

Mr. Josep Borrell Fontelles

High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/
Vice-President of the European Commission
European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200
1049 Brussels, Belgium

Subject: Reconvene of the EU-Israel Association Council

To the Honourable HR/VP Josep Borrell Fontelles,

We, the undersigned Members of the European Parliament, National Parliaments of EU Member States and the Israeli Knesset, jointly call on the High Representative and Vice-President of the Commission to take the appropriate steps to renew the work of the EU-Israel Association Council and resume its activities with regular meetings as soon as possible.

Israel and the European Union have been close strategic allies long before the establishment of the Association Agreement¹. Unfortunately, the Association Council, established by the agreement with the aim of ensuring continuous political dialogue between the EU and the State of Israel has not held a formal meeting since 2012, despite pressing challenges and significant shared interests and looking also at the need of a functioning and effective forum for close dialogue and consultation and the value of a consensus building process.

Moreover, we note with concern that no EU-Israel Partnership Priorities have been adopted in the context of the revised European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)² (2015). At the same time, the EU adopted Partnership Priorities with five Southern Partners, including Jordan³ (2016), Lebanon⁴ (2016), Egypt⁵ (2017), Algeria⁶ (2017) and Tunisia⁷ (2018).

We were encouraged by your statement on 14 April 2020 that the European Union values its relationship with the State of Israel and is committed to regular dialogue as foreseen in the EU-Israel Association Agreement and by the EU-Israel European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) Action Plan.⁸ We were further reassured by your statement that the EU is

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32013D0001>

² https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/joint-communication_review-of-the-enp.pdf

³ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/partnership_priorities_2016-2018_and_their_annexed_eu-jordan_compact.pdf

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/eu_lebanon_partnership_priorities_2016-2020_and_their_annexed_eu-lebanon_compact.pdf

⁵ <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/eu-egypt-partnership-priorities.pdf>

⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/10_pps_alg_text_council_09_03_2017_st03101.fr17.pdf

⁷ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:22018D1792&from=FR>

⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/neighbourhood/countries/israel_en

keen to schedule a meeting of the Association Council as soon as possible. However, no progress has been made so far to this effect.

The election of a new Knesset and the establishment of a new coalition Government in Israel offer the opportunity to resume our political dialogue at the high level of the Association Council, thus ensuring a very important opportunity of consultation with representatives of Government and Opposition in Israel on issues of concern. This dialogue and consultations are called for by new and persistently shared challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic (including research on a vaccine and on other ways to curb the virus), continuous dangerous tensions in the Middle East (including with regard to the EU's energy interests in the Mediterranean and energy security for energy vulnerable countries in the region and cooperation with Israel to this effect), and the worrying rise of antisemitism in Europe, as well as several other pressing issues.

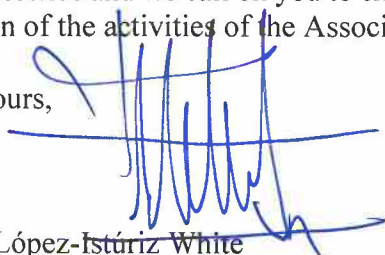
We welcome your positive talks on May 26th with Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi. In your own words, *the EU looks forward to continuing working with the new Israeli government in a constructive and comprehensive way, in the spirit of the longstanding friendship that binds the EU and Israel together*⁹.

In the same vein, by re-establishing and further consolidating a capacity of dialogue with Government and Opposition in Israel through the Association Council, we strongly believe that the EU would be able to prove its genuine commitment to close cooperation and consultation with the State of Israel. Such cooperation and consultation would in turn further promote a high degree of mutual confidence that would allow a discussion of issues where the EU and the State of Israel may not always have converging positions, thus enhancing the potential for a common understanding.

Since the start of your mandate, you have stressed the centrality of diplomatic, political and policy dialogue. In this sense, a functioning Association Council will add in very relevant terms to the EU's capacity of dialogue, at large, with the State of Israel and to closer EU-Israel ties on all matters of shared concern.

