

# ISRAEL SURVEY

Europe 2023

# Europe-Israel relations at a glance

In light of the 75th anniversary of Israel, the European Leadership Network (ELNET) conducted a survey among Members of Parliament (MPs) across Europe about their views on bilateral relations with Israel, their country's policy towards the Middle East, and Jewish life in Europe. 381 MPs from 17 countries participated in this survey. In 2022, this unique survey was conducted in seven countries (Austria, Finland, France, Germany, Latvia, Spain, and the UK) for the first time.

In general, an overwhelming majority of European parliamentarians surveyed consider their country's relations with Israel to be very good or rather good (66 percent). While for most respondents, historical responsibility forms the basis for this relationship, common values and interests are also strong motives for European parliamentarians.

While priorities vary from country to country, about three-quarters of the respondents call for greater cooperation with Israel and argue that their countries should assume more responsibility within the framework of the Abraham Accords.

A majority of the questioned MPs see defense as well as domestic security as important fields for potential cooperation with Israel. About two-thirds of European MPs want to increase NATO cooperation with Israel.

In the light of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the changing global and regional order, and the growing threat of (nuclear) armament in the Middle East, the results presented here are an appeal and a call to action to the European Union and to Europe's national governments and parliaments.

## About ELNET

The European Leadership Network (ELNET) is a non-partisan policy organization that works to strengthen relations between Europe and Israel by promoting political, strategic, and diplomatic cooperations, based on shared democratic values and mutual strategic interests.

ELNET's actions, inspired by the European dream, are firmly rooted in the promotion of freedom, justice, and peace. Our work is focused on foreign and security policy, combating all forms of antisemitism based on the IHRA definition, and fostering innovation for a better world.

ELNET strongly believes in the mutual benefit of close relations between Europe and Israel and works independently. Our offices in Brussels, Berlin, London, Paris, Warsaw and Tel Aviv as well as activities in other European countries strengthen the dialogue between European and Israeli decision-makers in politics, economics, and society.

ELNET fosters experience on the ground by organizing delegations and conferences, while encouraging parliamentary diplomacy through dialogue formats and campaigns.

ELNET is supported by a large number of private individuals, corporations, foundations, and institutional partners.

- ▶ 28 percent of participating MPs know ELNET well.
- ▶ 34 percent of participating MPs receive the ELNET newsletter.
- ▶ 18 percent of participating MPs regularly use ELNET's policy briefings.

# 1 Status & Nature of Relations with Israel

Fig. 1

► *To what extent has the relationship between Israel and your country changed in the last five years?*

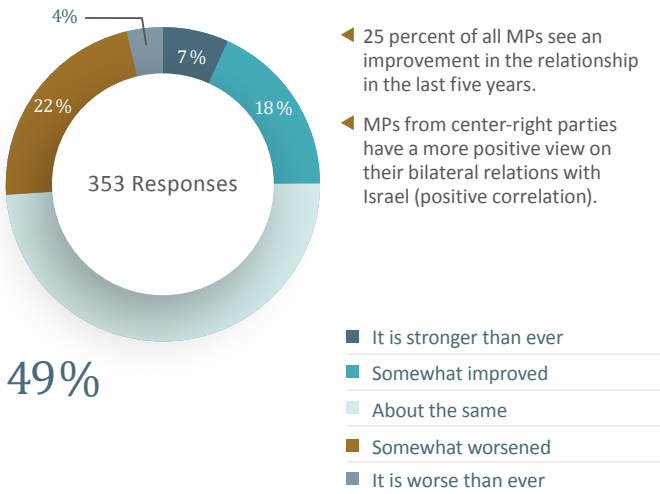
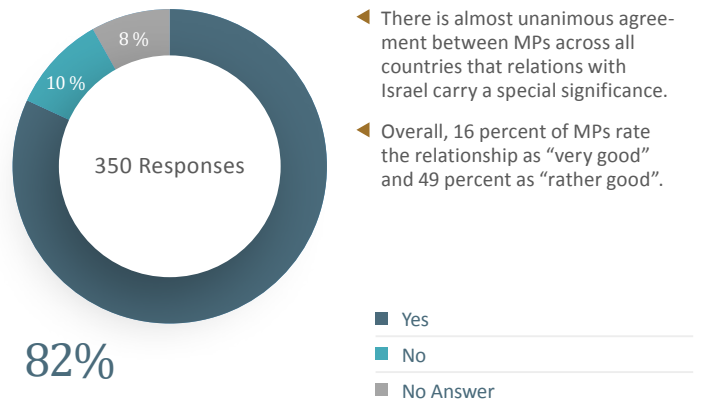


