



In this issue:

---

**Welcome, Tel-Aviv**

---

**A Tale of Two Islands**

---

**Scientifically Approved: Israel is Europe**

---

**News in Brief**

---

*This is the Bar Mitzvah (13th) issue of the Ben-Tovim Report, and the last one in the current format. Over the last 3 years, I have been extremely privileged to witness the number of readers grow rapidly from about 1,500, mainly from the UK, to over 5,000 worldwide. Simultaneously, geographies and interest diversities of readers have grown, thus the future will bring various editions which are more relevant to your needs. Thank you for your support, please keep sending your invaluable input and suggestions.*

---

### Welcome, Tel-Aviv

The financial center of greater Tel Aviv entered, for the first time, into the most respected ranking of global financial centers, doing it in an impressive way. Global Financial Centers Index (GFCI), published in London by the **Z/Yen Group**, positioned Tel Aviv at the 32nd place out of 80 global locations. London, New York, Hong Kong and Singapore remain the leaders on the index.

The exciting announcement could not have come at a better timing for us, the founders of **City TLV**, a brand new partnership for the promotion of greater Tel Aviv as an international financial center. City TLV ([www.city-tlv.org](http://www.city-tlv.org)) is an NGO led by individuals and entities that share this vision and can play substantial roles in its realization. It is our wish to create a world-class hub of selected financial services of the highest quality; to promote the exports of financial services from Israel, and to attract foreign investments to the industry; to encourage collaboration among governmental ministries, regulatory institutions, municipalities and the private sector; to create business opportunities for its members; and to represent the financial services industry in international forums.

### Scientifically Approved: Israel is a Part of Europe

Israel will participate in the **Horizon 2020** program, the EU's \$108 billion research and development program that will be implemented between 2014 and 2020. Israel now stands to be the only non-EU member participating in this program. Horizon 2020 is planned to become one of the most important contributors to the funding of scientific research in Israel. Some \$1.35 billion of Israel's own funds are expected to be invested in the program.

The approval of Israel's participation followed a political compromise with the European Union, considering the EU's directives limiting the funding provided by its member nations to Israeli institutions that operate beyond the Green Line. The compromise implies that Israel will sign an addendum that enables it to retain its position that the language used by the EU in the Horizon agreement (which states that there is a difference, funding-wise, between research bodies operating within and beyond the Green Line) is unacceptable. The addendum will as well state, however, that there will not be a diversion of scientific funding provided by the bloc's member nations to institutions operating beyond the Green Line. Both sides have also agreed that any Israeli institution operating both within and beyond the Green Line will be allowed to apply for EU grants according to the program's overall outline. Each application will be considered according to its individual merit.

The European Organization for Nuclear Research (**CERN**) made a unanimous vote to take Israel as a full member. Israel is the group's first and only non-European member. This decision will permit Israel to become a full part of the large scope of research, scientific, educational and industrial activities that are carried out by CERN. The current main activity of CERN is the

operation of the Large Hadron Collider, a particle accelerator located on the Swiss-French border.

Being a member country, Israel will be able to send scientists to and conduct experiments at the accelerator. Israel will also take part in approving new experiments and the construction of new accelerators. A law which was passed by Knesset in November paved the way for Israel's membership in the group. The same rights which are given to diplomats are now given to Israeli scientists working at CERN, a status that is required by the CERN bylaws. The objective of the Organization is to ascertain that there is no government interference in its research work. Israel subscribed to \$13 million dollar annual membership fee.

---

## A Tale of Two Islands

**Malta.** The political and economic ties between Israel and Malta have never been closer. The little Euro Zone and EU member became an attractive European hub for Israeli tech and financial services companies. Regularly, direct flights carry thousands of Israeli tourists who are always looking for new and inexpensive destinations. The previous year, the Maltese government appointed Mr. **Simon Pullicino** as its first resident ambassador in Israel. Business delegations from the island regularly call on Tel Aviv.

Last October, an historic milestone in the bilateral relations was reached when the Prime Minister, **Joseph Muscat** visited Israel with an Enterprise Malta business delegation. Muscat has been leader of the Labour Party since 2008, when he was just 34 years of age. He became Prime Minister with the political upheaval in Valetta of last March and all his listeners in Tel Aviv were impressed with his friendly and dynamic approach.

**Jersey.** My enthusiastic readers will recall a story from two years ago about a visit to Israel by Senator Alan Maclean, the Minister for Economic Development of the States of Jersey, accompanied by a large business delegation from the Island. At that time, I could not hide my own personal satisfaction, as the original bilateral connections were launched in 2009 with a visit to the Island in my former official capacity. I was even more delighted when we welcomed a first-ever visit to Israel by the Chief Minister of The States of Jersey, Senator **Ian Gorst**. Senator Gorst spoke to a large audience at the annual Israel Business Conference, and met with dignitaries such as the Bank of Israel Governor, Dr. **Karnit Flug**.

## News in Brief

- **ISRA**, the unique global index of Israeli equities (refer to our edition of July 2013), is reaching new heights in both market value and capitalization. Developed by **BlueStar** Indexes, ISRA provides a benchmark for a broad spectrum of Israeli equities.
- **Edison**, the leading international investment intelligence firm, expanded its presence in Israel by locally hiring **Will Manuel**, the founder of HSBC's equity research team for Israel-listed companies.
- **Fitch** has asserted the "A" rating of Israel and raised the country's outlook to "positive". It also asserted Israel's long-term local and foreign currency ratings at "A+" and "A" respectively.
- More than 800 people took part in **BrainTech 2013**, Israel's first international brain technology conference, Chaired by **Dr. Rafi Gidron**.
- Korea's **Samsung Electronics** announced that the company is planning to launch a start-up incubator in Israel in the near future.
- **PrimeSense**, an Israeli firm responsible for the development of a 3D motion detection technology, has been purchased by **Apple Computer**, Inc.
- The **World Bank** and Israel have reached an agreement to produce their first joint technology fund, which they will use to promote Israeli agriculture, water, and renewable technologies in developing markets.

---

**I wish you a very Happy 2014 !**

---