Time is of the essence and we call on you to ensure that all efforts at EU level are deployed for a resumption of the activities of the Association Council at earliest possible.

Respectfully yours,



MEP Antonio López-Istúriz White

⁹ https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/79936/Israel:%20High%20Representative/Vice-President%20Josep%20Borrell%20speaks%20to%20Foreign%20Minister%20Gabi%20Ashkenazi

List of Signatories Letter HRVP Borrell EU-Israel Association Council

From the European Parliament:

First name	Last name	Party	Title	Country
Anna-Michelle	Assimakopoulou	EPP	MEP, VP of the Committee on International Trade	Greece
Petras	Auštrevičius	RE	MEP, Chair of the Delegation for relations with Afghanistan	Lithuania
Carmen	Avram	S&D	MEP, Member of the Delegation for relations with Israel	Romania
Traian	Băsescu	EPP	MEP, former President of Romania	Romania
José Ramón	Bauzá Díaz	RE	MEP, Member of the Delegation for relations with the Arab Peninsula	Spain
Nicola	Beer	RE	MEP, VP of the European Parliament, Chair of the Working Group on Antisemitism of the European Parliament	Germany
Ioan-Rares	Bogdan	EPP	MEP, Head of EPP Romanian Delegation	Romania
Cristian-Silviu	Bușoi	EPP	MEP, Chair of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy	Romania
Pilar del	Castillo Vera	EPP	MEP, Chair of the Delegation for relations with the countries of the Andean Community	Spain
Olivier	Chastel	RE	MEP, VP of the Committee on Budgets	Belgium
Lefteris	Christoforou	EPP	MEP, Head of the EPP Cyprus Delegation	Cyprus
Ilana	Cicurel	RE	MEP, Member of the Delegation for relations with Israel	France
Andor	Deli	EPP	MEP	Hungary
Markus	Ferber	EPP	MEP	Germany
Loucas	Fourlas	EPP	MEP	Cyprus
Søren	Gade	RE	MEP, VP of the Committee on Fisheries	Denmark
Michael	Gahler	EPP	MEP, EPP Coordinator AFET	Germany
Kinga	Gál	EPP	MEP, VP of the Subcommittee on Security and Defence	Hungary
Esteban	Gonzalez Pons	EPP	MEP, VP of EPP	Spain
Enikő	Győri	EPP	MEP	Hungary
Niclas	Herbst	EPP	MEP, VP of the Committee on Budgets	Germany
Monika	Hohlmeier	EPP	MEP, Chair of the Budget Control Committee, former Bavarian State Minister for Education and Cultural Affairs	Germany
György	Hölvényi	EPP	MEP	Hungary
Manolis	Kefalogiannis	EPP	MEP	Greece
Andrey	Kovatchev	EPP	MEP, VP of the EPP Group	Bulgaria
Andrius	Kubilius	EPP	MEP, Head of the EPP Lithuanian Delegation	Lithuania
Stelios	Kympouropoulos	EPP	MEP	Greece
David	Lega	EPP	MEP	Sweden
Miriam	Lexmann	EPP	MEP	Slovakia
Antonio	López-Istúriz White	EPP	MEP, Chair of the Delegation for relations with Israel	Spain
Lukas	Mandl	EPP	MEP, VP of the Subcommittee on Security and Defence	Austria
Marian	Marinescu	EPP	MEP	Romania
Fulvio	Martusciello	EPP	MEP, Chair of the Delegation to the EU-Kazakhstan, EU-Kyrgyzstan, EU-Uzbekistan and EU-Tajikistan Parliamentary Cooperation Committees and for relations with Turkmenistan and Mongolia	Italy

