



## 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.

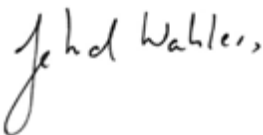
Thanks in part to solid “realpolitik”, what started out as tentative political “probing” between Germany and the young State of Israel after the unimaginable atrocities of the systematic murder of the Jews in Europe has developed into a stable foundation. Contacts at governmental level are excellent, 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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