



**Draft Joint Statement following the Meeting between the Delegations of
the European Parliament and of the Knesset**

**28 June 2023
Brussels**

The Chair of the European Parliament's Delegation for relations with Israel, Antonio López-Istúriz White, and the Chair of the Knesset Delegation for relations with the European Parliament, Mr. Ariel Kallner:

welcome the results of the 46th Inter-Parliamentary Meeting between the European Parliament and the Knesset, which took place on the 28th of June 2023 in Brussels and built on the results of the 45th Inter-Parliamentary Meeting, held in Jerusalem on the 31st of October 2021;

highlight the great deal of trust that has been built over the years between the European Parliament (EP) and the Knesset and reiterate their mutual interest in moving towards a deeper cooperation on political and technical levels;

acknowledge that the EU and Israel have been taking mutual advantage of their long-standing partnership, reinforced by deep historic and cultural ties. Underline their shared interest in promoting global and regional stability, as well as developing joint and coordinated responses to global challenges such as climate change, sustainable economic development and counter terrorism. Moreover, they advocate for further EU-Israel cooperation on green and digital recovery in a post-pandemic context;

welcome the renewal, in January 2022, of the EU - Israel Action Plan, within the European Neighbourhood Policy framework, with the objective of gradually integrating Israel into European policies and programmes. Stress the importance of an enhanced structured dialogue between the European Union and Israel, at all levels, on the basis of the Association Agreement. Hope for a swift agreement on the Partnership Priorities between EU and Israel.

highly welcome the resumption, after a 10-year pause, of the EU-Israel Association Council, on 3 October 2022, as key forum for the development of the relationship and for engaging in a genuine high-level political dialogue on all issues of mutual interest. Equally welcome the interest recently expressed by both sides for holding the next Association Council meeting towards the end of this year;

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highly welcome the fresh-start and the improved political relations between the EU and Israel, marked by high level visits, including the visit to Israel of the EP President Roberta Metsola on 22 May 2022, the visit of the European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, on 13 June 2022, the visit of European Commissioner Olivér Várhelyi on 22 March 2022, the visit to Brussels of the President of the State of Israel, Isaac Herzog, on 26 January 2023, the visit of the Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen, on 2 May 2023 and the visit to Israel by the European Commission Vice-President Margaritis Schinas on 12 June 2023, as well as the very recent visits of the Human Rights Subcommittee and of the Internal Market Committee of the European Parliament;

highly appreciate the message transmitted by President Metsola, during her visit to Israel, acknowledging that the European Parliament will always be a strong ally in the quest for peace and that, building on the shared history and open relations between the two peoples, it is important to focus on the future, for the further development of the strong partnership between Europe and Israel;

antisemitism

highly welcome the official address by the President of the State of Israel, Isaac Herzog, at the European Parliament plenary, at the Holocaust Memorial Day, on 26 January 2023, as an important moment and in the joint efforts against antisemitism;

highly welcome the EU and Israel determination to combat antisemitism, including all forms of anti-Semitic hate speech and other anti-Semitic content and manifestations, offline and online;

accentuate on the importance to cooperate closely in addressing antisemitism and Holocaust distortion and denial in the digital sphere, as agreed at the 14th EU - Israel High-Level Seminar on combating racism, xenophobia and antisemitism, held on 12 June 2023 in Jerusalem. Fully support the cooperation in expanding the digital pillar of the network of 'Young European Ambassadors to promote Holocaust remembrance';

appreciate the participation of the European Parliament in the global fight against antisemitism, in ensuring a full implementation of the recent EU Strategy on prevention and combatting antisemitism, as well as in fostering Jewish life in the EU and promoting Holocaust remembrance worldwide. Welcome the willingness of both parliaments to increase cooperation in this respect;

political dialogue

stress the importance of maintaining the positive momentum in the EU - Israel relations, of implementing the commitments taken at the EU-Israel Association Council in 2022, as well as the importance of fostering the shared values of open society and democracy based on inclusiveness and strong checks and balances;

note that the European Parliament is observing closely the wide political and societal debate in Israel, notably on the proposed reform of the judiciary, as well as the negotiations under the auspices of the President of Israel, and hopes that a wide consensus will be reached on such an important issue;

underline that the normalization of relations of Israel with some Arab states through the Abraham Accords and the Negev Forum is a fundamental step for regional stability, a process which EU fully supports, including through a financial facility to support cooperation at a trilateral and regional level. The EU believes that the process should also

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include the Palestinians and that it can have a positive impact on the Middle East Peace Process, needed for lasting regional stability.

agree on the importance that renewed efforts are needed towards progress in the Middle East Peace Process. Remind the Israeli call, at the Association Council in 2022, upon the EU and its members to play a constructive role in creating conditions to enable Israelis and Palestinians to work together. Underline the willingness of the EU to support efforts to restore a political horizon for fair, comprehensive, long-lasting peace. Take note of the well-known EU position on the support of the two-state solution and on the urgency to avoid all unilateral measures that could hinder the process;

underline Israeli commitment to maintaining the status quo of the Holy sites in Jerusalem and to respecting the special role of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in Muslim holy shrines in Jerusalem, as well as the commitment to the rights of the adherents of all faiths in Jerusalem – Christians, Muslims and Jews, guaranteeing freedom of religion and peaceful worship, tranquillity in daily life, and the welfare of all the city's inhabitants;

