahead of France and the EU average in terms of per capita GDP in 2013³⁷), it would not be capable of fully satisfying the political part of the Copenhagen criteria. According to Sharon Pardo, the fundamental obstacle lies in Israel's self-image and national interest: "Proponents of Israeli membership of the EU ignore fundamental incongruities between Israel's self-definition as a Jewish state and the state of the Jewish people, on the one hand, and the guiding principle of the EU of an open and unified space. Israel is a liberal state, but Israel's self-definition as a Jewish state and the state of the Jewish people makes it exceptional and radically different from other states."³⁸

Ideas of the Future

In contrast to the aging societies of Europe, the "start-up nation"³⁹ Israel comes across as a young, child-loving, dynamic country with a growing population and enormous innovative power. Like the new frontier myth has become part of the civil religion of the United States (besides the self-image as "one nation under God"), the

35 | "Seventy years ago the Jewish people did not have the national capacity to summon the nations, nor the military might to defend itself. But today things are different. Today we have an army. We have the ability, the duty and the determination to defend ourselves." Cf. Prime Minister Netanyahu in his Yom ha-Shoah address on 18/19 Apr 2012: Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Yom Hashoah-Address by PM Netanyahu", 18 Apr 2012, http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/AboutIsrael/History/Holocaust/Pages/Yom_Hashoah_PM_Netanyahu_18-Apr-2012.aspx (accessed 2 Mar 2015).

36 | See for instance Dalit Halevy / Ari Yashar, "Feiglin Outlines Five-Step 'Jewish Sovereignty' Plan", *Arutz Sheva*, 13 May 2014, <http://israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/180590> (accessed 2 Mar 2015).

37 | See *CIA World Factbook*, "Country Comparison: GDP Per Capita", <https://cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2004rank.html> (accessed 2 Mar 2015).

38 | Statement made by Pardo in the interview with KAS Israel held on 18 Jul 2011: Michael Mertes, "Five Questions – Five Answers: Israeli Perceptions of Europe", KAS Israel, 18 Jul 2011, <http://kas.de/israel/en/publications/23431> (accessed 2 Mar 2015).

39 | Well-known phrase from the title of the bestseller by Dan Senor and Saul Singer, *Start-Up Nation: The Story of Israel's Economic Miracle*, New York, 2009.

pioneering spirit is one of the core elements of the secular-Zionist ethos. The national-religious settler movement derives part of its legitimacy from the conviction that it has remained true to that ethos, a view in which it was explicitly encouraged by Reuven Rivlin, Israel's current president, during his time as Speaker of the Knesset.⁴⁰



Young and dynamic: In comparison to the ageing European societies, Israel presents itself as a young, child-friendly, dynamic country with a growing population. | Source: Yoav Lerman, flickr @0@0@.

While many European societies are responding defensively to the global economic upheavals – from the ascendance of new, self-confident competitors in East Asia to the banking and financial crisis of 2007 to 2008 and the subsequent national debt crisis – and trying to maintain the status quo, Israel has been holding its own in the global markets as a successful “Silicon Wadi” with innovative products and services thanks to a strong incubator and venture capital sector. According to the most recent Bloomberg Global Innovation Index, Israel is ranked the 5th most innovation-friendly country in the world – behind Germany (3) but ahead of the U.S. (6), France (9) and the UK (10).⁴¹

40 | “You, my brothers, are pioneers ...”. Chaim Levinson, “Rabbi at terror victims’ funeral: Jews want peace, evildoers seek to destroy us”, *Haaretz*, 1 Sep 2010, <http://haaretz.com/1.311471> (accessed 2 Mar 2015). Further: Mazal Mualem, “Rivlin dedicates Independence torch to settlers amid criticism”, *Haaretz*, 26 Apr 2004, <http://haaretz.com/1.120669> (accessed 2 Mar 2015).

41 | See Bloomberg, *Bloomberg Innovation Index*, <http://bloomberg.com/graphics/2015-innovative-countries> (accessed 2 Mar 2015).



Proud pioneering spirit: Israel is known for its ability to innovate. The labels “Start-up Nation” and “Silicon Wadi” are quite accurate in that regard. | Source: Or Hiltch, flickr @@@.

Altogether, these facets provide an image of a country which sees its future less and less tied to Europe. In her brilliant study of Israeli mentality, Diana Pinto describes present-day Israel as a country that “thinks of itself living in its own cyberspace at the very heart of a globalized world with increasingly Asian connotations”.

She defines this cyberspace by the fictitious internet addresses “www.israel.org for its highly dynamic and innovative civil society; www.israel.com for its prosperous business world; www.israel.inc for its spectacular technology; www.israel.gov, surely the least impressive of its activities; without forgetting www.israel.god, the most imponderable but also the most outspoken and vividly present”. Pinto states that the country is “happily surfing on the line that separates the declining powers (Europe, but also America, it must be said) from the emerging powers (such as China, India and Brazil, and even, from an Israeli perspective, Russia)”⁴².

ANTI-SEMITISM IN EUROPE

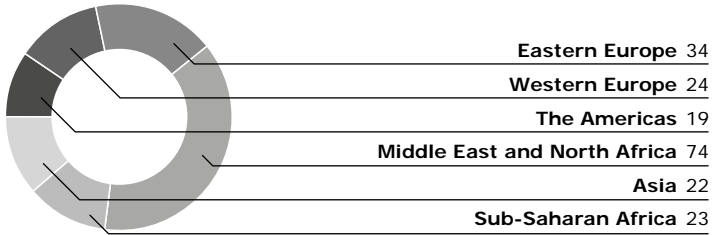
The resurgence and new social acceptability of anti-Semitic views in Europe are drawing attention in Israel, and not only on the right wing of the political spectrum – although that is where they are monitored most closely. The concern is complemented by a sense of validation: any anti-Semitic criminal act in present-day Europe is an argument for the continued validity of Israel's promise to

42 | Diana Pinto, *Israel Has Moved*, Harvard University Press, 2013, pp. 7, 9 f. and 14.

be a safe haven for persecuted Jews from all around the world.⁴³ Israel is seen as the only place where they are greeted with unwavering solidarity. Typically, the big “Republican March” on 11 January 2015 in Paris was said to have been predominantly in support of *Charlie Hebdo* and not the Jewish victims of the terrorist attack on a kosher supermarket on 9 January.⁴⁴

Fig. 2

Scale of anti-Semitic attitudes worldwide (in per cent)



Source: ADL, n. 46.

Such worries are not only fuelled by a multitude of horrific news, but also reflected by surveys. On 8 November 2014, the eve of the remembrance day for the 1938 Kristallnacht pogrom, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) published a report about the experiences of citizens of EU Member States with anti-Semitism, hate crimes and discrimination, which attracted a great deal of attention in Israel.⁴⁵ In the spring of 2014, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith (ADL) published a study which examined the extent of anti-Semitic views worldwide for

43 | Cf. as one example of many the following statement by a French Jewish woman, who is planning to emigrate to Israel: “In Israel there is an army that will protect us. Here, I can no longer see a future for my children”, in: Dan Bilefski, “Number of French Jews Emigrating to Israel Rises”, *The New York Times*, 20 June 2014, <http://nytimes.com/2014/06/21/world/europe/number-of-french-jews-emigrating-to-israel-rises-sharply.html> (accessed 2 Mar 2015); see also: Emily Greenhouse, “After Charlie Hebdo, Jews in France Confront An Old Question”, *BloombergPolitics*, 13 Jan 2015, <http://bloomberg.com/politics/features/2015-01-13/after-charlie-hebdo-jews-in-france-confront-an-old-question> (accessed 2 Mar 2015).

44 | Cnaan Liphshiz, “France marched for Charlie, not for the Jews”, *The Times of Israel*, 16 Jan 2015, <http://timesofisrael.com/france-marched-for-charlie-not-for-the-jews> (accessed 2 Mar 2015).

45 | European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, “Discrimination and hate crime against Jews in EU Member States: experiences and perceptions of antisemitism”, http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2013-discrimination-hate-crime-against-jews-eu-member-states-0_en.pdf (accessed 2 Mar 2015).

the first time.⁴⁶ According to this study, a quarter (24 per cent) of Western Europeans and a third (34 per cent) of Eastern Europeans – some 150,000 million people in total – hold anti-Semitic views. It is only nine per cent in the U.S. by the same criteria; according to a recent survey by the Pew Research Center, Jews, together with Catholics and Evangelical Christians, have the highest popularity ratings out of all the religious communities and denominations there.⁴⁷



In numerous European cities it is necessary to protect Jewish institutions. Anti-Semitic acts have increased in recent years. On the 14 February 2015, a terror attack on a synagogue in Copenhagen was conducted. | Source: Peter Kirkeskov Rasmussen, flickr @@@@.

From an Israeli perspective, the danger to European Jews comes above all from an unholy alliance of right-wing extremists, radical Islamists and parts of the pro-Palestinian Left. This alliance is spreading an atmosphere of hate and violence on an unprecedented scale at anti-Israel demonstrations in Europe. In many places, synagogues, Jewish schools and other Jewish institutions have been placed under guard as if high-security installations. One thing that is causing particular concern in Israel is the impression that the influence of Muslim voter groups on European

46 | See ADL, "Index of Antisemitism", <http://global100.adl.org> (accessed 2 Mar 2015).

47 | Cf. Pew Research Center, "How Americans Feel About Religious Groups", <http://pewforum.org/2014/07/16/how-americans-feel-about-religious-groups> (accessed 2 Mar 2015).

politics is showing an inexorable increase. Prime Minister Netanyahu even spoke of an “Islamisation” of Western Europe in early 2015.⁴⁸ (Taking all this into account, it is no surprise that some right-wing European populists – Geert Wilders from the Netherlands to name but one – are seeking allies amongst Israeli politicians from the far Right in the fight against Islam.⁴⁹)

Besides European societies, their political representatives are also suspected of anti-Semitism. The same applies to numerous European NGOs, including the German political foundations, whose main task is supposedly to provide one-sided support to the Palestinian cause. When there are voices in Europe maintaining that Israel is violating human rights in the Palestinian Territories and to be blamed for the death of innocent children there, then this is believed to subliminally reactivate the anti-Semitic blood libel. When the EU refuses to recognise the Israeli settlements on the West Bank as part of Israel, then that is supposedly merely a European contribution to the international boycott movement against Israel and to efforts de-legitimise the Jewish state. Seen from the Israeli perspective, European criticism of the Israeli settlement policy is motivated by anti-Semitism in any case as it judges the Jewish state by other benchmarks than non-Jewish countries, which are allowed to conduct comparably policies with impunity, such as Turkey in Northern Cyprus or Morocco in the Western Sahara.⁵⁰

48 | Cf. Reuters, “Netanyahu says Europe’s ‘Islamization’ pushing Israel to expand Asia trade”, *Haaretz* online, 19 Jan 2015, <http://haaretz.com/business/1.637751> (accessed 2 Mar 2015); further: Herb Keinon, “Netanyahu: Israel must open Asian markets due to anti-Semitism in Europe”, *The Jerusalem Post online*, 18 Jan 2015, <http://jpost.com/Israel-News/Politics-And-Diplomacy/Netanyahu-Israel-must-open-Asian-markets-due-to-Islamization-anti-Semitism-in-Europe-388164> (accessed 2 Mar 2015).

49 | See for example Eldad Beck, “Geert Wilders: Israel fighting our war”, *Ynetnews*, 30 Nov 2010, <http://ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3991733,00.html> (accessed 2 Mar 2015).

50 | All these arguments were voiced at a joint conference by KAS Israel and the Jerusalem Centre for Public Affairs on 24 Mar 2014. Cf. Michael Mertes, “Is the EU an Enemy of Israel? A Conference Discloses Misconceptions”, KAS Israel, <http://www.kas.de/wf/en/33.37204> (accessed 2 Mar 2015).

DISCREPANCIES IN THREAT ANALYSIS

The criticism that the EU is underestimating the “Islamic Threat” within its borders is complemented by the accusation that it is showing a spirit of appeasement in its foreign affairs dealings.⁵¹ In its indulgent pacifism, it neglects to build up the hard power required for exercising a role in world politics. Although it presents itself as a moral superpower lecturing others, it would not be not willing or ready to provide reliable and robust security guarantees to Israel in the event of the establishment of a Palestinian state, which it supports. In this context, Israeli commentators have lately been only too keen to call attention to the EU’s helplessness in the face of Russia’s conduct in Ukraine.⁵²

Although the EU presents itself as moral superpower lecturing others, it is not willing to provide robust security guarantees to Israel in the event of the establishment of a Palestinian state, which it supports.

In the dispute over the correct response to the Iranian nuclear program, Israeli politicians and security experts tend to be sharper in their criticism of the willingness of the Obama administration to enter into discussions and make compromises than of the moderate stance of the Europeans. However, the EU’s reluctance to categorise the Lebanese Shiite Hezbollah and the Palestinian Sunni Hamas as terrorist organisations meets with broad incomprehension. When the EU declared the military wing of Hezbollah a terrorist organisation in July 2013 after long discussions, Israeli government representatives protested, saying that differentiating between a political and a military wing flew in the face of reality.⁵³ The decision by the European Court of Justice of 17 December 2014 to remove Hamas from the list of terrorist organisations on the basis of procedural errors was initially seen in Israel as a further example of the EU’s naïveté.⁵⁴

51 | An accusation voiced first and foremost by Prime Minister Netanyahu. Cf. Herb Keinon, “Israel severely rebuked, as PM warns ‘spirit of appeasement’ blowing through Europe”, *The Jerusalem Post online*, 17 Dec 2014, <http://jpost.com/Israel-News/Politics-And-Diplomacy/Israel-severely-rebuked-internationally-as-PM-warns-spirit-of-appeasement-blowing-through-Europe-385001> (accessed 2 Mar 2015).

