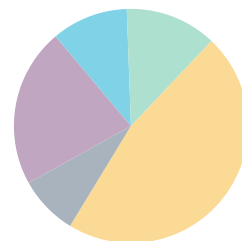
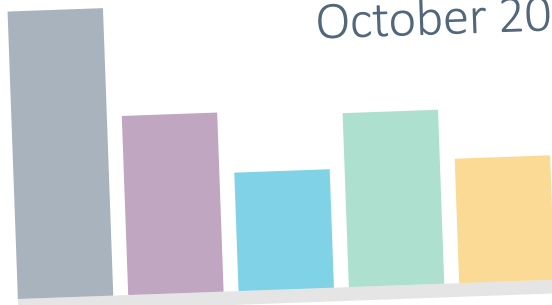


# The 2018 Israeli Foreign Policy Index of the Mitvim Institute

October 2018



**MITVIM**  
The Israeli Institute for  
Regional Foreign Policies

**FRIEDRICH  
EBERT  
STIFTUNG**

# The 2018 Israeli Foreign Policy Index

## Findings of the Mitvim Institute Poll

The sixth annual public opinion poll of the Mitvim Institute on Israel's foreign policy was conducted in September 2018. It was carried out by the Rafi Smith Institute and in cooperation with Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, among a representative sample of Israel's adult population (700 men and women, Jews and Arabs) and with a margin of error of 3.5%. This report presents the poll's key findings, grouped under four categories: Israel's foreign relations, Israel's Foreign Service, Israel and its surrounding regions, and Israel and the Palestinians.

### Key Findings

#### A. Israel's Foreign Relations

- Israelis rank their country's **global standing** at 5.82 out of 10. This ranking has been improving every year since 2015.
- Israelis are split regarding their country's **top foreign policy priorities**. Improving relations with Arab states and advancing the Israeli-Palestinian peace process are ranked first, followed by countering the BDS (Boycotts, Sanctions and Divestments) movement and advancing ties with Russia.
- Israelis rank the state of **Israel-US relations** at 7.75 out of 10. 63% describe the relations as good (compared to 41% in 2017). This ranking has been improving every year since 2015.
- Israelis see Russia as **the most important country** for Israel besides the US, followed by Germany, Great Britain, China, France, and Egypt.
- For 54% of Israelis, it is very or rather significant for additional countries to relocate their **embassies in Israel to Jerusalem**. 37% think it is not or not very significant.
- 41% of Israelis think that the **Nation State Law** will have a negative impact on Israel's foreign relations. 12% think it will have a positive impact.
- Israelis are split on whether Israel should prioritize building **ties with democratic countries** (40%) or should not consider regime type as a factor (42%).

#### B. Israel's Foreign Service

- Israelis rank their **government's handling of foreign policy** at 5.22 out of 10. This ranking has been improving every year since 2015.
- Israelis rank the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs' (MFA) fulfillment of its mission** at 5.01 out of 10. This ranking has been improving every year since 2015.
- 58% of Israelis think that the **lack of a full-time foreign minister** has a negative impact on Israel's foreign relations. 5% think it has a positive impact.
- 42% of Israelis have no opinion on who should serve as **Israel's foreign minister**. For those who did have an opinion, the leading candidates are Yair Lapid or Benjamin Netanyahu (10% each).
- 47% of Israelis think that Israel should take into account, to a moderate or large extent, the impact of its policy decisions on **Diaspora Jews**. 38% think this should be taken into account to a limited extent, or none at all.
- 55% of Israelis think that the Israeli MFA should be the responsible entity to counter **BDS**, rather than a special ministry (21%) as is the case today.
- 46% of Israelis think that **entry to Israel** should be permitted to anyone not posing a security threat. 41% think that entry should be denied to those calling to boycott both Israel and the settlements, and 4% think that entry should be denied to those calling to boycott settlements only.

### C. Israel and its Surrounding Regions

- The Israeli public is divided as to whether **Israel belongs** more to the Middle East (28%), Europe (23%), or the Mediterranean Basin (22%).
- A vast majority of Israelis (69%) think that **regional cooperation** between Israel and Middle Eastern countries is possible. 19% think it is not.
- 41% of Israelis would not like to **visit any Arab country**, even given normal ties between Israel and its neighbors. The United Arab Emirates (13%) and Egypt (12%) are the countries that Israelis would like to visit the most.
- Egypt (24%) and Saudi Arabia (23%) are the Arab countries with which Israelis see the **most importance in cooperating**. 28% think that Israel should not try to develop cooperation with any Arab country.
- A majority of Israelis think that **the EU** is currently more of a foe to Israel (55%) than a friend (18%).
- 70% of Israelis think that Great Britain, France and Germany compose the most important **group of EU member states** with which Israel should develop closer ties. 7% preferred the Visegrad group, which includes Hungary, the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia.
- The Israeli public is split on whether Israel should try to improve its **relations with Turkey** (42%) or not (45%).

