

# **Czech-Israeli Intergovernmental Consultations**

## **Joint Statement**

On May 22, 2016, the Governments of the Czech Republic and the State of Israel held the 4<sup>th</sup> Intergovernmental consultations chaired by the Prime Minister of the Czech Republic Mr. Bohuslav Sobotka and the Prime Minister of the State of Israel Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu.

The 4th Intergovernmental consultations reflected the strong basis of the longstanding cooperation and mutual interest in further deepening the Strategic Partnership between both countries. Both Governments affirm their emphasis on strengthening the key areas of cooperation and appraise the outstanding level of bilateral ties based on bonds of friendship and trust. Both sides appreciate the level and intensity of bilateral dialogue conducted on regular basis and at the highest possible level.

Both sides also appreciate the rising trend of cooperation in new areas, such as cyber security, science, technology and innovation. The Governments emphasize their ambition to further support upgrading the existing cooperation and stress their aspiration to expand joint cooperation in new areas.

**The following Government members took part in the consultations:**

**On the Czech side:**

Prime Minister, H.E. Mr. Bohuslav Sobotka; Minister of Industry and Trade, Mr. Jan Mládek; Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Mrs. Michaela Marksová; Minister of Health, Mr. Svatopluk Němeček; Minister of Education, Youth and Sports, Mrs. Kateřina Valachová; Minister of Regional Development, Mrs. Karla Šlechtová; Minister of the Environment, Mr. Richard Brabec; Minister of Culture, Mr. Daniel Herman; Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Martin Tlapa; Director of the National Security Authority, Mr. Dušan Navrátil

**On the Israeli side:**

Prime Minister, H.E. Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu; Minister of national infrastructure Energy and Water, Mr. Yuval Steinitz; Minister of Welfare and Social Services, Mr. Haim Katz; Minister of Culture and Sport, Mrs. Miri Regev; Minister of Science, Technology and Space, Mr. Ofir Akonis; Minister of Tourism, Mr. Yariv Levin; Minister of Environmental Protection, Mr. Avi Gabbay; Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Director General), Dr. Dore Gold; Ministry of Economy (Director General), Mr. Amit Lang; Ministry of Health (Director General), Mr. Moshe Bar Siman Tov; National Cyber Defense Authority, Mr. Buki Carmeli

## **Foreign Affairs**

The Government of the Czech Republic and the Government of the State of Israel share history and common values that are the basis of the unique, strong and deep-rooted ties between the countries. Both governments are determined to further enhance their Strategic Partnership and reaffirm their joint aim to further strengthen bilateral relations based on longstanding friendship and mutual trust.

Both Governments welcome the continually growing intensity of the high-level as well as experts and working level visits exchange with special emphasis on bolstering economic, science & technology, cyber, defence, security and cultural cooperation.

Both sides stress their interest to continue holding the bi-annual Intergovernmental Consultations for solidifying joint cooperation and setting new targets in all key areas. Similarly, both sides highly value the regular holding of the Czech-Israeli Forum, which provides an important platform for mutual exchange of information on strategic and security related issues concerning the latest developments in the Middle East and Europe.

Both sides emphasize the need to further develop strong relations between Israel and the European Union and to continue cooperation on economic, scientific, research and development, regional and security strategic areas.

In the United Nations and other international organizations, the Czech Republic and the State of Israel will jointly promote the values upon which both states were founded. In that respect, the Czech Republic and the State of Israel will continue to cooperate closely.

Both sides share the belief that a just and lasting solution to the Israeli – Palestinian conflict must and can be reached as a result of direct negotiations.

Both Governments strongly oppose any manifestation of de-legitimization and boycotts of Israel and stay committed to cooperate on global and regional level. Both Governments reiterate their strong commitment to human rights and to the fight against all forms of intolerance and racial discrimination, including anti-Semitism. Both Governments strongly affirm that any challenge to the right of existence of the State of Israel is unacceptable. Both sides expressed their hope for Israel's peaceful coexistence with all its neighbours.

Both sides note with satisfaction the successful implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding for the Establishment of Bilateral Consultations signed between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Israel on 25 November 2014 in Jerusalem. Both sides will continue regular consultations by Senior Officials of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs on regional and international issues, exchange views on matters of mutual concern and promote their bilateral cooperation in political, economic and trade, scientific and technological, cultural and other fields.

Both sides decided to enhance and extend the existing political dialogue between Ministries of Foreign Affairs also on the platform of the Visegrad Countries with Israel.

Both Governments welcome the current efforts to facilitate the employment of spouses of diplomatic and consular staff outside their diplomatic missions in their respective States.