52 | Cf. Manfred Gerstenfeld, “Why Israel should monitor the Ukraine conflict closely”, *The Jerusalem Post online*, 17 May 2014, <http://jpost.com/Opinion/Op-Ed-Contributors/Why-Israel-should-monitor-the-Ukraine-conflict-closely-352559> (accessed 2 Mar 2015).

53 | See “Netanyahu: EU should blacklist all Hezbollah wings, not just its military”, *Haaretz online*, 23 Jul 2013, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/.premium-1.537257> (accessed 2 Mar 2015).

54 | See “Israel cries foul after EU strikes Hamas from terror list”, *The Times of Israel*, 17 Dec 2014, <http://timesofisrael.com/court-orders-eu-remove-hamas-from-terror-blacklist> (accessed 2 Mar 2015).

By contrast with the EU and the U.S., Israeli foreign affairs politicians have been noticeably reluctant to voice criticism of Russia's aggressive conduct in the so-called "near abroad" (particularly Georgia and Ukraine). Russia is not perceived as a threat but as a (potential) partner.⁵⁵ There have not even been any negative official comments against the support Russia has been providing to the Assad regime since 2011 in its fight against attempts to overthrow it. From an Israeli perspective, a predictable dictator is always the lesser evil compared to unpredictable hordes of jihadists – even if he is allied to Hezbollah.

UNWANTED INTERVENTION: THE EU AND THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

The policy of the EU (and of numerous individual EU Member States) in support of the two-state solution – in other words, the establishment and recognition of a sovereign Palestinian state – was, is and will remain one of the main sources of European-Israeli tension. There was a brief period of détente after the Oslo Accords of 1993, when this goal seemed to be coming into reach and the time had come to let Israel rise up into the ranks of the associate partners of the EU. Subsequently, the tone became increasingly more irritable on both sides, particularly after the formation of Netanyahu's third cabinet (in March 2013), the most settler-friendly Israeli government so far.

In the "Venice Declaration" of 13 June 1980,⁵⁶ the (then nine) EC Foreign Ministers raised for the first time the European Community's claim to be involved in finding a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The EC recognised the right of the Palestinians to self-determination; this right was to be exercised "within the framework of the comprehensive peace settlement", meaning the two-state solution. The PLO would have to be involved in the negotiations (speaking on behalf of the Palestinian people prior to the existence of a state). What appeared to be a stumbling block from Israel's point of view at the time has become a matter of course since the Oslo Accords between Israel and the PLO. By participating in the Middle East Quartet (United Nations, European

55 | On the background see: Lincoln Mitchell, "Borscht Belt: Will Israel Spurn America for Russia?", *Observer*, 22 Jan 2015, <http://observer.com/2015/01/borscht-belt-will-israel-spurn-america-for-russia> (accessed 2 Mar 2015).

56 | Cf. European External Action Service, "Venice Declaration", 13 Jun 1980, http://eeas.europa.eu/mepp/docs/venice_declaration_1980_en.pdf (accessed 2 Mar 2015).

Union, United States, Russia), which presented a “roadmap” to peace in the middle of the Second Intifada, the EU underscored its ambitions to remain involved in Middle East politics: the appointment of elder statesman Tony Blair as the quartet’s special envoy in 2007 put a European face on this group, which has yet to produce results.



Between cooperation and dissent: Despite the close partnership between the EU and Israel, here the Representative for Foreign Affairs Federica Mogherini and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, disputes occur, for instance over the settlement policy. | Source: Gali Tibbon, European External Action Service, flickr ©🇪🇺🇮🇱🇮🇱🇪🇺.

The central points of dispute between the EU and Israel include the persistent European protest against the Israeli settlement policy. In legal terms, the EU justifies its criticism with the fact that no sections of the West Bank form part of Israeli territory. This view is based on a ruling by the European Court of Justice⁵⁷, which had to determine whether products from the settlements were “Made in Israel”, i.e. whether they fell under the preferential tariff arrangement between Israel and the EU; the court ruled that they did not. Politically, the EU’s main objection is that the settlement policy destroys trust in the willingness of the Israeli government

57 | Cf. Court of Justice of the European Union, “Products originating in the West Bank do not qualify for preferential customs treatment under the EC-Israel Agreement”, Press Release No. 14/10, 25 Feb 2010, <http://curia.europa.eu/jcms/upload/docs/application/pdf/2010-02/cp100014en.pdf> (accessed 2 Mar 2015).

to come to an agreement and renders a two-state solution, which the EU supports, less and less feasible.⁵⁸

It is under discussion to have goods from Israeli settlements in the West Bank labelled as such throughout the EU. This is considered a “boycott against Israel” on the right wing of the political spectrum in Israel.

In recent years, the EU’s political toolbox has included above all incentives (“carrots”) in the form of upgrade proposals up to and including an offer of a Special Privileged Partnership. One potential sanction (describing it as a “stick” would be taking the metaphor too far) currently under discussion is to have goods from Israeli settlements in the West Bank labelled as such throughout the EU. Several EU Member States have already introduced corresponding national regulations. The labelling obligation in itself is considered a “boycott against Israel” on the right wing of the political spectrum in Israel, although the goods are not subject to any import bans. Similar accusations are being voiced when the EU insists that the funds it provides must not go to settlement projects (as is the case in the “Horizon 2020” Framework Programme).⁵⁹

Today, Israel is facing even greater problems as EU Member States are abandoning the wait in increasing numbers and recognising the “State of Palestine” unilaterally (without, however, following through and opening an embassy there). This was presaged by many European countries giving their approval to a resolution voted on at the UN General Assembly on 29 November 2012 to confer “non-Member Observer State” status on Palestine. The surprising decision by the German government to abstain caused real consternation among Netanyahu’s government at the time.⁶⁰

Disregarding polemic accusations of anti-Semitism,⁶¹ the most significant political objection to the European criticism that Israel is blocking the two-state solutions has been that the past setbacks

58 | For a summary of the EU arguments against the settlement policy by Ambassador Lars Faaborg-Andersen see n. 18.

59 | Cf. *ibid.*

60 | Cf. Jonathan Schanzer / Benjamin Weinthal, “How Israel Lost Europe”, *Foreign Policy*, 30 Nov 2012, http://foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/11/30/how_israel_lost_europe (accessed 2 Mar 2015).

61 | See Keinon, n. 48; further the statement made by Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman on 4 Jan 2015, namely that some “lies and fabrications” that could be heard in the European Parliament amounted to “another chapter in the Protocols of the Elders of Zion”. Quoted according to: Herb Keinon, “Liberman says western Europe, not Iran or Palestinians, Israel main challenge”, *The Jerusalem Post online*, 4 Jan 2015, <http://jpost.com/Israel-News/Politics-And-Diplomacy/Liberman-implies-some-EU-parliaments-motivated-by-anti-Semitism-on-Palestinian-issue-386599> (accessed 2 Mar 2015).

in the peace process were, in fact, due (in part) to Palestinian intransigence. The Israeli side draws attention to the fact that Hamas is holding on to its major objective of wiping the “Zionist entity” from the map and maintains that many Europeans taking the side against Israel are encouraging the Palestinians to remain intransigent, and even to use violence.

How seriously the new European trend towards recognition of Palestinian statehood is being taken in Israel is reflected in a statement made by Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman in the presence of the Israeli ambassadors to European states in January 2015. In this statement he maintained that it was not the Palestinians, Iran or Hezbollah that would pose the greatest challenge in the New Year, but Western Europe.⁶²

CONCLUSION

The description of the relationship between Israel and the European Union as an “uneasy partnership” will be appropriate for the foreseeable future. On the one hand, the causes of alienation are likely to intensify, at least as long as a two-state solution remains out of reach. On the other hand, there are an increasing number of valid reasons for expanding the existing cooperation.

The two sides have much to offer each other in economic, scientific and technical as well as cultural cooperation. The “start-up nation” Israel can serve as a model to stagnating European countries, demonstrating how a lack of natural resources can be more than compensated for through ingenuity and innovative power. The European Union, for its part, can show Israel through its uncompromising efforts to fight anti-Semitic tendencies that it is still considerably closer to Israel in terms of its values than the East Asian economies, where Israel is seeking new partners today.

In view of the violent upheavals in the Middle East and North Africa, Israel and the European Union share fundamental security interests. Both are under threat from the proliferation of jihadist terror, albeit in different ways. Both would be affected if Iran were to succeed in establishing itself as a nuclear great power in the region. All this militates in favour of deepening security cooperation, from the exchange of intelligence to the drafting of joint strategies.

In short: Israel and the European Union may be disappointed with each other in some respects, but they will continue to need one another.

TRILATERAL IN AFRICA

DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION ISRAEL – GERMANY – THIRD COUNTRIES

*HE Yakov Hadas-Handelsman, Ambassador
of the State of Israel to Germany*

THE EARLY DAYS OF ISRAELI DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

In Judaism, *tikkun olam* is the duty to do what one can to make the world a better place and to promote a sustainable relationship between humans and nature. It is also one of the guiding principles of Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation (MASHAV), whose purpose is to pass on Israeli expertise and experience to international cooperation partners (particularly in developing countries). Over time, the humanitarian aspect of MASHAV's work has increasingly taken priority over the original outlook of Israeli development cooperation, which had been influenced more strongly by foreign policy considerations.

MASHAV was founded in 1958 subsequent to a visit to Africa by Golda Meir, Israel's Foreign Minister at the time, in order to give Israeli development cooperation a systematic approach. Just ten years after the foundation of the State of Israel, the country itself was still undergoing a development process, besides having to master immense security challenges. After having started out with very simple capacity-building measures, MASHAV has since developed into an actor to be taken seriously and now coordinates Israel's international development cooperation. Over the course of 57 years, measures put in place by MASHAV have helped to upskill over 270,000 individuals from over 140 countries, some of which do not even maintain diplomatic relations with Israel.

In the early period spanning the 1960s and 1970s, MASHAV was at times the largest department within the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and on occasion Israel's means to development



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cooperation exceeded that of other Western states.¹ During those early years, knowledge transfer through development cooperation characterised a very respected and positively connotated period in Israel's international relations. At that time, a high proportion

Both Israel and most of the African states had to rid themselves of colonialism or foreign rule and fight for their independence.

of the State's development budget was earmarked for countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The strong, even emotional connection was rooted in common founding traditions: Both Israel and most of the African states had to rid themselves of colonialism or foreign rule and fight for their independence. Furthermore, in those countries there was a high level of interest in Israel's experiences as a young nation with a rapidly developing and successful economy.²

Many Israelis considered the fact that African states turned away from Israeli politics in the aftermath of the 1973 Yom Kippur War to be a betrayal. The public disenchantment was followed by a reduction in the MASHAV budget.³ In the course of the Oslo peace negotiations in the 1990s, MASHAV gained fresh impetus through the political will to forge new relations with countries in the Middle East, Central Europe and the former Soviet Union. However, after the peace process had stalled, efforts in the area of development cooperation were scaled back as well.

ISRAELI DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION TODAY

Israeli development cooperation is influenced significantly by the country's foreign policy and security circumstances as well as the situation of the Jewish diaspora. Jordan and the Palestinian Authority as well as Gaza are traditional beneficiaries of public development funding. Israel also provides aid in the context of the Syrian conflict, for instance by supplying medical care to Syrian refugees. In 2013, this aid amounted to 11.26 million U.S. dollars. Ethiopia was one of the main beneficiaries of aid funds for a long time. Although development cooperation with that country had seen a decline due to the emigration of numerous Ethiopian Jews to Israel, it is now being revitalised also through the tri-lateral cooperation with Germany (TDC⁴). Besides its immediate

1 | Cf. Aliza Belman Inbal/Shachar Zahavi, *The Rise and Fall of Israel's Bilateral Aid Budget 1958-2008*, Tel Aviv, 2009, <http://socsci.tau.ac.il/government/images/PDFs/riseandfall.pdf> (accessed 4 Feb 2015).

