

Ms. Ursula von der Leyen

President of the European Commission

Mr. Josep Borrell Fontelles

High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/
Vice-President of the European Commission

Mr. Olivér Várhelyi

Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement

European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200
1049 Brussels, Belgium

Subject: Reconvening the EU-Israel Association Council

To the Honourable President Ursula von der Leyen, HR/VP Josep Borrell Fontelles and Commissioner Olivér Várhelyi,

We, the undersigned Members of the European Parliament, call on the European 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.

Recently, various and repeated statements have been made about the intention of the EU to schedule a meeting of the Association Council in the near future. It is of the utmost importance that a concrete date is agreed upon to resume the mutual dialogue on the official level of the Association Council. This would allow us to jointly address common challenges such as the energy crisis, looming food insecurity, and the continuous dangerous tensions in the Middle East, while at the same time to applaud and encourage the recent groundbreaking developments following the Abraham Accords, which enhance peace and stability in the region.

Israel and the European Union have been close strategic allies long before the establishment of the Association Agreement. The Association Council, established by the Agreement with the aim of ensuring continuous political dialogue between both parties, has not held a formal meeting for almost ten years since its establishment in November 2012, despite pressing challenges and significant shared opportunities.

Moreover, no EU-Israel Partnership Priorities have been adopted in the context of the revised European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) (2015). At the same time, the EU adopted Partnership Priorities with five Southern Partners, including Jordan (2016), Lebanon (2016), Egypt (2017), Algeria (2017) and Tunisia (2018).

During her recent visit to Israel, the President of the European Commission reiterated that democracy has strengthened the special bond of friendship between the EU and Israel through the decades, and that today more collaboration than ever before is taking place. Further collaboration is needed, for example with regard to the mounting food security challenges, where Israel can and must play an important role given its unique expertise in innovative, resource-efficient agriculture.

The strong and necessary strategic partnership between the EU and Israel - and the region - entered a new chapter on the 15th of June, with the signing of the memorandum of understanding on gas exports between Egypt, Israel and the EU. An agreement that will allow us to meet the challenges posed by our dependency on Russian fossil fuels by substantially increasing Israeli gas exports via Egypt to Europe.

Democracies like Europe and Israel should come closer together. Our relationship can be of great value in the face of mounting challenges. Reconvening the Association Council is the single most important step we can take, and time is of the essence.

Respectfully,

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2. MEP Álvaro AMARO
3. MEP Andrus ANSIP
4. MEP Pablo ARIAS ECHEVERRÍA
5. MEP Anna-Michelle ASIMAKOPOULOU
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21. MEP Marco CAMPOMENOSI
22. MEP Jordi CAÑAS
23. MEP Maria de Graça CARVALHO
24. MEP Daniel CASPARY
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26. MEP Dita CHARANZOVÁ
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29. MEP Lefteris CHRISTOFOROU
30. MEP Ilana CICUREL
31. MEP Rosanna CONTE
32. MEP Corina CRETU
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34. MEP Ryszard CZARNECKI
35. MEP Arnaud DANJEAN
36. MEP Paolo DE CASTRO

37. MEP Salvatore DE MEO
38. MEP Pilar DEL CASTILLO VERA
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40. MEP Tamás DEUTSCH
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45. MEP José Manuel FERNANDES
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47. MEP Raffaele FITTO
48. MEP Anna FOTYGA
49. MEP Loucas FOURLAS
50. MEP Søren GADE
51. MEP Kinga GÁL
52. MEP Luis GARICANO
53. MEP Charles GOERENS
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64. MEP Martin HLAVÁČEK
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67. MEP György HÖLVÉNYI
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