



TWINNING-AGREEMENT-PROJECT

ISRAEL & GERMAN RANGER ASSOCIATIONS



1

Summary description

The TWINNING program presents a long-term partnership between the ranger associations of Israel and Germany. The aim is to establish a continuous and long-lasting exchange programme between Israeli and German rangers within the scope of the twinning agreement of the individual ranger associations.

From now on, annual exchange visits of a German delegation to Israel and an Israeli delegation to Germany are intended to be organised.

2

Aims

- The overarching goal is to promote knowledge sharing, mutual support and training to solve fundamental issues of ranger work across national boundaries. Nature knows no boundaries, similar to the work of rangers. An international, professional exchange provides new perspectives and focuses on joint actions for the protection and preservation of the global biodiversity.
- To establish international connections of rangers also in countries neighbouring Israel or countries along migrating routes of birds to improve cross country understanding.
- While carrying out protected area management work, irrespective of borders, similar thematic issues occur on a regular basis, especially concerning the topics of official activities, communication, de-escalation, visitor information, environmental education, strategic approaches in nature protection services, visitor management or practical measures in the protected area for habitat maintenance or signage.
- In the course of the cooperation, the rangers personally experience how certain tasks, e.g. nature conservation service, visitor information or monitoring, are handled in the other protected area or country. Through the mutual insight into the everyday life of the rangers, knowledge can be efficiently exchanged and implemented.
- While in Israel the fight against poaching and wildlife management play a central role, in many German protected areas the focus is strongly on visitor information and, among other things, also on working with children; also in Brandenburg, on wildlife management and the ecologisation of land use. Through the exchange, the rangers pass on their "best practice" knowledge from their area of expertise, or give suggestions for improvement, so that a constant mutually inspired further development is given.

3

Parties involved

The programme is organised under the patronage of the International Ranger Federation (IRF) and the European Ranger Federation (ERF).

- Rangers from the Israel Nature & Heritage Foundation and the Israel Nature and Parks Authority (INPA) from various protected areas.
- Rangers from the German Ranger Association from the cooperation areas Brandenburg Ranger Service, the Bavarian Forest National Park and the Black Forest National Park.

4

Briefing / origin

The idea to initiate joint exchange programmes between German and Israeli rangers was formed in 2016 at the World Ranger Congress of the IRF in Colorado. The meeting of Ilan Yeger (head of the Israeli Ranger Association) and Frank Grütz (back then head of the German Ranger Association) formed the initial idea of the TWINNING project. Since then, mutual efforts have been made to establish the envisaged cooperation.

2017, the Israeli association suggested a first exchange in Germany. As a result, the German Ranger Association sought cooperation partners from the protected areas of Germany for the concrete exchange of rangers. The Bavarian Forest National Park then made it possible for the first Israeli exchange group to visit a large German protected area. This excursion in 2017 enabled the first tangible step of the partnership to be established.

After the successful implementation of the first programme in 2017, it was decided at the European Ranger Congress of the ERF in Litomerice (Czech Republic) to establish a Twinning Agreement between the Israeli and German Ranger Associations. In addition, it was decided to extend the programme to other cooperating protected areas in order to spread the project over several shoulders and place it on a stable foundation. The Brandenburg Ranger Service and the Black Forest National Park then became part of the Twinning Group.

Since the year 2018 regular annual exchanges with a visit in Israel as well as Germany have been taking place.

5

Implementation

- Mutual exchange visits in Israel and Germany of approx. One week duration each and visit of different protected areas with varying thematic emphases.
- Focus on a broad exchange of experience on the current topics of protected area management in the respective country/protected area.

1

Milestones

2016:
Development of the idea of a ranger exchange project between Israel and Germany at the World Ranger Congress in Colorado.

Spring 2017:
first tangible result of the partnership by a visit of an Israeli exchange group to the Bavarian Forest National Park - as first German cooperation partner.

Spring 2017:
Official agreement on a TWINNING programme of the Israeli and German ranger associations at the European Ranger Congress of the ERF in Litomerice (CZ) and joint visit of the former concentration camp Theresienstadt by the Israeli and German participants of the congress.

Spring 2017:
Inclusion of the Brandenburg ranger service and the Black Forest National Park as cooperation partners (distributing the programme among several partners and establishing a permanently stable foundation).

Winter 2017:
Official partnership agreement between the Mount Carmel National Park in Israel and the Black Forest National Park in Baden-Wuerttemberg.