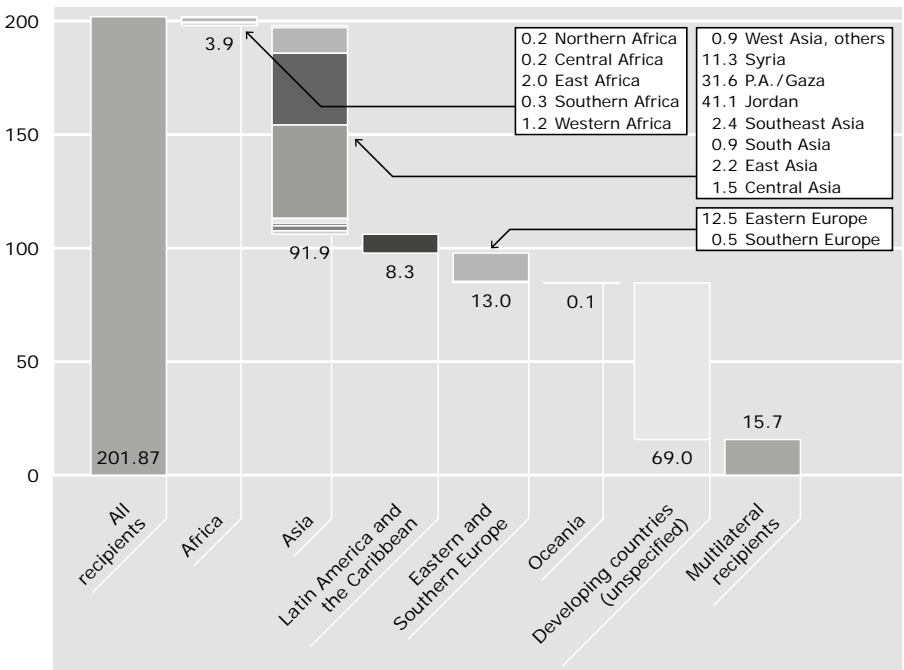
2 | Cf. *ibid.*

3 | Cf. *ibid.*

4 | TDC hereinafter used exclusively with reference to Germany-Israeli collaboration.

neighbours, Israeli development cooperation focuses on East Africa as well as Eastern Europe and Central Asia. In Sub-Saharan Africa, Kenya, Ghana and Ethiopia, are the largest beneficiaries of funds from Israel – those are involved in TDC, too. The other African states involved in trilateral cooperation, Burundi, Burkina Faso and Cameroon, are also on the radar of Israeli development cooperation, and Israel's involvement there is being expanded in collaboration with Germany.

Fig. 1
Israel's Official Development Assistance (ODA) and Recipients, 2013 (in million U.S. dollars at current prices)



Source: Prepared by author based on OECD data as of 28 Dec 2014;
 net ODA: expended resources less redemption/return on sales.

While multilateral recipients received nearly 40 per cent of German development funds over the last 15 years, most notably intermediary bodies of the European Union and the European Development Fund, but also the International Development Association (IDA) as a part of the World Bank, Israel only involved multilateral agencies with respect to some ten per cent of its development expenditure during the same period. Once again, the World Bank with its International Bank for Reconstruction and Development

(IBRD) played the most prominent intermediary role. Whereas Germany's engagement has increased with its accession to the United Nations (UN) as a full member in 1973, circumstances are making it difficult for Israel to establish international alliances.⁵ There are, however, indications of a positive development. Over the last few years, Israel has become more actively involved in initiating UN resolutions relating to development policy. These resolutions are successfully adopted due to a spirit of pragmatism and in disregard of political animosities. Cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Africa is expanding as well.

Israel's projects concentrate on the areas of poverty reduction, food security, women's rights as well as improving local health and education systems.

MASHAV's annual budget is between ten and eleven million euros. The German ODA expenditure of the Federal Ministry for Development and Cooperation (BMZ) of 6.4 billion

euros (2014) shows why a German-Israeli lever can be effective in development cooperation. In that respect, Israel's approach focuses on the training of multipliers. Its projects concentrate on the areas of poverty reduction, food security, women's rights as well as improving local health and education systems. These key objectives are in line with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and are also part of Germany's development policy.⁶

Well versed in dealing with the consequences of war and terrorism, Israel can provide reliable, fast and effective assistance particularly in humanitarian crisis situations by supplying mobile clinics, medical equipment as well as search and rescue teams. Currently Israel is heavily involved in the fight against Ebola, amongst other things by providing funding to the UN Ebola Response Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF). Israel is the sixth largest contributor to this fund, measured by per capita contributions. The World Health Organization and UNICEF receive funds for operating clinics in the affected region. In addition, MASHAV has sent fully equipped medical clinics to Guinea, Liberia and Sierra

5 | The Middle East conflict is causing various groups of countries to put forward disproportionately high numbers of resolutions against Israel at the UN. In addition, the formation of international blocks means that there is only a limited number of regional groups Israel can associate itself with.

6 | Cf. BMZ, "Leitlinien für die bilaterale Finanzielle und Technische Zusammenarbeit mit Kooperationspartnern der deutschen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit", 2008, p. 9, <http://bmz.de/de/mediathek/publikationen/reihen/strategiepapiere/konzept165.pdf> (accessed 28 Dec 2014).

Leone. Israeli experts have been dispatched to Cameroon and Ivory Coast to operate clinics and train health workers.⁷

One fundamental aim of Israel's development policy is to encourage political rapprochement. Experiences from the past have shown that while it may help to expand practical relations, it is unlikely that cooperation will survive major

political disputes.⁸ This sobering realisation is tempered by the international attention and recognition of the achievements of Israeli technology in land/water management⁹ during

While its own budget is relatively modest, MASHAV is successful in achieving valuable synergy effects due to relatively high levels of co-funding.

the height of Israeli development cooperation (and beyond). While its own budget is relatively modest, MASHAV successfully achieves valuable synergy effects by relatively high levels of co-funding. In this context, Germany is the most important partner country. Further partnerships involve Denmark, Italy, Japan, Canada and the U.S., among others.

THE ISRAELI AGENCIES MASHAV AND CINADCO

MASHAV's activities focus on poverty reduction, food security, sustainable development, the empowerment of women and maternal and children's health, social equality as well as improving public health and education systems. Due to the limited MASHAV budget, funds are used mainly to train multipliers which can take place in two settings. Either individuals attend training courses in Israel with the objective of subsequently implementing projects in their home countries, or Israeli experts go to partner countries in Africa organising trainings locally or working in villages and cities. MASHAV also dispatches experts to analyse conditions on the ground and devise a consultancy concept based on findings. Direct infrastructure investments are rather rare.

MASHAV works closely with the Center for International Agricultural Development Cooperation (CINADCO) of the Israeli Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, organising training measures and cooperation projects in the areas of water resource management, irrigation and fertilisation, market-oriented agriculture,

7 | Cf. Dave Bender, "UN Identifies Israel as Top Contributor Per Capita in Fight Against Ebola", *The Algemeiner*, 18 Dec 2014, <http://goo.gl/a6CvDi> (accessed 28 Dec 2014).

8 | Cf. Belman Inbal / Zahavi, n. 1.

9 | An example which is often cited is the drip irrigation system from Netafim, which was developed in Israel.

livestock and dairy production as well as agricultural research and development. In TDC, CINADCO is involved in Ethiopia, Ghana and Burkina Faso.

TRILATERAL COOPERATION IN AFRICA INVOLVING GERMANY AND ISRAEL

In connection with the regular evaluation by the members of the DAC¹⁰ as well as the desire for better liaison between development donors,¹¹ the German government has expanded trilateral development cooperation consistently.¹² This applies particularly where the State of Israel is concerned. Both countries are committed to the global agenda for sustainable development, the fight against poverty and the implementation of the MDGs.¹³

Israel and Germany share the vision that, particularly in the era of globalisation, economically strong countries should support countries that are in the process of developing their economy by providing them with resources and expertise to enable them to fulfil their potential. This brings about a triple win situation for all those involved: It strengthens and substantiates Israeli-German cooperation, it helps to realise financial and knowledge synergies, and it is implemented in local projects that support sustainable economic and social development. Building on 50 years of German-Israeli diplomatic relations, there are prospects of expanding the cooperation beyond Africa, particularly to countries of Central Asia, and beyond existing projects. At a special side event to be

- 10 | Germany has been a full member of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development since 1961. Israel has been an OECD member since 2010 and regularly attends DAC meetings.
- 11 | Cf. Peter Molt, "A Review of (West) Germany's Relations with Developing Countries in Sub-Saharan Africa", *KAS International Reports*, 11-12/2014, p. 55.
- 12 | This is emphasised in the 2009 Coalition Agreement. In the 2013 BMZ strategy paper "Triangular Cooperation in German development cooperation", the German Government makes specific reference to the standards of the Accra Agenda for Action and the Busan Declaration A Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, which also has Israeli support. Cf. The Federal Government, "Koalitionsvertrag zwischen CDU, CSU und FDP 17. Legislaturperiode", p. 128; BMZ, BMZ Strategy Paper 5, "Triangular cooperation in German development cooperation. Position paper", 2013, p. 4, http://bmz.de/en/publications/type_of_publication/strategies/Strategiepapier334_05_2013.pdf (accessed 29 Jan 2015).
- 13 | Cf. Federal Press Office, "Gemeinsame Erklärung zu den Deutsch-Israelischen Regierungskonsultationen vom 25. Februar 2014", <http://goo.gl/4Z8I5g> (accessed 29 Jan 2015).

held at the UN General Assembly in New York this year, Israel and Germany will present the TDC format to draw attention to the successful format of multilateral development collaboration.

The Federal Republic of Germany and the State of Israel have always been closely linked through their history and their democratic values. Pooling financial and human resources through TDC enriches this unique bilateral relationship and places it on a thoroughly practical base. Former Federal

Development Minister Dirk Niebel used to speak of Israel as a "strategic partner"¹⁴; his successor Gerd Müller considers TDC a success story and an "innovative model for the

Federal Development Minister Gerd Müller considers trilateral cooperation a success story and an "innovative model for the future".

future"¹⁵. Owing to its extensive diplomatic connections, Germany can act in an intermediary role, integrating Israeli experts into German development cooperation delegations or projects. With its wide-ranging projects and internationally established intermediary organisations, such as the German Federal Enterprise for International Cooperation (GIZ), Germany has a good understanding of how to plan and fund cooperation projects. For Israel, this is a particularly valuable connecting factor and an important basis for future collaborations.

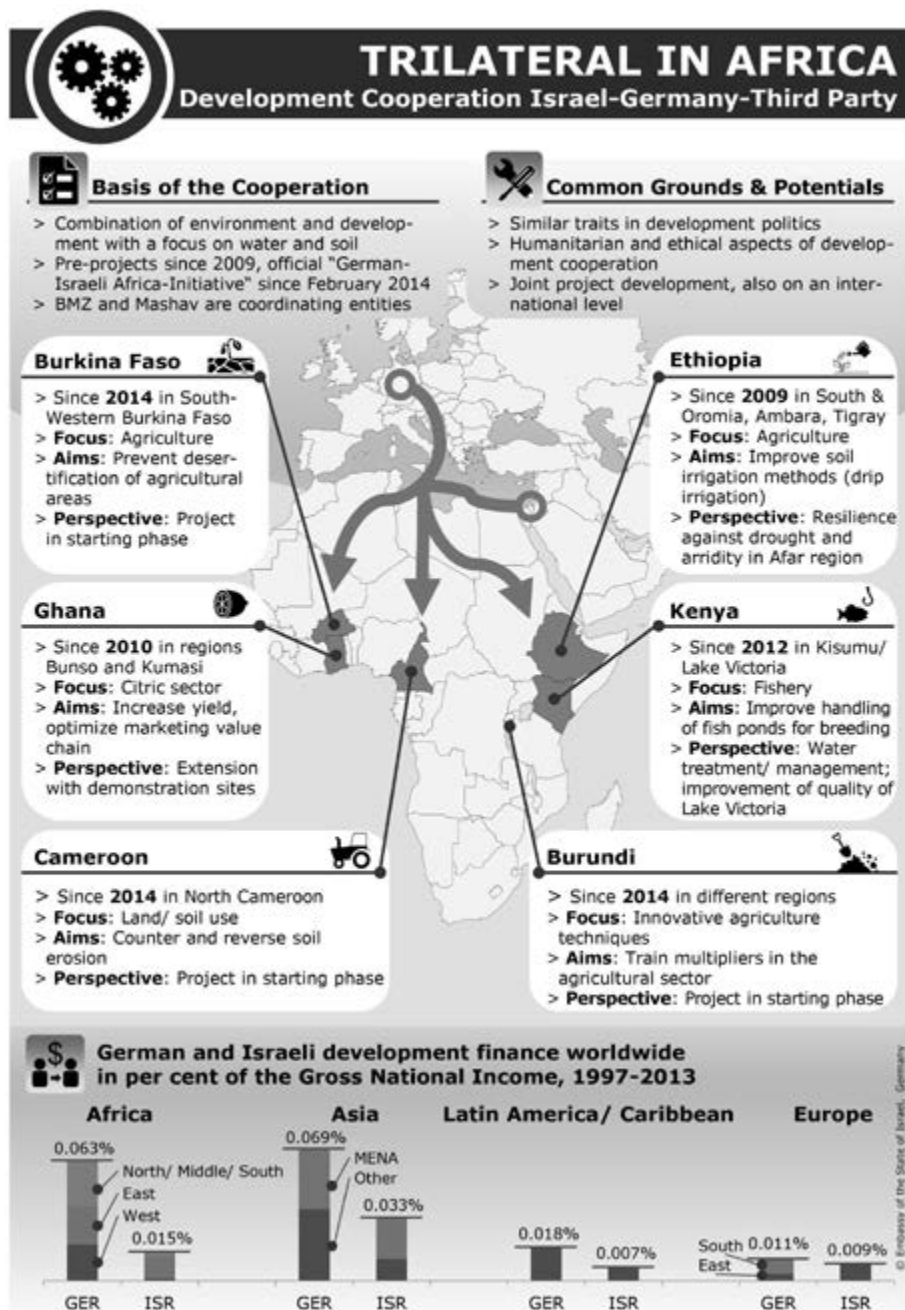
The common denominator of TDC is to apply environmental and development considerations to topics such as agricultural irrigation, effluents, soil degradation and desertification. Projects aimed at sustainable soil management also play an important role. To cover the global demand for food to feed the growing world population, at least a further 120 million hectares of land will be needed for cultivation by 2030. At the same time, climate change will increasingly lead to infertile soils, which, in conjunction with inadequate management methods, will mean the loss of arable land.¹⁶ Sustainable soil management, as promoted by TDC, and the focus on entire value chains will contribute to the dissemination of methods using resources sustainably and economically.

