

***The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual KAS-BGU Round:  
Reflecting on 50 Years of European Integration  
30 April - 1 May 2007, Jerusalem***

**REPORT**

The Konrad Adenauer Foundation, the Centre for the Study of European Politics and Society at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in cooperation with Bar-Ilan University, the European Commission's Delegation to Israel and the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs held on **30 April - 1 May 2007** an international workshop entitled "*The 2nd Annual KAS-BGU Round: Reflecting on 50 Years of European Integration*".

The workshop provided an opportunity to reflect on the evolution of European integration since the Treaty of Rome was signed and on the dynamics that have underpinned this evolution. It brought together scholars and practitioners from across the EU in a process of reflection that ran through the conference and provided perspectives from a range of disciplines on how the EU and its policies have evolved.

**30/4/2007 - Day I**

**Keynote Addresses**

***Prof. Dr. Georg Milbradt, Premier (Ministerpräsident) of Free State of Saxony***

- The fact that we are having a discussion in Israel about the last 50 years of European Integration is a sign of the great development which has taken place during these 50 years, which included both positive and negative processes.
- Israel and Germany share responsibility and security for a process which aims to lead to less tension and to peace in the Middle East.
- The importance of this is seen in Germany also as a response to the growing globalization of trade and economy.
- The European culture is Western-Judeo-Christian - the emphasis is on the Latin and western traditions. As time has progressed, an important division has evolved between state and church in the west, but not in the Eastern and Muslim world.
- If we want more than the economic cooperation on which Europe is based, we have to agree on a community of shared values and cooperation. The EU's goal is to achieve harmony through diversity, meaning, a consolidation of common values and common economic goals. This is a mission in which total values have become clear only following the enlargement process.

- There are differences between the "old" and the new" EU Member States. The EU should not look for new Member States, and Turkey's joining the Union would only serve to weaken it. The economic gap between Turkey and the EU is too great, which would force the Union to offer a new economic system.
- There are many challenges in joining the EU. There are many demands to be met, and it is also very time consuming. Patience is very important in the membership process.
- The EU should examine the situation in the Balkans and the consequences of the last two enlargements before considering further expansions. The EU is interested in the Balkan states and Turkey drawing closer to Europe, but cannot allow them all to join. The further development of the EU would be institutional rather than a territorial.
- The EU influence over its Member States' national policies has increased. The constitution of the EU is a treaty between the Member States. It is not the European people who will sign it, but the states.
- There is a misconception that a new setup will lay down a constitution. Therefore, it is very important that the German Chancellor try to determine a plan for a new treaty. There is no need to redefine the EU through this constitution, but rather to set a framework for its work. Member States have to maintain their identity: integration should be achieved without changing the states. The EU must achieve a final form and the member states have to be in a position where they can agree on common policies.
- The national states or the individual regions should do what is best for them and the EU should work at the level which would best fit the situation and body at issue. The EU ought to distinguish between topics that should be dealt on the EU level, national and local level. There should be a union within the union due to the gaps between the states.
- There should be some compromise in security, defense and foreign policy. International use of economic means would become a political one only in collaboration with military strength.
- Germany definitely has a special obligation when it comes to Israel.
- If we wish to determine our own destiny we have to secure more population in Europe. The question of integration of immigrants from other cultural backgrounds in addition to the demographic issue should be considered more seriously.

### *1/05/2007 - Day II*

#### **Panel I: United in Diversity**

*The panelists focused mainly on ways in which the elements of diversity and unity should work together and their challenges during the years, since the signing of the Treaty of Rome in 1957 till today.*

#### **Comprehensive observations and recommendations**

- Diversity is a given built-in within the concept of the EU. The essence of the EU and its treaties all involve the relationship between the concepts of diversity and unity. This would mean: value of diversity, identity, sovereignty, geography and the European institutions.
- The identity and coexistence of countries that joined the EU at different times is the essence of Europe.
- One of the main problems which the EU is facing today is defining a common goal. This should not be achieved only by emphasizing unity. In fact, one of today's goals is protecting individuality of the countries from globalization.
- The temptation to create the USA as a counter-value to the EU is a mistake, because the USA and EU generally share common values.