### **Economy, Trade, Investments, Infrastructure, and Energy**

Both Governments appreciate the intensive economic and trade cooperation, which is founded on a solid legal and institutional framework. The trade exchange has been developing positively over the last decade.

The State of Israel is a major trading partner of the Czech Republic in the Mediterranean region and belongs to the main export destinations of Czech products outside the European Union. The CzechTrade office was established in Tel Aviv and has been successfully promoting entrepreneurial projects, especially the SMEs, for the third consecutive year.

Having reviewed the trade relations and bearing in mind that the volume of trade in 2015 lacked slightly behind the level of the record year 2012, both Governments are interested in further expansion and diversification of trade and investments flows on a mutually advantageous basis. In this regard, both Governments welcome the Czech business mission organized on the fringes of the Intergovernmental Consultations and the Czech-Israeli Business Forum held today in Jerusalem.

Both Governments will focus on fostering business friendly environment in all areas of common interest including incentives for direct investments, favorable taxations as well as an active approach to joint new platforms for entrepreneurship and innovation

e.g. industrial / technological parks, trade, exhibitions, forums, seminars or numerous business meetings.

Both Governments confirm their ongoing intention to further encourage the bilateral agricultural trade with the goal of expanding the agricultural trade flows. The Governments are ready to continue their efforts in removing existing administrative and technical barriers to trade.

Both sides stress their interest in deepening the cooperation in transport infrastructure and will consider launching collaboration in the field of space activities, lightweight satellites and intelligent systems.

The Governments note the importance of promotion and facilitation of cooperation and information exchange in the field of advanced energy technologies, providing a high standard of energy security and resilience of energy infrastructure to end consumers and reducing energy intensity of both economies. Both Governments declared ongoing efforts to enhance the successful cooperation in these areas and prioritize their efforts to involve Czech and Israeli businesses and research institutions in energy sector.

## **Science, Research and Technology**

The Czech Republic and the State of Israel both view favorably the implementation of the Joint Declaration by Deputy Prime Minister for Science, Research and Innovation of the Czech Republic and the Ministry of Science, Technology and Space of the State of Israel on Cooperation in the Field of Research and Development signed on 25 November 2014 in Jerusalem (hereafter referred as the Joint Declaration).

The Governments appreciate the long-standing cooperation in the area of fundamental and applied research that will continue to be supported by the new programme INTER-EXCELLENCE administrated by the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.

The current cooperation is ensured i.a. by a joint call for proposal in the area of fundamental research and industrial research with the implementation period in 2016 - 2018 that has been recently announced and carried out simultaneously by the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Science, Technology and Space of the State of Israel in accordance with the Joint Declaration.

The Governments welcome the appointment of a first Scientific, R&D and Innovation Attaché of the Czech Republic to Israel whose mission is to reinforce closer cooperation in R&D between the Czech Republic and the State of Israel and to facilitate joint R&D projects. The Government of the Czech Republic welcomes the establishment of the National Authority for Technology and Innovation of the State of Israel and affirms its readiness to initiate cooperation with the new Partner.

The Governments are ready to continue their efforts in supporting bilateral cooperation in the field of science and technology through jointly developed R&D programmes in fundamental and applied research and through research projects undertaken by research organizations and companies from the Czech Republic and the State of Israel in wide spectrum of scientific fields including life sciences, new materials, biotechnology, ICT, nanotechnology, etc.

Both Governments reiterate their intention to strengthen joint participation in the EU-Framework Programme “Horizon 2020” and other international R&D initiatives.

Both Governments suggest to promote closer cooperation in the fields of fundamental and applied research, transfer of modern technologies, transfer of experiences within programmes to support venture capital and commercialization of R&D (proof of concept), technology incubators, innovative business and start-ups with the involvement of innovation centers from both countries.

The appropriate authorities are ready to initiate discussion on opportunities for Czech researchers’ visits to I-CORE centres.

Both Governments appreciate the signing of the Joint Declaration by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic, and the Ministry of Science, Technology and Space of the State of Israel.

## **Development Cooperation**

The Governments express the wish to enhance their bilateral cooperation in the area of the international development cooperation in the territories and sectors of mutual interest and focus. This cooperation will be conducted through the Czech Development Agency (“CzDA”) and the Israel’s Agency for International Development Cooperation („MASHAV“).

Objectives and modalities of their cooperation will be based on the Declaration of Intent on International Development Cooperation between MASHAV and CzDA.

## **Defence and National Security**

Continuing the tradition of close bilateral defence ties, the Governments of both states are cooperating in number of related activities and are further working on opening new areas of joint interest. The Ministries of Defence have recently established joint working groups aimed at discussing and preparing joint projects in the area of defence industry, teaming scientists, companies and militaries in collaborative environment. Other projects between the two militaries are also being prepared, carefully assessing effectiveness and expertise on both sides. The Defence Ministries also continue close relations in terms of exchange of views, opinions and information on current international security environment.

