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PROJEKT NEWS

Imbalance in mutual perceptions between Europe and Israel

According to a Bertelsmann Stiftung survey, Europeans are much more critical toward Israel than is true of the reverse. There is also a lack of agreement on the issue of Europe's responsibility for Israel.

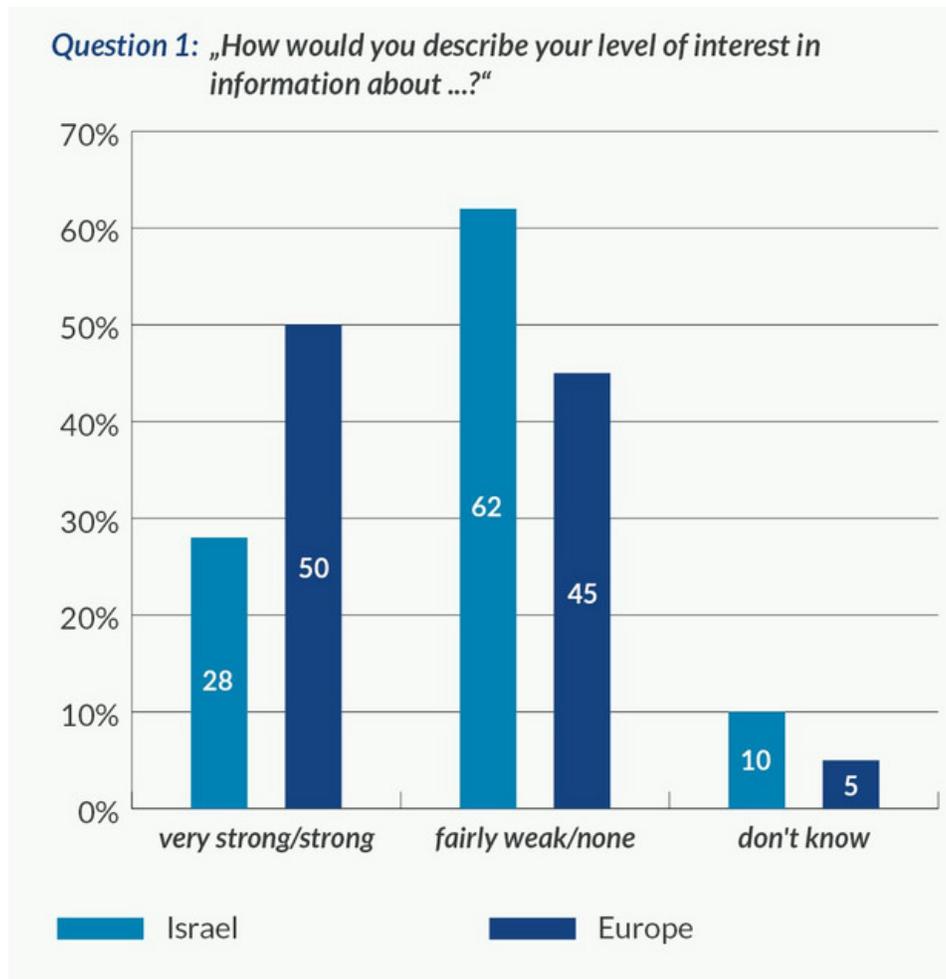
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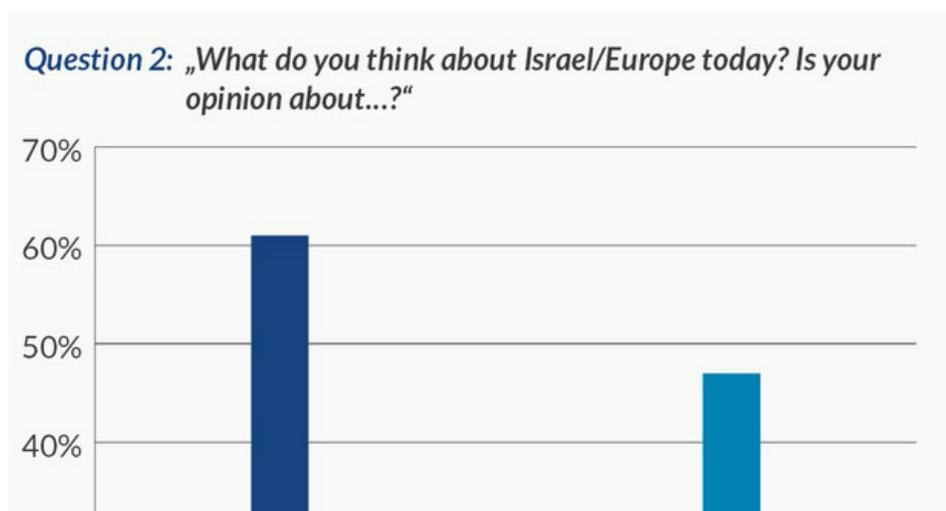
Dr. Joachim Rother

