

## ELNET-Israel's Monthly Newsletter

*A Review of Activities & Analysis on Europe-Israel Related Matters*

### *Europe's Evolving Political Map*

Dr. Emmanuel Navon, CEO of ELNET-Israel



*Dear Friends,*

With the beginning of the Jewish year, and as we enter the last quarter of 2023, ELNET-Israel is planning ahead and getting ready for new challenges. One of them is the changing political map in Europe and the need to address a resurgent far-right. As an apolitical organization working with mainstream European politicians, ELNET does not associate with political parties that are openly racist or antisemitic, reject the basic tenets of Western democracies, or praise autocrats. At the same time, some parties evolve, and we must remain watchful of those evolutions if we wish to seize new opportunities for Israel in Europe, without compromising on our core values and principles...

*Read Full Analysis Below*

### *ELNET Activities This Month*



*ELNET-Israel CEO Emmanuel Navon speaking at the ICT Summit on NGOs and terrorism*



*Panel discussion co-hosted by ELNET and NGO Monitor at the ICT Summit*



*ELNET arranges meeting for Belgian MP Theo Francken and Israel's NSA Tzahi Hanegbi*



*ELNET-Israel CEO meets with new UK Ambassador to Israel Simon Walters*



*ELNET-Israel CEO meets with German Ambassador to Israel Steffen Seibert*



*ELNET-Israel meets with new French Ambassador to Israel Frederic Journeaux*



*ELNET-Israel CEO with founder of 1st UAE Holocaust museum Ahmed Obaid Almansoori*



*ELNET hosts the latest round of the Strasbourg Forum*



*ELNET's GINSUM program brings biggest delegation of Israelis to Germany*



*ELNET's innovation program GIHF-AI hosts its second annual conference in Germany*



*The Israeli GINSUM delegates tour Germany's Smart Hospital*



**Panel at ICT Summit:** ELNET co-sponsored a panel session at the International Institute for Counter Terrorism (ICT)'s World Summit on Counter Terrorism, together with NGO Monitor. The session, titled 'NGOs and Terrorism: A Double-Edged Sword' began with opening words from ELNET-Israel's CEO, **Dr. Emmanuel Navon** and NGO Monitor's President, **Professor Gerald Steinberg**. The panelists included Belgian **MP Theo Francken**, ELNET's guest and a former delegate; Former MK **Dr. Einat Wilf**, member of ELNET-Israel's Board; Head of the Israel Money Laundering and Terror Financing Prohibition Authority **Adv. Ilit Ostrovitch-Levi**, and moderator NGO Monitor Vice President **Olga Israel Deutsch**. The panel also included a pre-recorded video message from ELNET's guest, panelist **MEP Antonio López-Istúriz White**. The discussion focused on the delicate balance between democratic countries providing a sacred space for NGOs and civil society to operate in, and between combating the threat of terrorism, in particular the challenges in targeting such terrorist activity that exploits NGOs for terror purposes. Given that the challenges plague Israel as well as Europe, increased partnership can serve to combat these shared threats to free societies.

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**Ambassador Meetings:** During the month of September, ELNET-Israel had meetings with key European ambassadors to Israel. As such, ELNET-Israel's CEO Dr. Emmanuel Navon met with the new **Ambassador of the UK to Israel, Simon Walters**, as well as the **Ambassador of Germany to Israel, Steffen Seibert**. Together with the directors of ELNET's delegations and strategic dialogue programs, Dr. Navon also met with the new **Ambassador of France to Israel, Frederic Journes**. ELNET looks forward to working together with all three ambassadors, and to continued fruitful collaborations with their embassies.

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**Strasbourg Forum:** The latest iteration of ELNET's Strasbourg Forum was held in Strasbourg this month. The Forum brings together experts and policymakers from Germany and France to discuss two key strategic issues:

1. The Iranian challenge and its implications for Europe and the Middle East, in particular Israel.
2. Cooperation between Europe and Israel in the face of the new world order.

ELNET-Israel's CEO partook in the event, speaking on the issue of the new world order and the opportunities for Europe stemming from the Abraham Accords.

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**GINSUM Delegation and GIHF-AI Conference:** Through its innovation projects GINSUM and GIHF-AI, ELNET brought the biggest delegation of Israelis to Germany this month. The GINSUM (the German Network of Startups and Mittelstand) delegation, which included 30 Israeli healthcare experts, innovation managers, startups, and representatives of the Israeli Ministry of Health, came to partake in the 2nd annual GIHF-AI (German Israeli Health Forum for Artificial Intelligence) Conference on digital health and AI, hosted this year in Germany. During their visit, and in collaboration with the Israeli Ministry of Health, Business Metropole Ruhr GmbH, and Health IL, the delegation also had high-level meetings, met with key German and Israeli figures, and visited Germany's renowned University Hospital Charité. The delegates also participated in the Big Bang Health Festival, a major healthcare event, where ELNET hosted panels, masterclasses, and an "Israel Corner," for attendees to gain firsthand exposure to Israeli innovation.