### D. Israel and the Palestinians

- 49% of Israelis think that a breakthrough in ties between **Israel and Arab states** can be reached even without progress in the **Israeli-Palestinian peace process**. 33% think that such a breakthrough is dependent on progress in the peace process.
- Most Israelis want Israel to launch **negotiations with the Palestinian Authority** towards a peace deal (50% vs. 36%), but do not want (32% vs. 51%) Israel to hold **negotiations with Hamas** towards a long-term ceasefire in Gaza.
- More Israelis think that the **continued Palestinian split** between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip serves Israel better (38%) than a reunification between them (27%).
- More respondents want Israel to improve **living conditions in the Gaza Strip** (43%) than to increase economic pressure on Gaza (38%).
- 21% of Israelis think that the **policy of US President Donald Trump** advances Israeli-Palestinian peace. 29% think it is distancing peace, and 30% think it does not impact chances for peace.

### Trends over Time

Average rankings on a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high)

	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
Israel's global standing	<b>5.82</b>	5.49	5.01	3.96	5.12
The government's performance on foreign policy	<b>5.22</b>	5.05	4.55	4.00	5.29
The MFA's fulfillment of its mission	<b>5.01</b>	4.81	4.31	4.03	4.80
The current state of Israel-US relations	<b>7.75</b>	6.88	5.56	5.01	6.09

## Sample Breakdown

**Sample size:** 700

50% **Male**; 50% **Female**

84% **Jews**; 16% **Arabs**

18% **Russian immigrants** (within the Jewish sample)

Age	Total
18-29	27%
30-49	40%
50+	33%

Level of Religiosity (within the Jewish sample)	Total
Religious	22%
Traditional	31%
Secular	47%

Political Point of View (within the Jewish sample)	Total
Right & Far Right	46%
Center-Right	18%
Center	18%
Center-Left	11%
Left & Far Left	7%

Level of Education	Total
High school or below	25%
High school graduate	27%
Academic degree	48%

Level of Income	Total
Below average	31%
Average	44%
Above average	25%

\* Among 93% who responded

## A. Israel's Foreign Relations

### 1. What is your general feeling about Israel's standing in the world today?

On a scale of 1 to 10; 1 is bad, 10 is very good

	Total
1- Bad	5%
2	3%
3	7%
4	11%
5	15%
6	16%
7	20%
8	15%
9	5%
10 - Very good	3%
<b>Average</b>	<b>5.82</b>
Percentage who responded	95%

	Total	Jews	Arabs
Poor (1-3)	<b>15%</b>	13%	26%
Rather poor (4-5)	<b>26%</b>	25%	41%
Rather good (6-7)	<b>36%</b>	38%	21%
Good (8-10)	<b>23%</b>	24%	12%
<b>Average</b>	<b>5.82</b>	5.96	4.84

\* Among 95% who responded

#### Trends over time:

	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
<b>Average</b>	<b>5.82</b>	5.49	5.01	3.96	5.12

## 2. Which of the following foreign policy issues should the State of Israel prioritize in the coming year?

The columns exceed 100% as respondents were allowed to select two answers from the list

	Total	Jews	Arabs	2017
Relations with moderate Arab states	<b>25%</b>	24%	27%	35%
The Israeli-Palestinian peace process	<b>25%</b>	23%	35%	31%
Countering delegitimization and boycotts of Israel	<b>22%</b>	25%	1%	24%
Relations with Russia	<b>20%</b>	19%	25%	15%
The threats from Iran	<b>19%</b>	22%	2%	20%
Relations with the US	<b>18%</b>	20%	12%	19%
Relations with the EU	<b>17%</b>	18%	14%	17%
Relations with Asian countries	<b>14%</b>	14%	9%	18%
Relations with African countries	<b>3%</b>	3%	0%	3%
None of the above / No opinion	<b>11%</b>	8%	24%	2%

## 3. What is your assessment of the current relations between Israel and the US?

On a scale of 1-10; 1 is bad, 10 is very good

	Total
1 - Bad	1%
2	1%
3	1%
4	3%
5	8%
6	9%
7	14%
8	23%
9	18%
10 - Very good	22%
<b>Average</b>	<b>7.75</b>
Percentage who responded	93%

	Total	Jews	Arabs
Poor (1-3)	<b>3%</b>	2%	8%
Rather poor (4-5)	<b>11%</b>	10%	22%
Rather good (6-7)	<b>23%</b>	22%	31%
Good (8-10)	<b>63%</b>	66%	39%
<b>Average</b>	<b>7.75</b>	7.91	6.73

\* Among 93% who responded

### Trends over time:

	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
<b>Average</b>	<b>7.75</b>	6.88	5.56	5.01	6.09