Fig. 2

► *Do relations with Israel have a special significance for your country compared to other countries?*



## From a European perspective, relations with Israel are stable over time.

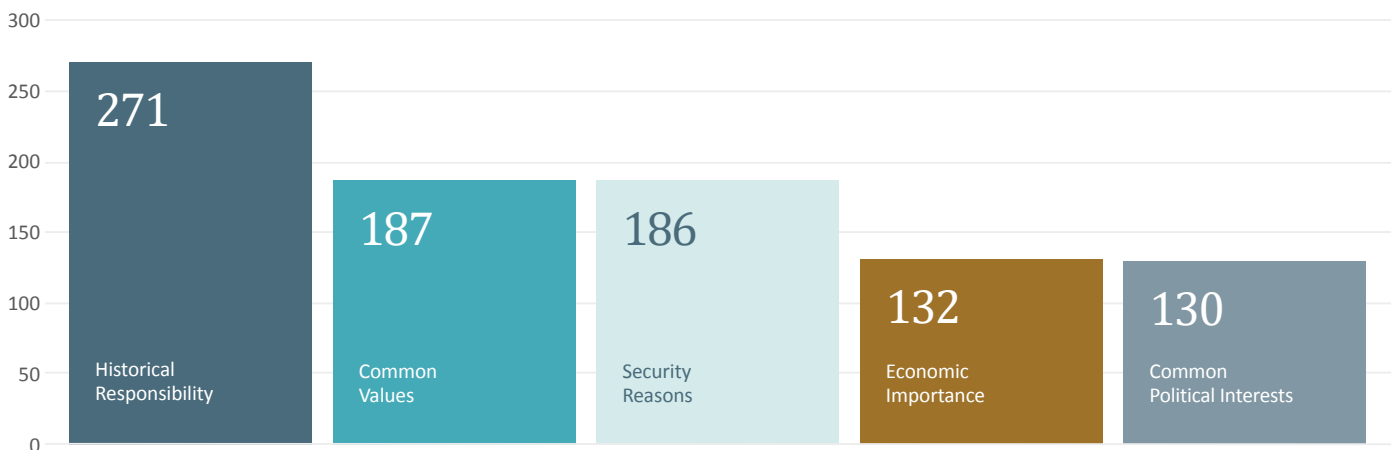
- 64 percent of Austrian MPs as well as 41 percent of Swedish and French MPs consider relations with Israel to be stronger than five years ago.
- 42 percent of Danish MPs and 27 percent of German MPs consider relations with Israel to be worse than five years ago.

## A majority of MPs views the relationship to Israel as good.

- MPs who perceive bilateral relations with Israel as positive also tend to support closer Israel-NATO cooperation and tend to call for a more active role of their respective country in the Middle East (both with positive correlation).

Fig. 3 (310 Responses)

► *If yes, what is the reason for this special status in your opinion? (Multiple answers are possible)*



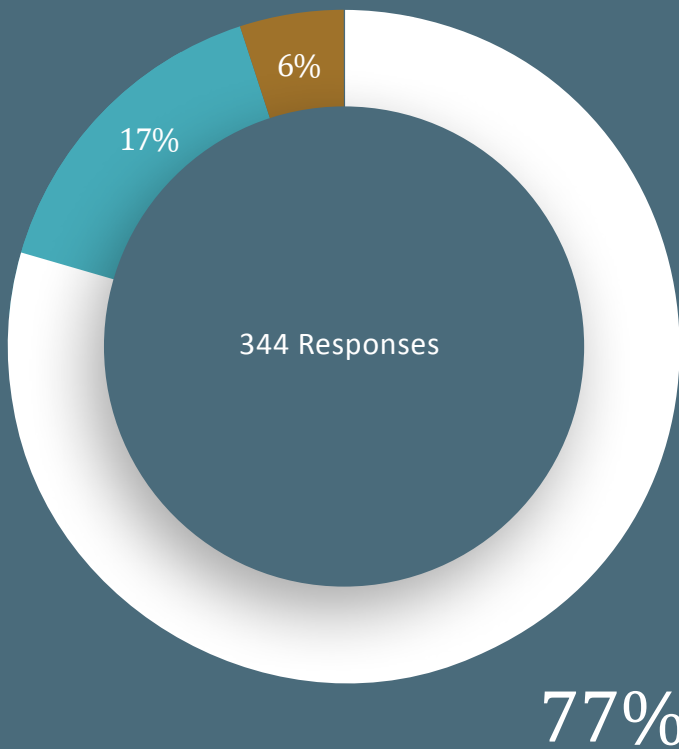
## Relations with Israel have a special significance for Europe.