14 | Marcel Fürstenau, "Deutschland und Israel kooperieren in Kenia", *Deutsche Welle*, 18 Aug 2012, <http://goo.gl/OwUWf2> (accessed 29 Jan 2015).

15 | Gerd Müller, "Deutsch-israelische Regierungskonsultationen: Trilaterale Kooperation ist eine Erfolgsgeschichte", 25 Feb 2014, <http://goo.gl/xxyfbb> (accessed 29 Jan 2015).

16 | According to estimates, the amount of arable land potentially being lost may equal the amount of land that would, in fact, be required to produce the extra food required. Cf. Sergio A. Zelaya, DDD 5th International Conference 2014, Sde Boqer.

Fig. 2





During the German-Israeli Intergovernmental Consultations in February 2014 in Jerusalem it was decided to broaden the cooperations between MASHAV and the BMZ. | Source: © Rainer Jensen, picture alliance/dpa.

The “Israel-Germany Africa Initiative”¹⁷, an example of TDC with African partner countries, is one of the youngest German-Israeli cooperation programs. It was given the official go-ahead by Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in December 2012, after the first project had already been initiated in Ethiopia in 2009. In the spirit of celebrating 50 years of German-Israeli diplomatic relations, the signing of the cooperation agreement in February 2014 has further strengthened the collaboration between the two countries. Israel is investing seven million U.S. dollars in this enterprise, with Germany contributing some 70 million U.S. dollars. These funds will support existing projects in Ethiopia, Ghana and Kenya as well as new endeavours in Burundi, Burkina Faso and Cameroon¹⁸ during the period from 2015 to 2020. The BMZ and MASHAV will act as coordinating partners. On the Israeli side, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Finance and the Prime Minister’s Office are the funding parties. The African TDC partners will also contribute funding and have a hands-on involvement in the projects.

17 | The “Israel-Germany Africa Initiative” is not to be confused with the so-called “Afrika-Initiative” of the BMZ and Stiftung Partnerschaft mit Afrika e.V., which was scheduled to run from 2013 to 2015 and focuses on the areas of art, culture and the media, sport and civil society, (vocational) education as well as the economy.

18 | The TDC activities in Burkina Faso, Burundi and Cameroon began in 2014, focusing on projects for adapting to effects of climate change. One important aspect is the up-skilling of multipliers (also in Israel itself) in new agricultural techniques. In existing projects, Israel is providing bursaries for individuals to attend advanced training in Israel.

Ethiopia: Agricultural Irrigation

Trilateral cooperation started with a project in Ethiopia. It was initiated in May 2008 on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the foundation of the State of Israel with the aim of jointly addressing effects of climate change in Ethiopia. Particularly in the desert regions of Ethiopia, the climatic and geological challenges are similar to those in Israel. However, while Israel is capable of wresting productive land suitable for agriculture from the desert using the very latest efficient technologies, this is not yet the case in Ethiopia. Efficient irrigation is the key. If this can be achieved, it could help to boost food security and offer the rural population prospects of making a better living.



The countries of Sub-Saharan Africa are especially affected by climate change. Long-lasting droughts pose the biggest challenge to the people in Ethiopia. | Source: European Commission, DG ECHO, flickr ©©©.

From 2009 to 2013, the TDC focused mainly on efforts to improve the living conditions of farmers and communities engaged in raising livestock and/or agriculture. Effects of climate change such as irregular and more frequently occurring weather phenomena in the form of drought and flooding are among the greatest challenges to the affected people. The partners involved in the projects were the Ethiopian government, the German Environment Ministry via GIZ and MASHAV via CINADCO. The implemented measures included the installation of systems for drip irrigation at twelve locations in the regions of Oromia, Amhara, Tigray and in Southern Ethiopia as well as the training of some 5,000 farmers and their families in cultivation methods and efficient water usage. The irrigation systems consist of locally manufactured tubing with

tiny holes, which offer the advantage of being simple and cheap to handle while providing a high level of efficiency. This innovation enabled several harvests a year, boosting overall yields at the same time. In locations that were deemed unsuitable for drip irrigation, the focus was on improving the traditional irrigation systems. The project was embedded in the BMZ-GIZ “Sustainable Land Management Program”. The project partners provided financial and consulting support totalling 2.3 million euros.

The partnership has been extended by a second project phase beginning in June 2014. It strengthens resilience against aridity and drought for (nomadic) communities in the Afar region in Northeast Ethiopia.¹⁹

Ghana: Optimisation of Citrus Production

Ghana was the first African country to establish diplomatic relations with Israel in 1956. Golda Meir’s visit to Ghana in 1958 contributed significantly to her motivation in setting up MASHAV during the same year. After almost four decades of Israeli-Ghanaian relations having been frozen due to the Yom Kippur War and one year before the official reopening of the Israeli embassy in Accra, the TDC in Ghana was formalised in 2010.

Germany puts its developmental focus in Ghana on agriculture and sustainable economic development. Israeli development projects also have an agricultural emphasis and in addition cover fishery and water management as well as the expansion of sewage infrastructure.

Israeli development projects in Ghana have an agricultural emphasis and in addition cover fishery and water management as well as the expansion of sewage infrastructure.

Citrus production in Southwest Ghana (including the areas around Bunso and Kumasi) proved to be an ideal starting point for the trilateral cooperation for all sides. The project was inaugurated at a ceremony attended by the then Federal Minister Niebel, the Israeli Ambassador to Ghana Moshe Ram and the Ghanaian Finance Minister Kwabena Duffuor. It operates in line with the market-oriented agriculture program of the Ghanaian Development Agenda 2010-2013 and supports its implementation.

19 | By the submission deadline, the project coordinators were still in the initial project start-up and planning phase. Potential project components comprise the establishment of institutions and measures of further training as well as demonstration plots. Date cultivation is also being considered.



In Ghana, the Israeli development cooperation has been pursuing the modernisation of the citrus industry since 2010. As a result, higher yields can be reported, from which local merchants benefit. | Source: Eileen Delhi, flickr ©1133.

Initially, the project concentrated on the modernisation of the citrus production in the region through local seminars. While the average yield for citrus fruit in Ghana is 20 to 25 tons per hectare, it is 70 to 80 tons in Israel. Consequently, the objective was to double the yields as well as optimise the value chains to permanently safeguard the economic gain.²⁰ Moreover, since many trees were found to suffer from disease and viruses, the introduction of resistant varieties was initiated as well.

The target group for these measures comprised over 120 specialists from the Ghanaian Ministry of Agriculture as well as local producers. GIZ experts and CINADCO collaborated on this project. Israel's major contribution was its specific expertise in irrigation methods, which were adapted to the circumstances in Ghana. After the first phase proved to be successful, the project was continued and expanded in 2014 by setting up some demonstration plots to convince local producers of their efficacy. Ghanaian and

20 | Cf. MASHAV, "Israel-Ghana Partnership for Development", p. 13, <http://goo.gl/mTdMHU> (accessed 29 Jan 2015).

Israeli scientists continue in their efforts to find further cultivation and irrigation methods to increase yields and fruit quality.²¹

Kenya: Fisheries on Lake Victoria

Some 40,000 fishermen operate from the Kenyan shore of Lake Victoria. While catches were as large as 240,000 tons at the turn of the millennium, they dwindled to a fraction of that within a decade. Overfishing and the use of nets with small mesh size have resulted in poorer catches and contributed to the erosion of the sea bed. The water has become cloudier as a result, which inhibits fish reproduction. Lake Victoria is also affected by climate change, as the drier conditions mean that the tributaries are feeding less water into the lake, for instance.



The ecological balance of Lake Victoria is negatively affected by over-fishing. Therefore, trilateral projects with Kenyan, Israeli and German participation focus on sustainable fish farming. | Source: Anita Ritenour, flickr ©.

Germany has been involved in Kenya for over a decade in the optimisation of the value chain comprising the rearing, processing and marketing of fish. Israel has been collaborating with fishermen since 2009 in attempts to reintroduce carp into Lake Victoria.

21 | Cf. Dubi Raber/Shmulik Gross, "Germany-Ghana-Israel: Trilateral Cooperation on Citrus Production", MASHAV, <http://www.moag.gov.il/NR/rdonlyres/3E840812-A453-42B9-B246-D739806DA616/0/GhanaCitrusCourse26January2014to6FebruaryfinalByDubiRabberandShmulikGross.pdf> (accessed 29 Jan 2015).

Further projects are focused on raising resilience against water shortages as well as the development of the sewage and water management sector. A Kenyan economic development program supports the establishment of fishponds and fish breeders. These measures are intended to allow the fishing grounds to recover and Lake Victoria to regain its ecological balance. The objective of increasing catches is not purely based on economic considerations, but also meant to contribute to food security as the population is increasing, particularly in the area bordering the lake.



Through aquafarming, artificial fish ponds, it was possible to increase fishery for Tilapia in Kenya, which lead to new employment and income opportunities. | Source: Mike Lusmore, flickr ©①③③.

This is where the TDC with Kenya, which was formalised in 2012, came in. German and Israeli experts provided joint consulting services on the subject of small-scale Nile perch breeding. The German partners provide their expertise mainly by offering vocational training, while the Israelis concentrate on efficient fish farming (fish food ingredients, the establishing and maintaining of fishponds, breeding methods). In addition, specialists from both countries organise trainings for fish farmers and multipliers on feed production, water quality monitoring and fish breeding. In this context, the Ramogi Institute of Advanced Technology in Kisumu is to be upgraded to an "Aquaculture Competency Center", involving the development of a standardised curriculum among other things. Subjects covered by this curriculum will also include organisational development in order to educate people about the

benefits of joining together in cooperatives. The purpose of networking among producers is to reduce their transport costs and to increase their negotiating power.²² There are also training and demonstration farms for fish farming in Kisumu, with which the project partners collaborate.

The fish farm project is divided into two phases. During the first phase, 8,000 fishermen were trained during the period from June 2012 to June 2014. The total budget was 2.3 million euros. Up to 1.3 million euros are available for the second phase, which is due to run until December 2016. The partners are GIZ, MASHAV and the Kenyan Ministry of Agriculture.²³ Initially, the local population greeted the project approach with little enthusiasm. However, as the TDC and the Kenyan economic promotion measures started to show results, acceptance grew. Fish farmers now operate over 40,000 newly established fishponds.

At the end of 2014, the TDC was expanded to include water treatment and management in Bungoma, Kakamega and Siaya. Improvement of the water quality of Lake Victoria is another potential objective of German-Israeli cooperation in the region. A project plan is currently being examined in collaboration with the KfW Development Bank, with the launch planned for 2016.

OUTLOOK: THE MULTI-FACETED NATURE OF COOPERATION FORMS THE BASIS FOR PRAGMATIC INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION IN THE FUTURE

The TDC format is a recent endeavor in the context of German-Israeli relations, and projects have only been in place for a few years so far. The feedback from the project partners indicates that all sides welcome the collaboration. Due to the different structures of the intermediary organisations and their links with the respective governments, the challenge is to find an agreement between the different actors as to who performs which tasks within the cooperation. This is reflected particularly in the differences between the way MASHAV is linked to the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the way the GIZ is linked to the BMZ and thereby the German government. Further challenges for German-Israeli

22 | Cf. BMZ, "Trilaterale Kooperation am Viktoriasee", <http://goo.gl/tmNYpZ> (accessed 29 Jan 2015).

23 | Besides the experts, there is a steering committee in place to oversee progress. Cf. IsraelAgri, "Israel and Germany Collaborate in a Fish Farming Project", 14 Aug 2014, <http://goo.gl/UMyhSO> (accessed 29 Jan 2015).

cooperation, as well as cooperation with third partners, lie in the different working cultures and, in some instances, also the large project scope, such as in the case of Ethiopia. In any case, Israel will strive for the confirmation of the cooperation and its expansion beyond existing project horizons. One important point to be made in this context is that it must be provided that local partners continue the projects independently and in a sustainable manner.

In times of limited funds, cooperation is the appropriate means to realise joint development efforts.

Trilateral – to Israel this means not restricting its cooperation exclusively to the German-Israeli relationship, but expanding its activities internationally in a pragmatic manner. In

times of limited funds and distributed competences as well as varying diplomatic relations with third countries, cooperation is the appropriate means to realise joint development efforts. Addressing the effects of climate change in collaboration with countries that are worst hit makes the order of the day. In that respect, development politics is not possible without the environmental core concept of sustainability. In this context it is worth highlighting that Germany and Israel engage in a bilateral climate project since November 2014. Strategies to adapt to climate change are particularly important for Sub-Saharan Africa. However, development cooperation must ask how it can find an approach that will include the issue of climate-warming emissions in agriculture in addition to adaptation efforts. Furthermore, we should jointly contribute to the discussion on development policy, both with respect to the manner of implementation and the scientific foundation, such as the translational sciences. The main question is: how do we proceed from scientific findings to good recommendations for political action and ultimately to implementation?