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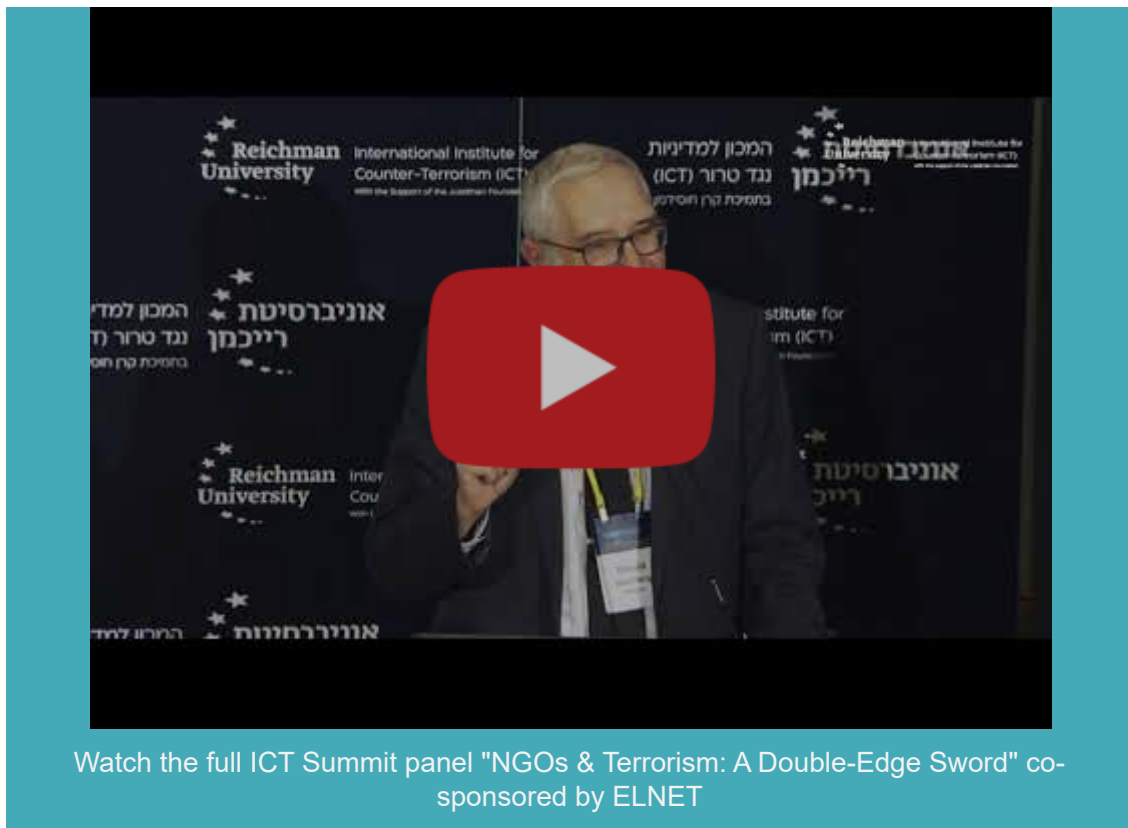
**Combating Antisemitism Event:** ELNET-Israel's CEO Emmanuel Navon spoke at an event hosted by Combat Antisemitism Movement (CAM) honoring **Ahmed Obaid Almansoori** for opening the first Holocaust museum in the UAE. In his talk, Dr. Navon highlighted the stark contrast between Ahmed's inspirational work, and the recent despicable antisemitic speech by Mahmoud Abbas. Dr. Navon explained that a new generation of Arabs in the Middle East relate to Jews in a more positive light, unlike past generations who were influenced by age-old antisemitic tropes that originated in Europe. The event was attended by ELNET-Israel board members Ambassador Dani Dayan, Chairman of Yad Vashem, and Brig. Gen. (Res.) Sima Vaknin-Gill who is also a board member of CAM, in addition to the Ambassadors to Israel of Belgium, Croatia, and Kosovo, as well as Dr. Nir Boms of the Becker Foundation.

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**'A Window Into Europe' Webinar:** ELNET gave a presentation on the European arena in an online webinar titled 'A Window into Europe', hosted by the Civil Society Forum.

ELNET-Israel team members shared about the work ELNET does to promote stronger ties between Europe and Israel through parliamentary delegations, strategic dialogues, and more.

## Latest Videos



## ELNET in the Press

**THE TIMES OF ISRAEL** THE BLOG Pascaline Wagemans

### Europe is repositioning itself and becoming more active on Israeli-Arab normalization

SEP 14, 2023, 3:11 PM

As the Abraham Accords came about in 2020, the EU and its members felt an initial reticence to join in on the shared euphoria. While the UK, Israel and the U.S. quickly set up their own cross-partisan caucuses to advance the newly achieved Israeli-Arab normalization agreements, most national parliaments in Europe, as well as the European Parliament, took a more conservative approach and postponed such gestures. Mainly, Europeans feared the Accords would bypass the Palestinians, who vehemently opposed them, even though they suspended annexation.