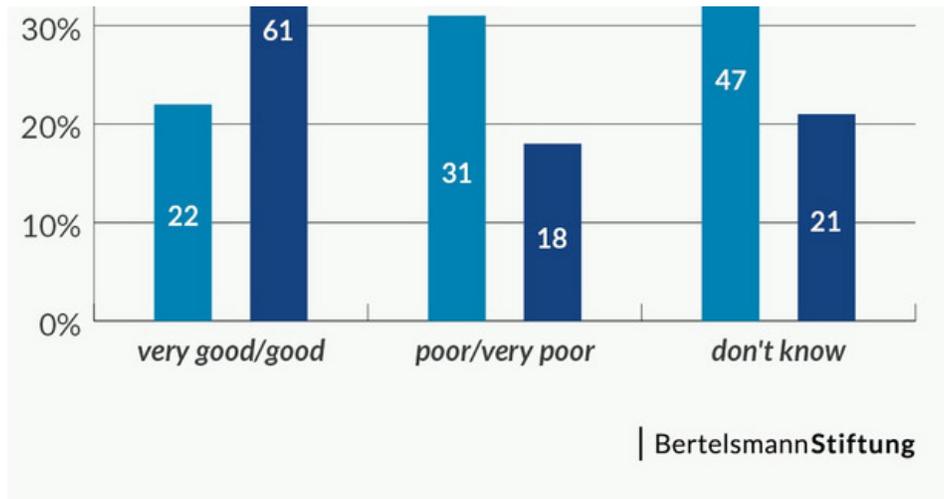
Gütersloh, 9 September 2019. In a survey carried out shortly before the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, a total of 11,195 citizens either of Israel or one of eight European countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Spain, Poland, the United Kingdom, Italy and the Netherlands) were questioned online regarding their attitudes toward each other. While a majority of Israelis have a good or very good opinion of Europe, Europeans' views on Israel are overwhelmingly negative. Thus, 61 percent of Israelis expressed positive opinions regarding Europe, while only about 20 percent of Europeans displayed a positive attitude toward Israel. The degree of interest shown by each side in the other is also unevenly distributed. While half of all Israelis surveyed indicated that they were interested in information about Europe, just over one-quarter of the surveyed Europeans expressed an interest in information from

the Mediterranean country. The sources used to obtain information about the other country or region also vary greatly. While a majority of Israelis (59 percent) obtain their information about Europe online, traditional media sources dominate among the European respondents, with half gaining their information about Israel via TV and newspapers, and only 28 percent using internet-based sources.



📷 Bertelsmann Stiftung

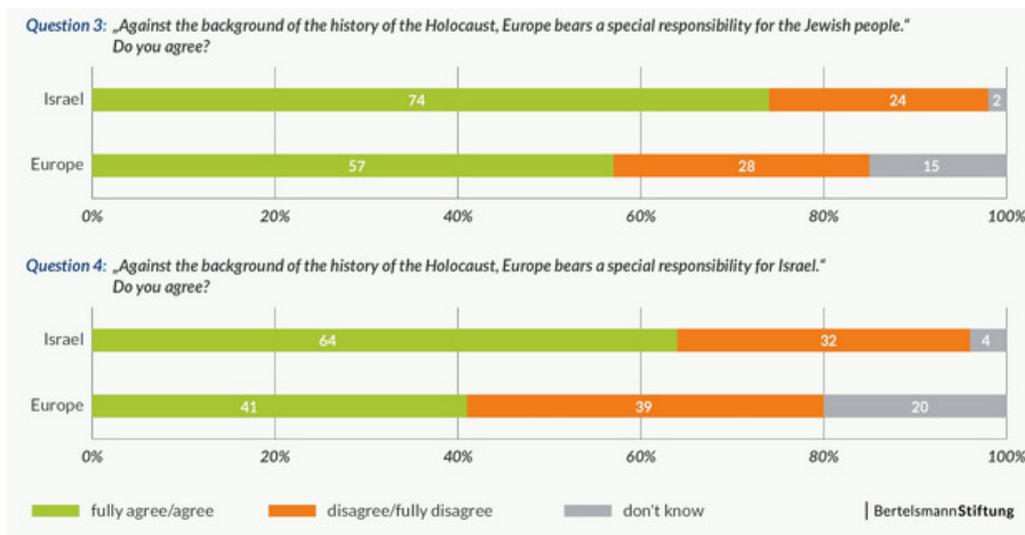




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Role played by the Holocaust in shaping relations