- Integrating a minority that disagrees with the Christian norms could lead to more extremism and more nationalism. However, the voice of groups that are not interested in being integrated should not be denied.
- On the other hand, there are also voices that argue that the identity is changing together with the EU. The question of which values are emphasized is the vital one. Religious identity imposed on the EU is counterproductive. Israel-EU relations are two successful examples of creating a new political entity and identity.
- The role of the state is overemphasized in discussions, and the role of civil society should also be taken into account. Europe has developed a strong myth of civil society, due to distrust towards the democratic state.
- The funding of civil society organizations, which are non-democratic institutions, is enormous and is being granted in an ineffective way. Funding goes to organizations that in many cases do not necessarily support the EU. There is a lack of supervision in the way the European values are implemented in the organizations which are funded by the EU. The role of democracy, the state and civil society in managing conflicts, rather than promoting conflicts, is to reduce tension. The combination of lack of faith in democracy and the overstretched role of civil society will worsen in the coming generation.
- The EU condemns Israeli nationalism and promotes organizations which deny the continuing of Israel as a Jewish state. There should be a reexamination of transnationalism, multiculturalism and funding of civil society.
- The EU is a rich tapestry of languages and cultures. From the start, there was a choice to promote the rich linguistic and vast diversity. The criteria came out of the belief that language is an expression of culture and identity.
- "Multilingualism" is a word to describe a situation in which several languages are used in one region. "Plurilingualism" means a situation where one person speaks several languages. The aim of the EU is to reach a situation in which a person speaks his own mother tongue and two more foreign languages of neighboring countries - usually his country's trading partners. This goal has been achieved only in Italy and Belgium.
- The Languages barometer survey was discussed: the current situation is that 50% in Europe can converse in one foreign language, usually English, 28% in two foreign languages. The most common foreign languages Europeans speak are English, then German, French, Italian, Spanish and last, Polish and Russian.

### **Panel II: The European Union as a Global Player**

*The discussion focused on the possible global policy, its foreign policy and global involvement on a broader scale and its global credibility*

#### **Comprehensive observations and recommendations**

- The UN is one of the most important arenas in which the EU is or is not going to play as a union. The European Commission's delegations would play a significant role in the UN if the Union shared competence, meaning, trade etc.
- Should the EU become a leader of the UN? There is great potential for the EU to have a stronger voice in the UN and become an important bloc. EU Member States have extensive experience in dealing with crises. The EU is the UN's best friend, and both share common goals of security, peace and prosperity. There has been an impressive development of the EU's ability in working within the UN.
- There are two limits to EU interaction with the UN: The first would be effectiveness of the EU. EU Member States usually see the UN arena as a platform for their own national diplomacy. The choice to act as one body should belong to the EU states and

they are not bound to choose so. A strong EU Presidency would lead to a strong voice in the UN.

The second limit is the numerous voices which speak in front of the UN: the Presidency, the Commission etc. On the other hand, reducing 27 states' voices to one EU voice would appear unfortunate. It is preferable to have many voices saying the same thing. The external limits are the UN system and the reaction of others to the EU as a bloc. The EU is viewed as neocolonial and prompts other groups to act as opposition blocs. Ultimately there is a large gap between the EU's will to lead the UN and what is actually happening.

- The EU is already a global security player, and European military capability should not be underestimated.
- The EU has already played a leading part in conflicts. It should keep doing so, and not stop in the middle of the way. Policy is expanding and it should continue. The importance of the EU's role is growing with the long-term trend towards integration.
- The EU can be compared to a good insurance company, which many countries are interested in joining in order to enjoy the security it offers. The EU provides a model to the rest of the world.
- Soft power is the key. We do not want to have a military force. However, we need to learn how to combine soft and hard force. Soft power does not work alone and the EU is not efficient when it comes to needed use of force.
- The EU shares a responsibility to protect world crimes, such as genocide or the Lebanon and Iran issues. Action taken in every matter should be according to the situation.
- In order for Israel to attain a better image as a state, it should not think only in terms of armed power to maintain peace and security. It should produce a change of mind-set in its relation to the use of power.
- Managing a conflict means bringing an end to it. The panel members are critical in improving the process and not relying on hard power alone.

### **Panel III: The Challenges of a Wider European Union**

*The panels discussed the issue of the EU integration and enlargement, the politics of the ENP, its definition as “everything but membership” and the transition from multilateralism to bilateralism.*

#### **Comprehensive observations and recommendations**

- To date, with more than two years into “Wider Europe” as the Commission once euphorically called its new approach, the EU has still not managed to find a coherent, effective, attractive and credible policy approach vis-a-vis its southern neighbourhood.
- This is due to the lack of coherence and effectiveness: the inclusion of the southern Mediterranean partners into a scheme that originally was not designed for their needs resulted in rather confusing policies that are becoming increasingly difficult to grasp.
- Another reason is the lack of attractiveness. One of the real carrots which the EU had initially offered, i.e. the free movement of people, has gradually disappeared following the objection of the governments of some EU Member States.
- Also, the offer to grant the three freedoms in exchange for reforms, appear less attractive when they are analysed on the basis of cost-benefit calculations that take into account factors such as independence and power.