- The three most common motivational factors are historical responsibility, followed by common values and security reasons (in 2022, common interests were named more frequently than security reasons).
- Those MPs who communicate more often with Jewish communities tend to predominantly see historical responsibilities as a basis for special relations with Israel (positive correlation).

## 2 Potential for cooperation

Fig. 4

► *How do you evaluate the current bilateral cooperation with Israel?*



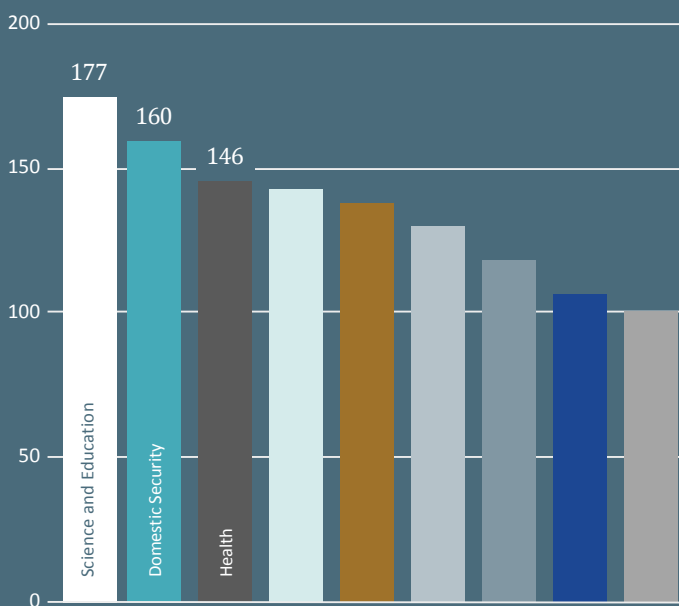
### Strong European call for more cooperation with Israel.

- A broad majority of European parliamentarians (77 percent) favor closer cooperation with Israel.
- French MPs (95 percent), Members of the European Parliament (87 percent), and German MPs (82 percent) are most open for more cooperation (“There should be more cooperation”).
- Danish MPs (42 percent), Irish MPs (36 percent), and Swedish MPs (12 percent) are least open for more cooperation (“Cooperation should be reduced or reconsidered”).

- There should be more cooperation
- The current level of cooperation is sufficient
- Cooperation should be reconsidered and reduced if necessary

Fig. 5 (291 Responses)

► *In which areas would you like to see particularly close cooperation with Israel? (Multiple answers are possible)*



▲ In general, MPs emphasize the importance of science and education, domestic security, defense, and health as areas for cooperation.

### Defense and domestic security gain importance.

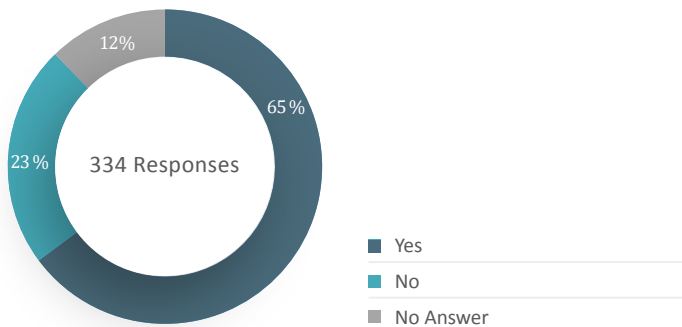
- Defense is the top priority for French MPs (96 percent), Greek MPs (67 percent), Swedish MPs (65 percent), British MPs (60 percent), and Latvian MPs (57 percent).
- Domestic security is the most relevant area for close cooperation for Latvia (100 percent), Denmark (100 percent), and the Czech Republic (88 percent).
- In Germany, cooperation in science and education comes first (61 percent), followed by domestic security (51 percent), and health (51 percent). In 2022, economic issues were seen as more important than domestic security.
- France has a strong focus on climate issues. 80 percent of the questioned MPs want closer cooperation in that field. In 2022, MPs saw economy and innovation as a more relevant topic than climate and environment.
- For MPs from green parties, climate and environment is the most important field for close cooperation with Israel.
- For members of Christian democratic parties, economy and innovation is the most important field for close cooperation with Israel. The second most important area is defense.

