

## **Czech-Israeli Intergovernmental Consultations**

### **Joint Statement**

On 25 November 2014 the Governments of the Czech Republic and the State of Israel held the third round of intergovernmental consultations. The Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, Mr. Bohuslav Sobotka, and the Prime Minister of the State of Israel, Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu, chaired the consultations and note with satisfaction the progress made in the relations between both states since the last consultations held on 17 May 2012.

Both Governments, mindful of the solid partnership that has been forged between them over the years, are determined to further strengthen their relations by expanding their joint work and cooperation in a wide range of areas.

The Governments emphasize their aspiration to further strengthen the relations based on a centuries-old affinity between the Czech and the Jewish peoples, sustained and enhanced by a large community of Israelis of Czech origin and a strong Jewish community in the Czech Republic that strives to preserve the Jewish tradition and heritage.

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

**On the Czech Republic side:** Prime Minister Mr. Bohuslav Sobotka; Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Science and Research and Innovation, Mr. Pavel Bělobrádek; Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Ms. Michaela Marksová-Tominová; Minister of Defence, Mr. Martin Stropnický; Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Marian Jurečka; Minister of Industry and Trade, Mr. Jan Mládek; Minister of Health, Mr. Svatopluk Němeček; Minister of Culture, Mr. Daniel Herman; First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Petr Drulák.

**On the Israeli side:** Prime Minister Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu; Minister of Defense, Mr. Moshe Ya'alon; Minister of Science Technology and Space, Mr. Yaakov Perry; Minister of Culture and Sport, Ms. Limor Livnat; Minister of Health, Ms. Yael German; Minister of Social Affairs and Services, Meir Cohen; Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Mr. Yair Shamir; Minister of Transportation and Road Safety, Mr. Yisrael Katz; Minister of Senior Citizens, Mr. Uri Orbach;

## **Foreign Affairs**

The unique strong and deep-rooted ties between the Czech Republic and the State of Israel are based on shared history and common values. Both Governments are determined to further enhance the bilateral relations and strategic partnership. Both Governments strongly affirm that calls for the destruction of the State of Israel and any denial of the Holocaust are wholly unacceptable. The Czech Republic supports the State of Israel's right to self-defense.

Both Governments express their hope for Israel's peaceful coexistence with its neighbors. In this context they reaffirm their commitment to work together towards a stabilization of the region and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. They strongly reaffirm the right of the State of Israel to ensure its security.

Both Governments reaffirm that the common values of democracy, freedom and the rule of law are the solid foundation for their partnership. They reiterate their strong commitment to human rights and to the fight against all forms of intolerance, including anti-Semitism, racial discrimination and xenophobia.

Both Governments emphasize the need to further develop mutual relations between Israel and the European Union and to continue cooperation on strategic and regional issues. 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.

The Government of the Czech Republic joins the Government of the State of Israel in its strong opposition of any manifestation of de-legitimization and boycotts against the State of Israel.

Both Sides share the belief that a just and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict must and can be reached only as a result of direct negotiations. Such a solution should be based on the principle of two states, embodying the rights of the Jewish and Palestinian peoples to self-determination, living side by side in peace, security and mutual recognition.

The two Governments, through their respective Ministries of Foreign Affairs, will continue to promote and elaborate the dialogue in the strategic, economic and research fields and have decided to enhance and extend the existing dialogue between the Ministries on both the political and professional levels. The two Governments express their satisfaction with the successful gatherings of the Czech-Israeli Forum. The Czech Side welcomes the willingness of the Israeli Side to organize the fourth meeting in Israel.

Both Governments welcome the commemorative events marking the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the restoration of diplomatic relations between the countries and of the historic visit of President Havel to the State of Israel.

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.

### **Bilateral Trade, Investment, Finance and Economic Cooperation**

Based on the solid foundation of actively-pursued pragmatic cooperation in the field of trade and economic development, the bilateral relations between the states have reached an advanced stage of long-term partnership at many levels.

Both Governments confirm the key role of trade for their economies and note with satisfaction the increased scope of their bilateral trade, in both exports and imports, during the last five years.

For the Czech Republic, Israel is a major trading partner in the Middle East, one of the main Czech export destinations outside the European Union. In order to further promote bilateral trade, the new CzechTrade office was opened in Tel Aviv in January 2014.

The Governments will work on expanding and diversifying the trade flows between the two countries and will encourage a higher level of bilateral trade on a mutually advantageous basis.

The Governments acknowledge the activities and cooperation of the Czech and Israeli chambers of commerce and the commercial sections of both embassies as a key impetus for the development of business relations.

The Government of Israel welcomes the Czech business and R&D mission accompanying the delegation of the Government of the Czech Republic. The Czech-Israeli Business and R&D Forum held on this occasion was an opportunity to strengthen contacts between entrepreneurs from both countries. In this context, readiness was expressed to issue a reciprocal invitation to an Israeli business mission during the next Intergovernmental Consultations.

The Governments are ready to continue their efforts in promoting a stable and favorable environment for mutual business investment and innovation activities.