Spring 2018:
First return visit in Israel in spring 2018 by Urs Reif (Black Forest National Park).

Summer 2018:
a delegation of 6 people from Israel visited protected areas in Brandenbrug as well as the Black Forest National Park for 1 week. Participation of Michael Großmann as representative of the Bavarian Forest National Park in the Black Forest.

Spring 2019:
5 German delegates from the Brandenburg ranger service and the Black Forest and Bavarian Forest National Parks visited the protected areas in Israel for 1 week.

Summer 2019:
Visit of an Israeli delegation (5 rangers) to the Black Forest and Bavarian Forest National Parks.

November 2019:
The IRF President’s Award for German & Israel Ranger Associations „Twinning-Agreement-Project“.

January 2020:
The next step: 5 German delegates from the Brandenburg ranger service and the Black Forest and Bavarian Forest National Parks visited the protected areas in Israel for 1 week.

Spring 2020:
planned visit of an Israeli delegation to protected areas in Brandenburg with joint participation in the Ranger Congress of the European Ranger Association (ERF) in the Bavarian Forest.

2

Response

Response of the parties involved
The visits of the Israeli rangers were met with a very positive response. Employees were able to learn many new things and also see old things from new perspectives. Like the train-the-trainer programmes of the Ranger Association, the exchange programme aims to bring the employees from the area - i.e. the rangers - into exchange with their international colleagues. Broadening the perspective, finding new solutions to similar problems and promoting international empathy and language skills are also essential building blocks.

Public response:
Presentation of the Twinning proect on the ERF homepage:
<https://www.europeanrangers.org/twinning-meeting-in-israel/>

Interview of the „Südkurier“ (Constance) with the Israeli Consul General Sandra Simovich about the partner activities of the ranger associations, here with a special focus on the existing partnership between the national parks Carmel Mountain and Black Forest.
<https://www.suedkurier.de/ueberregional/politik/Darf-man-Israel-kritisieren-Frau-Generalkonsulin;art410924,10111214>



Manfred Lütkepohl (Brandenburg Ranger Service) and Ilan Yeger (INPA) at the World Ranger Congress 2016 in Colorado.

1

What makes it successful / what is new about the project?

Israel currently plays a special role in the efforts to preserve global biodiversity. In the surrounding neighboring states, the conditions for successful conservation work are currently difficult in many places, primarily due to the current political situation. In addition, there is broad international support and networking in Israel, which is beneficial to the success of nature conservation projects. Successful species and nature conservation projects concern, for example, the reintroduction of regionally extinct species such as the wild donkey, the oryx antelope or the griffon vulture.

Major conservation efforts also concern, for example, the Iberian ibex, several species of gazelles (one of which is now endemic to Israel) and wetlands in general. For the various species and nature conservation projects visited, please refer to the attached presentation of the exchange in Israel in spring 2019. Israel has an enormous importance especially with regard to migratory birds, since many birds, which do not fly over the open sea, lay their essential migratory routes, for example the eastern route, over the Sinai Peninsula and the south of Israel. Of course, this also applies to many species from Germany.

For example, Israel is an important transit country for the Lesser Spotted Eagle, which is breeding in Germany and is threatened with extinction here. In Brandenburg the colleagues from Israel could visit breeding areas of this species and familiarize themselves with its ecology within the breeding area.

It is comparatively easy for European protected areas to exchange information and learn from each other. Israel is almost isolated, which is why it is enormously important to integrate them into an international network through cooperation. The visit and signing of the agreement represent an important first step in this direction.



Main migratory routes of migratory birds flying medium distances. Israel marked with a red circle.

Source: Wikipedia.de, H. Hoffmeister (Lanzi)

2

Why is this interesting for groups other than the parties involved?

For the conservation of biodiversity it is of great importance to involve seemingly isolated states such as Israel in the international dialogue and to create a network. In particular, the relations between Israel and Germany have a special relationship due to recent European history. For a number of reasons, the connection between the staff of Israeli and German protected areas on the comprehensive and global topic of biodiversity conservation (keyword: CBD-Rio de Janeiro, international biodiversity strategy, etc.) is particularly suitable for such exchange projects.

On the one hand, rangers generally distinguish themselves through their personal commitment to nature - also for an altruistically designed general theme - which should be emphasized. The linking of such a commitment with international efforts for one and the same goal increases the basic motivation to continue working for this important goal despite the restrictions, regressions and loss of species that continue to emerge - also internationally.

