

Welcoming remarks at Elnet reception – 5 minutes

Thursday, October 27, 17:30-20:00 [REDACTED]

Setting:

You are opening the closing reception of the Seventh EU-Israel Strategic Dialogue in Herzliyah. [REDACTED]

- **MEP Antonio López-Istúriz White**, Chair of EU delegation to Israel; Secretary General, EPP Party, European Parliament

Remarks:

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues, friends,

1. It is a great honour for me to welcome you all to the closing reception of the Seventh EU-Israel Strategic Dialogue [REDACTED]
2. Thank you to our friends from Elnet, and to my colleagues at the EU delegation, for all their hard work in making this Strategic Dialogue possible, including a number of last-minute changes.
3. Dear friends, today we talked about many important issues: Russia's brutal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine and the looming food crisis, the prospect of a nuclear-armed Iran, climate change and many others. We also discussed at great length the importance of the EU-Israel partnership. And while I could use this stage to once again talk about the Association Council and the vast potential that intensified bilateral cooperation holds for both sides, I will resist the urge and instead offer you a little bit of a scoop. A scoop that may challenge what you think about Israelis' perception of the EU.

4. Every year, we commission a Gallup poll that takes the pulse of Israeli attitudes toward the European Union. We just received the results of the 2022 survey. It hasn't been published anywhere yet, but I am happy to offer you a sneak preview. The main headline is that the number of Israelis who have a positive view of the EU has increased over the last year from 42% to 47%. This number should of course be much higher, but the good news is that only 15% have a negative view of the EU. (The rest are neutral.)
5. Another heartening finding of our poll is that a whopping 72% percent of respondents consider EU-Israel relations as good, and only 24% as bad. Interestingly, the respondents who view bilateral ties as "very good" has doubled from 10% to 20%.
6. Now some of you may have heard about the annual Mitvim survey, which has somewhat less encouraging figures. But the most recent Mitvim poll, released just a few weeks ago, also showed a significant increase in the number of Israelis who perceive the EU as a friend of Israel. In fact, the number of Israelis who view the EU as a friend is the highest in years.
7. I hope that we will all do our part to ensure that these positive trends are sustained and continue to grow. Because the EU-Israel relationship is strong, deep, and mutually beneficial, and it only makes sense that this also be reflected in public opinion.
8. I hope you will enjoy the rest of the evening, including the keynotes by our very distinguished guests.
9. Thank you very much!