Trilateral development cooperation does not merely represent an “intrinsic end in itself”. The symbolic power of trilateral collaboration and its effectiveness in notable cooperation projects are of paramount significance to Israel as well as to all other involved actors.

“From aid to trade” is a further aspect that is not to be underestimated; it is not mentioned all that often, but that makes it all the more important. Cooperation offers starting points for sustainable development, potentially involving economic links with other countries; even if for the simple reason that this draws governments’ attention more strongly to those countries, which in turn encourages economic actors to take action.

As a democratic society, Israel occupies an isolated position in the Middle East. However, trilateral development cooperation in particular shows that Israel has good connections throughout the world. As an open and pluralist society, we are prepared to take on a global responsibility.

One disappointing circumstance remains: media reporting about Israel is still dominated by conflict rather than cooperation, however successful the implementation of cooperation projects may be. That said, the positive collaboration encourages further activities building on what has been achieved. Israel has a vast amount of specialist expertise in the areas of semi-arid agriculture and disaster preparedness and response. Both aspects result from Israel's special position politically, historically and geographically. These are the areas where we should further enhance and expand our cooperation.

START-UPS – A CONNECTING ELEMENT BETWEEN ISRAEL AND GERMANY

Eric Marx



Eric Marx is a Berlin-based journalist covering natural resource issues alongside the revival of Jewish life in communities across Europe. A monthly contributor to *Ethical Corporation* magazine, his writings often focus on the role of forward-thinking companies and their willingness to advance progressive business models.

BERLIN – A NEW START-UP HUB

The exchange takes place quite naturally. A woman stands up, introduces herself as Katka and says she's looking to recruit start-ups for Betahaus' hardware accelerator program. She's followed by Max, who has ideas for starting a dynamic travel guide business and wants to collaborate with a tech co-founder; another says she'd like to hire a software developer for a psychological profiling consultancy; a third is looking for freelance work marketing food supplements.

Jobs are found and project ideas worked out. A spirit of common purpose fills the air. The sense of opportunity is unmistakable. Such is the scene at a weekly breakfast event held at Betahaus, a co-working space in Berlin known as a platform for incubating entrepreneurial talent. Aside from the affordable office space and plentiful contacts, the big added-value in co-working – and the strength of Berlin in general – is this "very flat, horizontal ecosystem", says Betahaus cofounder Christoph Fahle. Obstacles to cooperation are very low. Rents are cheap and the diversity of talent an endless source of inspiration in the freedom to experiment and learn. Yet this is all changing. Things are set to go vertical, fast. Over the past three years the scene has professionalised considerably. Betahaus now hosts upwards of 50 events every week, with its accelerator program as just one example of the way in which it attempts to bring entrepreneurs together with business angels and venture capitalists.

Highly qualified and skilled people have arrived in large numbers. Drawn to the giants of the IT and telecommunications industry, such as Siemens and IBM, many also set out to form their own companies. Success stories abound. Prominent among them are

SoundCloud, a six-year-old audio-sharing web site, and Zalando, which was founded in 2008 and went through a fast development phase, raising upwards of 1.8 billion euros in 2013.



Co-working as a philosophy: Betahaus redefines the workplace – café and office in one place help ideas to emerge. Consequently, the company facilitates networking of the start-up scene in Berlin. | Source: Stefano Borghi, betahaus, flickr ©©©©.

There has been a surge in venture capital at funding levels once thought inconceivable. At the same time, the trend to accelerators (in essence, schools for start-ups) has been picked up by several corporates, including Allianz (Allianz Digital Accelerator), Axel Springer (Axel Springer Plug and Play), and Deutsche Telekom (hub:raum).

As a consequence, many now believe that Berlin has the chance to become Europe's leading start-up hub. Google executive chairman Eric Schmidt said as much when in June he ended a speech by congratulating Germany "for finally becoming a Start-up Nation". The occasion was the launch of Factory, Berlin's first major start-up hub, and so perhaps Mr. Schmidt could be forgiven for deploying excessive hyperbole (Google is one of the backers, having pledged one million euros to the project through its "Google for Entrepreneurs" program).

Analysts say it's the Digital Economy that plays the predominant role in Berlin, accounting for over 85 per cent of the start-ups. That's why global tech companies like Google and Mozilla and Facebook are here. At some point in 2015 Cisco will open a

technology hub in Berlin, plunking down 30 million U.S. dollars in investment money to launch what it refers to as “Internet of Everything Innovation Center”. City administrators say they now recognise the pivotal role of small, usually venture-funded companies in driving innovation and creating jobs. They acknowledge fierce global competition among cities to attract entrepreneurs and new businesses. Moreover, Mittelstand companies – accounting for 80 per cent of the German economy – typically refuse venture capital and are notoriously wary of digital innovation. Above all, legal frameworks, insurance provisions and tax incentive structures all have to be reconsidered at the federal level.

How, then, to really drive the momentum forward? More than 4,000 start-ups were launched in Berlin in 2014, and yet the reality is most will struggle and go out of business. The answers – some “obvious”, others “unlikely” – began to filter

A study by McKinsey, entitled “Berlin Gründet”, lays out a plan for Berlin to go beyond digital tech, into areas like biotechnology and urban technology.

up to the top roughly three years ago, after city administrators commissioned a ground-breaking study carried out by McKinsey consultancy firm. The strategy, entitled “Berlin Gründet”, lays out a plan for Berlin to go beyond digital tech, into areas like biotechnology and urban technology, where the city already has significant resources. Talent, infrastructure, capital, networks and public image are the five factors laid out, along with the need to attract more foreign entrepreneurs from countries like Israel.

Even “luddites” know of Israel’s status as a country famous for producing game-changing innovation. Given its small size, the success it’s had in launching fast-growing companies has been nothing short of miraculous. And yet, could it really be that the answer for Germany lies in partnering up with Israeli entrepreneurs? Perhaps there’s a win-win synergy for the two countries to explore – but what and how exactly might that be pulled off?

ISRAELI KNOW-HOW

Not all start-ups are launching web sites to sell clothing or promote mobile apps. Infarm is an Israeli company founded by Guy and Erez Galonska, two brothers who want nothing less than to revolutionise the urban food supply, something they’ve set out to accomplish from the ground floor of an industrial warehouse transformed into an urban farm in the heart of Berlin. That’s where

I find the brothers one afternoon, playing host to investors and an assorted group of government officials and business managers.

“Are you aware of the enormous crisis facing humanity?” Erez rhetorically asks the audience as he bounds on to the stage. Guy follows closely behind, his PowerPoint presentation intended to dramatise the difficulties of food security in a world that may soon be home to nine billion people. To feed them all will take new technological breakthroughs. By growing plants without soil, and through the use of artificial light and other advanced techniques, it will be possible, says Guy, by way of introducing Infarm’s business prospect — a foldable greenhouse kit that enables people to enjoy growing microgreens at home. “You can grow your own leafy greens all year round,” says Erez jumping in with a reassuring message aimed at convincing any skeptical onlookers. “We call it the micro-farm. In a future world of indoor farming, this would be the Mac book.”



Rethinking agriculture: The idea of farming inside buildings, as is being pursued by the Israeli start-up Infarm, is gaining ground in Berlin. | Source: © Infarm.

There’s plenty of doubt in the room. Can microgreens – young edible greens from various kinds of vegetables – really begin to feed the world? A definitive answer is beside the point. What matters is that the two brothers have chosen to come to Berlin to try to start their business here, and that those in attendance recognise and appreciate the decision. Among them is Dr. Cornelia

Yzer, the senator for economics, technology and research of the Federal State Berlin, a keynote speaker at an event aimed at promoting discussion of future German-Israeli cooperation. "More and more Israelis are discovering Berlin has the ideal conditions for start-ups," says Yzer, shortly after the Galonska brothers leave

The establishment of a Berlin Start-up Unit which now acts as a multilingual service agency for foreign entrepreneurs promotes the city as an up-and-coming start-up hub.

the stage. As the headline speaker it's her role to promote Berlin as an up-and-coming start-up hub. All the statistics are rosy: more than 4,000 start-ups launched in 2013 of which there are already 5,700 companies in the IT space; increased access to capital and seed funding, especially through a new 100 million euros fund managed by the IBB Berlin investment bank; the establishment of a Berlin Start-up Unit which now acts as a multilingual service agency for foreign entrepreneurs wishing to cut through the German bureaucracy; and a concerted effort by city administrators to look outside to cities like Tel Aviv, London and Silicon Valley.

How many of these new businesses are being founded by Israelis? Those statistics are hard to come by, though Hemdat Sagi, attaché for economics of the Israeli embassy in Berlin, points to a strong uptick in interest, a trend she links to the Berlin government's more aggressive promotional effort. "It's a process which started a few years ago when Berlin started to position itself as a start-up hub, and started to build platforms and programs to attract start-ups," said Sagi. She receives roughly 150 inquiries from Israeli entrepreneurs and companies each year. Many are in tech sectors offering mobility and telecommunications solutions, along with some involved with medical device applications and life sciences. "The greatest challenge is still to convince Israeli start-ups to approach the German market," said Sagi, "because their first inclination is to go to Silicon Valley, where they can find every multinational as well as higher levels of finance and contacts." Yet an even bigger challenge lies in being able to approach the German Mittelstand, which remains somewhat resistant to absorbing outside innovation. "Germany's start-up and investment scene are still in something of a development stage," Sagi continued. "They are increasingly open to innovation [...] but the culture of investment is more risk-averse. And so [German] investors would prefer to invest in start-ups that are based in Germany."

Beezeebee, an Israeli toy company focused on early childhood development, learned this lesson well. The company co-owned by Mali Baum and her husband, managed to enter the market prior

to their relocation, but now with the permanent move have developed relationships with mid-sized companies that include learning applications for the iPad. "We see Berlin as the New York of Europe in that it's bringing us lots of opportunities to be closer to our customers across Europe," says Baum.

Also speaking at the event is Shelly Hod Moyal. A founding partner of iAngels, a crowdfunding platform specialising in Israeli tech start-ups, Moyal says in the past Israel focused almost entirely on enterprise software and cyber security. Now, all of that is rapidly changing. "With the Internet of Everything, the ecosystem in Israel is diversifying across even more sectors," says Moyal, using a term coined by Cisco to refer to a new wave in hyper-connectivity that promises to usher in even more innovation. Business models are being upended and in such an environment it's crucial to understand how to adapt to the pace of innovation driving the market. That message is echoed by Wolfgang Hisserich, a Deutsche Telekom vice president responsible for heading up the company's global partnering unit. "Big corporates need to understand that innovation happens outside," says Hisserich. It's the strategy Deutsche Telekom is now actively pursuing, across the globe and particularly in Israel in fields varying from automotive location-based services to cyber security and big data analytics.

"The Internet of Everything" is a term coined by Cisco to refer to a new wave in hyper-connectivity that promises to usher in even more innovation.

Mickey Steiner, a former executive with SAP who now directs BETATEC (Berlin Tel Aviv Technology and Entrepreneurship Committee), a recently launched initiative aimed at developing the two countries' ICT sectors, the essential equation is as follows: "Israeli start-ups go to Germany as they see it as a prospective market, while large- and medium-sized German companies look to Israel for innovation". When asked to explain the legitimacy of such a two-way exchange he adds: "We feel we have a lot to gain from each other." Today, Intel Israel accounts for a fifth of the country's high-tech exports, employing some 8,000 people directly who, in turn, generate about 17,000 additional jobs. When Apple established its first presence outside the U.S., where did it turn? Steiner asks the audience. "Israel," he tells them. "The same for Microsoft and IBM."

The Israelis diligently laid the foundation of the high-tech boom by pouring money into elite universities and by creating a clever system to attract venture capital. That's also possible for Germany,

but for now, in the short term, Germany might best stay apace by aggressively scouting the Israeli market. Both Deutsche Telekom (hub:raum) and Axel Springer (Plug and Play) have incubators in Israel. Likewise, Israeli start-ups feature prominently in these companies' Berlin accelerators, thanks in large part to ongoing relationships stretching back for more than a decade.



The German Founders' and Entrepreneurs' Days are one of the most important fairs for start-ups in Germany. | Source: © André Wagenzik, Peperoni, deGUT.

Yet that two-way relationship only goes so far. What of the small German start-ups which are looking to scale up their ambitions? And what about the Mittelstand? As Yzer points out in her speech, Berlin now has plenty of accelerators and is even importing large shots of outside talent. There's plenty of opportunity for Israeli engineers looking to sign on into Berlin's powerful ICT industry. Still much more engagement is required. "We're all aware that after seed funding more is needed in terms of private international funding. That's where you can really make the impact," Yzer tells the audience. "We also have to encourage [German] start-ups to go international in their thinking – right from the beginning."

VENTURE CAPITAL PERSPECTIVE

Talk to venture capital (VC) investors and what emerges is a far more sanguine picture. "The fact is there's a big gap between the VC and start-up industries in Germany when compared to Israel," says Eran Davidson, a former President and CEO of Berlin-based Hasso Plattner Ventures who in early 2014 formed his own VC

fund. It's still the contacts and links to business partnerships that attracts Israelis, and not access to financial capital. Davidson worked for ten years as a venture capitalist in Israel and has seen both sides up close. He says the gap relates to fundraising and the ambition level of the founders. A new wave of smarter companies is emerging, and Davidson does credit Germany with seeding an ecosystem that seems to now be moving in the right direction. "The market is applauding, but time will tell."



