



POLICY MATTERS

*ELNET-Israel's Monthly Review of Activities and Analysis
on Europe - Israel related matters*

Latest Activities This Month



first delegation in the years since diplomatic tensions between the countries. The delegates met with the President of the State of Israel, received an official warm welcome from the Speaker of the Knesset on the Knesset Plenary floor. The MPs also descended into an attack tunnel built by the Hezbollah terror group armed by Iran, which was of especial relevancy to the Polish parliamentarians as the Russian army is currently being armed with attack drones by Iran. Additionally, given the Ukrainian refugee crisis in Poland, the delegates learned about Israeli Emergency and Crisis Management expertise.

The delegation came to re-establish the Poland-Israel Friendship Group of the Knesset, and since the delegation, the Knesset is already working on the matter. Following the visit, the MPs are preparing a report to present to the Parliament, and have demanded a meeting with the Polish MFA to understand why it voted against Israel at the UN.

Elnet hosted a delegation of newly elected MPs from France's President Macron's majority group, many of whom have never visited Israel before. The delegation includes several members of the foreign affairs committee and defense committee, groups that work closely with Israel on a regular basis.

ELNET in the Press



ELNET brings historic delegation of Polish MPs to Israel

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Polish parliament delegation visits Israel 'to reinstate warm diplomatic ties'

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לראשונה זה ארבע שנים: משלחת מהפרלמנט הפולני ביקרה בישראל

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ELNET brings delegation of new French MPs to Israel

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Will EU-Israel Association Council proceed with warming ties?



إسرائيل وبولندا.. في مواجهة "روسيا وإيران"

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WHY IT MATTERS

Dear Friends,

This is the first monthly newsletter of ELNET Israel, which begins with the Year 2023. In it, you will receive an editorial-type of analysis on Israel-Europe relations as well as a summary of our office's activities.

As you know, I was appointed Executive Director of ELNET Israel on the 1st of January 2023. Filling this position is both an honor and a responsibility. I intend to solidify and increase our office's activities thanks to its outstanding and dedicated team. We are building new partnerships to expand our strategic dialogues and our delegations.

I also come to ELNET Israel with a strategy: one of leveraging the Abraham Accords and the war in Ukraine to the benefit of Israel's relations with Europe. While originally dismissed by many European decision and opinion makers as an insignificant gimmick and as a diversion from the Palestinian issue, the Abraham Accords are now recognized as a paradigm shift.

Thanks in part to ELNET – which, in 2022, organized events on the Abraham Accords in Paris in May, in London in November, and in Jerusalem in December – more and more European politicians, businesspeople, academics and journalists are reconsidering their approach to the Middle East. They now realize that normalization between Israel and Arab countries, far from being incompatible with the search of a political settlement between Israel and the Palestinians, can in fact produce joint economic projects that shall benefit the Palestinian economy. Europeans also increasingly understand that economic partnerships between Israel and countries like Morocco and the UAE can help alleviate the energy and food crises that have hit Europe with the war in Ukraine.

Morocco is the world's largest producer and exporter of phosphates – which are used as fertilizers – and Israel has developed cutting-edge technologies for agricultural productivity and for water-saving irrigation. Joint agricultural projects between Israel and Morocco can be built together with European companies. Israel is also an exporter of natural gas, and it can therefore help Europe wean itself from Russian gas. Indeed, the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen has recently signed with Israel an agreement for the supply of Israeli gas to the European Union (EU). This gas will be exported as liquefied natural gas (LNG) thanks to a partnership between Israel and Egypt (Israel does not have liquefaction plants for natural gas, but Egypt does). While neither Morocco nor Egypt are technically signatories of the Abraham Accords (which refer specifically to the normalization agreements signed between Israel, the UAE, and

benefit.

If normalization between Israel and the Arab states constitute a paradigm shift in the Middle East and in North Africa, so does the Ukraine war in Europe. German chancellor Olaf Scholz has described this war as a *Zeitenwende*, or historical shift. In Europe, the “end of history” is over. As Europe is militarily threatened by Russia again, and as European governments increase their military spendings, Israeli technology is in high demand. Yet military partnerships between Israel and Europe require a proactive approach. ELNET is proud to have contributed its part in the broader context of an important military agreement between Germany and Israel. Likewise, the upgrade of military ties between Russia and Iran have contributed to a rapprochement between Europe and Israel. Here also, however, only a proactive approach can produce tangible results. Thanks much in part to ELNET’s recent delegation of Polish parliamentarians to Israel, relations between Israel and Poland appear to be on the mend. This necessary and welcome shift was critical precisely because Poland stands at the forefront of NATO and of EU support for Ukraine’s war effort.

While ELNET Israel intends to proactively leverage the Abraham Accords and the *Zeitenwende* to the benefit of Israel’s relations with Europe, it is no secret that the new Israeli coalition is not of the liking of most European governments. This new political constellation creates a challenge that cannot be ignored. As a bipartisan and non-political organization, ELNET shall not take sides in the controversies that divide Israel society. But it shall explain to European public opinions the nature and reasons of those controversies. Precisely because Israeli-European relations are challenged by recent political developments in Israel, ELNET is going to be more needed than ever. We intend to rise to the challenge with professionalism and with dedication.

In the name of ELNET Israel, I wish to thank you for your support. I expect to work with each and everyone of you to bring our organization to new heights.

Sincerely,
Emmanuel Navon

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

- First delegation of MPs from the Czech Republic
- Mini -Delegation of French MPs on advanced video technologies
- First Delegation from Romania
- Delegation of French MPs from the Republican Party

ELNET'S 3rd International Policy Conference

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