#### 4. The relations with which countries (except for the US) are the most important to Israel today?

The columns exceed 100% as respondents were asked to provide three answers. The table only includes countries receiving 5% and more

	Total	Jews	Arabs	2017	2016	2015	2014
Russia	<b>42%</b>	44%	31%	51%	45%	41%	33%
Germany	<b>34%</b>	36%	20%	34%	32%	31%	32%
Great Britain	<b>29%</b>	29%	28%	26%	30%	19%	27%
China	<b>23%</b>	26%	4%	25%	21%	20%	20%
France	<b>22%</b>	22%	23%	20%	25%	14%	16%
Egypt	<b>12%</b>	12%	15%	12%	18%	21%	27%
Jordan	<b>6%</b>	5%	8%	7%	5%	10%	3%
India	<b>5%</b>	6%	0%	8%	2%	5%	2%

#### 5. How significant do you think it is for additional countries to relocate their embassies in Israel to Jerusalem?

	Total	Jews	Arabs
Very significant	<b>26%</b>	54%	18%
Rather significant	<b>28%</b>	61%	18%
Not very significant	<b>20%</b>	37%	53%
Not significant	<b>17%</b>	34%	53%
No opinion	<b>9%</b>	9%	29%

#### 6. What do you think will be the impact of the Nation State Law on Israel's foreign relations?

	Total	Jews	Arabs
Positive	<b>12%</b>	13%	5%
Negative	<b>41%</b>	38%	60%
No impact	<b>26%</b>	30%	5%
No opinion	<b>21%</b>	19%	30%
<i>The gap between "positive" and "negative"</i>	<b>-29%</b>	-25%	-55%

#### 7. With which of the following statements do you most agree:

	Total	Jews	Arabs
Israel should prioritize building relations with democratic countries	<b>40%</b>	41%	36%
Israel should not consider regime type as a factor when building its foreign relations	<b>42%</b>	44%	30%
No opinion	<b>18%</b>	15%	34%

## B. Israel's Foreign Service

### 8. To what extent are you satisfied with the Israeli government's conduct in the realm of foreign policy?

On a scale of 1 to 10; 1 is not at all satisfied, 10 is very satisfied

	Total
1- Not at all satisfied	14%
2	5%
3	8%
4	8%
5	14%
6	14%
7	16%
8	11%
9	7%
10 - Very satisfied	3%
<b>Average</b>	<b>5.22</b>
Percentage who responded	94%

	Total	Jews	Arabs
Not satisfied (1-3)	<b>27%</b>	27%	38%
Not very satisfied (4-5)	<b>22%</b>	20%	30%
Moderately satisfied (6-7)	<b>30%</b>	30%	26%
Satisfied (8-10)	<b>21%</b>	23%	6%
<b>Average</b>	<b>5.22</b>	5.37	4.20

\* Among 94% who responded

#### Trends over time:

	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
<b>Average</b>	<b>5.22</b>	5.05	4.55	4.00	5.29



## 9. To what extent are you satisfied with the way in which the Israeli MFA is currently fulfilling its mission?

On a scale of 1 to 10; 1 is not at all satisfied, 10 is very satisfied

	Total
1- Not at all satisfied	12%
2	6%
3	10%
4	13%
5	14%
6	14%
7	15%
8	9%
9	5%
10- Very satisfied	2%
<b>Average</b>	<b>5.01</b>
Percentage who responded	91%

	Total	Jews	Arabs
Not satisfied (1-3)	<b>28%</b>	27%	34%
Not very satisfied (4-5)	<b>27%</b>	25%	39%
Moderately satisfied (6-7)	<b>29%</b>	30%	23%
Satisfied (8-10)	<b>16%</b>	18%	4%
<b>Average</b>	<b>5.01</b>	5.13	4.20

\* Among 91% who responded

### Trends over time:

	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
<b>Average</b>	<b>5.01</b>	4.81	4.31	4.03	4.80

## 10. What do you think is the impact of the lack of a full-time foreign minister on Israel's foreign relations?

	Total	Jews	Arabs
Positive	<b>5%</b>	5%	3%
Negative	<b>58%</b>	60%	49%
No impact	<b>21%</b>	22%	17%
No opinion	<b>16%</b>	13%	31%
<i>The gap between "positive" and "negative"</i>	<b>-53%</b>	-55%	-46%

### 11. Who would you like to see as Israel's foreign minister?

This was an open question. The table only includes those receiving 5% and more

	Total	Jews	Arabs	2017
Yair Lapid	10%	11%	8%	13%
Benjamin Netanyahu	10%	11%	2%	6%
Naftali Bennett	6%	7%	2%	5%
Tzipi Livni	5%	6%	4%	7%
Avigdor Lieberman	5%	6%	3%	6%
No opinion	42%	38%	64%	39%

### 12. To what extent should the Israeli government take into account the implications of its decisions on Diaspora Jews?

