

D-IL

Delegation for
relations with
Israel

© European Union, 2019.
Manuscript completed in June 2019.

Languages

This publication is available in English (original), French and German.

Disclaimer

The opinions expressed in this document do not necessarily represent the official position of the European Parliament.

Reproduction and translation of this document for non-commercial purposes are authorised, provided the source is acknowledged and the publisher is given prior notice and sent a copy.

Delegation for relations with Israel (D-IL)

**Summary of activities during the 8th term
(2014-2019)**

Table of Contents

Introduction	5
Interparliamentary meetings (IPMs)	7
European Parliament positions:	9
Key topics	14
Recommendations from the outgoing delegation	16
Appendix	18

Introduction

The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and European Neighbourhood Policy provide the framework for general EU-Israel relations. The EU-Israel Partnership consists of close political and mutually beneficial trade and investment relations with economic, social, financial, civil, scientific, technological and cultural cooperation.

The [EU-Israel Association Agreement](#), which was signed in 1995 and entered into force in 2000, exists within the **Euro-Mediterranean Partnership** (Barcelona Process). It establishes dialogue and aims at strengthening political stability, furthering economic development and fostering regional cooperation. Israel is also part of the **European Neighbourhood Policy** (ENP), but it receives limited funding from the European Neighbourhood Instrument on account of its relatively advanced economic development. Nonetheless, the ENP sets out the [EU-Israel Action Plan](#), which was established in 2005 and renewed until 2020. This plan sets the objective of integrating Israel into European policies and programmes in areas such as closer cooperation on science, technology, security and migration.

Israel is also an important trading partner for the EU, and the EU remains [Israel's primary trading partner](#). The current partnership continues a commitment to reinforce arrangements for free trade in industrial products which had been in force since the **1975 Cooperation Agreement**.

In 2013, the EU offered Israel and Palestine '[Special Privileged Partnerships](#)', consisting of an unprecedented package of political, economic and security support initiatives which would become available to them should there be progress in the Middle East Peace Process, with a signed final agreement.

These packages would **build on the existing EU-Israel and EU-Palestine partnerships**, while making fruitful use of the potential trilateral cooperation to tackle the region's socio-economic challenges.

The EU and the Middle East Peace Process

The EU is committed to a two-state solution with an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable Palestinian state living side-by-side with Israel and its other neighbours.

The EU is willing to work with its partners to re-launch [peace negotiations, based on the following parameters](#):

- An agreement on the borders of the two states, based on the 4 June 1967 lines with equivalent land swaps as may be agreed between the parties. The EU will recognize changes to the pre-1967 borders, including with regard to Jerusalem, only when agreed by the parties.
- Security arrangements that, for Palestinians, respect their sovereignty and show that the occupation is over; and, for Israelis, protect their security, prevent the resurgence of terrorism and deal effectively with security threats, including with new and vital threats in the region.
- A just, fair, agreed and realistic solution to the refugee question.
- Fulfilment of the aspirations of both parties for Jerusalem. A way must be found through negotiations to resolve the status of Jerusalem as the future capital of both states.

The EU considers the building of settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory illegal under international law, and as

constituting an obstacle to peace and the possibility of a two-state solution.

Delegation for relations with Israel (D-IL)

The European Parliament's Delegation for relations with Israel is responsible for **deepening Parliament's contacts with Israel and with the Israeli Parliament, the Knesset**.

Interparliamentary meetings are held regularly either in Israel or in the European Parliament, in Brussels or Strasbourg. They are organised around specific themes pertaining to EU-Israel relations. In addition to its interparliamentary meetings, D-IL holds regular meetings in Brussels and Strasbourg, which may involve preparations for meetings with Israeli counterparts or debriefings afterwards. These meetings also offer Delegation members the opportunity to discuss developments in Israel and bilateral relations. Some of these meetings are held in association with other bodies of the European Parliament or with other delegations focusing on Israel's neighbourhood.

Interparliamentary meetings (IPMs)

During the European Parliament's eighth parliamentary term, IPM discussions focused on security, trade and the economy, innovation, and combating anti-Semitism. The last IPM was cancelled at the request of the Israeli Knesset because of the early legislative elections held on 9 April 2019.

