

Tel-Aviv, Israel

Her Excellency Angela Merkel
Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany
German Bundestag
Platz der Republik 1
11011 Berlin
Germany

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Madam Chancellor,

Address to her Excellency the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany
in regards to the future Relations with the State of Israel

The Federal Republic of Germany and the State of Israel share a special relationship based on common beliefs and historical context. In light of 50 years of diplomatic relations, I wish to present my gratitude to you and your nation for your support of the Israeli state and people, and hope to reinforce the deep connection between our nations in the years to come.

The rise of the Nazi party and its supporters in Germany and the European continent after the First World War created a menace to the world Jewry. The murder of 6 million Jews based on religious belief symbolises perhaps one of the world's darkest moments, endangering human rights and freedoms around the world.

Nonetheless, the German people sought to atone for the wrong doings of their leaders, supporting the holocaust survivors and the State of Israel, defending the democratic order and integration of all citizens of the world. Since before the establishment of Israel, German people were eager to try the orchestrators of the final solution, and contribute to the creation of a better future. Not only through the promotion of new international norms of equality and justice, but also through direct aid to those in need.

The reparations agreement, signed in 1952 by the Chancellor of West Germany, Konrad Adenauer, and the Prime Minister of Israel, David Ben-Gurion, marked the beginning of a new chapter in the German-Israeli relations. Essential assistance to the emerging state of the Jewish people after two centuries in diaspora, was accorded for its economic, political and social development, helping to form Israel as a nation among nations.

The noble intentions paved the way for bilateral relations, fostering diplomatic relations between our two states in 1965. The results of these relations are evident in our everyday lives, due to the ever growing number of associations, collaborations and mutual initiatives, aiming to solve some of the world's most preeminent dangers. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the convergence of all German people, celebrating this year the 25th anniversary of German unity, were to strengthen the German-Israeli relations and expand cooperation in the fields of culture, education and science, as well as the inherent interests of trade, stability and peace.

The partnership of the two states stems from a similar outlook on the international political system, and the search for a pathway to insure the well-being of all people. As stated in the speech given by your Excellency to the Knesset plenum in 2008, the relations created a state of trust which “has its origins in the values that we, Germany and Israel, both share, the values of freedom, democracy and respect for human dignity”.

Indeed, the Zionist movement awoke at the end of the nineteenth century in central Europe, with ideals of national liberation and the establishment of a Jewish and democratic state. Theodor Herzl, father of modern Zionism, envisioned the creation of a Jewish state based on the German-born enlightenment movement and his admiration of the Austro-Hungarian way of life. In his diaries and novels, he depicts the principal language of the Jewish state to be German, and its political model to be based on the democratic model of contemporary Imperial Germany. In his book “Altneuland”, published in 1902, he wrote about a modern state full of monorails and modern industry, as existed in the Ruhr area.

The State of Israel has shown great growth in the last 67 years, primarily with the emergence of a Hi-Tech industry, medical technology utilities and agriculture. With the sophistication of desalination technics and the extraction of natural minerals, Israel overcame some of the biggest threats to its national security, and is able to share its advancement with the rest of the world. Defence, chemicals and diamonds sectors also serve as a multiplier for the Israeli wide-ranging industries.

Germany constitutes Israel’s second largest trading partner in the world, and the leading partner in Europe, with bilateral import and export amounting to some USD 6.5 billion in the year 2013 alone. Israel cooperates with German companies in fields like defence, electronics, textile, transportation and agriculture. Similarities in the economic markets can be found also in development of information technology, medical equipment and entrepreneurship.

Furthermore, the two nations also have joint education and research initiatives. Focusing on cultural exchanges, associations such as the “Israeli German Future Forum” bring youth from both states together for advancement and interdependency. The academic exchanges and mutual study prosper through programs such as “Minerva” and the “German-Israeli Foundation for Scientific Research and Development”.

Through the promotion of R&D agreements, German and Israeli teams work together on issues concerning biotechnology, health, renewable energy and water and environment technology, mostly through “HLS, Eurostar and EUREKA”.

On the international level, Germany supports the state of Israel in multinational venues and is an important benefactor in the strategic alliance between Israel and the European Union. This special status is framed by the European Neighbourhood Policy, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the Union for the Mediterranean.

Israeli presence in European institutions is evident, and the two sides enjoy an association agreement, which came into power in 2000, and incorporated free trade arrangements for industrial goods and concessionary arrangements for trade of agricultural products. The agreement was followed with another treaty, ACAA, creating a free trade agreement in regard to pharmaceuticals.

Honourable Chancellor,

The Federal Republic of Germany and the State of Israel share this special relationship while respecting each other's sovereignty and principle of self-determination. Our nations must embrace their historical obligation and engage in a strategic alliance based on freedom, justice and solidarity. Soon the diminishing generation of the founders of our democratic polities will cease to remind us the implications of the past, and the obligation for coexistence of all people in a unified society.

The relations of trust have the potential to solve a great deal of the problems hovering over the integrity of the two states, while strengthening the technological advancements and discoveries. I would suggest that this mutual understanding could affect many of the threats to German and Israeli national security, and the development of the free world.

Nowadays Germany faces new challenges to its demography, its energy dependancy and environment. The State of Israel has much experience absorbing waves of immigrations in short time, and supporting their integration with administrative and socialisation agencies. Moreover, the developing oil and gas fields on the Israeli shores may be a source of energetic trade. Also, Israeli agricultural developments can assist to reduce the influence of pollution on German soil and environment.

Israel could benefit from the German role in the international community to secure a just solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on former agreements and a two state solution. Germany gained its reputation as a mediator in the recent years, for example with involvement in the Russia-Ukraine conflict over Crimea, Donetsk and Luhansk, or the E3+3 process regarding Iran's nuclear program. Comprehensive agreements may end with diplomatic relations between the State of Israel and the Arab nations, based on the Arab Peace Initiative, and maintaining Israeli security through peace.

The two states could also enjoy closer cultural and scientific ties, further enlarging bilateral trade agreements and exchanges. The increasing interest in Counter-Insurgency studies and Entrepreneurship serves as a platform for educational and research cooperation that create connections between peoples.

In the political sphere, both nations could upgrade their multilateral relations with future enlargement of the European Union. Several remarks by European and Israeli politicians suggest high interest in the incorporation of Israel as a special partner. Due to high performances in the last economic crises and a higher flexible leeway in the future, Israel may find its place as a full member of the European Union.

In a wider scale, the alliance can be the basis for solutions to some of the political problems threatening the world, such as repression of rising antisemitism, capitulation of international terrorist organisations, restoration of the environmental habitat and stabilisation of the international system. It will further impact the positive evolution of humanity.

In conclusion, as an Israeli citizen highly influenced by the German-Israeli relations, I thank you, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, for your commitment to the State of Israel and its prosperity. The special partnership cannot easily be shaken, and its potential is boundless. May this relationship of trust between our states light the way for others to end all disputes, and strive for a better tomorrow.

Yours sincerely,



Lavi Melman