Both Governments note that companies in their respective countries have developed innovative solutions in ITC, cyber-defense, agro-technology, HLS, new media and other hi-tech sectors and agreed to encourage further mutual cooperation in these fields.

The Government of the Czech Republic previously introduced a coherent and transparent policy for the promotion of investments, including favorable taxation and various incentives for direct foreign investments that are also applicable to Israeli companies operating in the Czech Republic. The benefits that Israeli companies may reap by participating in the development of technological parks and industrial zones in the Czech Republic were highlighted.

The Governments note the importance of creating partnerships between the respective business communities in order to enhance bilateral trade and economic relations. In light of this, both Governments attribute particular significance to innovation and high value-adding industries. The Governments have invited industries and companies to collaborate in joint initiatives such as industrial/technological parks and other investment opportunities in order to create new platforms for entrepreneurship and innovation in both markets. In this context, the Governments reaffirm the importance of the continued participation of governmental, academic and private sector parties in various business seminars and exhibitions in Israel, the Czech Republic and international events around the world.

### **Better Regulation**

The Governments both consider better regulation to be an important policy goal and will further promote cooperation and the exchange of best practices, including simplified regulation in the field of conducting business and reducing the bureaucratic burdens in this field.

### **Scientific, R&D and Technological Research**

The Governments are ready to encourage and support bilateral cooperation in the field of science and technology through jointly developed R&D programs and projects undertaken by research organizations and companies from the Czech Republic and the State of Israel in a wide spectrum of areas including basic sciences, bio- and nano-technologies, materials and life sciences, space research, etc.

The Governments intend to strengthen their joint participation in the EU-Framework Program “Horizon 2020” and in EUREKA. Special attention will be given to developing cooperation in new fields of technology.

The Governments welcome the signing of the Joint Declaration between the Minister of Science, Technology and Space of the State of Israel and the Deputy Prime Minister for Science and Innovation of the Czech Republic on Cooperation in the field of Research and Development.

## **Defense and National Security**

The Governments recognize that cooperation in the field of security and defense is a key area in Czech-Israeli relations. Bearing in mind the existing ties between both Ministries of Defense and the Principal Memorandum of Understanding (PMoU) on Military Cooperation signed in Tel Aviv in 2009, the Czech Republic and the State of Israel are determined to further advance and deepen the strategic cooperation between the Ministries of Defense, as detailed in the Joint Statement concerning bilateral defense and military cooperation signed by both Ministers of Defense.

The Governments are ready to strengthen and expand cooperation in the field of law enforcement, especially in the fight against all forms of organized crime and terrorism.

## **Cyber Security**

The Governments seek to strengthen their cooperation on cyber security and combating cyber-crime, and to expand knowledge, understanding and expertise of cyber security from technological, strategic, social, international and legal perspectives. They will cooperate to create a desirable situation in which potential interference with the authenticity, integrity and availability of data is reduced to a tolerable degree, along with any other harm to the participants in cyberspace. Both Parties welcome the signing of the Declaration of Intent between the Government of the State of Israel and the Government of the Czech Republic in the field of Cyber Security.

## **Holocaust Remembrance and Education**

The Governments declare that within their respective countries, they will make every effort to ensure that future generations will continue to commemorate the Holocaust of Europe's Jews and the destruction of the Czech Jewish community during the Second World War. The Governments are grateful to those Czechs who through their actions helped rescue Jews during the *Shoah*. Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority in Jerusalem, gathers testimonies on this subject and has to date awarded the title "Righteous among Nations" to 114 Czechs. Both

Governments agree to continue their efforts to locate, preserve and disseminate knowledge about Czech contributions to saving Jews during the Holocaust.

The Governments wish to continue to strengthen their cooperation in Holocaust education by training Czech teachers in Holocaust education both at Yad Vashem's International School for Holocaust Studies in Jerusalem and throughout the Czech Republic. Yad Vashem is working with various Czech partners, including the Terezín Memorial, the Lidice Memorial, the Jewish Museum of Prague, and the Terezín Initiative, to further their shared goals in Holocaust education.

The Governments also view favorably the development of cooperation between Yad Vashem and *Shoah* Memorial Bubny, a new *Shoah* memorial in Prague.

The Government of the State of Israel congratulates the Government of the Czech Republic for initiating the Prague Holocaust Era Assets Conference, leading to the Terezin Declaration endorsed by 46 Nations on 30 June 2009 in Prague. The Governments note the activities of ESLI (European Shoah Legacy Institute), established following the "Terezin Declaration".

The Governments welcome the commemorative events marking the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp planned by the Czech Republic and the European Jewish Congress , as well as the fourth session of the “*Let My People Live Forum*”, which will take place in Prague and Terezín on January 26 and 27, 2015.

Both Parties welcome the signing of the Joint Declaration between the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic, the Ministry of Education of the State of Israel and Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority of the State of Israel.

### **Education and Youth Exchange**

The Governments emphasize their aspiration to further strengthen ties in the field of education by advancing collaborative opportunities on all education levels, with the goal

of increasing knowledge of the linguistic, cultural and historical heritage of both countries.