	Total	Jews	Arabs
To a large extent	12%	47%	50%
To a moderate extent	35%		
To a small extent	30%	38%	39%
Not at all	8%		
No opinion	15%	15%	40%

### 13. Do you think there is a need for a special ministry to counter BDS (the movement to boycott Israel) or should the issue be under the responsibility of the MFA?

	Total	Jews	Arabs
A special ministry is needed	21%	21%	20%
The MFA should be responsible	55%	60%	31%
No opinion	24%	19%	49%

### 14. Who of the following do you think should be denied entry to Israel?

	Total	Jews	Arabs
Whoever opposes the policy of the Israeli government	9%	10%	8%
Whoever calls to boycott settlements	4%	3%	5%
Whoever calls to boycott both the settlements and the State of Israel	41%	48%	3%
Entry should be permitted to anyone not posing a security threat	46%	39%	84%

## C. Israel and its Surrounding Regions

### 15. Where do you think Israel belongs?

	Total	Jews	Arabs
More in the Middle East	<b>28%</b>	27%	32%
More in Europe	<b>23%</b>	25%	12%
More in the Mediterranean Basin	<b>22%</b>	22%	24%
None of the above	<b>10%</b>	11%	3%
No opinion	<b>17%</b>	15%	29%

### 16. Do you believe that regional cooperation between Israel and other countries in the Middle East is possible?

	Total	Jews	Arabs	2017	2016	2015	2014
Yes, it is possible	<b>69%</b>	70%	65%	70%	64%	59%	69%
No, it is not possible	<b>19%</b>	20%	10%	23%	26%	36%	28%
No opinion	<b>12%</b>	10%	25%	7%	10%	5%	3%
<i>The gap between "yes" and "no"</i>	<b>+50%</b>	+50%	+55%	+47%	+38%	+23%	+41%

### 17. Given normal ties between Israel and its neighbours, which Arab country would you like to visit the most?

The table only includes countries receiving 5% and more

	Total	Jews	Arabs
United Arab Emirates	<b>13%</b>	12%	18%
Egypt	<b>12%</b>	14%	0%
Jordan	<b>8%</b>	9%	4%
Lebanon	<b>6%</b>	4%	21%
Saudi Arabia	<b>6%</b>	5%	8%
No Arab country	<b>41%</b>	41%	40%
No opinion	<b>2%</b>	1%	2%

### 18. With which Arab country do you think it is the most important for Israel to try to develop cooperation in various fields?

The table only includes countries receiving 5% and more

	Total	Jews	Arabs
Egypt	<b>24%</b>	25%	15%
Saudi Arabia	<b>23%</b>	25%	13%
Jordan	<b>8%</b>	7%	12%
No Arab country	<b>28%</b>	26%	40%
No opinion	<b>4%</b>	4%	0%

10% of the Arabs mentioned the Palestinian Authority, which was mentioned by 1% of the Jews.

**19. Do you think that the EU is currently more of a friend or a foe to Israel?**

	Total	Jews	Arabs
More of a friend	<b>18%</b>	16%	27%
More of a foe	<b>55%</b>	61%	25%
No opinion	<b>27%</b>	23%	48%
<i>The gap between "friend" and "foe"</i>	<b>-37%</b>	-45%	+2%

**20. With which group of EU member states do you think it is most important for Israel to develop closer ties?**

	Total	Jews	Arabs
Great Britain, France and Germany	<b>70%</b>	73%	58%
Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary and Slovakia	<b>7%</b>	8%	2%
Greece and Cyprus	<b>4%</b>	4%	6%
Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia	<b>1%</b>	1%	0%
No opinion	<b>18%</b>	14%	34%

**21. Do you think that Israel should or should not try to improve its relations with Turkey?**

	Total	Jews	Arabs
Should try to improve relations	<b>42%</b>	38%	68%
Should not try to improve relations	<b>45%</b>	52%	7%
No opinion	<b>13%</b>	10%	25%
<i>The gap between "should" and "should not"</i>	<b>-3%</b>	-14%	+61%

## D. Israel and the Palestinians

**22. Do you think that a breakthrough in Israel's ties with Arab countries can be achieved only after progress has been made in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process or even without progress in the peace process?**

	Total	Jews	Arabs	2017
Only after progress has been made in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process	<b>33%</b>	31%	45%	39%
Even without progress in the peace process	<b>49%</b>	54%	18%	48%
No opinion	<b>18%</b>	15%	37%	13%
<i>The gap between "after progress" and "without progress"</i>	<b>-16%</b>	-23%	+27%	-9%

**23. In your opinion, should Israel launch peace negotiations with the Palestinian Authority?**

	Total	Jews	Arabs
Yes, it should	<b>50%</b>	46%	70%
No, it should not	<b>36%</b>	42%	5%
No opinion	<b>14%</b>	12%	25%
<i>The gap between "should" and "should not"</i>	<b>+14%</b>	+4%	+65%