Attractive through innovation: Major IT companies like Apple, Google etc. turn towards Israel. The country offers favorable conditions for venture capital and know-how. | Source: Fondation France Israël, flickr ©©©.

Over the past three years U.S. start-ups attracted roughly 64 billion euros in investments, while in Germany only two billion euros in venture capital made its way into young companies. This according to a new report by Ernst & Young, an accounting firm, which also notes an increase in fundraising by start-ups along with a large shift by big international VC funds coming into the country. Overall attitudes have improved with regards to Germany as a whole. Munich has a good track record with companies like Scout24 Group, Mytheresa and JouleX. Likewise, Hamburg and Düsseldorf have exhibited deft digital expertise in managing several mid-cap exits. Still, it's Berlin, with its ability to attract global talent that outshines the rest as a central hotspot for start-ups.

According to the report, e-commerce remains the central focus of German entrepreneurs, with fashion, home & living, travel & events and food services all lending themselves to fairly easy market entrance. Gaming is big, as are services based on online

or mobile platforms that allow for new modes of advertising and digital payment. Indeed, Berlin now has several high-profile entrepreneurial success stories: six standouts — SoundCloud, Volga, ResearchGate, Home 24, Rocket Internet and Zalando — have valuations in excess of a billion euros. Nevertheless, these kinds of high-growth firms are the exception.

“You have to have the best team in place, and you have to have enough money to scale up fast,” says Christian Nagel, a partner with Earlybird, one of the most active venture funds in the country. Nagel cites as an example the experience of My Taxi, a ride-sharing app which was fast to market in establishing its brand here in Germany. Yet when Uber, a San Francisco-based company, challenged it head-to-head, they clobbered the young German entrepreneurs. The city has managed to build

There’s an inflow of highly qualified and skilled people that’s creating a kind of “breeding ground” among global tech companies all now attracted to the Berlin ecosystem.

an exciting culture of entrepreneurial spirit, adds Nagel, fed in large part by a strong network of accelerators and incubators, as well as up-and-coming small- and medium-sized companies that benefit from close proximity to advanced research institutes. Likewise, there’s an inflow of highly qualified and skilled people that’s creating a kind of “breeding ground” among large global tech companies all now attracted to the Berlin ecosystem.

Enthusiasm is there aplenty but what’s lacking, says Davidson, is access to available scale-up capital and worldly managerial talent. “There are hundreds of companies here,” he says, “and yet they lack the managerial experience and the high ambitious approach, including the funding needed for later stages. “What we’re still missing,” he continues, “are people that know-how to bring technology to the market and make a business out of it. There are opportunities for investors like me, but we need to work in a different way, to push harder for higher achievements.”

THE FUTURE

Close observers say the German start-up scene began to really take off after the founding in 2007 of Rocket Internet, a Berlin-based incubator whose business model involves identifying successful internet ventures from other countries and replicating them in predominantly emerging markets. In late 2014, Rocket raised more than three billion euros in an initial public offering on the Frankfurt stock exchange that turned company founders — Oliver,

Alexander and Marc Samwer – instantly into three of the richest men in Germany.



Success Story made in Berlin: Rocket Internet has demonstrated entrepreneurial spirit – and so did Zalando or SoundCloud – and worked its way up to a market value of several million euros. | Source: Martin Loetzsch, flickr @📷📷.

“It was like a huge talent factory where people went in and got the methodology and know-how,” says Michael Franzkowiak, a former employee at Rocket who went on to found Contiamo, a two-year-old data analytics company which has its offices at hub:raum, the Deutsche Telekom technology accelerator. Franzkowiak, 30, says he’s thankful for the support he’s receiving at hub:raum. Very quickly he received a one million euros investment, along with access to prospective clients and all the trappings of a fully-stocked office space located in the heart of central Berlin. But in many ways his true loyalties lie with Rocket, where he established a network of international companies to which he now sells his service. “The culture has evolved around entrepreneurship, and the role models are Michael Brehm [of Zalando] and Oliver [Samwer],” says Franzkowiak, likening the pair to a home-grown version of the so called PayPal Mafia of Silicon Valley – a group of successful American entrepreneurs who all met at Stanford University before heading out to seed, found and sell a number of wildly successful global tech companies.

Few now question Rocket’s status as the biggest rock-star of the Berlin scene. The company has plans to launch ten more start-ups in 2015 and clearly there is no other company like it in Germany, if measured in terms of sheer ambition. Dubbed by some “the

world's largest incubator," it may very well be the case that Rocket and its progeny can help usher in a second wave of investment that helps propel the entire ecosystem forward. Indeed, many now believe the rush in by heavyweight international VCs is already happening.

German entrepreneurs have an idea and look for a platform or delivery channel, whereas in Israel many businesses are formed straight out of technical universities.

Yet if there's an Achilles heel in this coming wave of entrepreneurship, analysts say it may be in an over-reliance Germans have in launching start-ups focused too heavily

on the digital economy's consumer services side. The German entrepreneurs are business guys who have an idea and look for a platform or delivery channel, whereas in Israel many businesses are formed straight out of the technical universities. "They really are focused on marketing and design and usability, and not so much on deep technology," says Simon Schaefer, the founder of Factory, a new 16,000-square-meter accelerator whose tenants includes small start-ups working alongside global tech company leaders like Mozilla and Twitter, as well as local heroes SoundCloud and Wunderkinder. Having spent time living in Israel, Schaefer says he's seen both systems up close – and that it's time for a more comprehensive engagement aimed at tapping into Israel's deep technology pipeline.

"Many Israelis internationalize by going to the U.S. straight away," says Schaefer. "Germans do the same thing, but more and more are actually now looking to what is closer in proximity. This needs to continue," says Schaefer, pointing to the rise of a single EU digital market as a necessary precondition for further incentivising this trend. In the absence of such an overarching framework, it will fall upon risk-taking entrepreneurs to lead the way. Many are doing just that, and others will surely follow, says Eran Eloni, CEO of LeanCiti, a two-year-old company focused on big data visualisation.

At first there were setbacks. "We thought we could raise some capital here," says Eloni, for whom LeanCiti is his fifth start-up. "In Israel it's very easy to find money for a second round of seed investments. We thought we could get more money in Germany, bigger money, but we did not succeed," says Eloni of meetings he had with German corporate VCs who politely declined to provide any capital finance. But LeanCiti did have success in readying its products for entry into the European market. Eloni found partners in Germany and gives a lot of credit to local Berlin administrators

who helped make introductions to German companies. "If I could create a start-up entrepreneur that has German and Israeli DNA, it would be the perfect entrepreneur," says Eloni. "Because Israelis are doing things really fast. Everything is burning. We don't have time; we're looking for the exit but, in a sense, we also lack the development strategy, the long-term thinking and planning. "This is something the Germans could bring in," he adds. "That's where the synergy lies."

“WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN 50 YEARS’ TIME?”

OUTLOOK ON THE FACTORS INFLUENCING THE
DEVELOPMENT OF GERMAN-ISRAELI RELATIONS

Michael Borchard



Dr. Michael Borchard is Head of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung's office in Israel.

INTRODUCTION

“Where do you see yourself in five years’ time?” This innocuous standard question from any job interview held in Germany provokes either great hilarity or an uncomprehending shake of the head in Israel. To citizens of that country who grow up and live with a totally different experience of threat than people in most European countries thinking ahead significantly beyond the present and contemplating the future is an incomprehensible exercise. Who can say what the coming years will bring when you live in an environment characterised by disintegrating states, asymmetrical situations of threat, and neighbouring countries that are not exactly friendly towards you?

Thousands of years of the Jewish people consistently being threatened, persecuted and disappointed, repeatedly displaced and expelled, the development of an unbroken survival instinct, the feeling of ultimately having to rely on oneself – all this has left its mark on the collective culture and memory of the Jewish people and therefore also of the Jewish state, summarised in the saying “God helps those who help themselves”. As understandable as this stance may be, having since developed into Israel's national “culture”, it does create an immediate dilemma. Particularly for a country under such fundamental threat, sustainable alliance-forming, sound diplomacy, visionary and forward-looking policies are essential for creating security and stability. Under these circumstances, excellent bilateral relations devised to stand the test of time are of utmost importance.

German-Israeli relations in particular are a case in point, illustrating what long-term, visionary policies can achieve. The picture of David Ben-Gurion and Konrad Adenauer conversing in the New York Waldorf Astoria in an evident spirit of cordiality, which has since developed into a symbol of German-Israeli relations, precisely reflects this farsightedness and the will to provide reliable partners to Israel in an insecure situation where its very existence is threatened. For David Ben-Gurion, it also meant sitting down at the same table with individuals from a people that had perpetrated the most heinous crimes against the Jews.



Federal Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion met personally for the first time in March 1960 in New York. Among other topics, they spoke about economic assistance for Israel. | Source: Benno Wundshammer, Bundesregierung, Bundesarchiv B 145-Bild-00009354.

This meeting of two extraordinary personalities on the 35th floor of the old-established hotel had been preceded by tough negotiations about “reparations” (or “Wiedergutmachung” in German). Economic relations and military co-operation between Israel and the Federal Republic of Germany increasingly intensified over the following years. Just 20 years after the end of National Socialist rule and the horrors of the systematic murder of the European Jews and some five years after the memorable meeting of the two statesmen, the then Chancellor Ludwig Erhard and then Israeli Prime Minister Levi Eshkol signed an agreement on the exchange of ambassadors. While it is the case that the failure to establish relations earlier had been mainly due to obstruction on the part of Germany, this political step remains a remarkable development in foreign affairs, worthy of being referred to by a term

To be precise, we should speak of at least two miracles: The fact that the relationship was established just two decades after the end of the Shoah, and the astonishing development of the relations up to the present day.

that should be used very rarely in the realm of politics: a miracle. To be precise, we should speak not only of one but of at least two miracles: The first miracle is the fact that the relationship was established just two decades after the end of the Shoah. The second

miracle is the astonishing development of the relations up to the present day. Even though there were repeated upsets and setbacks such as the traumatic experience of the hostage-taking at the Olympic Games in Munich in 1972, the disappointment about deliveries of arms to Egypt and subsequently to Saudi-Arabia and the German government's growing disapproval of the continued construction of settlements, there are few other relationships that have developed in the same consistently positive manner over decades, relatively unaffected by changes in political leadership on both sides.

A telling example which can hardly be exceeded in terms of its positive impact but has attracted very little public attention in the two countries is an Agreement on Consular Assistance negotiated between Germany and Israel in 2012.¹ It calls for Germany's provision of assistance to Israeli citizens in countries where the latter have no consular representation. Germany of all countries acting as a protector to Israelis around the world in situations where people frequently encounter danger to life and limb – that is a remarkable indicator of the quality of German-Israeli relations.

But to what extent does this provide a solid foundation for the future? In which direction will German-Israeli relations develop over the next few decades? When asked to comment on that question, political scientists are quite likely to refuse to look into the crystal ball, stating that there is insufficient evidence to satisfy scientific criteria. Nevertheless, after 50 years of good, and these days even excellent relations, one has to pose the question as to which conclusions can be drawn from an examination of the situation from both a historical and a present-day perspective. That is precisely what this article is intended to do by focusing on six "I"s, matching the beginning of Israel's country name.

1 | Cf. Yoav Sapir, "Deutschland als Botschafter Israels. Das Konsularabkommen zwischen Jerusalem und Berlin ist ein großes historisches Symbol", *Jüdische Allgemeine Zeitung*, 21 Feb 2013, <http://juedische-allgemeine.de/article/view/id/15277> (accessed 9 Feb 2015).

BURDEN OF HISTORY OR COMMON INTERESTS?

The first "I" stands for interests, more precisely "common interests". Can common interests, which are at the center of almost all diplomatic relations, also underpin German-Israeli cooperation? There will always remain a special aspect to the German-Israeli relationship, due to the tragic constant of historical guilt and responsibility. The Israeli author David Grossman expressed it very clearly at a recent event organised by political foundations in honour of the 75th anniversary of Federal President Joachim Gauck: "However good and extensive these relations may be today, they will always remain difficult, emotive and traumatic. There is not and cannot be forgiveness for this horrific chapter of German history; nor can there be healing. Wherever Jews and Germans come together, the wound of the Shoah will forever remain open."²

Amos Oz protested equally vehemently against the description of the German-Israeli relationship as "normal" back in 2005. "A normal relationship can exist between Norway and New Zealand or between Uruguay and Sri Lanka. There has been an ambivalent relationship between Germany and the Jewish people for over two centuries, an intense, deep and damaged, complicated and multifaceted relationship. Not a normal relationship. And that will continue to apply to the relationship in the future."³

These views are not only held by Israel's intellectual elite but are still widely shared by the population. The findings of an unprecedented survey conducted by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, in which Israelis and Palestinians were questioned about their opinions on Germany and the Germans, show that when asked the open question as to what came to their mind first when thinking of Germany, the great majority of them still immediately thought of National Socialism and the Holocaust.⁴

2 | David Grossman, "Israel ist kein Ort der Freiheit", *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 30 Jan 2015.