43rd EP-Knesset IPM, 31 October 2017 (Jerusalem)

The Knesset delegation reiterated that the most important policy areas for Israel are the defence of Israeli identity and the Jewish character of the state, the fight against terrorism, the law on military service, and the role of the judiciary in Israel,

where it feels there is a lack of EU engagement. The Knesset delegation underlined that the two-state solution is currently no longer on the Israeli agenda because it feels that the basis for negotiations is missing.

42nd EP-Knesset IPM, 17 November 2016 (Brussels)

The exchange of views focused on the **protracted conflict between Israel and Palestine**, and on the current security challenges in Israel and in the EU, with a focus on **terrorism, cybersecurity** and **technology start-up industries** specialising in the security field. The discussion also centred around the **EU's commitment to the fight against anti-Semitism**. The Knesset delegation also expressed its concern regarding the [Interpretative Notice on indication of origin of goods from territories occupied by Israel since June 1967](#), and called for a **stronger EU stance against the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement**. MEPs drew the attention of the Israeli delegation to the **NGO Bill** adopted by the Knesset, which is **perceived in the EU as problematic for the democratic development of Israel**, and to the working conditions of Israeli human rights defenders. Items on the agenda that were not tackled included trade and economic relations.

41st EP-Knesset IPM, 16-18 November 2015 (Tel Aviv & Jerusalem)

Discussions focused on the aforementioned **Interpretative Notice**, with the Knesset delegation arguing that the measures were counter-productive and discriminatory against Israel. The IPM also touched on the **Middle East Peace Process**, the **Iran nuclear deal** and the **security challenges in the Middle East**. The delegations underlined the urgent need to restart negotiations and enable a political process with the aim of

reaching a two-state solution, and the need to further deepen EU-Israeli relations on the political, economic, cultural and societal level, and in particular regarding trade, investment, science, research, technology, education, energy and climate change. The European Parliament Delegation Chair, Fulvio Martusciello (EPP, Italy), also emphasised the **need to step up cooperation in the fight against terrorism, radicalisation and violent extremism**.

40th EP-Knesset IPM, 3 December 2014 (Brussels)

Discussions focused on **Israel's security threats**, the **Middle East Peace Process**, the situation in the wider Middle East, the domestic political situation and wider relations between the EU and Israel. **Concerns about Iran's nuclear programme** and the threat it continues to pose to Israel's security were raised. Leonello Gabrici (European External Action Service – EEAS) laid out the advantages of the unprecedented package that is the **Special Privileged Partnership as a powerful EU tool for advancing the Middle East Peace Process**. The Chair drew special attention to this meeting as one of dialogue and appeasement, while Avishai Braverman from the Knesset delegation **called for more unity around common values and notions of security**.

European Parliament positions:

Resolutions (2014-2019)

Resolution on the situation in the Gaza Strip [2018/2663\(RSP\)](#)

Parliament noted the violence following the Great March of Return, a six-week weekly mass protest, which began on 30 March 2018 in the Gaza Strip. It **supported the calls for**

independent investigations into these violent events, and stated that the intentional use of lethal force against protesters who do not pose an imminent threat to life or **serious injury violates international human rights law** and, in the context of occupation, is a serious breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention. It **condemned the killing and injuring of innocent Palestinian demonstrators** in the Gaza Strip during the preceding three weeks, and urged the Israeli Defence Force to refrain from using lethal force against unarmed protestors. It also **recognised Israel's security challenges and the need to protect its territory and borders** while using proportionate means. Parliament went on to **call for an immediate and unconditional end to the blockade** and closure of the Gaza Strip, which had resulted in a deteriorating, unprecedented humanitarian crisis in the area. It called for an immediate and meaningful international effort for the **reconstruction and rehabilitation of Gaza** and for the return of the Palestinian Authority to the Gaza Strip.

For further information, you can find full summaries on [Parliament's website](#).