Evangelos	Meimarakis	EPP	MEP, VP of EPP	Greece
Roberta	Metsola	EPP	MEP, Head of the EPP Malta Delegation	Malta
Dolores	Montserrat	EPP	MEP, Chair of the Committee on Petitions, Head of the EPP Spanish Delegation	Spain
Ljudmila	Novak	EPP	MEP	Slovenia
Andrey	Novakov	EPP	MEP	Bulgaria
Urmas	Paet	RE	MEP	Estonia
Jiří	Pospíšil	EPP	MEP	Czechia
Emil	Radev	EPP	MEP, VP of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs	Bulgaria
Frédérique	Ries	RE	MEP, VP of RE	Belgium
Bert-Jan	Ruissen	ECR	MEP, VP of the Delegation for relations with Israel	Netherlands
Sara	Skyttedal	EPP	MEP	Sweden
Antonio	Tajani	EPP	MEP, Chair of the Conference of Committee Chairs, Chair of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs, former President of the European Parliament	Italy
Hermann	Tertsch	ECR	MEP, VP of ECR	Spain
Romana	Tomc	EPP	MEP, Head of the EPP Slovenian Delegation	Slovenia
Edina	Tóth	EPP	MEP	Hungary
Adrián	Vázquez Lázara	RE	MEP, Chair of the Committee on Legal Affairs	Spain
Petar	Vitanov	S&D	MEP	Bulgaria
Witold	Waszczykowski	ECR	MEP, VP of the Committee on Foreign Affairs	Poland
Elena	Yoncheva	S&D	MEP, VP of the Delegation for relations with Israel	Bulgaria
Marco	Zanni	ID	MEP, Chair of ID	Italy
Tomáš	Zdechovský	EPP	MEP, VP of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, EPP CONT Coordinator	Czechia
Juan Ignacio	Zoido Alvarez	EPP	MEP, Member of the Delegation for the Relations with Palestine	Spain
Željana	Zovko	EPP	MEP, EPP AFET Vice-Coordinator	Croatia
Milan	Zver	EPP	MEP	Slovenia

From national European parliaments:

First name	Last name	Party	Title	Country
Lars	Adaktusson	Christian Democrats	MP, Sweden, Member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs	Sweden
Aurore	Bergé	LREM	MP, France, Chair of the Parliamentary Friendship Group France-Israel	France
Alberto	Casero Ávila	Partido Popular	MP, Spain, Second Vice President of the Mixed Commission for Coordination and Monitoring of the Spanish SDG Strategy	Spain
Bernard	Cazeneuve	Parti Socialiste	France, former Prime Minister, former Minister of Interior, former MP	France
Boriss	Cilevičs	SASKANA	MP, Latvia, Chair of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, PACE, Chairman of the Group for promoting cooperation with the Parliament of Israel	Latvia

Gitta	Connemann	Christian Democratic Union	MP, Germany, Vice Chair of the Germany-Israel Friendship Group	Germany
Philippe	Dallier	Les Républicains	Senator, France, First VP of the Senate, Chair of the France-Israel Parliamentarian Friendship Group	France
Bernard	Deflesselles	Les Républicains	MP, France, Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, VP of the European Affairs Committee, Member of the Parliamentary Friendship Group France-Israel	France
Bijan	Djir-Sarai	Free Democratic Party	MP, Germany, Rapporteur for the FDP fraction in the Bundestag on the Middle East	Germany
Philippe	Douste-Blazy	N/R	France, former Health Minister, former Foreign Affairs Minister, former UN Deputy Secretary General	France
Gatis	Eglitis	The New Conservative Party	MP, Latvia, Deputy Chairman of the Group for promoting cooperation with the Parliament of Israel	Latvia
José Ignacio	Echániz	Partido Popular	MP, Spain, Deputy Spokesperson for the Board of Spokespersons, Second Vice Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs	Spain
Pavel	Fischer	No party affiliation	Senator, Czech Republic, Chairman of the Foreign, Security and Defense Committee	Czechia
André	Gattolin	La République En Marche!	Senator, France, VP of the European Affairs Committee	France
Fernando Adolfo	Gutiérrez	People's Party	MP, Spain	Spain
José	Gutiérrez Díaz de Otazu	Partido Popular	MP, Spain, Defense Commission spokesperson, Vice President of the Spanish Delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly	Spain
Michel	Herbillon	IREM	MP, France, VP of the FA Committee	France
Belén	Hoyo Juliá	Partido Popular	MP, Spain, Spokesman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Member of the Spanish Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean	Spain
María Teresa	Jiménez-Becerril Barrio	Partido Popular	MP, Spain, Second Vice-President of the Joint Commission for the European Union, Member of the Spanish Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE	Spain
Dimitrios	Kairidis	New Democracy	MP, Greece, Chairman of the Greece-Israel Friendship Group	Greece
Roger	Karoutchi	Les Républicains	Senator, France, Vice-Chair of the Parliamentary Friendship Group France-Israel	France
Olga	Kefalogianni	New Democracy	MP, Greece, Vice-Chairman of the Greece-Israel Friendship Group	Greece
Yiorgos	Kefalogianni	Citizens' Alliance	MP, Cyprus, Chairman of the House Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs, President of the Citizens' Alliance, Chair of the Cyprus-Israel Friendship Group, former Foreign Affairs Minister, former Minister of Commerce and Industry	Cyprus
Lucio	Malan	Forza Italia	MP, Italy, 1st VP of the Parliamentarian Group of Forza Italia at the Senate of the Republic, Chair of the Italy-Israel Friendship group	Italy
Duarte	Marques	PSD	MP, Portugal	Portugal

