



# Current Initiatives – 2017



ECI in the European Parliament

## Where are all the others?

In 2004 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Elie Wiesel was invited to the European Commission in Brussels to speak about the rise of anti-Semitism in Europe. In his speech he explained how disappointed and helpless he felt as nobody, except the Jewish communities, seemed to react to the rise of anti-Semitism. – “Where are all the others?”, he asked.

The ECI was formed as a coalition “of all the others”, meaning non-Jews, who felt it was their moral ob-

ligation to stand up for the Jewish people and the State of Israel in a time of existential threat.

ECI was not the first Christian organisation to express solidarity with the Jewish people; however, it was the first to put these words in to action by opening an office in Brussels and engage with the political leadership to articulate solidarity with the European Jewish Community and the modern State of Israel.

## Advocacy at the European Union

In an official EU conference in the European Parliament in Brussels in October 2016, speakers from Jewish communities from across Europe posed a serious question: "Is there a future for the Jewish people in Europe?"

Recent surveys reveal that Jewish communities no longer feel safe in Europe. Throughout the year ECI has stood up against the growing tide of anti-Semitism in Europe as well as any attempt to boycott, isolate or delegitimize the State of Israel.

The core activities of ECI take place in Brussels. Through regular contacts with EU-officials and members of the European Parliament, we help raise awareness of issues which are of critical importance for the Jewish communities in Europe and the State of Israel.

In 2016 ECI reiterated its call to the EU to review its funding to the Palestinian Authority after a 13 year old girl was stabbed to death by a Palestinian terrorist. In a meeting with EU-officials responsible for this funding, ECI called for the transfer of funds to the PA to be made conditional on the ending of payments by the PA to terrorists.

The important work of ECI in Brussels was publicly acknowledged by the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, in a private meeting in Jerusalem in September 2016.



## Advocacy at the United Nations

The United Nations remains a hostile environment for the State of Israel which has been the target for unrelenting diplomatic attacks over the years. Since 2011 ECI has been active at the UN level in New York as the only non-Jewish, pro-Israel group in presenting the legal case for Israel.

In 2016 ECI continued to reach out to the UN member states, reminding them of the 3000 year old historical connection between the Jewish people and Jerusalem as three UNESCO resolutions were adopted, blatantly denying any such connection. The diplomatic battle against Jerusalem grew in intensity as the UN Security Council issued a devastating resolution against Israel just one day before Christmas, even putting into question the legality of Jewish prayer at the Western Wall in Jerusalem.

In a rare interview before stepping down from his 10 year term as Secretary-General of the UN, Ban Ki-moon openly acknowledged the UN bias against Israel. ECI has consistently made the UN clearly aware of this bias, while at the same time engaging constructively with senior UN officials to correct this imbalance.

The important contributions of ECI was officially recognized by the UN Secretariat in December 2016 when ECI was invited to the farewell concert for the outgoing Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon and the installation of the new Secretary-General, António Guterres.



## Annual Policy Conference in the European Parliament

One of the highlights of the year is the ECI Annual Policy Conference in the European Parliament in Brussels, which this year was followed by the ECI Prayer Summit. By engaging consistently with policy makers and decision makers over the years, ECI and its partners have been able to be a real influence within the EU.

This year the conference took place in April and highlighted Israeli innovations and entrepreneurship as an antidote to boycotts, divestments and sanctions (BDS) against Israel. Following presentations by experts in this field and contributions by members of the European Parliament, the conference concluded that Israeli innovations promote peace while the BDS movement breeds anti-Semitism.

In December ECI filled one of the largest conference rooms in the European Parliament with enthusiastic pro-Israel activists in a joint conference with the European Christian Political Movement (ECPM) to discuss EU-Israeli security cooperation. As the Deputy Speaker of the Israeli Knesset, Hilik Bar, addressed the conference, he marvelled at the high level of support that he was privileged to experience in the heart of the European Union.

In 2004 Nobel Laureate, the late Elie Wiesel, addressed a similar conference in Brussels and asked why it was only the Jewish communities that stood up for Israel. "Where are all the others?," he asked. Elie Wiesel passed away in 2016, but Israel is no longer alone in the corridors of power in the European Union.



## Holocaust Remembrance Day

Ever since its inception in 2003, European Coalition for Israel has played a key role in marking the Holocaust Remembrance Day in honouring the victims of the Holocaust and raising awareness of new forms of anti-Semitism.

In 2005 ECI initiated and hosted the first Holocaust Remembrance Day event in the European Parliament in Brussels, which only a few years later received the official patronage of the President of the European Parliament. Today this annual event is hosted by the current President of the European Parliament.

In 2016 ECI marked the Holocaust Remembrance Day with a social media campaign in solidarity with the Jewish school teacher in Marseilles who in January was attacked and stabbed by a radicalized ISIS supporter. As Jewish community leaders around Europe were wondering whether the time had come for Jews to no longer wear their religious symbols in public, ECI decided to call upon elected leaders to wear a kippah (skull cap) in solidarity with the Jewish communities in Europe.

The "Wear-A-Kippah" challenge was well received and European Parliament President Martin Schulz and Vice-President Antonio Tajani (current President in 2017) openly posed with ECI in a photograph for social media wearing a Jewish kippah. Across Europe many members of parliaments took part in the campaign and in some national parliaments whole party groups posed with Jewish religious symbols as the campaign spread on social media.



## Global Outreach

While remaining faithful to our historical roots and primary commitments in Europe, the reach of ECI has grown over the years. In 2016 ECI staff visited six continents as more nations were discovering the uniqueness of the ECI ministry.