Employees learn that in other countries, too, people fight for the same goals under the same restrictions and that this cohesion motivates them. This motivation increases in particular as the common history has after all not been characterized by cohesion and togetherness and historical boundaries of living together can be broken up within the framework of such a project.

3

Which concrete consequences does this milestone have?

The Twinning Agreement Project is now bearing a large number of other fruits:

- For example, in summer 2019, a Volunteer Ranger from the Bavarian Forest National Park visited Israel. There, he worked as a volunteer for several weeks.
- During the International Ranger Congress 2019 in Nepal (International Ranger Federation Congress), one ranger from Israel and one from Germany will report on the programme and the success of the cooperation in a joint presentation to an international audience.
- The political public has become aware of the Twinning Agreement project. After a visit to the Black Forest National Park by the Israeli Consul General Sandra Simovich, she also came for a visit to the Bavarian Forest National Park in autumn 2019.
- Numerous members of the European Ranger Federation were guests in Israel in the summer of 2019. During a Train-The-Trainer seminar „International Ranger Training Course on Anti-poaching management and enforcement techniques“, in cooperation with the Israel Nature and Heritage Foundation, rangers from several European countries were able to discuss with experts in Israel and benefit greatly from the experience gained there, also in real-life operations on the ground.



First exchange group from Israel visiting the Bavarian Forest National Park in spring 2017. Picture: Bavarian Forest National Park.



Joint visit of the former concentration camp Theresienstadt by the Israeli and German participants of the European Ranger Congress (2017) in Litomerice.



Ilan Yeger (INPA) and Carsten Wagner (German Ranger Association) with the signed twinning agreement. Sean Wilmore, president of the IRF, on the right: Frank Grütz, president of the ERF, Litomerice, CZ, 2017.



Israeli rangers visiting the Brandenburg Ranger Service in summer 2018.



Urs Reif with rangers from Israel during the first visit in Israel in spring 2018.



Israeli rangers on World Ranger Day visiting the Black Forest National Park.



German rangers during their visit in Israel in spring 2019. For more information, please visit: <https://www.parks.org.il/en/new/international-ranger-exchange-produces-first-results/>



Israeli ranger visiting the Bavarian Forest National Park, 2019. Here together with rangers of the Sumava National Park and Bavarian Forest National Park, on the German-Czech border.



Israeli rangers visiting the Black Forest National Park 2019.



Train the Trainer in Israel, summer 2019 and joint celebration of World Ranger Day, 2019.



Train the Trainer in Israel, summer 2019 and joint celebration of World Ranger Day, 2019.



Train the Trainer in Israel, summer 2019 and joint celebration of World Ranger Day, 2019.



Train the Trainer in Israel, summer 2019 and joint celebration of World Ranger Day, 2019.



2020: German Rangers in Israel: From the desert to the coral reef in Eilat.



A Volunteer Ranger from the Bavarian Forest National Park working in Israel.



*Award of the IRF.
For more information, please visit: [https://www.europeanrangers.org/
outstanding-exchange-programme-with-israeli-rangers/](https://www.europeanrangers.org/outstanding-exchange-programme-with-israeli-rangers/)*



A Volunteer Ranger from the Bavarian Forest National Park working in Israel.



Ilan Yeger (Israel) after receiving the Award, Nepal, 2019.



Ilan Yeger (Israel), Sean Willmore (IRF) and Urs Reif (Germany) after receiving the award.



Volunteer Ranger Daniel Schmid (blue shirt) together with new colleagues and friends.



Train the Trainer in Israel, summer 2019 and joint celebration of World Ranger Day, 2019.



2020: German Rangers in Israel: From the desert to the coral reef in Eilat.



Israeli rangers visiting the Brandenburg Ranger Service in summer 2018.



Urs Reif with rangers from Israel during the first visit in Israel in spring 2018.



IMPRINT

EUROPEAN RANGER FEDERATION

Seat of the association: Frank Grütz, Treasurer ERF, Friedhofstr. 27, 66620 Nonnweiler, Germany
Phone: 0049 – 151 20 74 52 49, E-Mail: treasurer@internationalrangers.org

ERF Secretary: Emmanuel Icardo
E-Mail: secretary@europeanrangers.org

ERF President: Urs Wegmann, Greifensee-Stiftung, Bankstrasse 8 , 8610 Uster, Switzerland

www.europeanrangers.org