■ Science and Education	177
■ Domestic Security	160
■ Health	146
■ Defense	143
■ Economy and Innovation	138
■ Energy	130
■ Climate and Environment	118
■ Culture	106
■ Agriculture	100

### 3 Foreign Policy & Regional Involvement

Fig. 6

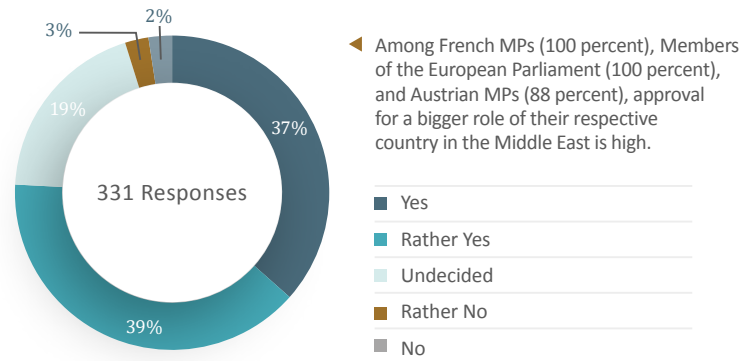
► *The call for Europe to become more closely involved with world politics is getting louder. Should your country play a bigger role in the Middle East as well?*



■ High approval of a more active role in the Middle East: two-thirds of MPs support closer engagement of their respective country in the Middle East in general and within the framework of the Abraham Accords.

Fig. 7

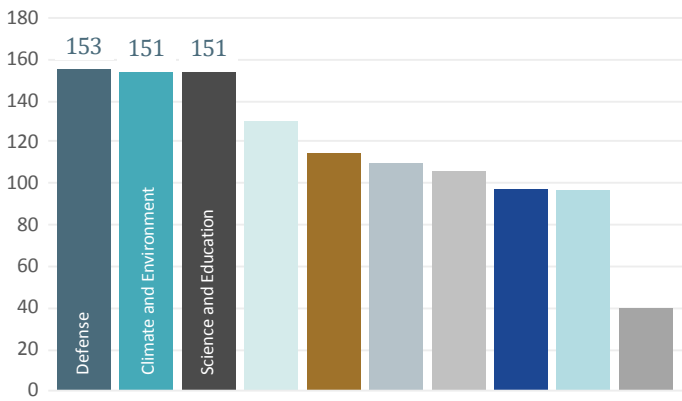
► *Abraham Accords: Should your country become more active in supporting cooperation between Israel and Arab/Muslim states, supporting an expansion of the agreements?*



■ In Sweden (52 percent), Ireland (45 percent), and Denmark (33 percent), approval for a bigger role in the Middle East is the lowest among the surveyed countries.

Fig. 8 (250 Responses)

► *Within the framework of the normalization agreements, your country should engage with the following topics in particular. (Multiple answers are possible)*



■ The most important topics for the MPs across Europe are defense, climate, and environment as well as science and education.

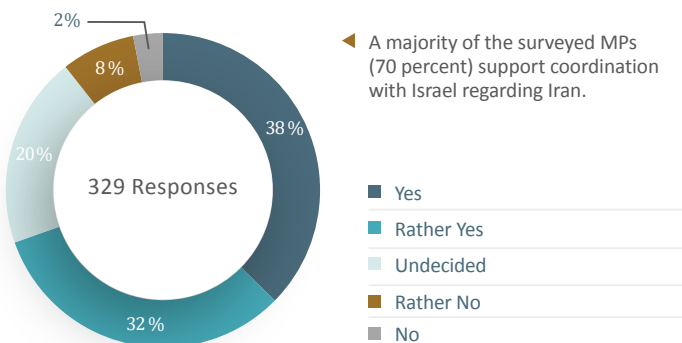
■ German MPs perceive climate and environment (79 percent) as most important topic for the Abraham Accords.

