



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

## MEMO

Brussels, 27 March 2014

### ENP Country Report 2013 - Israel

***The 2014 annual "Neighbourhood Package" consists of joint Communication ("Neighbourhood at the Crossroads") and a set of country specific and regional reports. The report on Israel underlines key/main developments and reform efforts in 2013 and makes recommendations for the year to come.***

***The year 2013 was marked by progress in several areas of cooperation such as the signature of the Comprehensive Aviation agreement, the entry into force of the Agreement on Conformity Assessment and Acceptance of Industrial Products (ACAA) and reaching an agreement on the participation of Israel in Horizon 2020 research programme. However, important challenges remain concerning the protection of rights of minorities and Israel's responsibilities in the Occupied Territories.***

***The EU underlined its full backing for the resumption of Israeli-Palestinian peace talks in August 2013 and reiterated its support for a two state solution based on an agreement on all final status issues, offering a Special Privileged partnership to both parties in case of such an agreement.***

- In 2013, Israel addressed some of the key recommendations from last year report. Other key recommendations contained in last year's ENP progress report have yet to be addressed, and remain valid. The regional Convention on pan-European rules of origin was signed as well as the EU-Israel comprehensive civil aviation agreement, and the ACAA came in force. Cooperation between Israel and the EU should continue to focus on activities highlighted in 2012 from the 2005 ENP EU-Israel Action Plan which have not yet been implemented. On the basis of this year's report and with a view to sustained implementation of the ENP Action Plan in 2014, Israel is also invited to: keep up the momentum in bilateral EU-Israel cooperation including by focusing on activities from the 2005 Action Plan;
- continue the commendable efforts to take bold and concrete steps towards a just and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the ongoing negotiation process;
- bring internal procedures for stateless people in line with the 1958 Convention on the Status of Stateless Persons;
- continue and increase efforts to ensure the equality of all Israeli citizens as regard to the rights of people belonging to minorities, including the Negev Bedouins, and the rights of status-less children (children born in Israel without legal residency status);
- strengthen cooperation with the EU in UN bodies, including on human rights issues, for example related to gender and disability;
- ratify the Second and the Third Protocol to the 2003 UN Convention on Transnational Organised Crime on the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts, components and ammunition;

- ensure further progress takes place on amending intellectual property rights legislation to bring it into line with OECD commitments;
- implement the government's commitment to ensure the independence of the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission and provide it with adequate resources;
- take additional measures to lower carbon emissions, in line with international agreements;
- ensure respect for international law and human rights in the occupied territories, including intensifying efforts to curb settler violence and minimising the use of administrative detention without trial;
- ensure respect for international law and human rights in the treatment of irregular migrants and asylum-seekers;
- ratify the Regional Convention on pan-Euro-Mediterranean preferential rules of origin.

Reforms initiated, carried out, or delayed during 2013 in the different areas of cooperation between the EU and Israel are described in the annual country report. Some of the issues reported deserve special attention.

Regarding domestic **human rights** issues, Israel reversed its 2012 decision and participated in the Universal Periodic Review under the UN Human Rights Council. While there was progress on the implementation of **women's rights**, additional efforts are needed to ensure the equality of all Israeli citizens, in particular as regard the rights of Arab minorities, including the Negev Bedouins. Irregular **migration** remained a serious challenge for Israel. Enforcement of the anti-infiltration law and the detention of migrants for criminal acts without trial provoked criticism from civil society and a ruling from the Supreme Court. Steps towards a regularisation of migrants and improvements to their health and welfare situation should be encouraged.

As regards Israeli responsibilities in the **Occupied Territories**, tension has increased in 2013, in the context of worrying developments on the ground, including increased settlement activity and demolitions in East Jerusalem and the rest of the West Bank. Despite some measures against settler violence and price-tag attacks, most of the cases relating to these issues continued to be closed without indictment. While there were periods of flexibility, heavy restrictions on movement and access to the Gaza Strip remained in place throughout 2013 and increased isolation as a result of this policy brought a deterioration of the economic and humanitarian situation. Sporadic rocket-fire from Gaza into southern Israel continued in 2013. Limited progress was made on decreasing the use of **administrative detention** of Palestinians, but its use and length are still excessive.

EU-Israel trade and economic relations are already well developed and are improving further. However, some issues remain open, including sanitary and phyto-sanitary matters and technical barriers to trade. An important development in 2013 was the signature of the comprehensive "Open skies" EU-Israel aviation agreement.

## **EU-Israel – BACKGROUND**

### **THE POLICY**

The **European Neighbourhood Policy** governs the relations between the EU and Israel.

2000: EU-Israel Association Agreement entered into force

2005: EU-Israel Action Plan was approved.

2008: Launch of the Union for the Mediterranean.

## **FACTS AND FIGURES**

2007-2010: The ENPI<sup>1</sup> financial contribution for Israel was earmarked at EUR 8 million, initially divided into four yearly EUR 2 million instalments. This was reduced in 2009 to EUR 1.5 million, reflecting problems in absorption capacity by the Israeli government.

2011-2013: The European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) envelope for Israel under the National Indicative Programme (NIP) 2011-2013 has been earmarked at EUR 6 million. The NIP is geared towards supporting the achievement of key policy objectives, as outlined in the EU-Israel Action Plan, and pursues the approximation of Israeli norms and standards with those of the EU.

2012: Meetings of the EU-Israel Association Committee and EU-Israel Association Council.

2013: Signature of the EU-Israel Comprehensive Civil Aviation Agreement ("Open Skies").

2013: the EU-Israel Agreement on Conformity Assessment and Acceptance of industrial products (ACAA) entered into force.

## **For further information**

[Press release: Neighbourhood at the crossroads – tacking stock of a year of challenges \(IP/14/315\), 27 March 2014](#)

For the Joint Communication check the EEAS website at

[http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/index\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/index_en.htm)

Website of Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy, Štefan Füle: [http://ec.europa.eu/commission\\_2010-2014/fule/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/fule/index_en.htm)

Website of High Representative and Vice President of the European Commission, Catherine Ashton: [http://ec.europa.eu/commission\\_2010-2014/ashton/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/ashton/index_en.htm)

European Commission: European Neighbourhood Policy

[http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/index_en.htm)

<http://www.enpi-info.eu>

[http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/documents\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/documents_en.htm)

[http://eeas.europa.eu/israel/index\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/israel/index_en.htm)

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1 the European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument