

November 8, 2011



Photo by: Courtesy

## Israel, EU sign space cooperation accord

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01/11/2011

Cooperation in space, industry agreement will allow EU's Galileo global-navigation satellite system to establish a satellite receiving station in Israel.

Cooperation between Israel and the European Union is set to expand into space, after Industry, Trade and Labor Minister Shalom Simhon and European Commission Vice President Antonio Tajani signed an agreement Monday in Tel Aviv.

The agreement paves the way for the EU's Galileo global-navigation satellite system to establish a satellite receiving station in Israel, and it also strengthens bilateral cooperation in space-related research and development.

In addition, Simhon and Tajani signed a deal on deepening cooperation in the field of tourism. They also discussed deepening ties between small-business experts from Israel and Europe and expanding the participation of Israeli companies in European-funded R&D programs. European leaders could learn from the example set by Israel as they work to rescue the region from financial crisis, **Tajani said Monday at the Go4Europe conference on Israeli-European business relations in Tel Aviv.**

**"Israel is a good example of how a country with a business-friendly environment is better resistant to the crisis,"** he said at the annual Go4Europe conference. He cited Israel's 4.7 percent growth rate in 2010 as proof that it had emerged strongly from global financial worries. Europe must strengthen its industrial and technological base to have more global influence, **Tajani said. Israel would continue to be an import partner for Europe in technology fields such as hi-tech,** he said, adding that there was also potential for cooperation in the two fields he discussed with Simhon: tourism and space.

Speaking before Tajani, Intelligence Agencies Minister Dan Meridor said Israel remains committed to strong economic relations with Europe, despite the ongoing problems in the euro zone.

"We need Europe to stay strong, just as we need America to stay strong," he said, "because the set of value and interests which we are part of are led by Europe and the United States. The weakening of Europe is politically dangerous to all of us."

Israeli intelligence information had failed to predict the Arab Spring, Meridor said, and Israel needed a strong economy to be able to deal with a rapidly changing Middle East.

"The strong economy we have now is based, among other things, on the deep crisis we faced 25 years ago," he said. "This crisis caught us in 1984 to '85, with hyperinflation and almost no foreign currency, as a result of very high defense expenditure and because of irresponsible government policies that spent more than they could."

"Since then, all governments have had policies of maintaining stability and not carrying a deficit," Meridor said. "We took seriously what we were taught by the Americans [at the time], but they forgot to take that seriously themselves."