■ For Czech, French, and Danish MPs, defense is the most significant topic within the normalization across the Middle East

Defense	153
Climate and Environment	151
Science and Education	151
Health	128
Economy and Innovation	113
Energy	108
Cooperation between Israel and Palestine	104
Domestic Security	96
Agriculture	95
Culture and Society	39

Fig. 9

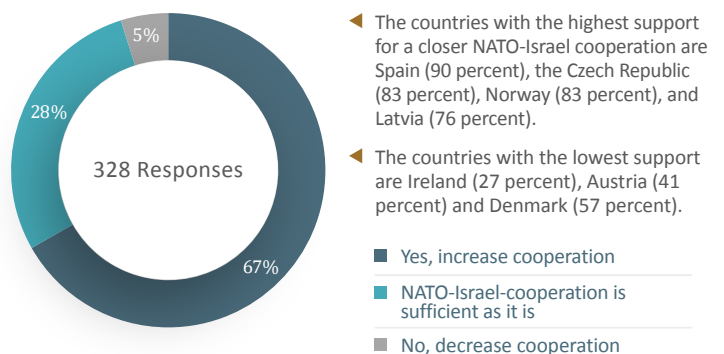
► *Should your country play a stronger role in containing Iranian activities in the Middle East and coordinate more closely with Israel in this issue?*



■ Particularly high support for a closer coordination can be seen in the UK (100 percent), France (86 percent), and among Members of the European Parliament (85 percent).

Fig. 10

► *Do you think NATO should cooperate more closely with Israel in order to enhance Europe's defense capabilities?*

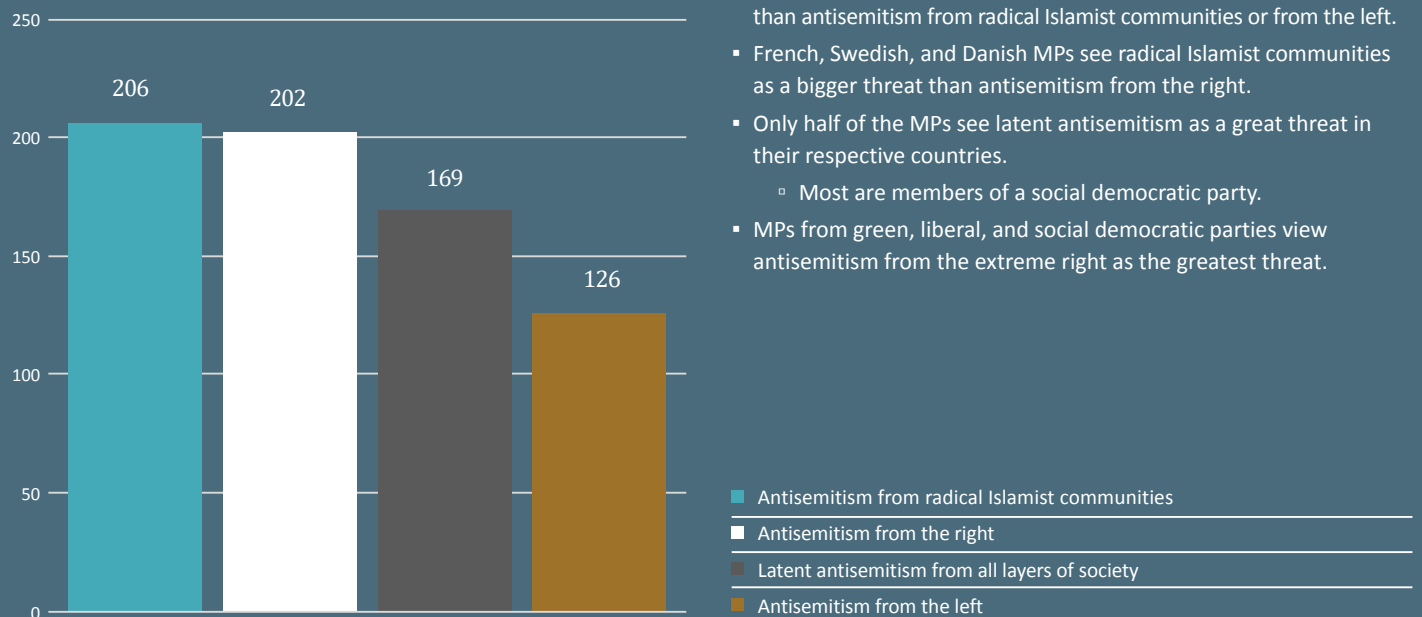


■ Altogether, 67 percent of MPs across Europe support closer cooperation between NATO and Israel.

## 4 Antisemitism and Jewish communities

Fig. 11 (338 Responses)

► **Which forms of antisemitism pose the greatest threat in your respective country?** (Multiple answers are possible)

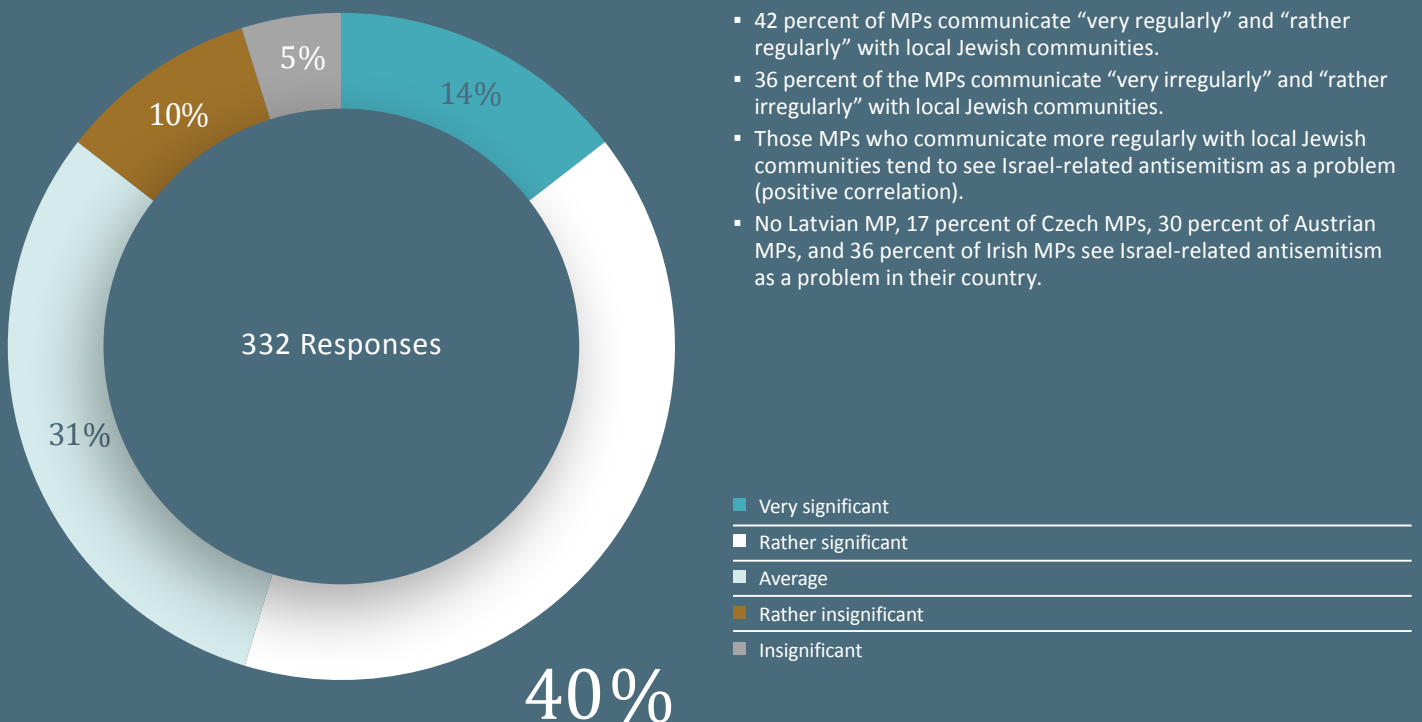


**Antisemitism is perceived as coming from all parts of society.**

- In Germany, more MPs see antisemitism from the right as a threat than antisemitism from radical Islamist communities or from the left.
- French, Swedish, and Danish MPs see radical Islamist communities as a bigger threat than antisemitism from the right.
- Only half of the MPs see latent antisemitism as a great threat in their respective countries.
  - Most are members of a social democratic party.
- MPs from green, liberal, and social democratic parties view antisemitism from the extreme right as the greatest threat.