The joint activities in the fight against terrorism and organised crime, and in the fight against radicalisation, the joint activities in the area of the protection and strengthening resistance of the so-called soft targets and in the area of cyber security and cyber criminality and illegitimate foreign influences will be developed according to the Agreement between the Czech Republic and the State of Israel on Cooperation in the Fight against Crime, which was signed in Jerusalem on 7 October 2013.

## **Cyber Security**

Recalling the Joint Declaration between the Government of the Czech Republic and the Government of the State of Israel in the field of Cyber Security signed in Jerusalem on 25 November 2014, the Governments seek to further enhance their cooperation in cyber security and combating cyber-crime.

To this aim, the respective national authorities and agencies are encouraged to share information on cyber security incidents, cyber security threats and threat actors; information on laws, regulations, security standards, national strategies on cyber security and protection of critical information infrastructure; information on national cyber security education and security awareness programmes and initiatives. Furthermore, they will facilitate mutual internships and trainings, develop and execute cyber security exercises.

As the cyber security is discussed at various international fora, the Governments will consider to promote the establishment of a group of like-minded countries in order to co-ordinate common approaches.

In the field of public-private partnership, the Governments will promote co-operation between private sector, academic and research institutions and common research and development projects.

Both Governments appreciate the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the National Security Authority of the Czech Republic and the National Cyber Security Authority which will provide a framework of cooperation.

In order to enhance business co-operation in the field of cyber security, the national authorities will in close co-operation with the private sector initiate a cyber security seminar which will be hosted in Prague as a follow up of the Intergovernmental consultations.

## **Holocaust Remembrance**

The Governments think highly of the efforts of the respective authorities and institutions to ensure continued in-service training of teachers, focusing upon the period of the Second World War, the Holocaust/Shoah legacy, the tragic fate of the Czech Jewish community as well as Nazi atrocities targeted at other groups and individuals who fell victim to the Nazi persecution in the former Czechoslovakia.

The Governments hold in high regard the dedication and assiduous work of academic institutions pursuing research, collecting evidence and preserving memory of the most tragic period in modern human history, and view favorably a possible collaboration between the International Institute for Holocaust Research of Yad Vashem and scholars and academic institutions in the Czech Republic.

The Governments appreciate the continued co-operation between the Yad Vashem Holocaust Martyrs and Heroes Remembrance Authority in Jerusalem, the Terezin Memorial and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic aimed at in-service training of teachers in regard to the history of the Holocaust and antisemitism. They commend the initiative of the Yad Vashem and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic in organizing new in-service training seminars for secondary school teachers, which took place on 19 January 2015 in Ceske Budejovice and on 29 February 2016 in Liberec. The



Governments have also noted the intention of the Lidice memorial and Yad Vashem to cooperate on projects to promote common goals, as outlined in a joint declaration signed on 25 November 2014 in Jerusalem between the Ministry of Education of the State of Israel, the Czech Ministry of Culture and Yad Vashem.

The Governments view favorably the well-developed long-term cooperation between Yad Vashem and the Jewish Museum in Prague, the Czech Republic's most important Jewish memory institution, as well as the recent development of cooperation between Yad Vashem and Shoah Memorial Bubny, a new Shoah memorial in Prague.

Both Governments acknowledge the important role of the European Shoah Legacy Institute (ESLI) created in 2010. The Czech Republic and the State of Israel are currently the major financial supporters of its activities. Both sides congratulate the newly appointed Coordinator on Combating Anti-Semitism by the European Commission, including her engagement with ESLI and its activities aimed at promoting the implementation of the Terezin Declaration in Europe. Both sides view favorably the intention to hold an international conference on restitution in Brussels in November 2016.

## **Higher Education**

Both Governments appreciate the long-standing co-operation between the Czech Republic and the State of Israel in the area of higher education. Both sides highlight the significance of promoting direct partnerships of higher education institutions in the Czech Republic and the State of Israel.

The Governments note with satisfaction that a successful scholarship exchange continues between the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Israel, pursuant to the intergovernmental Programme of Co-operation in the Field of Education, Science and Culture.

The Governments underline the importance of maintaining the current level of scholarship exchanges.

Both Governments express satisfaction with the ongoing academic cooperation between the Theodor Herzl Chair at Masaryk University (Brno) and the Tomas Garrigue Masaryk Chair at the IDC (Herzliya).

## **Youth**

The State of Israel and the Czech Republic attach great importance to strengthening the relations between young people in both countries. In that regard, they express their intent to promote cooperation in the field of youth exchange.