In Singapore, national leaders came together to learn more about the work of ECI and how the work could be replicated in Asia. In Brussels ECI received an official governmental delegation from Africa to discuss the development of relations with Israel.

In 2016 the first ECI National Conference took place in London, only four months after the Brexit vote. This uniquely timed conference was held in preparation for the 100th anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, as was a lecture in the House of Lords a few days earlier, organised by ECI on the eve of the 100th year.

Most importantly, in 2016 ECI launched its newest initiative, "American Friends of ECI", formed to strengthen transatlantic cooperation in support for Israel. Through this new organisation ECI offers a unique platform for Americans who want to support Israel at international institutions around the world.

In February ECI met with congressional staff on Capitol Hill to brief them on discriminatory EU labelling guidelines for Israeli products in order to prevent similar US directives. The official launch of American Friends of ECI took place in October 2016 with the German Deputy Ambassador to the USA, Boris Ruge, as the keynote speaker.



## ECI Young Professionals

It is a sad but undeniable fact that Israel is losing support among the younger generation in Europe. While older generations were shaping their perception of Israel from their memories of Israel's courageous battles in 1948 and 1967, a new generation has grown up with media images from Gaza and the security fence.

Today the battlefield for the hearts and minds of the young generation is on university campuses in Europe where our future decision makers are shaping their perceptions about Israel.

In the last few years, ECI has done its utmost to identify and train young professionals across Europe to be advocates for Israel. Together with students affiliated with ECI, we have been able to organise lectures and events on university campuses to present a true and historically accurate picture of the on-going conflict between Israelis and Palestinians.

As ECI we want to encourage and empower a new generation of advocates for Israel. Our most recent staff appointments have been young professionals and we are planning to provide more opportunities for young adults to serve on the ECI team as volunteers.



## Forum for Cultural Diplomacy

Since its creation in 2013, the Forum for Cultural Diplomacy has been hosting cultural events at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, presenting the universal messages of the Jewish holidays and Jewish contributions to the international community.

In 2016 the Forum for Cultural Diplomacy, together with the Permanent Representation of Israel to the UN, hosted the first ever Passover Seder event inside the United Nations Headquarters building in New York. By taking part in the traditional Seder and reading selected passages from the Hagadah, participating UN ambassadors and senior UN officials gained a deeper understanding of the miraculous rescue of the Jewish people from slavery to freedom.

In 2013 we discovered that all major religions, with the exception of Judaism, had their most important holidays recognized by the UN. After raising the issue with the Israeli government in Jerusalem, a request was made to the Secretary-General of the UN to have the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, recognized as an official UN holiday.

After more than two years of meeting with UN diplomats to explain the importance of Yom Kippur, the request was accepted in December 2015, and Yom Kippur became one of six rotating religious holidays. Hence, in October 2016, Yom Kippur was finally celebrated at the UN, after 67 years of Israeli membership. To mark this historic occasion ECI was officially received in the office of the UN Secretary-General.



## Media Work

ECI is privileged to hold a monthly televised talk-show directly from the European Parliament in Brussels. Known as the "European Report" and hosted by British journalist Simon Barrett and Tomas Sandell, the programme enables ECI to invite members of the European Parliament, EU-officials, diplomats and experts to discuss issues of concern for European Jewry and the State of Israel. Through this talk-show ECI gives Israel a voice in the heart of the European Union.

In 2016 the European Report featured, among others, the new Israeli Ambassador to the EU, Ronny Leshno-Yaar, who openly thanked ECI for its work in the European Union in support for Israel. The European Report is featured on several TV channels across Europe but can also be viewed directly on our website.

ECI has increased its media presence further by hosting press conferences and contributing in news programmes for renowned TV channels such as CBN and by writing regular columns in the Times of Israel and other media outlets.

Today, through social media, we reach a large international audience with daily updates and news items. Through our Facebook and Twitter accounts we engage with our partners and with policy makers and opinion shapers world-wide on issues related to Israel, the European Union and the United Nations.



## Join us. Take action.

The Middle East is in chaos. In Europe anti-Semitism and political radicalism is on the rise. Israel remains the only true democracy in a sea of dictatorships and brutal wars. Still, many political leaders seem to be obsessed with only one country, Israel.

This is not right. This is not just. If there has ever been a need for a coalition to stand on Israel's behalf, it is now.

As ancient cultures are erased before our very own eyes, borders are redrawn, and history is written, we need to remember this. For those who write history it is important to be on the right side of history. Join us. Take action.



### You can also follow our activities on:



European Coalition for Israel



[www.youtube.com/ec4i](http://www.youtube.com/ec4i)



@ec4Israel and @ECIUN

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## ECI-Bank accounts

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### UK Bank Account (in Pounds Sterling):

ECI · Yorkshire Building Society,  
IBAN number: GB88NWBK56003600115959  
Sort Code: 60 92 04 · Account Number: 54871937  
Ref/Roll Number: 5487193707

### Gift Aid (UK):

If you are a UK tax payer, then it may be appropriate for you to Gift Aid your donation.  
Please contact us for more information.

### US bank account

American Friends of the European Coalition for Israel  
Bank: Capital One  
Account Number: 1361231593 · Routing number: 065000090  
Tax exempt donations may be made via check, credit card, or bank transfer to the American Friends of the European Coalition for Israel.  
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on ECI website [www.ec4i.org](http://www.ec4i.org)