Fig. 12

► **In your view, to what extent is Israel-related antisemitism a problem in your country?**



**54 percent of MPs see Israel-related antisemitism as a significant problem in their country.**

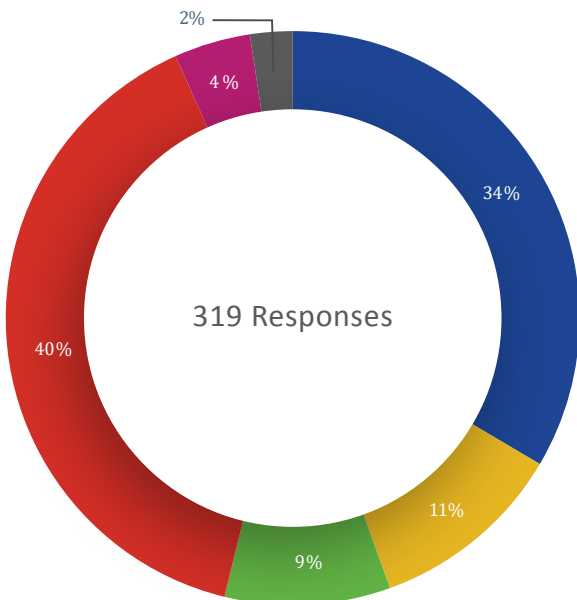
- 42 percent of MPs communicate “very regularly” and “rather regularly” with local Jewish communities.
- 36 percent of the MPs communicate “very irregularly” and “rather irregularly” with local Jewish communities.
- Those MPs who communicate more regularly with local Jewish communities tend to see Israel-related antisemitism as a problem (positive correlation).
- No Latvian MP, 17 percent of Czech MPs, 30 percent of Austrian MPs, and 36 percent of Irish MPs see Israel-related antisemitism as a problem in their country.

## 5 Survey Data

A total of 381 Members of Parliaments from Germany (209), Sweden (31), France (22), Austria (18), Ireland (15), Latvia (14), the Czech Republic (14), Spain (10), the European Parliament (10), Norway (8), Denmark (8), Greece (6), the UK (5), Italy (5), Malta (3), Cyprus (2) and Finland (1) responded to the survey.

Fig. 13

► **Parliamentary groups** (Invitations to participate were sent to all Members of Parliament).



- Interest was high among Swedish and French liberals as well as Austrian social democrats.
- The parliament with the highest response rate was the Latvian parliament (14 percent of MPs responded).
- The parliament with the lowest response rate was the Finnish parliament (0,5 percent of MPs responded).
- The survey was conducted online and was sent to MPs via email. All MPs were reminded twice to respond to the survey.
- Finland has meanwhile elected a new parliament; findings are still based on the 38th parliament (2019-2023).

- Conservatives
- Liberals
- Greens
- Social Democrats
- Left
- Others

\* The survey was conducted from February to March 2023.

\* Not surveyed were the AfD (Germany) and the FPÖ (Austria).

## Summary

### Political Insights

- A majority of European MPs (77 percent) would like to see closer cooperation with Israel.
  - Compared with the Israel Survey 2022, more MPs from those seven countries surveyed initially support closer cooperation. In fact, while 74 percent did so in the previous study, this year 81 percent of MPs supported this call.
  - Preferences changed compared to 2022: Defense and domestic security gained in importance.
- Two-thirds of MPs support closer engagement of their respective country in the Middle East in general and within the framework of the Abraham Accords in particular.
- A majority of surveyed MPs (70 percent) support coordination with Israel regarding Iran.
- 67 percent of MPs support closer cooperation between NATO and Israel.
- 25 percent of MPs see an improvement in bilateral relations with Israel.
- Compared to the results from 2022 (24 percent), a similar percentage of MPs saw an improvement in relations (25 percent).
- 82 percent of MPs view relations with Israel as special compared to other countries.
  - This unique relation is mainly rooted in historical responsibility (87 percent), common values (60 percent), and security reasons (60 percent).
- In general, antisemitism is perceived as coming from all parts of society. However, antisemitism from Islamist communities and the extreme right are observed as the biggest threats by European MPs.
- A majority of European MPs (54 percent) view Israel-related antisemitism as a significant problem in their country.
- 57 percent of the survey's participants have already visited Israel.

# European Leadership Network (ELNET)

[www.elnetwork.eu](http://www.elnetwork.eu)



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