Resolution on achieving the two-state solution in the Middle East 2016/2998(RSP)

Parliament **reiterated its strong support for the two-state solution** to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the basis of the 1967 borders, with Jerusalem as the capital of both states, with the secure State of Israel and an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable Palestinian State living side by side in peace and security. Members **condemned all acts of violence, acts of terrorism against Israelis and hate speech**, in order to rebuild confidence and to avoid escalation that would further undermine the prospects for peace. Stressing that **settlements**

are illegal under international law, Parliament condemned the fact that they are ongoing, and called on the Israeli authorities to immediately halt and reverse the settlement policy. Parliament underlined that, in order to support a genuine European peace initiative, it is the **primary duty of the Member States to contribute actively to the shaping of a united European position** and to refrain from unilateral initiatives that weaken European action. Members suggested that a **'Parliamentarians for Peace' initiative be launched** aimed at bringing together European, Israeli and Palestinian parliamentarians. For further information, you can find full summaries on [Parliament's website](#).

Other relevant resolutions	Adopted on
US recognition of the Golan Heights as Israeli territory and the possible annexation of the West Bank settlements – 2019/2702(RSP)	16/04/2019
Annual report on the implementation of the common foreign and security policy – 2018/2097(INI)	12/12/2018
EU/Israel Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement: extension of the EU-Israel Action Plan. EU position – 2018/0027(JOIN)	13/11/2018
Threat of demolition of Khan al-Ahmar and other Bedouin villages – 2018/2849(RSP)	13/09/2018
State of EU-US relations – 2017/2271(INI)	12/09/2018
Situation in the Gaza strip and status of Jerusalem – 2018/2719(RSP)	29/05/2018
Proposal to open negotiations on the Commission recommendation for a Council decision authorising the negotiations for an agreement between the EU and Israel on the exchange of personal data between Europol and the Israeli authorities for fighting serious crime and terrorism – 2018/2062(INI)	04/07/2018
US President Trump's announcement to recognise Jerusalem as capital of Israel – 2017/3012(RSP)	12/12/2017
Situation in the West Bank, in particular settlements – 2017/2527(RSP)	14/02/2017
Recommendation on the 71st session of the United Nations General Assembly – 2016/2020(INI)	07/07/2016
New initiatives related to the Middle East peace process – 2016/2818(RSP)	06/07/2016

Other relevant resolutions	Adopted on
West Bank displacement and demolitions, including of EU-funded projects – 2016/2712(RSP)	10/05/2016
The EU's role in the Middle East peace process – 2015/2685(RSP)	10/09/2015
Security challenges in the MENA region and prospects for political stability – 2014/2229(INI)	09/07/2015
Recognition of Palestine statehood – 2014/2964(RSP)	17/12/2014
Israel-Palestine after the Gaza war and the role of the EU – 2014/2845(RSP)	18/09/2014
The escalation of violence between Israel and Palestine – 2014/2723(RSP)	17/07/2014

Other legislative and non-legislative activities having an impact on Israel	Adopted on
Scope and mandate for EU Special Representatives. Recommendation to the Vice President / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy – 2018/2116(INI)	13/03/2019
Comprehensive European industrial policy on artificial intelligence and robotics – 2018/2088(INI)	12/02/2019
Safe use of remotely piloted aircraft systems (RPAS), commonly known as unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), in the field of civil aviation – 2014/2243(INI)	12/12/2018

Other legislative and non-legislative activities having an impact on Israel	Adopted on
EU guarantee to the European Investment Bank against losses under financing operations supporting investment projects outside the Union: ceilings for EIB financing operations – 2016/0275(COD)	14/03/2018
Resolution on nuclear security and non-proliferation – 2016/2936(RSP)	27/10/2016
EU strategy for liquefied natural gas and gas storage – 2016/2059(INI)	25/10/2016
European Fisheries Control Agency: cooperation – 2015/0308(COD)	14/09/2016
Annual report from the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to the European Parliament – 2014/2219(INI)	12/03/2015

Key topics

Establishing European mechanisms and structures to combat anti-Semitism

Many of the Delegation’s discussions centred around the **rise of anti-Semitic violence in Europe and the Middle East**, focusing on what measures the European Parliament could take to prevent such dangerous developments. D-IL members called for an intergroup on countering anti-Semitism, and in June 2017 Parliament adopted a resolution on [combating anti-Semitism in Europe](#), calling on Member States to appoint national coordinators on combating anti-Semitism and reiterating its commitment to the cause.