FACEBOOK  
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#### Europe

### Germany Set to Begin Reconstruction of Historic Synagogue, 80 Years After Nazi Destruction

During Kristallnacht, the imposing structure, which was dedicated in

#### Times of Israel

### [Europe is Repositioning Itself and Becoming More Active on Israeli-Arab Normalization](#)

Op-Ed by Director of ELNET's Forum of Strategic Dialogue, Pascaline Wagemans

#### Haaretz

### [Germany Set to Begin Reconstruction of Historic Synagogue, 80 Years After Nazi Destruction](#)

ELNET mentioned

## Europe's Evolving Political Map

Dr. Emmanuel Navon, CEO of ELNET-Israel



With the beginning of the Jewish year, and as we enter the last quarter of 2023, ELNET-Israel is planning ahead and getting ready for new challenges. One of them is the changing political map in Europe and the need to address a resurgent far-right. As an apolitical organization working with mainstream European politicians, ELNET does not associate with political parties that are openly racist or antisemitic, reject the basic tenets of Western democracies, or praise autocrats. At the same time, some parties evolve, and we must remain watchful of those evolutions if we wish to seize new opportunities for Israel in Europe, without compromising on our core values and principles.

This was one of the topics discussed during a recent ELNET online policy briefing with Yad Vashem Chairman and ELNET board member Ambassador Dani Dayan. The briefing took place shortly after Israel's Ambassador to Romania met with George Simion, leader of the far-right Alliance for the Union of Romanians (AUR) party. AUR opposed COVID vaccines in 2020 and called Holocaust education a "minor topic" in 2022, the year it was mandated in Romanian high schools. Some AUR leaders have even defended Romanians who served in the regime of Romanian dictator and Hitler ally, Ion Antonescu.

AUR did not meet Yad Vashem's demand to acknowledge the fact that Romania not only collaborated with Nazi Germany but also initiated the mass killing of Jews. In January 2023, after the Bucharest City Council refused to remove a bust honoring the finance minister in the country's pro-Nazi government during World War Two, one AUR parliamentarian accused the Elie Wiesel Institute for the Study of the Holocaust in Romania of "rewriting Romanian history and demolishing the cult of its heroes and martyrs." We at ELNET-Israel think that the meeting between Israel's ambassador and the AUR leader should not have taken place. It stained Israel's reputation and undermined Israel's relations with Romania.

Other problematic European parties, however, have evolved. But where should the line be drawn between legitimate and illegitimate European parties? To answer this question, let us first better understand the far-right phenomenon in Europe.

In Hungary, Italy, and Poland, hard-right parties are in power. In Finland, Sweden and Switzerland they have joined government coalitions. In Germany, polls put the far-right Alternative for Germany (or AfD) party at 22% (more than double its 2021 electoral result). In France, Marine Le Pen's National Rally has the support of a quarter of voters, and Mrs. Le Pen could possibly win the presidential election of 2017. In Poland the ultra-conservative Law and Justice party is leading the polls for the upcoming election on October 15th and is challenged on its right by the even more radical Confederation party.

Of the European Union (EU)'s 27 member states, 15 have hard-right parties that enjoy the support of about 20% of voters. Neither mainstream European parties nor Israel can reasonably ignore the voice of 20% of European voters in the name of democracy. Indeed, the cordon sanitaire around Germany's AfD has reinforced its narrative of being the only alternative to the mainstream parties.

Moreover, some hard-right parties have become more pragmatic and moderate once in power. This has been the case with Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, whose "Brothers of Italy" party was described as far-right before winning the 2022 election. Since assuming office, however, Mrs. Meloni's policies have been mostly mainstream conservative. Her economic policy is prudent and in tune with the guidelines of the European Union. Her foreign policy is staunchly pro-NATO and supportive of Ukraine. Even on immigration, her government has toned down its rhetoric. Hard-right parties in northern

Europe have shown similar signs of relative moderation: Finland's "The Finns" and Sweden's "Sweden Democrats" have mellowed once in government. Marine Le Pen's party no longer advocates leaving the EU.

While Israel should be aware of those evolutions, it should also have three clear criteria regarding hard-right European parties: a. They should accept the IHRA definition of antisemitism and recognize (when applicable) their country's role in the Holocaust, b. They should be supportive of the EU's founding principles such as respect for human rights and the rule of law, c. They should not identify with Russia, glorify authoritarian rulers, or undermine Western solidarity. Another relevant measurement for Israel is the affiliation of parties at the European parliament. A clear line must be drawn between the moderate conservative "European People's Party" (EPP) and the conservative "European Conservative and Reformists" (ECR) on the one hand, and the "Identity and Democracy" (ID) group on the other hand. The latter (which includes France's "National Rally" and Italy's "Lega") should be considered off-limits. This, in any case, is ELNET's policy.

ELNET shall continue to be both principled and informed when dealing with Europe's evolving political map, with the aim of improving Israel-Europe relations based on shared interests and common values.

## UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

- First E3 Strategic Dialogue in the UK
- ELNET-UK PTSD and trauma event together with United Hatzala
- GINSUM's 3rd German-Israel Space Forum
- German State MPs delegation
- French Senators delegation
- Young European Leaders delegation
- German-Israel Strategic Dialogue
- First Defense Delegation from the Baltic States
- EU-Israel Strategic Dialogue

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