**24. In your opinion, should Israel negotiate with Hamas towards a long-term ceasefire in Gaza?**

	Total	Jews	Arabs
Yes, it should	<b>32%</b>	30%	45%
No, it should not	<b>51%</b>	57%	16%
No opinion	<b>17%</b>	13%	39%
<i>The gap between "should" and "should not"</i>	<b>-19%</b>	-13%	+29%

**25. In your opinion, what will serve Israel's interests better: Reunification between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip or a continued split between them?**

	Total	Jews	Arabs	2017
Reunification between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip	<b>27%</b>	22%	52%	24%
A continued split between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip	<b>38%</b>	43%	12%	50%
No opinion	<b>35%</b>	35%	36%	26%
<i>The gap between "reunification" and "split"</i>	<b>-11%</b>	-21%	+40%	-26%

**26. In your opinion, what is better for Israel to do regarding the Gaza Strip: Work to improve living conditions there, or increase the economic pressure on it?**

	Total	Jews	Arabs
Work to improve living conditions in the Gaza Strip	<b>43%</b>	39%	62%
Increase the economic pressure on the Gaza Strip	<b>38%</b>	45%	2%
No opinion	<b>19%</b>	16%	36%
<i>The gap between “improve” and “increase pressure”</i>	<b>+5%</b>	-6%	+60%

**27. Do you think that the policy undertaken by US President Donald Trump advances Israeli-Palestinian peace or distances it?**

	Total	Jews	Arabs
Advances Israeli-Palestinian peace	<b>21%</b>	25%	2%
Distances Israeli-Palestinian peace	<b>29%</b>	24%	58%
Does not have an impact on chances for peace	<b>30%</b>	33%	12%
No opinion	<b>20%</b>	18%	28%
<i>The gap between “advances” and “distances”</i>	<b>-8%</b>	+1%	-56%

**For Further Information:**

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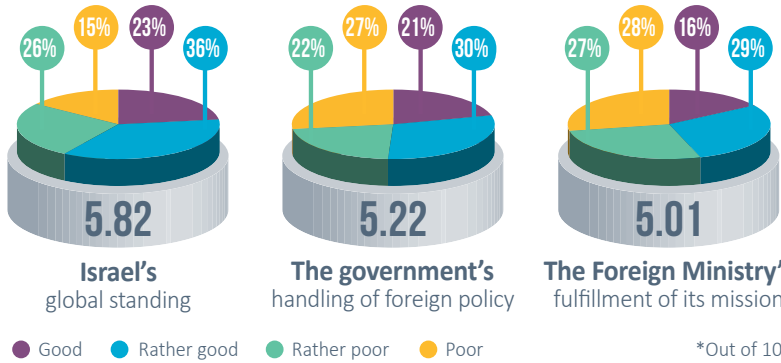
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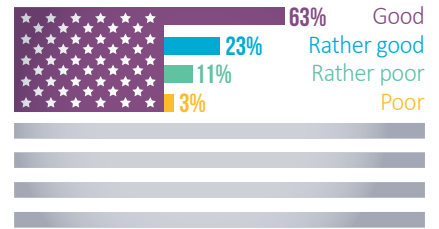
# The 2018 Israeli Foreign Policy Index - Key Findings

## General Assessments

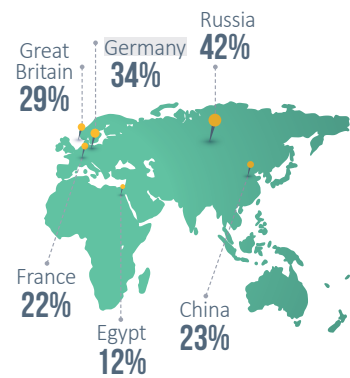
Average ratings on a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high)



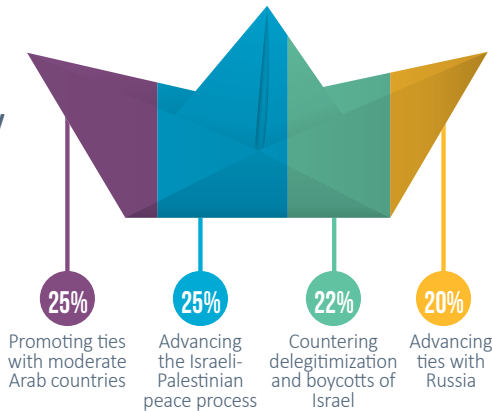
The state of Israel-US relations: 7.75 (Out of 10)



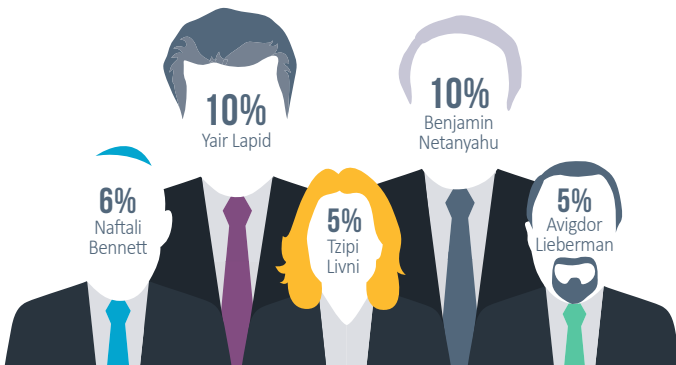
The most important countries for Israel in the world (except for the US)



Israel's top foreign policy priorities



Who should serve as Israel's Foreign Minister?



\*Respondents could specify any name they wanted. 42% had no opinion.

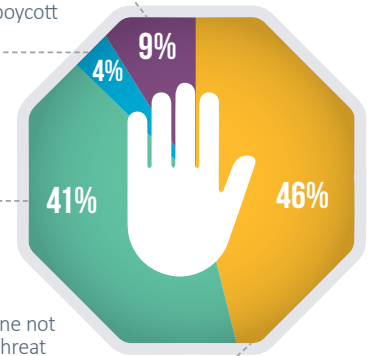
Who should be denied entry to Israel?

Whoever opposes the policy of the Israeli government

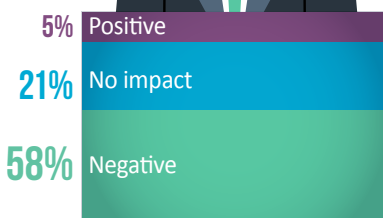
Whoever calls to boycott settlements

Whoever calls to boycott both the settlements and the State of Israel

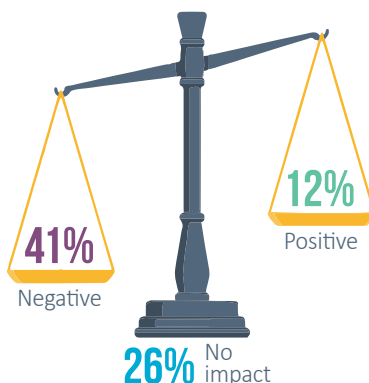
Entry should be permitted to anyone not posing a security threat



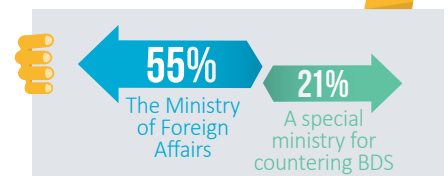
What is the impact of the lack of a full-time Foreign Minister on Israel's foreign relations?



What will be the impact of the Nation State Law on Israel's foreign relations?



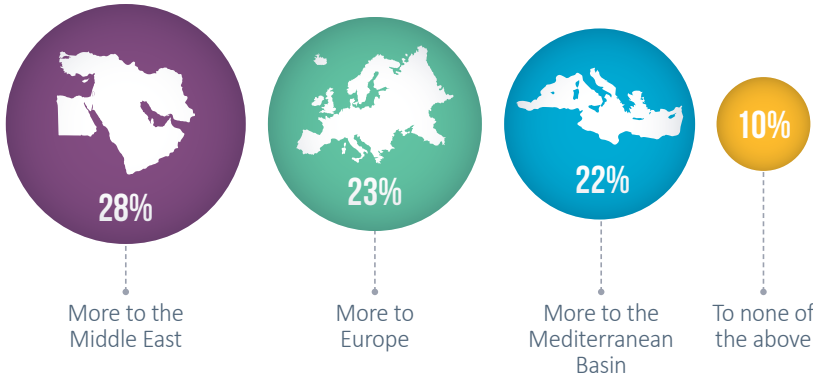
Who in the Israeli government should be responsible for countering BDS?



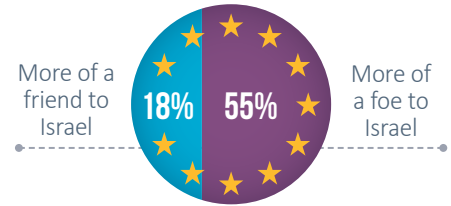
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# The 2018 Israeli Foreign Policy Index - Key Findings

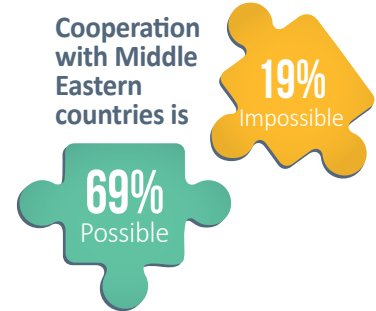
## To which region does Israel belong?



