



The Ashdod Solar Power Station in the Negev Desert, Israel



EU AND ISRAEL - ADVANCING THE GREEN DEAL, TOGETHER

The Middle East is one of the regions most affected by climate change, facing water shortages, food insecurity, and ensuing socio-economic unrest. Experts warn of more frequent and extended droughts; dryer soil leading to greater dust storms; more intense rain bursts; and more frequent heatwaves reaching unlivable temperatures.

Yet the news is not all grim - science also tells us that a zero-carbon society is possible - a society of green jobs and growth that can limit warming to 1.5°C. The European Union has already shown that it is feasible to decouple growth from CO2 emissions: since 1990, EU's GDP has grown by over 60% while net greenhouse gas emissions have fallen by a quarter. In July, the EU released a legislative package to implement the European Green Deal and deliver a 55% net reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 on the path to climate neutrality by 2050. But the EU cannot manage alone; international cooperation is necessary to make a global impact.

Along with nearly thirty European and Israeli diplomats, officials, and experts, we recently discussed cooperation on climate change at the annual EU-Israel Strategic Dialogue. The event, co-hosted by the EU Delegation in Israel and a non-governmental organization ELNET, made it clear that this challenge unites Europe and Israel like no other. The UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow creates a new momentum to foster international collaboration, and much can be achieved if Europe and Israel join the efforts.

Over the past decade, Israel earned the title "Start-up nation", excelling in innovation aimed at solving

The evidence is clear. In August, the world's scientists concluded once again that immediate action is needed. Climate change is uncomfortably close to all our daily realities no matter where we live. It is already triggering the climate disasters we saw this summer, putting the survival of many species at risk and soon rendering certain parts of the Earth uninhabitable to humans.

global challenges. As a true innovation powerhouse, Israel is home to over 1,200 climate innovation companies, and a leader in agriculture and water management, reforestation, smart farming, solar energy, and alternative protein production. Israel loses only 3% of its water due to leaks in urban water systems and has secured its supply in a rapidly drying up region, thanks to its advanced desalination and wastewater reuse technology.

By working with Israeli scientists and start-ups to address climate change, Europe stands to gain from this innovation ecosystem jointly developing game-changing solutions in the field. In fact, many innovative ideas brought forward by Israeli researchers came to life thanks to the EU Horizon 2020, the biggest research and innovation funding programme in the world, from which Israel benefits as one of the most active and longstanding non-EU associated partner.

Europe's global leadership on climate change through the 'Green Deal' is a new opportunity for closer cooperation with Israel's booming green-tech sector, for the benefit and the stability of the entire region. Negotiations over Israel's participation in the EU's new €96bn Horizon Europe programme (Horizon 2020's successor) have recently been concluded positively, with an agreement to be signed by the end of the year.

EU's Green Deal and Israel's innovative drive make them natural partners in the efforts to transform into modern, resource-efficient, and competitive economies. As a growing number of countries in

the Middle East normalize their relations with Israel, the EU is uniquely positioned to help foster new cross-border partnerships in the region, necessary to address the climate challenge. A closer collaboration with Europe can also help Israel improve its climate governance, strengthen green finance and the renewable sector. We must see it as it really is - a unique opportunity to jointly shape a common future based on the shared EU-Israeli environmental values, the EU green deal and Israel's spirit of innovation.

We now need a systemic and exponential change away from fossil fuels. It is good for our health, our households, our crops, our water, our jobs and our economies. This will require the support of world leaders and pressure from citizens. Every action counts: how we vote, what we eat, how we travel.

**JUST HOW DAMAGING
CLIMATE CHANGE WILL BE
IS IN OUR HANDS**

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