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Introduction

German Israel Congress

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The German Israel Congress is a cross-organizational platform established in 2010 to provide Israel-supporting groups, politicians, and people in Germany a platform of exchange, information and cooperation. The goal is to enhance bilateral relations between Israel and Germany on all levels.

In 2011, the 2nd German Israel Congress turned into the biggest conference of this kind in Europe, with 3,000 participants, 200 supporting organizations, cities and communities. Chancellor Angela Merkel supported the congress in form of a written greeting. The high level panels, lectures and workshops on the various topics relevant to German-Israeli relations all reflected a common denominator: The bond between Israel and Germany is based not just on history, but on a diverse set of shared values and strategic interests. The 3rd German Israel Congress took place on November 10th, 2013 in Berlin with a new concept designed to increase the initiative's strategic impact: integrating lessons learned from the two previous successful congresses, while adapting to socio-political changes in Germany.

Thus, the 2013 theme: “connecting for tomorrow” put an emphasis on the immense potential of German-Israeli cooperation in business, science, culture, politics and religion in the form of five parallel ‘labs’ that showcased on-going cooperation, and discussed ways to further exhaust the synergy potential in these fields. The goal of this new format – beyond actually increasing cooperation between the two countries - was to enhance the awareness especially in German public opinion about the mutual strategic interests, the shared values and synergy potential between the two societies. This unique event thus turned into an attractive venue for a more diverse set of target groups nationwide, including those who are less familiar with (or antagonistic towards) German-Israeli relations and with Israel itself.

The prominent German publisher and chairwoman of the Friede Springer Foundation, Dr. h.c. Friede Springer, Israel's Ambassador to Germany, H.E. Yakov Hadas-Handelsman, as well as the now former President of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, Dr. Dieter Graumann were patrons of the 3rd German Israel Congress. It included among others the Mayor of Berlin and Senator for Interior and Sports, Mr. Frank Henkel (CDU), MK David Tsur who delivered the greetings of the Knesset, Executive Director of the American Jewish Committee (AJC), David Harris, World President of the KKL-JNF, Efi Stenzler, internationally renowned political scientist Prof. Shlomo Avineri (Hebrew University), the chairman of the Heinrich Böll Foundation, Mr. Ralf Fücks, Israel's startup guru Yossi Vardi, Berlin's Senator of Economics, Cornelia Yzer, the president of the Alexander von Humboldt-Foundation, Prof. Dr. Drs. h.c. Helmut Schwarz and many others.

The upcoming **4th German Israel Congress** will be hosted under the slogan “**building partnerships**” by ILI – I LIKE ISRAEL e.V. in cooperation with the Israel Allies Foundation on **June 19, 2016** at the Congress Center in Frankfurt am Main.

Partners include among others the American Jewish Committee Berlin, the German-Israeli Society (DIG), the Israeli Trade Center and the Central Council of Jews in Germany. The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs supports the German Israel Congress in its endeavor as well. German Federal President Joachim Gauck and his counterpart, Reuven Rivlin, President of the State of Israel have been asked to grant the German Israel Congress their common patronage.

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Hosts of the 4th German Israel Congress are:

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