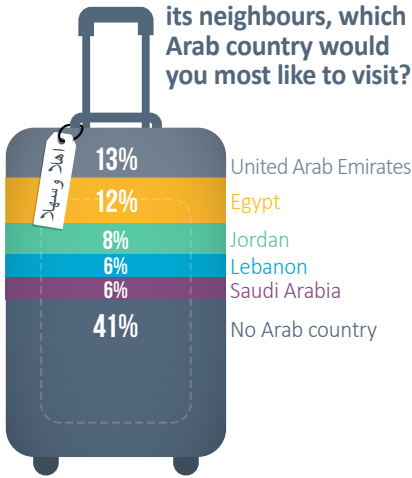
## The European Union is currently



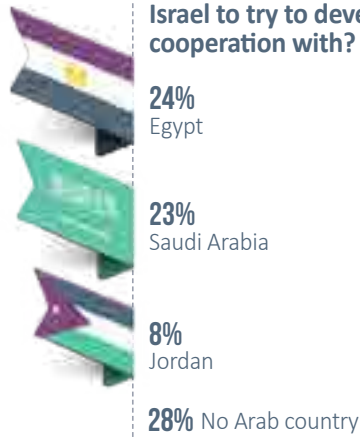
## Cooperation with Middle Eastern countries is



## Given normal ties between Israel and its neighbours, which Arab country would you most like to visit?



## Which Arab country is the most important for Israel to try to develop cooperation with?



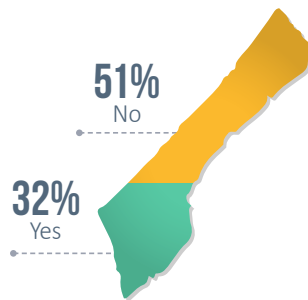
## A breakthrough in Israel's ties with Arab states will be possible



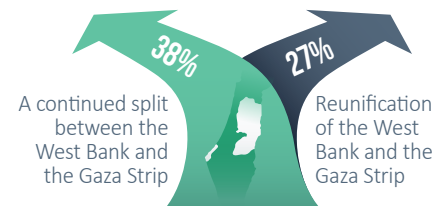
## Should Israel launch peace negotiations with the Palestinian Authority?



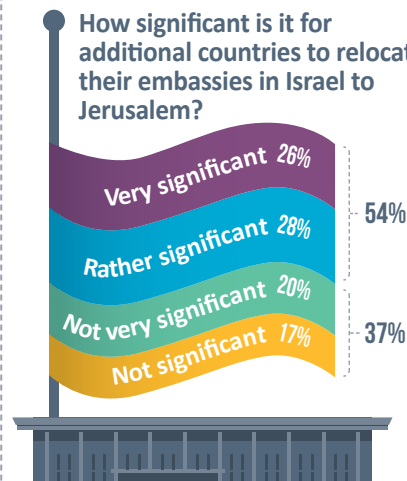
## Should Israel negotiate with Hamas towards a long-term ceasefire in Gaza?



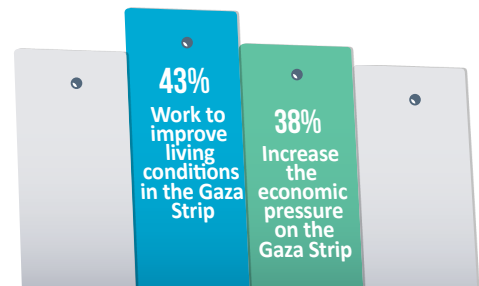
## What will serve Israel's interests better?



## How significant is it for additional countries to relocate their embassies in Israel to Jerusalem?



## What is better for Israel to do regarding the Gaza Strip?



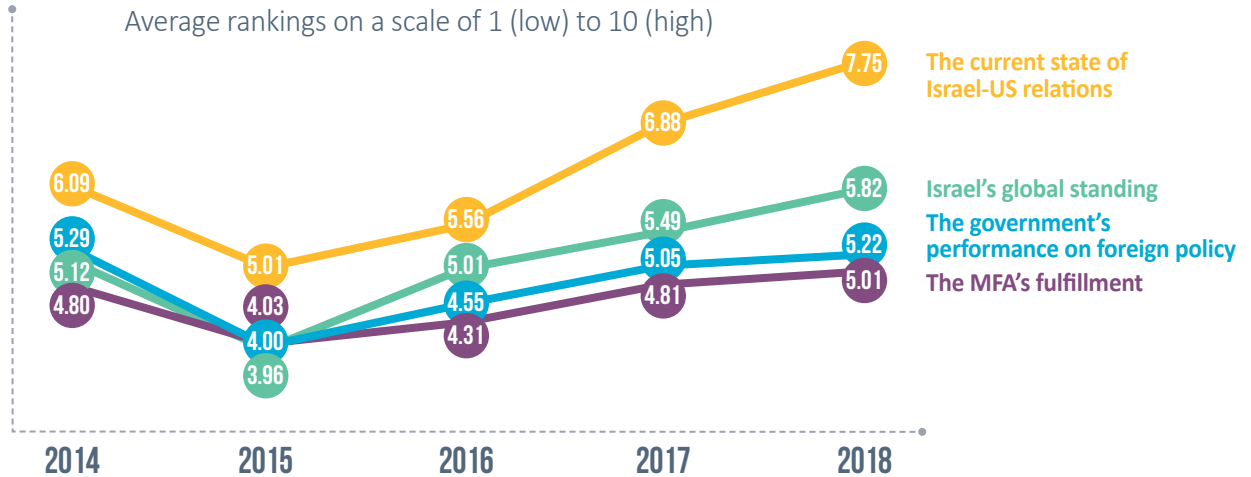
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# The 2018 Israeli Foreign Policy Index - Key Findings