Closer cooperation in addressing security challenges, with a focus on cybersecurity and terrorism

D-IL maintained that Israel's security must remain a European priority. The Delegation focused on threats faced by Israel such as Iran, and on how Israel can help Europe in overcoming its security challenges through closer cooperation on cybersecurity and terrorism. The Delegation believed that Israel's expertise on the matter could be of great help in overcoming Europe's security challenges in relation to cybersecurity and terrorism, and launched a dialogue on the issue to step up information sharing.

Maintaining and deepening fruitful EU-Israel trade relations

D-IL held many debates with their Knesset counterparts on how to continue to **deepen EU-Israel trade cooperation** and ensure that there is no support for boycotts or harm done to European and Israeli businesses. The **Interpretative Notice on indication of origin of goods from territories occupied by Israel since June 1967**, signed in November 2005, engendered a significant amount of debate and criticism in Israel about future EU-Israel trade relations. The notice did not bring any legislative changes, but rather it specified that while products originating from Israel within its internationally recognised borders benefit from the preferential tariff treatment, those originating from settlements outside the 1967 borders cannot benefit from such preferences or other trade facilitation measures. These products, however, are not prevented from entering the EU.

Issues raised by Israeli counterparts

- The Knesset delegation has remarked that the **EU does not see relations with Israel beyond the Israel-Palestine conflict**, leading to repeated requests that other subjects also be put on the agenda, such as start-ups, innovation and energy.
- The Knesset delegation commented on a **lack of plurality of views on the Israel-Palestine conflict** in the EU, asking D-IL to ensure a balanced approach to the issue.
- Knesset members often spoke about Israel's security concerns, especially regarding Iran, and how the **EU must continue to help Israel combat the growing security threats** it is facing in the region.
- Knesset members have highlighted that the EU must play a role in creating a platform for dialogue and cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians.
- Knesset members called for the EU to take a stronger stance against the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement.

Recommendations from the outgoing delegation

- Monitoring of the **rule of law and human rights**, and **scrutiny of EU policies**, programmes, projects and activities in relation to the partner country are the core responsibilities of each European Parliament delegation;
- The new D-IL could assess and follow up on the findings and conclusions of the October 2017 interparliamentary meeting (IPM), and work on resuming the talks as soon as possible, bearing in mind that the IPM scheduled in 2018

was postponed at the Knesset's request following the decision to hold early elections in Israel;

- **Further deepen EU-Israel relations** on the political, economic, cultural and societal levels.
- Deepen exchanges with Israeli interlocutors on the stalled **Middle East Peace Process** and other **regional issues** such as the **Syrian conflict** and its impact on neighbouring countries and **tensions in the Gulf** region, notably with **Iran**.
- There is a need to step up cooperation in the fight against terrorism, radicalisation and violent extremism. In this context, the previous Chair expressed concern at escalating violence in Jerusalem and elsewhere, and stressed the need to de-escalate tensions and safeguard civilians. He also stressed the need to tackle the causes of the violence and encouraged all leaders to restart a political process with the ultimate aim of reaching a two-state solution.
- Improve cooperation and intensify communication with other delegations working on the Israeli neighbourhood, especially the Delegation for Relations with Palestine (D-PAL), notably on topics discussed in IPMs.
- Better synchronise activities and **deepen coordination with committees** such as AFET, DROI sub-committee and INTA.
- Further discuss all items tackled with members of the Knesset in future D-IL meetings, **with the EEAS and representatives of European and Israeli think tanks**.

Appendix

History of the Delegation

The European Parliament's Delegation for relations with Israel (D-IL) was established in 1979, just after the first direct elections to the European Parliament. The EU-Israel Association Council, a structure established by the EU-Israel Association Agreement and composed of ministers from both sides, underlined the importance to 'take all appropriate measures to facilitate cooperation and contacts between the European Parliament and the Knesset of the State of Israel.'

The 20th Knesset established the Delegation for relations with the European Parliament, headed by Yaakov Perry MK (Yesh Atid) from 2014 to March 2018. From March 2018 until the end of the European Parliament's eighth parliamentary term, it was headed by Revital Swid MK (Zionist Union).

The Chair and Vice-Chairs of D-IL are elected by the other members of the Delegation, while the members are nominated by Parliament's political groups. The political balance of the Delegation mirrors that of Parliament as a whole.