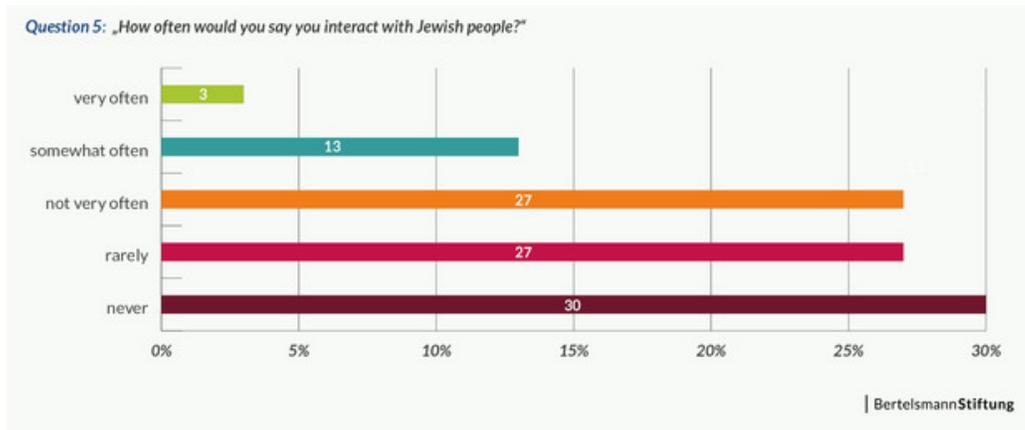
The significance of the Holocaust for current relations was also seen differently by respondents in Europe and in Israel. While three-quarters of Israelis are of the opinion that Europe has a special responsibility for the Jewish people, only 57 percent of Europeans agree (and just 55% of Germans). Views regarding Europe's responsibility for Israel are similarly divergent. While two-thirds of all Israelis surveyed ascribe responsibility for Israel to Europe, only about 40 percent of Europeans share this view (including in Germany).



📷 Bertelsmann Stiftung

Interactions with one another as a key?

The results thus indicate a significant imbalance in perceptions and expectations between Israeli and European citizens. In this respect, the connection between the attitudes described and the frequency with which the European respondents interact with Jewish people is revealing.



 Bertelsmann Stiftung

A more in-depth multivariate analysis of the figures shows that Europeans who have personal contact with Jewish citizens of Europe are more likely to agree with the statement that Europe has a special responsibility for the Jewish people, and also more often hold the view that Europe has a special responsibility for the state of Israel. In addition, people who have comparatively more frequent contact with Jewish people tend to have more positive views regarding Israel, and show more interest in information from that country.

“Contact with Jewish fellow citizens has a measurable influence on how Europeans think about the issue of responsibility toward the Jewish people and Israel,” said Dr. Joachim Rother, an expert on Israel for the Bertelsmann Stiftung. The relationship between interactions and opinions can be seen as a strong argument for the importance of exchange programs facilitating meetings between European and Israeli citizens. This is the best way to overcome prejudice, Rother said.

Publication





PUBLICATION

Significant differences in mutual perceptions between Europe and Israel

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Additional information

The results reported here are based on an international comparative survey conducted by Dalia Research in cooperation with [eupinions](#) between 27 November 2019 and 14 January 2020 on behalf of the Bertelsmann Stiftung. The study examines data from eight selected European country samples (Belgium, Germany, Spain, France, the United Kingdom, Italy, Netherlands and Poland), as well as from Israel (n = 11,195). In order to adjust key sociodemographic characteristics to their actual distribution in the population, the data was weighted on the basis of Eurostat statistics. The target weighting variables included age, gender, education level and degree of urbanization (rural and urban populations). An iterative algorithm was used to identify the optimal combination of weighting variables based on the composition of the specific country samples. The overall estimated design effect based on the distribution of weights is calculated at 1.25. For a random sample of this size, taking the design effect into account, there would be a margin of error of +/-1 percent, with a confidence level of 95 percent.

PROJECTS

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