

European, Asian Investors Look to Israel's 'Enormous Brainpower'

Investors say Israel is 'the model' for innovation, brainpower at Go4Europe conference.

By Yoni Kempinski, Tova Dvorin

First Publish: 10/28/2014, 10:53 AM

Hundreds of European and Asian investors looked to Israel for business partnerships on Monday, flooding Tel Aviv's Hilton Hotel for the twelfth annual Go4Europe/Go4Israel conference.

"I think the secret of Israel is simply that you have enormous brainpower," Luc Miller, CEO of OTTO Group in Germany, stated. "And you don't have many natural resources - or had not before - but you have enormous brainpower, and that makes a lot of Israeli start-ups very interesting for international companies that do not have the same quality of education."

According to Miller, Israel set something of a precedent for European business models.

"Europe is waking up, France is waking up, Germany is waking up - and they're trying to copy the model of the start-up nation," he explained.

This year's conference focused specifically on strengthening ties between Israel and China.

"I think the relationship between Israel and China is very special," Eric Zhao, Vice Director, Wujin Economic Zone, China, said. "Israel is very famous for its high-tech and China is very famous for its marketing."

"The Chinese people and the Chinese government - we have deep [positive] feelings about the Israeli people," Zhao added. "In China, everyone knows that Israel is full of innovation."

Public perception continues to be an issue, however, with some investors saying that misunderstandings over Operation Protective Edge have cast a dark shadow on the business world.

"I think it's a matter of a new generation," Miller said. "They don't know much about World War II and what happened. For them, Israel is just a normal country, and they compare the sophisticated normal country with the less sophisticated Arab countries, and say Israel is too technologically aggressive."

"I think it's very important to show, first of all, that Israel is not aggressive - that it's defending itself - and second of all, that everything that happens now in the Islamic world, they will discover themselves: it's not Arabs against Jews, it's radicals against all the world."

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/186693#.VE-UYCLkd4d>