deplore the recent upsurge of violence in Israel and in the West Bank and stress the urgency of swift measures for de-escalation and for ending the circle of violence;

take note of the EU's unconditional condemnation of rocket attacks on Israel from Gaza, as well as Lebanese and Syrian territories as well as of all terrorist attacks perpetrated against Israelis and of the EU firm commitment to the prevention of and fight against terrorism in all its forms;

take note also of the EU's strong concern on all acts of violence and of dismay about the large numbers of civilian deaths and injuries, including children. Take the view that priority must be to protect civilians including media representatives. Agree that military operations must be proportionate and in line with international humanitarian law. Take note that the European Union supports the Aqaba and Sharm El Sheikh communiqués, and stress the need that all parties recommit themselves to de-escalation, and to pave the way towards a political horizon;

express concern over the problematic and hateful material in Palestinian school textbooks, still not being removed, and stress the need that the Palestinian Authority and relevant experts modify the curriculum expeditiously. Underline that hateful and anti-Semitic incitement is of high concern and stress the importance of education as best weapon to fight prejudice, to counter toxic narratives and hate and to stimulate confidence building;

underline the importance of the agreement on maritime boundary between Israel and Lebanon, as important milestone for regional stability;

emphasize the importance of cooperating in facing the current global challenges, such as the continuing Russian war against Ukraine but also Iran's increasingly aggressive regional role;

with regard to the Russian war of aggression on Ukraine, renew their call for unhindered support to Ukraine and its allies and clearly condemn the Russian invasion. Take note that Israel joined political initiatives in the international arena and adopted a policy to effectively prevent the circumvention of sanctions. Recall that Israel has and will continue to provide humanitarian assistance to the citizens of Ukraine. Stress that both parties stand by Ukraine with unwavering support for as long as it takes: supporting Ukraine, keeping

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pressure on Russia through sanctions and emphasising accountability, and mitigating the global fallout of Russia's war including on food and energy security;

appreciate the EU's commitment to Israel security, which is non-negotiable. Stress that EU shares Israel's security concerns, notably about Iran's nuclear activities and its sponsoring of terrorist groups and other proxies;

stress the importance of EU - Israel cooperation on cyber issues in order to promote an open, free, stable and secure cyberspace, towards increasing global cyber resilience, as well as to tackling cybercrime. Welcome Israeli support for the establishment within the UN of a Programme of Action to advance responsible state behaviour in cyberspace;

sectoral cooperation

recall that Israel has the highest level of access to EU programmes among the Southern Neighbourhood countries, to which Israel can participate under similar conditions as the EU Member States. Israel is an active participant of various ENI South regional programs such as Med-Culture, SUDEP, Euromed Police, Euromed Justice, etc;

underline the comprehensiveness of the multi-layered partnership between the EU and Israel, for example, in the field of culture - with more than 15.000 exchanges of students under Erasmus+ programme, the field of innovation - including the Tel Aviv hub of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology, and the field of research - under Horizon 2020 programme, Israeli entities participated in over 1600 research projects and expectations are high for Horizon Europe too;

stress that Israeli civil society organisations, local and regional entities, universities and research programmes can also take part in the EU Cross Border Cooperation Programme;

recall that the EU is the first trade partner of Israel. Concerning goods, in 2021, the EU exported EUR 24.3 billion and imported EUR 12.6 billion. The EU was the largest exporter to Israel, holding a 34% market share, ahead of China (11.9%) and the United States (9.3%);

welcome the signature of the Memorandum of Understanding on gas exports between Egypt, Israel and the EU, at the East Mediterranean Gas Forum on 16 June 2022 and acknowledge the importance of regional cooperation between natural gas producing and consuming countries to support security of the energy supply, as well as the intention of the parties to enhancing cooperation on their respective green energy transitions;

welcome the regional cooperation on climate and environment, supported by EU, which could also contribute to stabilization in the Middle East. Projects such as the exchange of solar power from Jordan with desalinated water from Israel can provide Israel up to 50% of its water needs, while greening the Israeli energy mix;

stress the importance of enhanced efforts in the field of renewable energy and praise Israeli focus on solar energy and their advancements in water desalination, as well as the EU efforts in implementing the European Green Deal, with the objective to be climate-neutral by 2050. Call to develop common projects towards this objective;

recall that EU and Israel have a comprehensive EU-Israel air transport agreement, entered into force in August 2020 and that the market is fully liberalised;

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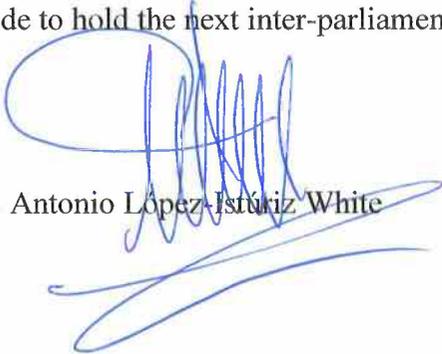
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recall also that Israel became a member of the European Alliance of Entrepreneurship in 2021 and is active in cooperation with the EU in vocational educational training reforms;

express the commitment to continue the close cooperation between the European Parliament and the Knesset to the benefit of our nations.

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Decide to hold the next inter-parliamentary meeting in Israel during the course of 2024.



Mr. Antonio López-Istúriz White

Chair of the European Parliament
Delegation for relations with Israel



Mr. Ariel Kallner

Chair of the Knesset Delegation for
relations with the European Parliament

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