Delegation Chairs and Vice-Chairs

Legislature	Chair	Vice-Chairs	Permanent members	Substitutes
2014-2019	Fulvio MARTUSCIELLO (EPP)	Bas BELDER (EFD) Olga SEHNALOVÁ (S&D)	18	18
2009-2014	Bas BELDER (EFD)	Salvatore TATARELLA (EPP) Olga SEHNALOVÁ (S&D)	18	18
2004-2009	Jana HYBÁŠKOVÁ (EPP)	Bas BELDER (EFD) Monika BENOVA (S&D)	21	19

Interparliamentary Missions (IPMs)

IPM Number	Place	Date
43rd EP-Knesset IPM	Jerusalem	31 October 2017
42nd EP-Knesset IPM	Brussels	17 November 2016
41st EP-Knesset IPM	Tel Aviv and Jerusalem	16-18 November 2015
40th EP-Knesset IPM	Brussels	3 December 2014
39th EP-Knesset IPM	Tel Aviv and Jerusalem	4-5 November 2013
38th EP-Knesset IPM	Tel Aviv and Jerusalem	30 April-4 May 2012

IPM Number	Place	Date
37th EP-Knesset IPM	Brussels	23 November 2011
36th EP-Knesset IPM	Tel Aviv and Jerusalem	24-26 May 2011
35th EP-Knesset IPM	Brussels	8-9 December 2010
34th EP-Knesset IPM	Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Haifa	15-18 February 2010
33rd EP-Knesset IPM	Brussels	23-25 September 2008
32nd EP-Knesset IPM	Jerusalem	29 October - 2 November 2007
31st EP-Knesset IPM	Strasbourg	25-26 April 2007
30th EP-Knesset IPM	Jerusalem	23-28 November 2005
29th EP-Knesset IPM	Brussels	23-24 May 2005
28th EP-Knesset IPM	Jerusalem	13-18 May 2004
27th EP-Knesset IPM	Strasbourg	19-20 November 2003
26th EP-Knesset IPM	Jerusalem	17-21 May 2003
25th EP-Knesset IPM	Strasbourg	15-16 May 2001
24th EP-Knesset IPM	Jerusalem	18-22 June 2000
23rd EP-Knesset IPM	Strasbourg	17-18 June 1998
22nd EP-Knesset IPM	Jerusalem	3-6 June 1997
21st EP-Knesset IPM	Strasbourg	14-17 November 1995
20th EP-Knesset IPM	Jerusalem	19-23 February 1995

IPM Number	Place	Date
19th EP-Knesset IPM	Strasbourg	18-21 April 1994
18th EP-Knesset IPM	Jerusalem	6-10 December 1992
17th EP-Knesset IPM	Strasbourg	8-12 July 1991
16th EP-Knesset IPM	Jerusalem	3-7 December 1990
15th EP-Knesset IPM	Strasbourg	15-19 January 1990
14th EP-Knesset IPM	Jerusalem	9-13 January 1989
13th EP-Knesset IPM	Strasbourg	18-21 January 1988
12th EP-Knesset IPM	Jerusalem	13-18 December 1986
11th EP-Knesset IPM	Strasbourg	9-12 December 1985
10th EP-Knesset IPM	Jerusalem	16-19 December 1984

Other relevant events

Title	Date	Organised by
AFET Mission to Israel, the West Bank and Jordan	2-6 January 2017	AFET & D-IL
Joint meeting D-IL/D-PAL	8 September 2016	D-IL & D-PAL
DROI Mission to Israel and Palestine (press release)	20-24 July 2015	DROI
Joint meeting D-IL/Delegation for relations with the Palestinian Legislative council DPLC (now known as D-PAL)	11 December 2014	D-IL & DPLC



A series of horizontal dashed lines spanning the width of the page, providing a guide for handwriting practice. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the entire width of the page.



A series of horizontal dashed lines spanning the width of the page, providing a guide for handwriting practice. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the entire width of the page, starting from the top right of the pencil icon and continuing down to the bottom of the page.



A series of horizontal dashed lines spanning the width of the page, providing a guide for handwriting practice. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the entire width of the page, starting from the top right of the pencil icon and continuing down to the bottom of the page.





European Parliament

EN