Both Governments reiterate the importance of sharing experiences concerning the education system in both their states and encouraging direct contacts and collaborative programs between higher education institutions, as well as at the pre-university level.

The Governments stress the importance of academic mobility and express their interest in cooperating in the framework of the new European Union program in the field of education and training, Erasmus+.

The Governments welcome the establishment of the Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk Chair at the Interdisciplinary Center in Israel and of the Theodor Herzl Chair at Masaryk University in the Czech Republic.

Both Sides concur on the importance of youth exchanges in building bridges for future cooperation, peace and stability, and emphasize the importance of the participation of youth organizations from both countries in joint projects in the framework of the EuroMed Program.

### **Working Holiday Program**

The Governments are ready to launch a Working Holiday Program. This new program will allow young people aged 18 to 30 to spend longer periods of time in the host countries while supporting themselves through work and will help enhance the interpersonal relations between the states. Both Parties will make their best effort to finalize the text of the Agreement between the Government of the State of Israel and the Government of the Czech Republic Concerning a Working Holiday Program by the end of 2014.

### **Social Affairs**

The Governments, through their respective Ministers of Social Affairs, will continue their fruitful cooperation and further develop it by increasing exchange of knowledge and best



practices in the areas of social services and social work. The mutual ties and work will be conducted by the Ministries' senior professional officials.

The Governments welcome in this respect the signing of the Joint Declaration between the Ministry Social Affairs and Social Services of the State of Israel and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic on cooperation in the field of social services and social work.

### **Senior Citizens**

Both Czech and Israeli societies are experiencing a demographic change and dealing with the challenges of ageing societies. Therefore, the Governments highly appreciate the establishment of Czech-Israeli cooperation in the field of senior citizen policy, based on the desire to have experts exchange their views and experience regarding senior citizens and ageing, in particular the employment of older workers, positive and active ageing, inclusion and participation of the elderly in society and their welfare, intergenerational solidarity and age-friendly cities. The Governments especially welcome the signing of a Joint Declaration between the Ministry of Senior Citizens of the State of Israel and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic on cooperation in the field of senior citizens and ageing, which will be the basis of the bilateral cooperation on those issues.

### **Health**

The Governments, through their respective Ministries of Health, wish to develop mutual cooperation and an exchange of best practices on health issues, to be organized by the Ministries' senior professional officials, and to sign a Joint Declaration on cooperation in the fields of health and medicine for the years 2014-2019.

### **Energy**

The energy sectors in both the Czech Republic and the State of Israel continue to undergo significant transformation. Ensuring a high level of supply security and maintaining reasonable prices, while integrating climate protection objectives, requires market-based solutions and technological innovation. Both Governments intend to strengthen their fruitful dialogue and successful cooperation in this field and to continue to encourage Czech and Israeli companies and research institutions to cooperate.

## **Environmental Protection**

The Governments seek to strengthen the environmental protection cooperation between both states , particularly in fields such as protection of water resources and rehabilitation of streams; waste water treatment; waste management; biodiversity conservation and ecosystem management; reduction, control and monitoring of air pollution; promotion of environmental technologies; climate change mitigation and adaptation measures; afforestation; environmental education and awareness.

## **Agriculture**

Both Governments agree to jointly promote innovations, research and education in agriculture that are closely linked to the phenomena of worldwide climate change and the need to safeguard food security worldwide for the future generations. Both Governments will explore ways to encourage mutual cooperation and an exchange of views in the fields of veterinary services, animal production, plant protection, land use and water management, including irrigation technologies. Both Governments emphasize the need to support agricultural trade, including measures to facilitate trade and removing existing administrative and technical barriers to trade.

## **Culture**

The Governments emphasize their commitment to expand cultural activities and initiatives, which will help to further deepen mutual understanding and cooperation between both societies.

The Governments announce their interest to negotiate a Program of Cooperation in the Field of Culture between the Government of the Czech Republic and the Government of the State of Israel for the years 2016-2019.

The Governments welcome the second round of the Days of Prague in Jerusalem project in 2015, as well as the further strengthening of cooperation in cultural areas such as the performing arts and the exchange of ensembles and individual artists, as well as support for projects of extraordinary value such as the Days of Jerusalem in Pilsen project as a part of the European Capital of Culture 2015 initiative.

The Governments consider arts education and cultural and creative industries as new fields for Czech-Israeli cooperation and welcome the opportunity to exchange information on cultural and creative industries in both countries.

The Governments welcome the signing of a Letter of Intent between the Ministry of Culture and Sport of the State of Israel and the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic on Cooperation in the Field of Film Coproduction, regarding their intent to negotiate an Agreement on Film Co-Production between both Governments

### **Conclusion**

The Governments reiterate the great importance they attribute to the close ties and continuous interaction between the Governments and agree to conduct a Government to Government (G2G) meeting in Prague during the course of 2015/2016.

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H.E. Bohuslav Sobotka  
Prime Minister of the Czech Republic

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H.E. Benjamin Netanyahu  
Prime Minister of the State of Israel

**Jerusalem, 25 November 2014**