

Globes (Translated from Hebrew)

The chancellor of Austria does business in Jerusalem

About a special meeting in the capital, with Erel Margalit and Palestinian entrepreneur Bashar al-Masri

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On Monday, Holocaust Martyrs 'and Heroes' Remembrance Day, I was invited to participate in a special meeting in Jerusalem. MK Erel Margalit, a member of the foreign affairs and defense committee and a candidate for the Labor Party, hosted compound venture capital fund JVP the Chancellor of Austria Christian Kern, who came to learn about the economic cooperation that can encourage entrepreneurship and innovation.

Among the participants were Hebrew University President Prof. Menahem Ben-Sasson, a number of representatives of international and Israeli investment funds, high-tech entrepreneurs and, in a somewhat symbolic manner, especially in the context of this special day, Palestinian entrepreneur Bashar Al-Masri, Siraj, which operates in the Palestinian Authority in high-tech.

We all came there to share with the Austrian chancellor our accumulated experience, each in his field, encouraging entrepreneurship and its positive impact on large circles, beyond the high-tech entrepreneurs and the employees in the companies they set up.

The Austrian chancellor is a polished politician, but it was evident that his impressions of the activities presented to him were genuine. Especially from the Israeli ability to implement programs that begin with the vision and become reality in a relatively short period of time.

JVP Venture Capitalists told the chancellor about the establishment of their media center in central Jerusalem and the creation of thousands of jobs in the city as a direct result. Yoav Zeruya, CEO of JVP's cyber activities in Be'er Sheva, spoke about the creation of 2,000 jobs in the Negev capital as a result of the rapid realization of Erel Margalit's vision (still in his previous position as chairman of the JVP venture capital fund he founded in the 1990s)) In cooperation with international companies and with government encouragement.

Practical collaborations

The chancellor noted that there is sometimes a chance for practical cooperation between the government and the private market, which can yield economic and social benefits in the foreseeable future. He said that in Austria there are about 220 different public bodies that are responsible for encouraging R & D activities in the country, which creates significant complexity and many bureaucratic difficulties.

Although he did not say so explicitly, this situation seemed very frustrating to him, especially in light of what he heard from the participants.

Knesset Member Margalit later told him about the initiative he is leading to create a food-processing center in the Galilee. The model, similar to the cyber model in the Negev, is based on the concentration of knowledge and technologies in the region, the encouragement of investment and the policy of benefits for entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs willing to start their businesses in this supportive environment.

Naturally, such a meeting could not help but spill over into politics. One can not ignore the fact that this meeting between Knesset members, high-tech people and Israeli investors and the Austrian chancellor and his delegation takes place in the capital of Israel a few hours after the shuddering siren of Holocaust Remembrance Day. The chancellor and his people must have heard the siren where they were the other morning.

When his turn came to speak, said the developer of the Palestinian Bashar Masri, who also founded the Palestinian city New Rawabi, that "in the absence of a political process, the young people of the Palestinians become a ticking bomb instead of a great opportunity to integrate high-tech world and Israel. 70% of Palestinians are under the age of 30 Israel must decide whether to become partners or ticking bombs ... We must create a new situation between us, Israeli high-tech can become a new bridge between Israelis and Palestinians and open Israel to the markets of the Arab world

"Political world"

Al-Masri said that in addition to his investment fund, a technological incubator was recently set up within the Authority, and he also spoke about his involvement in investments in start-ups within Israel, with an emphasis on the Arab-Israeli sector.

He added: "No one will be wrong, the investment world is a political world, without a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, many countries in the world, especially the Arab countries, will not transfer investments to Israel. A Palestinian state alongside Israel. "

Austrian Chancellor Christian Kern listened to the words in silence. He did not come there to talk about his views on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but it is reasonable to think that there were no disagreements with Al-Masri on this issue. Someone who sat next to me, a senior manager in Israeli high-tech, whispered to me with a smile that at least in this room where the meeting took place, there was probably not one person who thought otherwise.

Knesset member Erel Margalit, who declared last week that "the leftists are coming back," is working to systematically create connections between Israeli and Palestinian leaders and businessmen. Margalit spoke of the need to advance the "interests program," which focuses on economic cooperation with the Palestinians, with the support of European countries and the United States, in order to restore trust between the two sides.

"There is a huge opportunity here, to leverage the chancellor's desire to turn Austria into an active partner in initiating an economic move together with the Palestinians, who will build confidence in the direction of a move Political significance, "Margalit said.

The chancellor said at the conclusion of the meeting that Austria has become a center of global innovation in recent years, and aspires to copy the Israeli model and become Europe's "start-up". He said that he is currently formulating a plan under which Austria will invest in joint economic projects for Israel and the Palestinians in the areas of innovation. "I am happy to hear from MK Margalit about the Israeli innovation and the successes in the world. We will formulate a similar plan in Austria. "

The Austrian chancellor and a delegation of senior Austrian officials, Israeli Knesset members, senior Israeli high-tech executives and Palestinian businessmen met in the capital of the State of Israel, Jerusalem, and spoke about cooperation in various fields. This was perhaps the important headline of what happened in Jerusalem yesterday, and this is also the bottom line. Especially, and perhaps because, that yesterday was Holocaust Remembrance Day.

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