María Valentina	Martínez Ferro	Partido Popular	MP, Spain, Spokesman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, PP's Secretary on International Relations	Spain
Márta	Mátrai	Fidesz	MP, Hungary, Deputy of the Speaker, Vice President of the Hungarian-Israel Friendship Group	Hungary
Frank	Müller-Rosentritt	Free Democratic Party	MP, Germany, Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee	Germany
Zsolt	Németh	Fidesz	MP, Hungary, Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs	Hungary
Averof	Neofytou	Democratic Rally	MP, Cyprus, President of the Democratic Rally Party (DISY)	Cyprus
Peter	Östman	Christian Democrats	MP, Finland, Vicechair of the Christian Democratic party, Chair of the Finland-Israel Friendship Group	Finland
Constantin Veselinov	Popov	GERB	MP, Bulgaria, Head of the Defense standing Committee, Chairman of the Bulgaria-Israel Parliamentary Friendship Group	Bulgaria
Didier	Quentin	Les Républicains	MP, France, Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Member of the Parliamentary Friendship Group France-Israel	France
Christian	Schmidt	Christian Social Union	MP, Germany, Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, former Federal Minister of Food and Agriculture, former Parliamentary State Secretary to the Minister of Defense	Germany
Simon	Sutour	Socialist Party	Senator, France, VP of the European Affairs Committee	France
Michał	Szczerba	Platforma Obywatelska	MP, Poland, Chairman of the Polish-Israeli Parliamentary Group	Poland
Manuel	Valls	N/R	France, former Prime Minister	France
Joël	Voordewind	Christian Union	MP, Netherlands, Vice President, Vice Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee	Netherlands
Marian	Wendt	Christian Democratic Union	MP, Germany	Germany
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From the Israeli Knesset:

First name	Last name	Party	Title	Country
Karin	Elharrar	Yesh Atid-Telem	MK, Israel	Israel
Sharren	Haskel	Likud	MK, Israel, Deputy Speaker of the Knesset	Israel
Zvi	Hauser	Derech Eretz	MK, Israel, Chair of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee	Israel
Nitzan	Horowitz	Meretz	MK, Israel, Head of Meretz, Member of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee	Israel
Yair	Lapid	Yesh Atid-Telem	MK, Israel, Leader of the Opposition, former Minister of Finance	Israel
Mickey	Levy	Yesh Atid-Telem	MK, Israel	Israel
Merav	Michaeli	Israeli Labor	MK, Israel	Israel
Gideon	Sa'ar	Likud	MK, Israel, Member of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, former Minister of the Interior, former Minister of Education	Israel
Elazar	Stern	Yesh Atid-Telem	MK, Israel, Member of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee	Israel