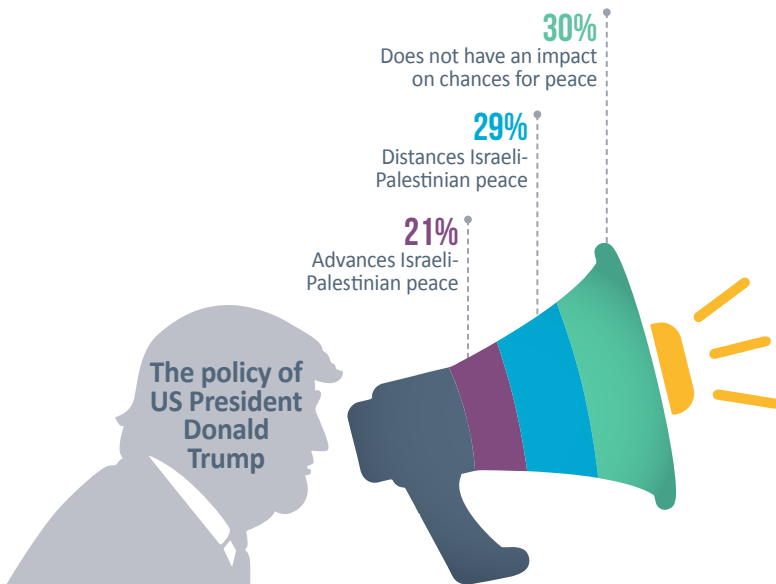
## Trends over Time

Average rankings on a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high)

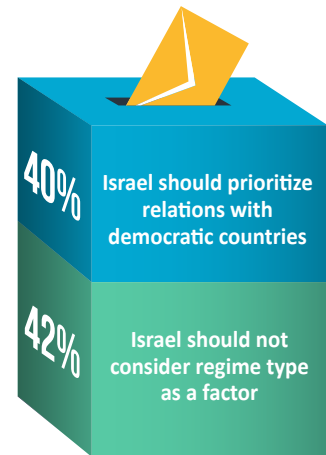


The current state of Israel-US relations

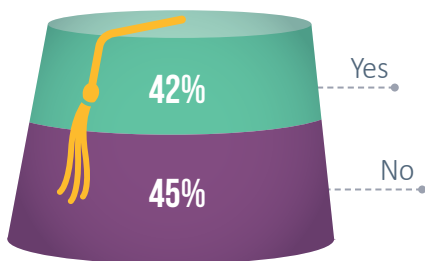
Israel's global standing  
The government's performance on foreign policy  
The MFA's fulfillment



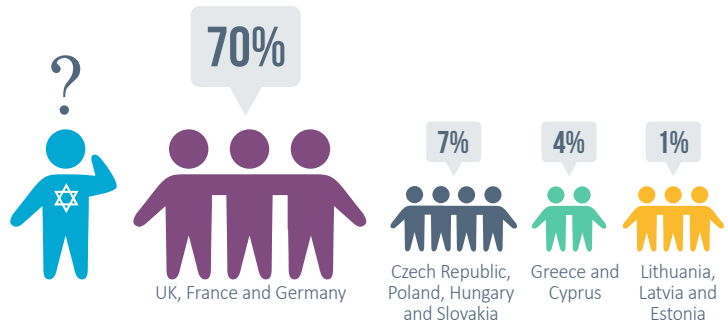
## When building relations with other countries



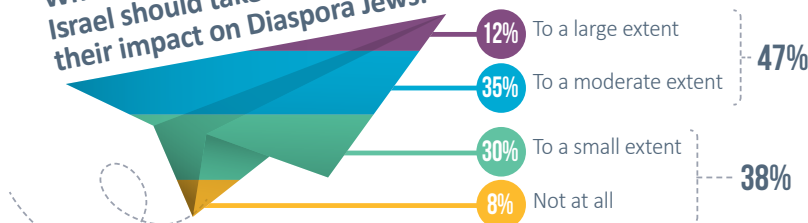
## Should Israel try to improve its relations with Turkey?



## With which group of EU member states is it most important for Israel to develop closer ties?



## When making decisions, Israel should take into account their impact on Diaspora Jews:



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