

09:30 , 09.20.10



news חדשות

Print

Analysis



'Israeli settlements considered illegitimate' Photo: AP



[click here to enlarge text](#)

'Israel's situation in Europe extremely dire'

Cancellation of settlement heads' delegation to Holland indicates of broader process taking place in Europe, warns EU expert. 'Israel not considered legitimate as long as it is an occupier'

Boaz Fyler

The [cancellation](#) of a mayors delegation from Israel to Holland due to the inclusion of settlement leaders from the West Bank is not the first European step to highlight the harsh attitude toward [Israel](#).

Arthur Vigrass, vice president of an organization that centralizes local Dutch authorities told Ynet that the decision to "suspend" the visit was taken independently, although they did consult with the Dutch Foreign Ministry.

The official noted that his organization was in charge of deciding who to host for study tours, and stressed that the decision to suspend the delegation did not mean that they are unwelcome, but rather suggested that the make-up of the delegation was controversial, and would have to be reconsidered before the visit can be conducted.



Security fence compared to Berlin Wall (Photo: AFP)

However, according to European Union expert Dr. Sharon Pardo from Ben Gurion University in Beersheba, the cancellation of the visit indicates of a broader process that is underway.

"You need to look at the context of Israeli-European relations. During the past year, the European Court of Justice in Luxemburg ruled on a seemingly financial issue, which carries long term political and legal implications."

Dr. Pardo referred to a ruling according to which Israeli produce originating from territories beyond the Green Line does not qualify under the criteria set by the trade agreement between Europe and Israel, and therefore cannot be exported tax free. That is to say, anything that is grown beyond the Green Line is not considered as being grown in Israel, and therefore is not included in the agreement.



Anti-Israel protest in London (Photo: Israeli embassy)

"This decision critically influences Israel's future conduct in front of the EU," Dr. Pardo noted. "We are witnessing the qualification of a political decision in the legal echelons. As far as the EU is concerned, the ruling forced the 1967 borders on Israel. It is an unprecedented ruling.

"It is clear that as long as there are no significant steps to end the conflict, there will be no upgrade in relations with Europe," he added.



Calling for settlement boycott in Hebron (Photo: AFP)

"There is an ideological gap between the two societies. Israel's situation is extremely dire in Europe. It is not considered legitimate as long as it is an occupier. Holland is one of the founders of the EU, and so its decisions accurately reflect the European public's position vis-à-vis what they consider an unjust occupation," he concluded.

In contrast, Dr. Emmanuel Navon, a European Union expert from Tel Aviv University, wished to calm the spirits. "At the moment it is the expression of a single country, and does not reflect the European Union's policy, because the EU has no de-facto stance vis-à-vis foreign and defense policies," he said.

Dr. Navon pointed especially to Eastern Europe, where he said "states hold much more pro-Israeli positions." Navon also named several Western European leaders with a pro-Israeli stance, such as Silvio Berlusconi, Nicolas Sarkozy, David Cameron and Angela Merkel.

"In the past," he noted, "Holland was the most pro-Israeli country within the EU, but its stance does not reflect the rest of the member states."

- **Follow Ynetnews on [Facebook](#)**

[Back](#)