

Resolution 2022 - Second German-Israeli Student Conference

This resolution was developed in the context of the Second German-Israeli Student Conference. The initiators of the resolution are the Free Federation of Student Unions (fzs e.V.), the Young Forum of the German-Israeli Association (JuFo DIG), the Jewish Student Union Germany (JSUD), Association of Jewish Students in the State of Hesse (VJSH), and the National Union of Israeli Students (NUIS).

For us, the pursuit of German-Israeli friendship in the context of youth, education and research entails two core strands of action. First, the fight against all Antisemitism in Germany and worldwide as a condition for any cooperation. This also includes supporting the normalization of other states' relations with the only Jewish state. Second, the continuation and constant expansion of exchange and cooperation between young people, trainees, students, researchers and teachers. These two dimensions are what this resolution seeks to address.

The signatories reaffirm the contents of the resolution of the First German-Israeli Student Conference of 2019, thus the IHRA working definition of anti-Semitism is used for the resolution.

Foundations

1. Preserving the memory of the Holocaust

Before we look at our future as young people in Israel, Germany and the world, it is important to learn and draw lessons from the past. The Holocaust was as an unprecedented crime against humanity committed by the Germany. It was born out of antisemitism and resulted in the killing of 6 million Jews, millions of refugees, and a severe global crises.

1.1. Remembrance is not a zero-sum game - We oppose any attempt to relativize the Shoah. For us, the remembrance of the Shoah is not competing with remembering the persecution and murder of ethnic, sexual, religious or political minorities under National Socialism or with the memory of colonial crimes.

1.2. Developing research & securing remembrance - We ask to extend Holocaust studies, and to continuously work for the commemoration of the Holocaust.

2. There is no honorable antisemitism!

It seems to us that the social consensus regarding the remembrance of the Holocaust and the outlawing of clearly antisemitic motives has developed cracks. Antisemitism appears under ever new guises.

2.1. Combating antisemitism - We oppose all antisemitism, whether it is expressed under the guise of "artistic freedom" or through the demonization and delegitimization of the state of Israel, which even recognized human rights organizations have made use of in the recent past.

2.2. Defending the IHRA definition of antisemitism - We oppose attacks on the IHRA working definition of antisemitism that, especially in the academic and cultural spheres, seek to make Israel-related antisemitism respectable.

Consequences

3. **Creating a safe environment on all campuses for all students**

The academy plays a central role in preparation of the students for the future. Hence it is important to make it safe and accessible for everybody. All students need to be able to participate in campus life, undisturbed and free from discrimination.

3.1. Compatibility of religion and study - Studying and religious practice must be compatible. Looking at Germany there are many institutional hurdles impeding the reconciliation of religion and studies. Exams are repeatedly scheduled on non-Christian holidays. This especially affects practicing Jews, since Judaism strictly prohibits working and writing on Shabbat or high holidays. Thus, it is necessary to take Jewish holidays into account when setting examination dates and to create a clear legal framework for this politically. Religious minorities in Israel are facing a similar situation, having to make adjustments to the Jewish calendar in order to pursue their studies. In Germany and Europe Jewish student groups must be able to act freely and should never have to justify their relationship to the state of Israel.

3.2. Training academic staff about cultural and religious sensitivity - Cultural and Religious Diversity exists on all campuses and it is necessary that academic staff are educated to be aware and sensitive about this diversity in their work and teaching.

3.3. Promoting social cohesion through the fight against antisemitism and racism - Social segregation that creates exclusion and prejudice within societies is a problem in both Israel and Germany. Higher education can have a role in promoting social cohesion as it provides an opportunity for different communities to have meaningful encounters and reduce stigmas. By providing collaborating opportunities, different communities can have meaningful encounters and can bring rapprochement between different societal groups.

3.4. Combating gender-based violence and securing a safe campus - Sexual and gender based discrimination is a problem on campuses both in Israel and Germany. In order to combat it, we need to develop monitoring structures and grant powers to academic institutions to deal with the problem. Doing this we can learn from each other and establish an exchange about successful strategies.

4. **Education and research as a constitutive pillar of German-Israeli relations**

The cooperation of Israeli and German universities, researchers and students must be a central component of the partnership between the two states.

4.1. Long-term funding of bilateral student exchange - The expansion and consolidation of student exchanges calls for increased bilateral cooperation and support from an adequately funded DAAD in Germany; cuts are the wrong approach. A closer connection to the European Higher Education Area in the form of Israel's inclusion in Erasmus+ is crucial in order to significantly simplify the mobility for students and teachers between Germany and Israel.

4.2. Research collaboration in various fields - Research collaborations must be promoted in a variety of ways in order to answer global, societal and social questions. This requires an innovation and start-up oriented exchange, joint research in various fields, a close connection of Israel to the European Research Area as well as solid and long-term funding.

5. No cooperation with countries and institutions that carry out active aggression against the State of Israel

The Iranian regime poses the greatest threat to Israel and Jewish life worldwide and is a central actor in the conflicts of the region. Iran is responsible for various attacks on Jewish and Israeli institutions globally and regularly threatens Israel with its destruction. It is also actively involved in further destabilizing its neighboring states and is building a network of pro-Iranian militias as a bridgehead against Israel. Universities and cultural institutions in Iran are also being hijacked for antisemitic propaganda. The formation of an opposition to this is virtually impossible. Therefore, at the present time, we firmly reject the cooperation of German universities with Iranian institutions. Threats of annihilation against Israel, denial of the Shoah and anti-Semitic terror can never be a basis for cooperation.

6. Normalization: Support Abraham Accords

In a region like the Middle East, which is overrun by wars, crises and conflicts, the normalization agreements between Israel and some Arab states (Abraham Accords) represent a glimmer of hope and therefore we welcome them. Renouncing hatred towards Israel and instead taking the path of dialogue, cooperation and friendship can make a lasting contribution to improve conditions in the entire region. We would like to positively accompany the networking and exchange between the respective civil societies of the states and call on the German government to support this rapprochement at the European level as well.

7. Working together for a sustainable future

As students we are committed to take actions against global crises of our times. We welcome initiatives such as the climate partnership between Germany and Israel. We would like to ensure sustainable practices in academic institutions to serve as a model for students and other institutions in fields of critical importance for humanity and the planet.

8. Giving youth a place in decision-making

Youth participation is necessary to integrate the viewpoint of the younger generation and to ensure that the impact of measures on future generations is considered. In 2017, Government Resolution 2880 was passed in Israel. The resolution recognizes youth as the engine of social and economic growth and emphasizes the importance of youth participation in decision-making and public policy formulation. However, the resolution has not yet been implemented. As young people are the future of both countries, their voices and their perspective need to be heard. We call on our governments to set the structure for youth participation in decision making processes.