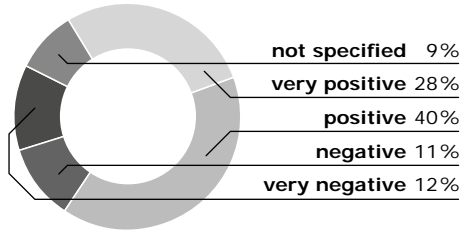
3 | Amos Oz, *Israel und Deutschland*, Frankfurt a.M., 2005, p. 7.

4 | Cf. Michael Borchard/Hans Maria Hejñ, "The Holy Land and the Germans – Measuring attitudes of Israelis and Palestinians towards Germany and the Germans", KAS Study, Jerusalem, 2015, p. 6.

Fig. 1

How Israelis view Germany

Do you have a positive or a negative opinion of Germany?



Source: Borchard/Heyn, n. 4, p. 3.

For this reason, the pillar of Germany's historical responsibility for Israel's existence will always play a major role within the edifice of relations between the two countries. The question is, however, whether the stability of this edifice can endure in the long run if it is not complemented by a second pillar, namely that of mutual fascination, close cooperation and collaboration.

The results of the KAS survey – at least those on the Israeli side – indicate that this is a resilient edifice⁵: While a majority of respondents, namely 42 per cent, still believe that the German-Israeli relationship rests more strongly on a historical basis than on common interests, the difference does not seem that significant. A remarkable 33 per cent think, however, that common interests have come to serve as the basis of the relationship, and this figure is all the more remarkable when you consider that 19 per cent of Israelis maintain that both common interests and history play an important role.

INNOVATION AS A BASIS FOR THE FUTURE

One of the most promising areas where these common interests will come into play is that of the second "I": "innovation". Once again, a differentiated and rather surprising picture emerges. While living in a start-up country themselves, which is justifiably proud of its high level of innovation, Germany is recognized by Israelis as an innovative country. For 80 per cent of the respondents, innovation was at the top of the list of all positive characteristics attributed to Germans. While many Germans look admirably towards Israel when it comes to its start-up scene, the same phenomenon exists in Israel the other way around.

5 | Cf. *ibid.*

The area of research and innovation, in which there are already numerous joint activities taking place, can provide one of the decisive starting points for a further deepening of bilateral cooperation between Germany and Israel. The current hype about Berlin is fuelled to a large extent by the increasing enthusiasm of the Israeli start-up scene for the good working conditions in Berlin, for high wages and highly skilled employees, for low prices and a good quality of life. The Berlin start-up scene shows a similar enthusiasm for Tel Aviv, for the willingness to take risks, for intelligent support programs, for extraordinary creativity, for a professionalism many of the new start-up entrepreneurs brought back from their time in the army.

It may be premature to speak of a “new core” in the bilateral cooperation. But in the same way as cooperation between Germany and Israel in the area of science and technology paved the way for diplomatic relations, subsequently developing into more than a mere alliance based on expedience and still extraordinarily prolific compared to other areas of interaction, this new field of mutual enthusiasm can also show the way far beyond the confines of economic interests.

While the discussions revolving around the so-called Milky protest confirmed the image of the innovative and attractive city of Berlin, they also brought up the painful past.⁶ During this episode in the autumn of 2014, an Israeli who had moved to Berlin with his family due to the good job opportunities mentioned on his Facebook page that a chocolate pudding that is hugely popular in Israel, where it is sold under the affectionate brand name “Milky”, costs three times as much in his home country as in Berlin. This social media posting may have ended up going totally unnoticed like many others if the young father had not also invited other Israeli families to make Aliyah to Berlin. The choice of this term, which specifically denotes the immigration of Jews from all parts of the world to Israel, represented a true provocation, which inevitably led to fierce reactions. In the media, the emotional debate focused on the key question of whether it is acceptable for Israelis to not only betray the Jewish dream of a nation state for a cheaper chocolate pudding but, to rub salt into the wound, also urge people to emigrate to the very place where the systematic mass murder of European Jews originated? Besides many positive statements on life in Germany, this episode also brought to light the significant extent of the prevailing “fundamental scepticism”.

6 | Cf. *ibid.*, p. 4.



In autumn 2014, a receipt that was posted on Facebook triggered a series of protests in Israel. Objects of criticism were the costs of living that are higher than in Berlin. | Source: Naor Narkis, Olim-el-Berlin via Facebook.

NEW OR OLD ANTI-SEMITISM – A PRESENT DANGER?

The third “I” therefore stands for “risk of infection”. To what extent is Germany immune from anti-Semitic tendencies today and, most importantly, will it be so in the future? In the focus groups, recorded group discussions conducted according to a scientific process, which the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung organised in connection with its survey to research the opinions of Israelis towards Germany, many Israelis provided astonishing assessments which can, of course, not be considered representative.⁷ Well before the horrifying attacks on the *Charlie Hebdo* offices and the kosher supermarket in Paris, Germany received markedly more positive assessments than France. The participants confirmed that they were aware of anti-Semitic tendencies in Germany, which were not to be trivialised, but that there was no comparison to the situation in the neighbouring country, where the problem was being swept under the carpet.

While this change in perspective is remarkable, one cannot fail to realise that decisive action to combat anti-Semitism in Germany and Europe will remain a vital condition for sustainable relations between Germany and Israel – the ultimate litmus test, if you

7 | Mitchell Barak, “Israeli Attitudes Towards Germany, KAS Israel Focus Groups, Final Analysis and Report”, Jerusalem, 2014, unpublished manuscript, p. 8.

will. The anti-Semitic demonstrations in the summer of 2014 in response to Operation Protective Edge in the Gaza Strip, with its ominous mix of Islamists, right and left-wing extremists as well as populists, rang the alarm bells. The tone employed in the various news forums, on websites and in social networks also sharpened to a worrying degree in the course of last year's developments.

Absurdly but not infrequently – as if it was an acceptable “excuse” – the anti-Semitism that is re-emerging in Germany like everywhere else in Europe is being “explained” by the policy Israel pursues in the Middle East conflict, which has supposedly elicited the negative stance towards Israel and the Jews in the first place, combined with the extremely simplistic “kitchen sink psychology” idea that victims too can become perpetrators. Such ominous words ultimately go back to the classic stereotypes and vilifications which put the blame for their fate on the victims of exclusion themselves.

Anti-Semitism is often being “explained” by the policy Israel pursues in the Middle East conflict combined with the extremely simplistic “kitchen sink psychology” idea that victims too can become perpetrators.

Anti-Semitism must be branded a violation of human dignity and fought against as such. By the same token, it must, of course, be possible to express criticism in Israeli policies without immediately being classed as anti-Semitic; this statement must, however, be seen in the context of a valid qualification voiced by Henryk M. Broder in his usual pointed manner, namely that anti-Semitism frequently begins when the sense of justice underlying the assessment of a situation is directed exclusively against Jews and people are not prepared to condemn human rights violations in other countries with the same vehemence as they do in the case of Israel. Put simply: “An anti-Semite is a person who condemns Jews for something for which he does not condemn non-Jews.”⁸

The new study of the Bertelsmann Stiftung gives a slightly more differentiated description: Criticism of Israel becomes problematic “when Jews are assigned collective responsibility and when the distinction between Jews in general and the Israeli government is blurred”.⁹ However gratifying the fact that a large majority, namely two thirds of Germans, rejects the statement “The policies of the Israeli government make me less sympathetic towards

8 | Henryk M. Broder, “Antisemitismus heute – Im Gespräch mit Henryk M. Broder”, *MDR FIGARO*, 30 Jul 2014, <http://mdr.de/mdr-figaro/journal/broder106.html> (accessed 9 Feb 2015).

9 | Steffen Hagemann/Roby Nathanson, *Germany and Israel Today. United by the Past, Divided by the Present?*, Gütersloh, 2015, p. 36.

Jews”, the more worrying is the fact that as many as a third of Germans harbour some anti-Jewish prejudice.¹⁰

The German-Israeli historian Dan Diner made an intelligent statement, which he called a “Gordian solution”, long before the current developments, which can serve as the guiding principle for German-Israeli relations and clearly spells out the need for action, particularly on the German side: “Namely on the one hand, to fight anti-Semitism as though there were no Arab-Jewish, no Israeli-Palestinian conflicts; and on the other hand, to do everything to find a solution to that conflict that is equitable for both sides – as though there was no anti-Semitism.”¹¹

Ultimately, this also shows that you must not succumb to the illusion that the new anti-Semitism, which is above all linked to criticism in Israel’s policies that frequently goes far beyond what is justified in this context, is anything other and less dangerous than the old anti-Semitism. The policy advisor Roland Freudenstein from the Winfried Martens Center in Brussels has compared these two “manifestations” of anti-Semitism very fittingly to a car with a hybrid engine.¹² The new anti-Semitism, which is frequently linked to the criticism of Israel, is the electric motor, which only propels the car across short distances. But if the vehicle needs to cover large distances and travel at high speed, it must ultimately fall back on the traditional, conventionally driven machine. This classic engine is the “old anti-Semitism” directed against the Jewish people. And this is the anti-Semitism that needs to be fought against, entirely disconnected from the discussion about the Middle East conflict.

STABLE FOUNDATION BASED ON TRUST

The focus group surveys conducted by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in Israel have repeatedly illustrated that underneath the strengthening protective layer of trust, which has grown over the historical scars, there is still some distrust acting as a source of infection.¹³

10 | Cf. *ibid.*

11 | Quoted from: Martin Kloke, “40 Jahre deutsch-israelische Beziehungen”, <http://bpb.de/izpb/25044/40-jahre-deutsch-israelische-beziehungen?p=all> (accessed 9 Feb 2015).

12 | Cf. Roland Freudenstein, “Europe’s New Anti-Semitism”, Keynote speech for B’nai B’rith Europe, Brussels, 6 May 2012, <http://bnaibritheurope.org/bbeurope/news/news-of-bnai-brith/220-roland-freudenstein-complete-speech-for-bbe> (accessed 9 Feb 2015).

13 | See Barak, n. 7, p. 4.

At the same time, the focus groups and the representative survey have also revealed how resilient this relationship has become as well as confirming the extent of the trust

80 per cent of Israelis view Germany as an important partner for Israel these days, 57 per cent of Israelis believe that their country can rely totally on the Germans.

placed in Germany despite the shocks of the last few months. It is remarkable that 80 per cent of Israelis view Germany as an important partner for Israel these days, that 57 per cent of Israelis believe that their country can rely totally on the Germans, that Germany is the most popular of all European nations in Israel.¹⁴ This does, however, immediately pose the question – leading to the fourth “I”, the “involvement” – as to whether and to what extent Germany can play a truly active role in resolving the Middle East conflict?


This emerging trust has become condensed into a term which could hardly be any more astonishing in view of the backdrop of the Shoah, that of the “honest broker”. A clear majority of Israelis, 54 per cent, agree with the statement that Germany can act as an “honest broker” between Israel and the Palestinians in the Middle East conflict, while only 32 per cent disagree. “The importance of this can hardly be overestimated considering that the words ‘honest broker’ ultimately reflect the opinion that Germany can be totally trusted and that German history should no longer mean that the German government has to limit its actions in seeking a resolution to the conflict.”¹⁵

According to one remarkable finding from the KAS survey, both “sides” of the conflict, Israelis and Palestinians, expect and explicitly approve of a stronger involvement on the part of Germany in the Middle East conflict. The fact that the German government and the German Chancellor have repeatedly voiced their opinion on the construction of settlements very clearly and described it as a major obstacle on the road to a sustainable peace does not affect the positive stance towards Germany. In the same way as there is understanding on the Palestinian side for the special relationship between Israel and Germany – one of the most surprising findings of the most recent KAS survey –, there are also indications of an understanding on the Israeli side for Germany maintaining close and trusting relations with the Palestinian Authority.

14 | Cf. here and below: Borchard/Heÿn, n. 4, p. 6.

15 | Ibid.



For Chancellor Angela Merkel the existence of Israel is part of the German reason of state. She emphasised this repeatedly during meetings with Israeli politicians, such as here with Benjamin Netanyahu (m.) and Ehud Barak (l.). | Source: Moshe Milner, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, flickr 

This hope of Germany taking on a more active role – no doubt linked directly to the unfulfilled expectations placed on the current U.S. administration – is both a compliment and a heavy burden. When both sides expect greater activity in such a multi-faceted complex conflict, it is a little reminiscent of a tightrope walker who not only has to cross the Niagara Falls in an incredibly courageous and spectacular act and arrive safely on the other side but simultaneously accept criticism for not performing a few tricks high up on the wire at the same time. Added to this is the time pressure on this tightrope walker, as hopes for the creation of a two-state solution are diminishing rapidly on both sides, and it is uncertain how long the window of opportunity for this solution will remain open. The heaviest burden, however, this tightrope walker has to carry is the unwillingness on the part of huge parts of the German public to contemplate taking forceful action, including military options, not only in the Middle East conflict but in any conflict.

One of the key reasons for the enormous trust Germany enjoys in Israel is the German government's decisive support for Israel's right to exist. When closely examining the scepticism with which the wider public views the Israeli government and Israel's actions in the conflict, one must not ignore the question as to how far

German society would be prepared to go if the idea that Israel's existence is part of Germany's national interest was put to the test. In this context, Shimon Stein speaks of two monologues, which he thinks are based on different collective and historical experiences: "The overriding rule for the Germans is 'War – never again', while the idea foremost in Israelis' minds is 'Defenceless – never again'".¹⁶

ISRAEL FROM MARS – EUROPE FROM VENUS?