- Lack of credibility: what is seen in Brussels as a “benchmarking approach” for the measurement of potential political and/or economic reform is actually an incomplete concept characterized by conceptual confusion and omission of clear cut indicators, or benchmarks, and eventually time frames.
- As long as it is not clear what the *finalite’*, so to speak, of this convolute of EU policies vis-à-vis the area is, it will be increasingly difficult for the Union to stimulate both Arab Mediterranean partners and Israel to take the existing Action Plans seriously and even go beyond them.
- Today the Western Balkan states and Turkey are officially defined as candidates. It seems that the EU has not decided yet on its “ins and outs”. The eastern neighbors, for example, pushing for inclusion and membership, would like to see the ENP as a policy of preparation for the next enlargement.
- In today’s international environment, a country cannot face its challenges on its own. Therefore the willingness to enlarge the EU means the willingness for a union according to the interests of the states.
- There are countries within the EU that no longer perceive the benefits of the enlargement, not even at the economic level, due to the increasing costs of the enlargement. We will probably not see many countries being admitted to the EU.
- The first and the most important question is how far does the “everything but membership” go? Should the idea of forming several unions outside of the EU with several dimensions of memberships be taken into consideration? What are its geographic limits, can Europe consider having Iran and Iraq also considered under the definition of a candidate, like Turkey?
- It would be a disadvantage for any country to ignore or fail to understand the EU.
- There is too much diversity and it is far from the EU founder’s dream. It faces internal challenges in its policies and decision making processes. The EU constitution was designed for 6 countries and now it is trying to struggle with 27.
- The challenge is to resolve the dilemma of being an effective international actor, when this requires leadership, and it is hard to be one among 27 different voices.
- The EU accesses the normative concerns of its members who want to be considered as acting for the benefit of the world. However, there is much less agreement within the EU on what actions should be taken and what policy should be adopted.
- There is a need to find a new balance between leadership and democracy. Germany and France have provided unofficial leadership.
- Challenges an enlarged EU poses Israel: for all its limitations, the EU is here to stay, it is an economic giant, standards superpower. The EU will remain an important instrument in the Middle East. The European concern in the Middle East will increase, as can already be seen in the EU’s security strategy. The European countries are going to define their interests in the region in a way that does not fit the same interests of the USA.
- Israel’s task is to try and find more constructive and effective ways to deal with the EU, which sometimes speaks for itself, sometimes through NATO, and sometimes through the UN. The European voice cannot be ignored.
- It is known that Europe is an economic rather than political entity. The EU can buy loyalty from our citizens and neighbors (like the ENP). When speaking about ethical Europe, money is not always an ethical code.
- We should refrain from believing that politicians will promote the interests of all Europe and not their own country.
- The EU bureaucracy is disconnected from the people. There are thousands of directions and regulations. We have to admit that Europe is an economic entity and through economic actions it fosters political relations.
- Is the EU the only possibility that exists in Europe? We can think of other alternatives. We are running through more political risks, because of the single idea of the EU.

#### **Panel IV: European Integration, the State of Israel and the Jewish Communities in Europe**

*The panel focused on the Jewish communities in Europe, their relation to Israel and Europe, the relation of Israel as a Jewish state to Europe, and the relation between Israel and the EU in general and the role of civil society in it.*

##### **Comprehensive observations and recommendations**

- With integration Jews want to share a sense of belonging.
- The EU and Israel are the children of two “never again”. This vision of a Europe ‘after’ WWII consolidated in the face of post-war rubble and the concentration camps, lay at the origins of the Council of Europe with its triple core values: human rights, the rule of law and democracy. Israel’s “never again” refers to someone else controlling the future of the Israeli nation. If it weren’t for WWII, the Jewish factor wouldn’t have been relevant.
- The European Jews are standing at a junction. The Jews belong to both Europe and the Jewish state. Being a Jewish community in Europe is an anachronism: for the Israelis, it is unfavorable and unacceptable, for Americans surviving the Holocaust was considered a miracle. The elites in the Israeli debates are the ones calling the Jews to come to Israel.
- On the other hand, it would have been easier for Israel to deal with a Jewish-free Europe. A few communities were established, and were not blamed for dual loyalty, had visibility and open space and became part of the European narrative.
- The European Jews should wear both European and Jewish hats, and help Israel understand the identity and Europe. They are trapped between the American understanding of Europe and the Israeli understanding which doesn't leave them much room for their own identity.
- "Harmonization of law" has become a common feature of agreements such as the Action Plan, when it is very clear that what is meant is not that the two legal systems undertaking the harmonization process should meet somewhere in the middle, but rather that the associated state should change its laws to be more like those of the EU.
- The goal of approximation of laws, i.e., approximating Israeli law to that of the EU, has gained further steam in the framework of the European Neighborhood Policy, which has made it very clear that legislative and regulatory approximation on the part of the State of Israel is a condition for her enjoying a significant measure of economic and political integration under the ENP.
- Most countries do see their legal and constitutional heritage as an expression of who they are and what they believe in. Israel, too, saw it as an important national project to replace the English with original Israeli legislation that was to reflect the values and heritage of the Jewish State. Jewish Law is perhaps the most central component of thousands of years of Jewish existence, intellectual pursuit and creativity.
- The Jews were famous for their legal system already in ancient times, and this preoccupation with law continued over centuries and millennia of political independence, as well as during exile and in the Diaspora (The Mishnah, the Talmud, the Shulchan Aruch and more).
- The demand for harmonization and unification of Israeli/Jewish law with that of the EU is in fact an immediate result of the globalization of the international economy. But precisely because of globalization and because of our particular situation here in the Middle East, we need to be more aware of the need to preserve our particular identity and our particular cultural heritage. Just as we need to work hard on ensuring the democratic functioning of our state, we need to work just as hard to ensure its Jewishness. Important constituents of this will need to be protected in the face of growing integration with Europe.