The Governments commend the existing level of co-operation between non-governmental youth organisations, in particular the exchange project implemented by the Czech Children and Youth Council and the Council of Youth Movement in Israel (CYMI), the recently established co-operation between the Czech Children and Youth Council and the Israel Youth Exchange Authority as well as projects undertaken within the EU Integrated Erasmus+ Programme. The Governments emphasize the significance of direct co-operation between non-governmental youth organizations.

Both Governments appreciate the support devoted by the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports to the “Cemach” project implemented in the Czech Republic in the years 2012 – 2015.

The Governments appreciate the signing of the Agreement between the Government of the Czech Republic and the Government of the State of Israel concerning a Working Holiday Programme on 8 June 2015. In offering hands-on experience of life and culture in the partner country, the Agreement has a considerable potential to promote friendly ties between young generations.

## **Social Affairs**

The Governments welcome the upcoming start of cooperation between the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic and the Ministry for Social Equality of the State of Israel which will be implemented through exchange of knowledge and best practices.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic and the Ministry of Welfare and Social Services of the State of Israel will continue and further develop fruitful cooperation established in the previous years. Issues of social services and social work are traditional topic of exchange of experience and best practices between the Czech Republic and the State of Israel. Apart from the relevant Ministries, participation of municipalities or possibly the non-governmental sector will be considered. The Governments welcome the International Conference on Welfare for Holocaust Survivors and Other Victims of Nazi

Persecution, which was organized on 26-27 May 2015 in Prague with support of the Ministry for Senior Citizens of the State of Israel and under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic.

## **Health**

The Governments, through their respective Ministries of Health, wish to further develop mutual cooperation and an exchange of best practices on health issues. The development of the relationships between the ministries' senior professional officials will be based primarily on the Joint Declaration on cooperation in the fields of health and medicine for the years 2014 – 2019.

## **Environmental protection**

The Governments wish to strengthen their cooperation in the field of environmental protection, particularly with focus on water management, including protection of water resources, rehabilitation of streams and waste water treatment; solid waste management and the development of a circular economy; climate change mitigation and adaptation; and development and dissemination of clean environmental technologies.

Both sides recognize the increasing importance of water related environmental issues (water scarcity, droughts, floods) and they expressed wish to continue and develop further cooperation in this regard, e.g. by preparing joint events, seminars or workshops, aiming at supporting sustainable management of water resources.

## **Culture**

The Governments welcome deepening of cultural cooperation and strengthening of cultural links between the Czech Republic and the State of Israel, both on the level of contacts between institutions of both countries and through concrete projects.

The Governments acknowledge the progress in negotiation of the Agreement on Film Co-production and express their wish to reach mutually balanced compromised text of the Agreement.

Both sides recognize the attention paid to issues coping with the past as well as to the culture of remembrance and welcome steps leading to further strengthening of cooperation in this field both in the Czech Republic and the State of Israel.

Both Governments commend the variety of cultural activities which take place in the Czech Republic and the State of Israel on annual basis . Both sides will encourage the further strengthening of cooperation in cultural area.

Both Governments welcome the signing of the Programme of Co-operation in the Field of Education, Science and Culture for the years 2016-2019.

## **Tourism**

The Governments are ready to encourage and support bilateral cooperation in the field of tourism through collaborative cooperation on participation of tourism organizations of both parties at key tourism fairs.

Both sides are prepared to cooperate in improving the bilateral arrival of tourists and the active promotion of tourism products.

The Governments, through their respective Tourism Authority and relevant organizations, wish to develop mutual cooperation in the field of spa and medical tourism, welcome the promotion by the Czech spa operators in obtaining the possibility of ensuring Therapeutic stays for employees of state institutions of Israel, to be promoted by the Czech authorities in cooperation with the Israeli Authorities.

Both sides concur on the exchange experience and information between them in the field of marketing of tourism products.

Both Governments welcome the signing of the Joint Declaration of Intent on cooperation in tourism between The Ministry of Regional Development of the Czech Republic and The Ministry of Tourism of the State of Israel.

## **Conclusion**

The Governments appreciate the outcome of the 4th Intergovernmental consultations between the Czech Republic and the State of Israel which demonstrates the strong basis of the Czech-Israeli Strategic Partnership and reflects the significantly broad and active cooperation and

mutual interest to further deepen the relations. Both Governments wish to continue holding the Government-to-Government dialogue and confirm conducting the next Intergovernmental consultations in 2018.

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H.E. Mr. Bohuslav Sobotka

Prime Minister of the Czech Republic

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H.E. Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu

Prime Minister of the State of Israel

**Jerusalem May 22, 2016**