The famous statement by Donald Rumsfeld that Europeans were from Venus and Americans had more in common with Mars can also be applied to the threesome of Israel-Europe-Germany.¹⁷ While people in Germany have at times spoken too thoughtlessly about democratic deficiencies in Israel without themselves being subject to an immediate threat to their existence, in Israel, any friendly reminder of the universal validity of human rights and human dignity is at times fended off too quickly as unjustified criticism, citing precisely this immediate threat.

Staying within the context of ancient mythology: the union of Mars and Venus produced Cupid, the god of harmony. In concrete terms with specific application to politics: maybe Israel and Germany will need to venture into an entirely new field of bilateral exchange in the future. There are good reasons for Germany to learn lessons from Israel in terms of hard power, for instance where the awareness of the wider public about present terrorist threats is concerned, or the operational readiness of the different "services" and many other areas. On the other hand, there are also good reasons for Israel to learn from Germany in terms of soft power, particularly where public diplomacy is concerned. This includes the ability of not only acting head-on and offensively towards institutions such as the European Union and the United Nations but also taking measures behind the scenes, strategically and with assistance from friends and advocates, to promote the country's interests to optimum effect. The latter requires above all appropriate diplomatic and interdisciplinary education. Apart from a very small number of exceptions such as the IDC in Herzliya,

16 | Shimon Stein/Mordechay Lewy, "Von Einzigartigkeit über Normalität zu Staatsräson: 50 Jahre diplomatische Beziehungen – Essay", *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte (APuZ)*, No. 6/2015, 2 Feb 2015, <http://bpb.de/apuz/199891> (accessed 10 Apr 2015).

17 | Cf. Rudolf von Thadden/Alexandre Escudier (eds.), *Amerika und Europa A Mars und Venus? Das Bild Amerikas in Europa*, Berlin, 2004.

there are no institutions in Israel for educating the internationally experienced elites of the future outside the confines of the army. In both countries' interests, Germany and Israel would be well advised to cooperate even more closely in this area.

GERMANY'S INTERNATIONAL ROLE – A PARADIGM SHIFT?

This brings us to the fifth "I", Germany's "international role". 71 per cent of Israelis consider Germany's influence in the world to be positive, 37 per cent even very positive.¹⁸ In the aftermath of the war, it was considered prudent in Germany for a long time to weigh up every step taken in foreign affairs with great care, particularly against the backdrop of the country's historical responsibility. Historian Heinrich August Winkler views this constant reference back to the Holocaust in Germany's international activities as, in fact, morally questionable. In a remarkable speech held at the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP) in 2013¹⁹ he stressed that the admonition that Germany would be well advised to generally show restraint in the international arena because of the cataclysmic historical experiences would, if taken to extremes, result in granting Germany a "right to look the other way" because of its past. In Winkler's eyes, the Holocaust would then ultimately result in the "unquestioning acceptance of ethnic cleansing and genocide", which would itself be totally absurd. Winkler therefore pleaded for "realism informed by normative enlightenment"²⁰ in the debate about human rights in foreign affairs.

There are indications that there may, in fact, be something akin to a gentle, very gradual paradigm shift beginning to take place in the international debate over Germany's role in the world, at least among elites. The speech the German Federal President gave at the 50th Munich Security Conference a year ago, in which he called for Germany to play a significantly more active role, was remarkable in that the great clarity with which the President spoke did not produce the usual reflexes, which politically focused speeches given by the Head of State in Germany tend to generate in political circles.²¹

18 | Cf. Borchard/Heÿn, n. 4, p. 7

19 | Cf. Hans Monath, "Ortstermin. Realismus und moralisches Gebot", *Der Tagesspiegel*, 19 Jun 2013, <http://tagesspiegel.de/politik/ortstermin-realismus-und-moralisches-gebot/8370920.html> (accessed 9 Feb 2015).

20 | Ibid.

21 | Cf. Joachim Gauck, "Germany's role in the world: Reflections on responsibility, norms and alliances", 31 Jan 2014, <http://bundespraesident.de/SharedDocs/Reden/EN/JoachimGauck/Reden/2014/140131-Munich-Security-Conference.html> (accessed 9 Feb 2015).

It was surprising to see the liberating effect this speech had on many and the number of positive reactions it evoked.



At the Munich Security Conference 2014, Federal President Gauck called on Germany to take a more active role in the international arena. | Source: © Guido Bergmann/Bundesregierung, picture alliance/dpa.

This view from within the country is complemented by an external perspective, which is also in favour of Germany taking on a more active role in efforts to resolve international and inner-European conflicts. While the former Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski called for German leadership in the euro crisis during his speech at the DGAP in 2011 rather than referring to its role in international politics generally, his statement is surely also still relevant in a security policy context: "I will probably be the first Polish foreign minister in history to say so, but here it is: I fear German power less than I am beginning to fear German inactivity."²²

Sikorski's statement did not go unnoticed in Israel. Israelis would rather fear German inactivity if this were to jeopardise a chapter of German-Israeli relations whose significance to Israel is not to be underestimated. The outstanding popularity of the German Chancellor, which is currently at close to 70 per cent, rose by as much as 15 percentage points over the last six years. This remarkable increase may be due to the fact that one true engine driving

22 | Radoslaw Sikorski, "Am Rande des Abgrunds muss Deutschland führen", *Die Welt*, 29 Nov 2011, <http://welt.de/debatte/kommentare/article13741449/Am-Rande-des-Abgrunds-muss-Deutschland-fuehren.html> (accessed 9 Feb 2015).

Israeli-German relations, which has been in existence since the days of the secret meetings between Defence Minister Franz-Josef Strauß and Shimon Peres, then Director-General of the Israeli Ministry of Defence, has had a "turbo" fitted to it: military cooperation between the two countries, which has intensified further in recent years.²³ The role of the Israeli Army is a key element of the country's national identity,²⁴ acting as one of the main points of reference of all societal development, which the following example illustrates: In hardly any other country besides Israel will soldiers being killed evoke greater media attention among the general public than civilian victims; the opposite is usually the case.

A number of Israeli diplomats have been concerned for some time that the relationship will increasingly develop in an asymmetrical manner.

Markus Kaim is right when he says that support for this military cooperation needs to be generated within society in order to avoid an increasing resistance in domestic politics.²⁵ A

number of Israeli diplomats have been concerned, however not outspoken, for some time that the relationship will increasingly develop in an asymmetrical manner. Shimon Stein and Mordechai Lewy have voiced this concern as follows: "As a leading member of the European Union, Germany will remain a significant and strategic partner for Israel's future. But will Israel also be of significance to Germany? It is by no means inevitable that what has grown over the past five decades will continue to develop equally positively."²⁶

YOUNG GENERATIONS – SIMILAR OR INCOMPATIBLE?

Ultimately, the crucial question is whether Israel's liking for Germany, to phrase it colloquially, will thrive in the right place and whether the positive dynamics will persist without massive political intervention and without a clear strategy. Maybe we are getting the wrong picture due to the hype about Berlin, namely one of two generations who are similar share the same interests and have the same outlook. This is a somewhat idealised view because

23 | Cf. Marcel Serr, "Zur Geschichte der deutsch-israelischen Rüstungs-koooperation", *APuZ*, No. 6/2015, 2 Feb 2015, <http://bpb.de/apuz/199900> (accessed 10 Apr 2015).

24 | Cf. Evelyn Gaiser, "The Relationship Between the Military and Society in Israel. The Entire Nation Is an Army, the Entire Country the Front Line", *KAS International Reports*, Aug 2014, http://kas.de/wf/doc/kas_38621-544-2-30.pdf (accessed 19 Feb 2015).

25 | Cf. Markus Kaim, "Israels Sicherheit als deutsche Staatsräson: Was bedeutet das konkret?", *APuZ*, No. 6/2015, 2 Feb 2015, <http://bpb.de/apuz/199894> (accessed 10 Apr 2015).

26 | Stein/Lewy, n. 16, p. 8.

cultural differences definitely exist, a fact that leads us to the sixth and last “I”, the danger of “incompatibility”. While a rather cheerful and relaxed patriotism has developed in Germany and the positive identification with one’s home country has increased noticeably, and not only since the days of the “summer miracle” of the 2006 World Cup with its welcoming and cheerful spirit, the trends in the two countries are heading in opposite directions and therefore leading straight towards alienation. In Israel, national pride is strongly embedded in people’s psyche, and the trend is rising, especially among the young generation. “Germany,” says Middle East expert Sylke Tempel, “is post-militarist, post-nationalist and post-religious. Israel is and can be none of those.”²⁷



Representants of the Jewish Agency visit Jewish Communities in Germany. It is important for the future that young generations are acknowledging the common ground of their cultures. | Source: Jewish Agency for Israel, flickr ©ⓂⓂ.

One of the findings emerging very clearly from the more recent surveys concerns the fact that particularly among the younger Israeli generation the proportion of those who are becoming more religious and more nationalistic or who are ultraorthodox is on the increase, not least among women, which gives cause for concern with respect to the sustainability of the relationship between the two countries. This also correlates closely with people’s image of Germany, a fact that was reflected particularly clearly in the KAS

27 | Sylke Tempel, “Deutsche Israelbilder – Essay”, *APuZ*, No. 6/2015, 2 Feb 2015, <http://bpb.de/apuz/199898> (accessed 10 Apr 2015).

survey. The younger and the more religious the respondents are, the more likely they are to have a critical view of Germany.²⁸

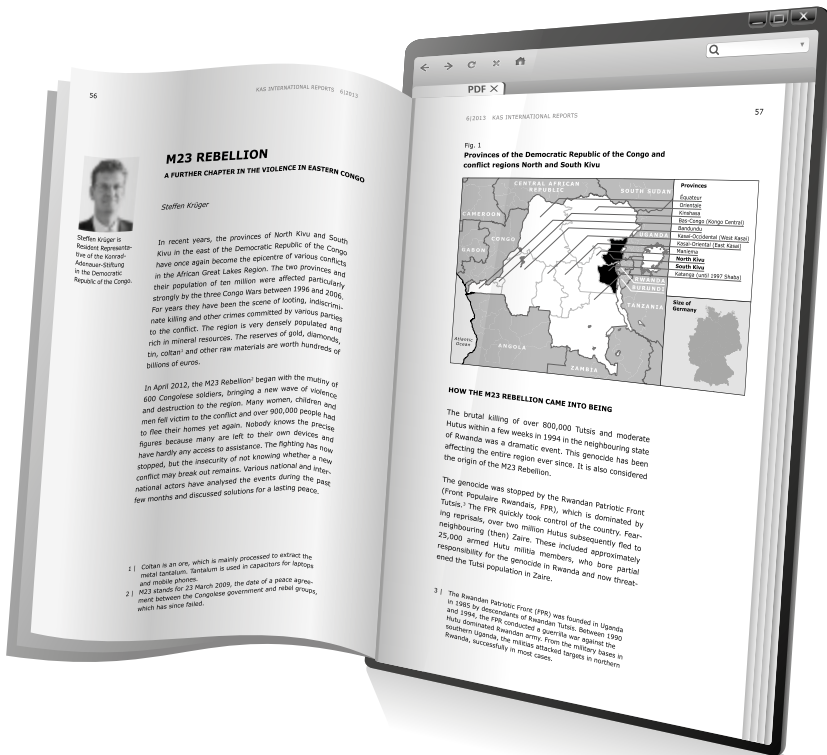
Imagine the following question being put to a candidate in a fictitious job interview between Israel and Germany today: "What do you imagine the next 50 years to be like?" This can only elicit a positive answer if greater efforts are made on both sides to replicate the good relationship existing at the level of the political elites more effectively at the grass roots level of civil society.

There is no easy way to overcome the different perceptions and cultures, but establishing a new culture of mindfulness would go quite some way. For Germany, this means engaging with Israel in new ways, finally escaping the repetitive newsreel of the conflict at least to some extent and trying to obtain a more differentiated picture of Israel, both in terms of its complexity and its attraction. For Israel, this means gaining a clearer perception of the different cultural worlds and performing its lobbying activities in Germany in a more strategic and sensitive manner, so that its message will reach the target audience and give it a better understanding of the reality of life in Israel. Both require a quality which David Ben-Gurion and Konrad Adenauer brought to their relationship to complement the politics of interest: empathy. And as banal as it may sound, this empathy will not develop without encounters, without civil society "ambassadors". Coming generations will judge this anniversary year by the extent to which these encounters and genuine dialogue will have been given adequate space.

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Konrad
Adenauer
Stiftung

Imprint

ISSN 0177-7521
Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e. V.
Volume 31

Klingelhöferstraße 23
D-10785 Berlin
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Subscriptions:

Annual subscription rate is € 50 plus postage. Single issues € 5. There is a special discount for school attendees and students. Orders: address as above.

Account Details:

Commerzbank Bonn
IBAN: DE43 3804 0007 0103 3331 00
BIC: COBADEFFXXX

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Translation: RedKeyTranslations, Hanover

Typesetting: racken GmbH, Berlin

Cover design: SWITSCH KommunikationsDesign, Cologne, using photos by © Stuelpner/pixelio.de and © inga dpunkt/photocase.de



This publication is carbon-neutral, printed using vegetable-oil-based ink on chlorine-free bleached paper from 100% recycled post-consumer waste fibre that has been awarded the EU Eco-label (FR/011/003).



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