- Israeli civil society is not involved in shaping Israeli – Europe relations, nor is young professions. The presence of civil society in the action plan is not significant, and it should be a guiding principle in promoting it.
- Despite support for EU membership there is still very little public knowledge about the EU and specifically about the AP as a basis for Israeli-EU relations. This is especially true for the younger generation.
- There is no increase in cooperation between Israel-EU civil societies, despite the fact the EU highlights this aspect; no significant new funding possibilities exist.
- The civil society is not internationally oriented and there is no non-governmental institutional mechanism in Israel that can initiate, coordinate and implement Israeli-EU joint ventures at the young professional level.
- All this is influenced by the lack of vision on the future of the relations.
- Civil society in the Action Plan should act as a player and as a subject – in both capacities, nothing significant is happening. We believe this should be the guiding principle in the continuation of ENP implementation
- Actions should be created and consolidated into frameworks which can give an institutional response to the needs: Fostering Bi-lateral relations and creating Israel-EU young professional partnership.
- Israel was a European project designed to solve the Jewish problem before the EU was conceived.
- There should be a new Israeli project - entering the family of European nations, like Germany after WWII. There must be a place on earth where the Jews are sovereign, and we should be a part of a family, which is Europe, not ME. The EU is the political entity in which we have to do the most.

### **Keynote Addresses**

#### **H.E. Fritz Bolkestein, Former European Commissioner for Internal Market, Taxation and Customs**

- What is the EU? It has no language, no legal system apart from the Rome treaty, no definite borders. It does not have an integrated army and the foreign policy is its weakest point. The whole topic of European federation has disappeared.
- It was a mistake to create a constitution which a new independent state gives itself and to invent a new treaty of human rights when Europe already has one.
- The reality did not meet the expectation. After the referendum on the constitution failed, the idea of voting until it passed was wrong. However, the French and Dutch votes shouldn't be seen as opposing the Union.
- The European values - democracy, the rule of law, human rights and more - are not exclusively European and the differences in implementing them in each country are considerable. There is no such a thing as a clear set of European values. The glue of the EU is the interest of member states to maintain the EU existence.
- The commission has often restricted itself to certain goals. The consistent mistake is to take actions which should be taken nationally and not on the EU level. Therefore, there should be a set of defined core activities which the EU should deal with. Three suggested core activities: 1. internal market- it should be defended, expanded and improved. 2. Foreign policy. Once France, UK and Germany agree, there will be a united foreign policy. Meanwhile, the EU should reduce anti-Americanism and maintain relations with US. 3. EURO - A number of EU members have played fast and loose with the Euro rules.
- Turkey should not join the Union. They are not European, their history is not European. Should it join, all the Russians and Caucasians would want a share too. It would be the best thing that could happen to Turkey, but not to the Union.

- The aim of the EU is to make the enlargement successful. Today we can see how the “old demons” like radical nationalism are awakening. These problems must be solved.
- The Union should develop itself as an economic world power and not a political one.

**Ambassador Yossi Gal, Senior Deputy Director General, Political Affairs, Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

- The State of Israel and the leadership has gone a long way in its approach to Europe. However, I wish to see much closer relations with Europe.
- Nowadays, compared to 3-5 years ago, we are much more relaxed and less suspicious and more ambitious when it comes to Europe. It is time that Europe acts likewise when it comes to relations with Israel.
- At this stage, membership is not on the cards. As a fact. It is not considered an option in Brussels. We should aim to be as close as we can to membership, as far as the Europeans allow us and we should identify a much better dialogue between Israeli and European leaders. On the practical, economic and other sides, we should lead to full integration as Israeli and European interests in that has been identified.
- There is no point in studying the models of the relations of the EU with other countries. Every country is a unique case. These are relationships between equals, in the sense that each side has its interest and wherever there is a meeting of these interests, we should follow it.